Random Thoughts of a Chaotic Mind

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I had them on my DeviantART page, now I'm posting them on my profile! Just don't take anything written within too seriously, ok? Recent chapter is set in a Ranma 1/2 setting.

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Magical Catalog: Naruto

I don't own Naruto or the few items from Ranma 1/2 world.

"Get back here you brat!" Snarls one of his pursuers, a blond child known as Naruto just laughs but continues to stay at the head of the pack. "You runt! You got some nerve trying to steal from me!" Another one of his pursuers howls as the child leaps over a fence and then ducks into a trash can.

Naruto remains in the metal can for a while, clutching the thick magazine that he stole from a man's paper recycle pile. *I wonder if the coast is clear?* The kid wonders and then slowly moves the lid so that he can see what's happening outside of the bin.

After watching people walk pass, Naruto finally decides that it's safe for him to head home to his apartment. Ignoring the smell that's likely clinging to him, he manages to make it stealthily to his apartment building with the magazine clenched to his skinny chest.

The blond smiles slightly as he closes his apartment door and leans on the door with a sigh. "Now then, let's see what other, fun stuff it has." The young blond says out loud as he walks to the table and sets the thick magazine on the table top.

"Lady Moriko's Mail Order Magical Business, now offering Aging Mushrooms and Jusenkyo Spring Water, huh, I thought magic doesn't exist." Nine year old Naruto Uzumaki wonders after reading the cover. It didn't take long before the blond to open the magazine and begins to read about the various magic that is listed under which section.

Look at these prices! I guess that I better be careful about using it since I won't be able to afford this stuff all of the time. The nine year old decides after reading through one section of the magazine.

Genin Examine

"Damn it! All my hard work goes down the drain! Stupid old goat! Stupid old cat lady!" The blond curses as he walks home from the Ninja academe after failing the Genin Examine, kicking pebbles and things out of his way.

As the blond makes his home, he walks right into the kitchen to make himself some ramen. It's then that the blond child remembers the package he got from Lady Moriko's catalog. A slow, mischievous smile grows on his face as he remembers what he ordered from said catalog.

"Let's see, I ordered some water from the goat spring and the man spring... What would happen if I really make him an old goat?" The blond muses softly as he moves to get a chair so he can reach the box on the highest shelf.

Once the box is down, the child looks through the contains before taking out the two vials he needed. Before he puts the box back up, he frowns as he takes time to look at the other vials that he bought. *I still got water from the raven spring, tiger spring water, and elk water. I also have that ring of magical immunity that I won on buying that lotto ticket, I really should wear that when handling the Jusenkyo water so that I don't get cursed.*

After all, he did have some weasel and fox water three months ago before he used it to curse the two lower grades to transform into said beasts. The class group below his current... err, previous class group were cursed to transform into weasels while the group that's a year younger then that group were cursed to transform into weasels.

True there hadn't been enough water from those two springs to curse all of those students, that was until Naruto added some normal water into the mix and waited three days so that the magic could enchant the newly added water like the instructions suggest to him on how to make more for him to use.

Surprisingly enough, the blond hadn't been cursed when he handled the Jusenkyo water that time since he hadn't worn the ring he won from the lotto that he entered when he placed that order. But since he plans to not just mix normal water into the mix, he wants to mix two of the waters, the goat one and the man one. And so, before putting the box containing the water back, the blond slides the ring onto his right hand.

By the time he puts the box up, Naruto's surprised to see that the ring now seems to fit his finger better then when he slipped it on. After studying the reformatted ring, he then gets off the chair before moving it to get his large wooden bowl out. It didn't take long before he's done needing the chair.

Once the chair is back at the table, Naruto picks up the two vials and studies the paper labels for a few seconds before twisting off the caps and pouring the contains into the large wooden bowl. Unsurprisingly, the two vials vanish from his hand once the task is done. With a sigh, he then uses a glass to add regular tap water to the bowl.

Once that's done, the blond then takes out his kettle and begins to fill it so that he can have some ramen. As he waits, he decides to wait a full week before filling up the water balloons. *And then I'll get my revenge on the teachers at the academe!* Naruto thinks until the kettle whistles, signally that the water is done boiling.

Week Later

Ok, time for the check lists. Naruto thinks to himself and glances at the water balloons, then to his ring on his right hand, and then glances into the mirror to make sure that his Henge is completely concealing his appearance. The blond even made sure not to wear a hint of orange and is wearing a head covering and face mask to that even if the Henge is dispelled, they still won't connect him to this incident.

Alright! It's time to finish this! The child mentally declares as he punches the air with his right fist. With that, the blond child posing as a sixteen year old with tri-colored hair, the main part being brown, white, and with a hint of black in the bangs.

It hadn't taken long for him to learn when the teacher of the academe were going to gather to review last year's scores and begin planning for next year. It helps that Naruto sent out a bunch of notices about the snacks being served, even if he had to order and pay for them out of his own pocket change. *Maybe I should try shopping early in the morning, when nobody is fully awake or aware of who I am...*

It wasn't hard to the demon container to get into a crawl space in the ceiling over the meeting. And so, Naruto waits for all of the teacher to arrive. As he's beginning to snooze, the sound of laughter wakes him fully up.

Moving to the slightly open panel, the blond looks down into the room and after a quick count, he finds that every teacher is sitting below. With a smirk, the kid pulls the sack of curse water filled balloons over to him as he pushes the tile over a bit more, giving him a better look at the room.

With a soft chuckle, Naruto slings the strap of the sack over his shoulder and, once he redoes his Henge, he pushes the tile away fully and drops down. Already he's got a water balloon in each hand and tosses them about the room. By the time he's landed on the floor, he's managed to throw at least three balloons.

As the teachers begin to react, he manages to hit a least two of the chuunin teacher squarely in the chest. Within seconds, chaos begins to reign as the teacher notice what happened to those who were hit by said balloons. By the time he sprints out of the room, he manages to hit each chuunin, even the women, although they likely did undergo a gender shift since there didn't seem to be such a thing as spring of drown human at Jusenkyo, only various one like spring of drowned young man, young woman, twins, and etc.

As he manages to dash through the halls, he notices a few elders from when he was younger and had hung around the Hokage for days on end. Before they could react, the water filled balloons hit them and new cries of alarm, surprise, and then horror follow after as he races pass them.

As he finally exits out of the building and begins to head for a local training ground, Naruto briefly glances into the sack to find at least three water balloons left, so when he spots a pair of old ladies who were commonly glaring at him, he uses the last of the balloons on them vanishing into an alley way.

Once he's out of the village, he cancels his Henge and looks for a spot to hide out until night fall.

Four Days Later

"Well, that went well." Naruto muses softly under his breath as he watches as various ANBU scout around the roof tops. It made him wonder if he went a little too far... until he recalled how unhelpful most of the teachers were.

Well, I do wonder what it'll be like sharing classes with students who can transform into weasels? Naruto wonders as he watches as a small group of foxes play tag about the street. The very color of their coats mean that they weren't real foxes since he spotted a blond and pink one among the lot.

Or perhaps the problem is, will I fit in with them? The blond wonders as he notices a weasel riding on somebody's shoulder, one that's nattering angrily about something while the person carries the cloths belonging to the cursed academe student. It wouldn't surprise him that if the carrier were to be hit by some cold water that they, too, would turn into a weasel.

So then, how do I go about this? All things considered, I really don't want to have a water base curse and I only have elk, raven, and tiger

water left. Nor can I dose myself with it right now, not when so many people are patrolling the town. The kid thinks with a slight frown.

Maybe I should order some spring water of young man and young woman and then forward it to the old man with instructions on how to increase the amount? Naruto wonders before just sighing and shaking his head. It didn't take the kid to arrive at his favorite restaurant and order lunch before he heads to one of the training ground to work off his frustration.

Year Later

"How can I fail again?!" Naruto snarls at the two examiners with his arms up in the air before he slams them on the table. Unsurprisingly, the pitcher of water falls over and triggers their curse, within seconds he's facing humans with the heads of goats. The two's legs altered to look more like that of a goat's hind legs then human's legs, complete with hooves.

He's not sure just how much of their bodies remain human looking either since they're wearing cloths, thus obscuring his view of the rest of their bodies. The pair seem to emanate a choking feeling, one that takes him a few seconds to throw off, causing him to narrow his eyes at the pair.

"I preformed the Substitution jutsu flawlessly!" He growls as he leans on the table while his hands remain on the table. The silver furred goat-man, Mizuki, just snorts and once the man finishes writing something on a piece of paper. Once Mizuki finishes and holds it up, Naruto reads it.

It wasn't long before he growls, "So what if I failed the written portion?! I know for a fact that my other scores should more then make up for it! Have you forgotten that you punished me by forcing me to read articles out of the academe rule book?! You have no right to fail me!"

If they don't give me a better reason then that one then I'm going to do something they won't like. I'm sure I can get the goats for it and I know for a fact that I have that lust powder just waiting to be used. He thinks darkly as he watches as the other teacher, Souta, begins to write something on another, fresh piece of paper.

Naruto snatches the sheet from the brown furred goat-man and reads it, it didn't take long before he frown as a slight flare of disappointment and hopelessness enters into his being for a few seconds before outrage and disgust eclipses those feelings.

"Since when can the empathize move from the jutsu potion of the test?" He asks in a very frosty tone once he gives the pair his best threatening look that he can muster. He flips the sheet over and puts it between the two.

Ok, scratch that, I'm not just going to do something to these two but to the whole village. I don't give a damn if the old man is like a grandfather to me! I am pissed and I'm sure this has politics all over it, meaning that this rot goes deeper, closer to the core of the village as a whole. He thinks, he already had a good idea of what kind of items he'll need to not just create a barrier around Hidden Leaf, but put the right kind of restrains on the populous so they can't harm him in any way.

Well, they could harm him emotionally but they're always doing that so it wouldn't be much of a different beyond the fact they can't physically assault him using their bare hands, weapons, or jutsus. He also planned to look into getting warding items so they can't do indirect harm to him as well.

And I'll finally know why they hate me, heck, I might just look into taking magical classes through the mail if I'm not satisfied with their explanations and reason. Naruto decides as he waits patiently for either of the two chuunin to explain in greater detail about this new policy concerning the written portion.

As Mizuki finishes writing something, the goat-man holds up the paper for him to read. "You FUCKING BASTARDS!" The ten year old shouts and then tries to jump the pair to strangle them.

He gets intercepted by a pair of ANBU and as he struggles to get at them, cursing them and their lame ass reason for failing him. It didn't take long before the only thing he remembers was something hard hitting him in the back of his head.

A few hours later, he woke to find himself in his apartment. As he tries to open the window next to his bed, he found it won't open. It doesn't take him long before he learns that the door is the same. As he begins to pace angrily around his apartment, he notices a note on the table.

His temper only flares up more once he finishes reading it. "I'm not going to calm down! I am not going to let them get away with this!" Naruto declares as he cripples up the paper and throws it out.

And so Naruto begins to take out his magical catalog, a pen, and an order forum to begin the process of ordering the right items he needs in order to pull off the barrier, the magical restraints, and the indirect harm wards. True, the amount at the end is beyond the cash he has on hand but he's already got an idea of how to get the rest of the cash he needs.

Once that's done, he puts the completed order forum, catalog, and pen away before he moves to make himself something to eat. He's got a whole day to spend within his apartment, meaning that he'll have to wait until tomorrow evening to get the money he needed. As he moves to close the blinds of his window, he pauses to look down at the building around his apartment building.

They won't get away with this, just wait, they'll wish they had treated me better. I'm done being this village's scapegoat. He vows.

Although it's true his personality had changed since he stole the catalog, he only got more bitter and angry after buying a set of

illusion glasses that were to allow him to 'live' a life where he was normal. While he had treasured the life it showed him, it also help to hit home just how much shit gets dumped onto his feet.

It might be too late for me to live a normal life, but I can make it so that their lives are never normal either. He mentally adds as he finally closes the blinds and lies on the bed. Half formed ideas and thoughts play out within his mind as he slowly drifts off into slumber as emotional exhaustion claims him.

The End...?

Of Drunkards and WishBearers: Naruto

I Don't Own Naruto or Gold Digger!

Naruto

My life sucks. He thinks as he muses about the evens of this day. Not only had he been chased by a group of persistence individuals that were drunk, but they would often stop in a bar, giving him a rest period to recover and hopefully hide his tracks. It didn't work out too well since it seems all they had to do was ask about him to get back on his trail.

Thus, he's now moving through a large trash pile belonging to the Uchiha clan if that fan symbol means anything on the posts about the area. He had manage to hide under an over turned tub while his pursuers walk pass his hiding spot a few times. He hated the smell of the trash but he didn't want to get another beating either.

What did I ever do to them anyway? He wonders privately to himself with a slight scowl on his face as he finally gets out from under the tub, it's been a pretty long time since the group passed by his hiding spot. Before standing, he shakes his head, resisting the urge to shake his blond hair with his hands, hands that have been touching things he rather not know about.

Once he stands up, he begins to glance about for signs of the group. As he walks through the trash pile, he hears some glass bottles clink together. As the urge to run battles the urge to investigate, he glancing around with a wary eye, trying to spot anyone that could be waiting in ambush for him.

Finally, he hears the clink of bottles and he heads off to investigate, his fear defeated by his curiosity. It didn't take long before he arrives at the spot where that group of men were laying about, so busy

trying to get drunk that they didn't even glance his way. Although, he can't help but frown as he stares at the number of unopen bottles that were laying about.

What the Hell?! He can't help but think as he spots a hovering being that looks disinterested in the antics of the seven men. "Well, well, well, looks like somebody's going to be striping their hides for drinking before a kid." The being muses once it spots him.

"Why are they drinking?" He finally asks once he's recovered his voice, he couldn't help but wonder why, after all, they haven't even stirred once he came into view. *Spooky.* He can't help but think as he gives the men a quick glance before staring at the strange floating being hovering above the tops of bottles.

"They're trying to drink to get ride of the memories of wishing to know where I came from and why I'm here. I doubt it'll work out well, it's more then likely they'll drink themselves to death." The being tells him, being very causal about it even though the men were sitting on the discarded stuff from the Uchiha clan.

As he looks at each of them, he felt really out of his depth, after all, you don't encounter strange beings who could float in the air. "Ok... Where did those bottles come from?" He asks as he notices how the empty bottles seem to go poof and then as the smoke clears, said bottle is refilled and resealed.

"Do you really *wish* to know?" The being asks and somehow, he shivers as he shakes his head rapidly. The being pouts but mostly shrugs as it begins to float higher into the air, its arms behind its head.

"So they wished to know stuff and then wished to get smashed?" He asks as a few of them roll over and puke on the ground close to where they're seated. With half closed eyes, the floating being hums in agreement, not altering its pose one bit.

"So, if they got wishes, does that mean I get wishes too?" He asks cautiously as he guess after thinking about it for a few seconds. "That's right!" The being says in a sing-song voice as the being comes to float by him.

"Wow!" He says, stunned that something like that would ever happen to him. "It's like a dream come true!" He exclaims.

The being snorts as its arms move from out behind its head. "Sure, if you say so." The being says in a dry tone, one that he didn't pick up on.

"So, so, are you like, all powerful? If so, can you make people like me?" He asks as he stares up at the being. "Make me powerful enough to become Hokage? Or so that I'd have an unlimited supply of Ramen for the rest of my life?!"

The strange being with rings orbiting parts of its body just looks startled before it laughs. "You're sharp, kid, I'll give you that. Very sharp." The being says and he can't help wonder if he should be proud of that fact or concerned by that comment.

"Anyway, to answer your questions, I'm not, not in the way you want, I don't know what that is, and highly unlikely." The being tells him and he can't help but pout up at the being with his arms crossed over his chest. "Ah, kid, don't do that."

"Well, can't you help me with those anyway?" He asks, totally floored that the Puppy-Eyes-Attack is even working on this being. It's never worked on any of the adults before, so this is really a new experience for him.

"Damn it all! I can't believe I'm getting conned by a six year old!" The being says and he blinks before correcting the being, although he can't help but wonder what 'conned' means. "I'm eight!"

"Really? You don't look it." The being muses before frowning.

Suddenly light engulfs him and within seconds, the being is cursing up a storm. As light spots vanish, he finds a storm beginning to form over head. "..." He frowns, not sure what just happened but it seems that this being has just summoned a storm front.

I don't know what's more impressive, the foreign language use or the way the men are cringing. He thinks as he takes a few steps back, away from the seemingly crazed being. *Maybe this isn't such a great idea. . .*

Before he got up the nerve to turn away and race off, the being noticed him for he did so and struggled to calm itself down. Finally, the shoulders droop down as the head falls forward with a sigh. "Look kid, I'm not pissed with you, just what they're have and haven't done."

"Huh?" He asks, kind of surprised. "Ok, since you want help with your wishes, I'll do my best to help with the wording." The being says.

"So, you want people to like you and you want to be top Ninja as well, huh?" The being says and he nods. He calms down as the being goes into a thoughtful pose.

"Well, the strongest physical and often times mystical beings I've come across and had the pleasure to call friends were lycanthropes." The wish granting being muses thoughtfully before turning to regard him. "But first, we need to deal with that second soul residing in your body."

Frowning, he glances about the area, wondering if there's somebody behind him or something. All he saw was the drunken men passed out around them with bottles of sake. "What second soul? I don't see one." He says as he glances at his shadow.

The being sighs before answering, "For one, your whisker marks on your cheeks are the only physical feature always on display that

marks you as having a tenant. Technology, you're possessed, by a fox demon I believe."

He feels his mouth moving but no sound is comes out of it. He just stares up at the being, totally stunned by this revaluation. A hand goes to touch one of his cheeks as he tries to recover from this shock to his system.

"How does that interfere with my wish to become Hokage?" He asks finally. The being sighs as it turns to regard those men that were passed out before looking back at him.

"To put it bluntly, having two souls within the same body means that the second soul could try and rebel, to hijack the body if it weren't locked up properly. While the 'lock' on your second soul is safe enough now, in years to come, you might start relying on some of the second soul's 'rent' which will cause the 'lock' to decay faster then it should." The being tells him.

"Oh, ok. So I'll just have to wish that the soul gets its own body when I make a wish to be stronger." He declares and the being seems to blink before smiling slightly as it nods in approval.

"Good point." The strange being with a ring orbiting around it muses. As the being moves to hover before him, it asks, "So, what's your official wish then?"

"Ok, I think this might work. Ok then, I wish to be come a totally awesome lycanthrope while the second soul within my body to have its own lycanthrope body." He says and then asks, "How's that?"

"Good job, I think." The being says and then asks, "Do you even know what a lycanthrope is?"

He shakes his head and the being chuckles softly before glowing. Within seconds, he feels as if he's surrounded by cool water that's not too cold or too hot. He watches as something red begins to appear before him. As he watches it, the red begins to take the form

of a fox and slowly, a second tail appear, then a third, a fourth, fifth, it continued until there's a total of nine tails.

Whoa. He can't help but think as he watches as the nine-tail fox begins to transform into a tall, red haired human who appears to be an adult. Then, suddenly, the adult falls to the ground, totally naked.

And then, he feels like something's looking at him. "He's easy enough, after all, he's already embraced his 'inner beast'." He hears the being muse softly. "But you, you're at a crossroads in more ways then one."

What does that mean? He wonders and as if reading his mind, the being says, "It means that you're not confide to a certain mold, well, not by much at least."

Oh, err. . . What is a lycanthrope? He wonders and the being explains, once more reading his mind.

"Lycanthropes are a varied race with different clans are known for transforming into a single animal, like a wolf, while another clan transform into a different animal, like a tiger. Also, be careful, you will have the ability to pass on your condition although they'll become your thralls as well." The being says. "It also helps that you want to be 'totally awesome' since that narrows the categories of animal types to Feloidea, Canidae, Ursidae, and perhaps, the Hyaenidae."

I haven't the slightest clue what those are. He muses and then suddenly, he gets flashes of different animals, some he's familiar with like tigers, lions, leopards, wolves, foxes, panda bears, brown bears, polar bears, and different kinds of black bears while others. . . Others, others he couldn't even name like this strange long neck one with really round ears.

I take it they're all meat eating? He muses and he can feel the being agreeing with him. *Well then, I won't take dog breeds cause of him.* He mentally nods at the red head laying on the ground. *Which one*

do you think would fit me? He wonders, guessing that the being would hear him.

"Well, I would suggest a feline simply because next to canines, they are a popular." The being informs him. He hums as he tries recalls the different images of big and small cats.

Well then, I guess I'll take your word for it. He muses and then thinks for a time, trying to pick something as quickly as he could. *What's up with that cat with the black markings on its muzzle? The one with tawny gray coat.*

"Ah, the Cougar, also known as Puma, Mountain Lion, and Panther, the distant sibling of the Cheetah. Use to be found in both parts of the Americas. It's not one of the original lycanthrope races at any rate. If you pick that one, you'd be not just original, but the founder of your clan." The being muses and then he nods.

Ok then, that's the one I pick, I'll be a cougar lycanthrope. He decides and with that, it didn't take long before he finds himself on the ground. He shakes his head as well as his tail.

With a frown, he turns and stares at the tail that's hanging behind him. It's then that he notices that not only did he notice things that seem different, but he's different as well. As he glances at his arms, he finds that he's covered in fur that's honey brown. "Freaky." He muses as he notices the claws on his fingers.

As he gets up, he notices that his cloths were now officially ruined as they're hanging on him by threads. As his tongue moves about behind his new set of teeth, he takes his time getting use to his new set of senses. Then, he turns to regard the red head that use to be a nine-tailed fox.

"How come he's out?" He asks and the being answers, "Simple, he was sleeping while all of this was going on."

"Now then, for your second wish, it might be wise to get a large library with a huge amount of fighting techniques that you can learn from." The being says and he frowns, he can't help but bite his lower lip for a few seconds before an impish idea arises.

After all, what's good does having books if you don't understand what's written in it? "I wish to always understand any kind of language even if its written so that I can read those books that are in the library you're thinking of!" He says, feeling proud by his quick response even though the being is staring at him with a dumbfounded expression on its face.

"Wow, that's definitely a good idea. It'll save you from needing to work to translate or learn any new language. You've got some wits there kiddo, make sure you polish them occasionally." The wish granting being says and within seconds, light engulfs him for a second or two before things return to normal.

"I'll try." He promises the being, feeling kind of out of his depths with the complement. "Anyhow, where's this library that I kind of wished for?" He asks as he glances around.

"Don't worry about it, you'll find it when you need it. So kiddo, any thoughts as to what your third wish is?" The being asks and he admits, "Not really, if you're right then I'm powerful and I now have access to jutsus! I'm so going to become the greatest Hokage this village has seen since it was founded!"

The being smiles slightly before admitting, "You're pretty easy to please." He shrugs, not really caring about that, after all, he's got what he needs to succeed, he just needs now is time to train.

"I know! I wish you can live and do whatever you want!" He says and the being laughs. "Sorry kiddo, but I'm already doing that so it doesn't count." The being admits after finally done laughing.

"But don't you have any friends to spend time with? I mean, wouldn't that be better then going around granting people wishes?" He asks

curiously.

"I'm sorry to break it to you kid, but they're in a different dimension then me and the way closed up a while ago. For all I know, they could have dropped dead of old age." The being says with a sigh.

"Oh..." He feels pretty sad about this and then as he thinks about it, he kind of got an idea about something. "Hey, I know! I could wish I can travel to different dimensions, that I can take people with me when I do so and that I'm not ever missed in Hidden Leaf while I'm off adventuring to these different worlds! That way, I can take you home as a way of thanks for the wishes you gave me." He tells the being and after a few seconds as the being gets this strange inward gaze, the being begins to nod.

"I believe that it could work. Although, it's unlikely that you'll age during your time away from this dimension since if you aren't the right age then they might think something's up." The being tells him and he nods his head rapidly. "Ok then, that's my wish."

And with that, he lights up once more and he suddenly knew what to do to exit out of this dimension. Straightening up, he touches a new source of energy within him and within seconds, he and the being winks out of existence as he focuses on the 'taste' of home that clings to the strange being's magic. It didn't take long before they wink into existence in a desert.

"Jade... We're on Jade." The being says softly, amazement oozing off of the being.

The End? To be continued . . . maybe.

Worlds Apart: Naruto Prolong

Falling, falling is all I seem to know. Even with my eyes open all I see is darkness around me. I don't know why this is happening, only that here I am, falling through darkness, waiting to hit the bottom.

Then, suddenly this light seems to spark into existence. Gasping, I can't help but bring my arms up to my face, trying to block out the light as it begins to surround me. And then, finally, darkness takes me as bird song reaches my ears.

He can't help but groan as he tries to turn onto his side. "You awake sunshine?" He hears his guardian, Kaelin Maemi say. He cracks an eye open as one of his ears turns to face the black Wolf. With a swish of his tail, he replies, "Just because my coat is golden doesn't mean my disposition is."

He growls as he feels Kaelin pulls the sheets off of him, he turns to regard the taller Cyantian. "Up and at it, Kirit! You do remember that school starts today, don't you?" Kaelin remarks as the Wolf moves through his closet, likely making sure he's hung up his clean cloths and that his dirty cloths aren't lining the floor of his closet.

Finally, he can't help but surrender to Kaelin's seemingly endless patience. After all, for as long as he's known the black Wolf, Kaelin's always seemed to out last his bouts of rebellion and stubbornness. *It's like dealing with a wall.*

As he rolls once more to the side, he runs his left hand through the bright blond spiked hair covering his head. Once his feet touch the floor, he heads off towards the bathroom to have a shower, knowing full well that Kaelin woke him up a good three units before he needed to leave for school. It allows him to not just have time to

shower and to get dry, but for him to do some of his chores and review his homework.

Once he's done in the bathroom, he heads back to his room to get dressed before heading down stairs to check on breakfast and then begin on his morning chores. "Smells as good as always, Kaelin!" He says once he's by the kitchen door, picking up the bucket as Kaelin just nods in acknowledgment, he then heads outside to feed Enfys and Ifor, the two Shivae that guard the property while they're away.

"Hey Ifor! Where's Enfys?" He asks the teal colored Shivae with white tiger stripes as the male comes at him once he exits out of the second set of doors. He gives Ifor some of the large chunks of diced fruit being careful not to let Ifor dump the bucket.

He whistles for Enfys to come for their breakfast. Once he reaches their bowls, Enfys finally comes towards him at a trot, causing the tags on her collar to click. The brighter colored Enfys soon joins Ifor by the bowls as he dishes out the contains of the bucket. He's glad that neither of the two Shivae have wings or else he might find himself tackled to the ground by just entering into the yard.

Once the food bowls were filled, he picks up the two water bowls so that he can fill them, leaving the bucket by the two Shivae. He knew that when he returns, one of the Shivae will likely have their head in the bucket as they lick the juices from within it. *So predictable.* He muses with a soft smile as he arrives back with the two bowls filled with water to find Enfys' head stuck in the bucket.

It didn't take much to get the bucket off of her head and then he carefully takes Enfys' collar so that he can clear her head off of the fruit juices that were likely matting her short fur. The scent of the diced sweet fruit causes Ifor to follow them. "It's a good thing you look pretty, Enfys since you cause so much trouble." He tells the brightly rainbow colored Shivae as he wets a cloth before wiping Enfys' head down.

Once he's done with the Shivae, he takes the bucket and drops the bucket down by the door before checking on the animals in the barn. Luckily, he didn't have much to do with them other then turning on the water flow and checking the feed on the computer. He notices that all of the animals that were alive yesterday were alive today.

Once that's done, he then goes to water the garden, once that's done, he washes his hands before heading into the house once more. He drops the bucket off by the kitchen door before heading into the dinning room. His stomach growls at not just the smell of food but at the sight of it.

"I think Adit will be coming to claim his brood mares this afternoon since Udell seems to have lost interest in them." Kaelin tells him and he nods, Udell is a very popular stud that Kaelin use to race some rots ago, long before he came into Kaelin's care. "You'd think at his age Udell wouldn't be so youthful in his duties." He jokes as they pass a few dishes between themselves, slowing filling their plates.

"I'll miss him when he's gone." Kaelin says and he nods, although Udell and him have yet to get along, he will miss the moody stallion when his time comes. "Udell's daughter, Damia's going to have her first foal soon, isn't she?" He asks, Damia's racing history had long since over shadowed her father's by winning five more races then what Udell had.

"That's what Ganit says, whether she'll go ahead with it is another story altogether." Kaelin says and he nods, trusting Kaelin to keep an eye on not just the sons and daughters of Udell but also their owners. "Are you going to try Jacey in the next race?"

Kaelin looks like he's going to have to think about it and soon, it's time for him to leave for school.

"Elsu! You finish eating?" Wajid asks from the hall. His jaws click as he turns to look at the door, it wasn't long before Wajid Haldis, a Cougar and his primary care giver, appears at the door frame.

Glancing at the dishes, he can safely say that he cleaned them. "I believe so." He answer. "So I see." Wajid says in bemusement and he just sighs. "Go get ready, I'll clean up." Wajid says and with a nod, he gets up out of his seat and heads into the hallway, heading for his room to grab his practice sword before heading out to get to his weapon class.

He nods to Cait as he passes her in the hallway while she heads to the bathroom. *I see why Wajid would want to clean the table by himself.* He muses as Wajid's daughter pauses by the door and gives herself a shake, he can only guess what kind of night maneuvers Cait had been put through.

Once he has his got the wooden sword, he remembers to grab his pack of changed cloths in case he ruins the ones he's wearing. A quick glance into the mirror, he still sighs at the sight of his reflect. He's a very unique male Utahraptor since males were suppose to be bright and colorful, he's anything but.

With a shake of his head, he snaps out of his thoughts and heads out of the house at a fast walk. As soon as he's at the gate, he speeds up as he races down the street to the lesson field where he hooks up with the slowly forming class, most of them were Mounties although like him, there were others that weren't receiving the training. *It's funny how despite the fact that most of them have been training since they were young kits or cubs and that within two rots, I've taken the top position within the class.*

Although his specialty had once been in throwing knives and unarmed combat, it didn't take him long before he's proficient with hand weapon. Not only did he surprise his instructors with how quickly he learnt to use such things, he surprised himself as well, it's the reason why nobody ever made mention of him being trained for another line of work, he's a natural when it comes to fighting. He displayed a grace during practice that few could match even though Utahraptor aren't known to be graceful moving.

Soon instructor Lakin appears, causing his classmate to quiet down. "Good morning teacher." They chanted once they're all formed up into rows. "Good morning students." The Serval type Mounty says to them.

And so began his class.

'How did it come to this? Why couldn't he just let me go?' I can't help but think as I fall through this darkness but as time goes by, I find it hard to care about how and why this happened, only what should I do in the here and now.

Time is meaningless now and slowly I feel as if I'm being hollowed out. I find it hard to remember my name, let alone who my parents are... were, whatever. All that seems to matter is the darkness and the fact that I'm falling through the air. As I grew use to this feeling of emptiness that accompanies the blackness around me, I turn my head to look down.

Suddenly I see something trying to spark below and then suddenly that something catches. Light rapidly displaces the darkness that surrounds me and I can't help but try to cry out at the brightness of it all. In the end, I can't seem to find it and I find myself forced to close my eyes, but that doesn't help so I bring up my arms in hopes that it'll help block out the light.

But still the light haunts me until I finally black out.

Wandering Nin Camp: Naruto

I don't own Naruto.

"Heiwa, do you read me?" A ninja code named Kibou says softly into his radio as he remains crouched in a large tree at the edge of a field. There's a bandanna wrapped around the young ninja's head, hiding his bright blond hair from sight while the lower part of his face is covered by a scarf.

"Loud and clear, Kibou." The ninja code named Heiwa says over the radio. *"Nothing stirring over here."* Heiwa adds and Kibou smiles slightly.

"How about you, Yabou?" Kibou asks softly, his sharp eyes noticing a few rabbits hopping about the field before him, causing him to relax slightly even though a few of them glance in Kibou's direction.

"Nothing new to report." The bored voice of Yabou states and he could just imagine the look of boredom on the Nara's face.

"Alright then, let's proceed another kilometer and stay alert. There was a sighting of a Mist nin in this area last week, at least, according to the report squad seven submitted. Move out!" Kibou says over the radio and with answering, 'Hai!' the line dies.

It didn't take long for Kibou to race through the meadow, scarring the rabbits and some birds. Once Kibou makes it to the edge of the meadow, he pauses on a large rock to look around before darting forward once more to leap onto a branch of a tree. As the young ninja reaches a river, he stop to check the position of the sun.

After a few minutes, Kibou finally leaps over the river and continues until he reaches a patch of rocks. As he inspects the ground, he finds a few old animal tracks remaining from the time it rained. Kibou

hums thoughtfully at the tracks before taking his time to glance around the grassy ground.

With nothing looking out of place, Kibou continues on. He stops at the sight of a dead body strung up on a branch, a blood stained headband with the symbol of Grass on the ground below. The body itself looked like it's been there for a while, not that it hadn't been touched as he did disturb a few crows on arriving at the site.

Looks like it's been a week since it's been put here. Kibou muses and begins to examine the site a bit before trying to find signs of where the fight had taken place. Though it took him from his patrol path, he did find it and using a kunai, he marks an oak before continuing to the edge of the patrol area.

Once positioned on a large tree, he says into the radio, "Everyone at the target location?"

"Yabou, here, and other then a few old traps, nothing unusual to report." Yabou says and within seconds, Heiwa reports in. *"Everything clear on this end."*

"Found a dead Grass nin and the fight site. Mark an oak eight miles sought west from the body." He tells the two, usually they would number four but Tenten had been among those who came down with the flu.

"Alright then, we'll meet up at point C and head into camp together." Kibou says into the radio and once that's greeted by a pair of 'Hai' he lets go of the transmitter. Glancing around once more, Naruto Uzumaki, currently code named Kibou and leader of squad thirteen, takes one last glance around before heading to hook up with the others.

Camp

"I see." Iruka says to them with a frown slowly appearing as the seconds tic by. "I'll alert Anko, I'm sure she'll want to take a look at

the body and at the battle field." The brown haired man with a single scar on his nose muses.

"Are we clear to go now, sir?" Heiwa asks and Iruka nods. As they turn to go, they remember to take off their radios before leaving the tent. "It's good to be free!" Souta, AKA Heiwa, says as the slightly older ninja puts his arms around Shikamaru and his shoulders.

"I'm going to visit Tenten before heading to the bath house." Naruto tells the pair, Souta hums thoughtfully in agreement and Shikamaru just sighs. "What about you two? What do you plan tonight?" He asks, glancing first at Shikamaru and then at Souta.

"Well, I'm thinking of going to see if Ai's up for a night under the stars." Souta says as the teen moves pass Shikamaru and himself, stars already in his eyes. "I will have a picnic basket fill with her favorites and then, as I feed her, she will then slowly pull me in and..." Souta trails off with his hands balled together and under his chin.

Shikamaru rolls his eyes while he just grins widely at wistful teen. "But first you need her to accept your invitation." Shikamaru mutters and within seconds, it's like a black cloud descended upon Souta.

Souta upper body is hunched over with his knees right under his chin. He swore he can see navy blue spirals hanging over the teen while Souta's body seems to be totally white in color. "Not again..." Naruto groans softly.

"It's not like he has much of a chance with her." Shikamaru points out. The bleak aura around Souta seems to darken even more and he sighs as he scratches the side of his head, trying to think of a way to cheer the thirteen year old up.

"You just like dashing his hopes, Shikamaru. It's not as if you have a girlfriend." Naruto points out in a dry manner, hoping that Souta was lost enough not to hear that. "Right, Souta?" He adds in hopes of gagging Souta's state of mind.

"That's... true." Souta says and the black aura about the teen seems to become a dark shade of blue while the spirals of despair have vanish from sight. The whiteness has become gray in color, although it's effects have yet to fade, which means that Souta might still descend into depression.

"I bet Tenten will be able to give Souta some advise on how to win Ai's heart, after all, she did take those seduction classes that Anko teaches." He says with a snap of his fingers as if he just thought about it. That seemed to do the trick since within seconds, Souta has taken his hands into his own and while looking right into his face while tears seem to stream down his checks.

"Oh Naruto! You're such a good and thoughtful friend!" Souta declares very passionately. *I feel like I should say, I'm glad you feel that way but I'm not like that.* Naruto admits guiltily as he attempts to pull his hands from Souta's iron hold on his hands.

"Whatever." Shikamaru declares and with that, the Nara heads off, leaving him alone with a very happy Souta. "See you later, Shikamaru! Try not to ruin any more dreams while we're apart!" He calls after the likely bored ninja.

"Away ho!" Souta declares, making sure to keep a tight hold of his left wrist and practically dragging him through the camp, not giving him a chance to match the pace. *At least he doesn't idolize Gai.* Naruto can't help but admit mentally as they arrive at the medical tent.

As soon as Souta lets got of his wrist, he follows at a slower pace as he rubs his wrist. *I hope Tenten will forgive me for unleashing Souta while in this state on her.* The blond thinks as he walks pass various beds on his way to where Tenten and Souta are.

"Hey Tenten, how's it going?" Naruto asks and tries not to wince at the look in Tenten's eyes when she turns to look at him. "Naruto! How *are* **you** ?" Tenten asks in a fake sweetness tone.

He tries not to gulp on hearing how the only female in the squad emphasis certain parts as she addresses him. "I'm not sure, Tenten, I saw a week old body hanging from a branch." Naruto tells her and Tenten's eyes light up while Souta just shrugs.

"Enough about the dead body, so it means that we'll be moving sooner then expected, that doesn't help me with **my** problem." The brunet states in a mightier then thou tone.

"Here's an idea, Anko teaches seduction, right? Maybe if you ask her nicely, she'll teach you to seduce Ai." Naruto says in a manner of fact tone.

Souta's eyes light up at the thought while Tenten mouths 'thank you' at him. "You're right! Why didn't I think of that? Oh, here I come Ai! Soon we shall be husband and wife!" Souta declares and pushes pass him to leave.

He watches as a pair of 'doctors' begin to shadow Souta. "Well, it seems that Kouki and Jakin decided to continue their study of Souta's behavior then messing with your guys' food." Naruto muses.

"Not likely, I spotted Seto and Cheza speaking with Daiki earlier. We're likely already screwed in that area." Tenten informs him and he just shakes his head.

"Maybe Wami will intervene?" The blond muses, trying to brighten Tenten's mood. In response to his idea, Tenten just chuckles and he finally remembers that Wami had been reassigned to the main body of their 'wandering' nation.

"So, you think you'll be up and ready for when we break camp?" He asks, deciding to stir clear of any kind of wishful thinking that is brought up at the thought of their 'village' finally finding a home and setting up as a stable ninja village once more.

"I would have been discharged at noon if it weren't for Aiji showing up and injecting me with something experimental substance." Tenten

says and he just sighs at the thought of the so call head of the unoffical scientific division that had formed when he was about seven years of age.

"You'd think that by now, Aiji and Riichi would have been reassigned to the main body." Tenten says before adding, "They are of proper age."

He nods in agreement as a hand goes to the gray cloth that holds the metal face plate that displays a leaf symbol, it's around his left arm. "Well, think of it this way, when they are ever sent to the front, who'd to say that the division would break apart? I shutter to imagine having Isa or Orimi as head of that group." He says and everyone within hearing range shutters at the thought of those two teenage girls at the head of their 'scientists'.

"Oh Kami, I hope I'm not around to see that come to pass." One of the other flu victims state, a sentiment echoed by the rest. A few likely started to silently cry while curling up into a tight ball.

"Anyway..." Naruto says after a few minutes to silence between Tenten and himself. "Yea, you better go before somebody decides to check your temperature." Tenten says lightly and he flashes her a grin as he nods in agreement.

And so, on his way out of the medical tent, the blond feels something tugging at his pants. Glancing down he finds Anko and Iruka's four year old daughter holding her favorite stuff animal with one hand while the other is holding onto his pants. He sighs as he bends down and picks the young girl up.

"I just know you'll make a good tracker when you grow up, Erisa. You're always find me when I'm in camp..." The young preteen muses out loud while the brunet decides to dig her head into the side of his neck as he begins to walk towards the nursery tent to put young Erisa back with her peers.

"Look who found me!" Naruto says in a sing song voice as he walks into the tent to find Remika and Yasunori holding a toddler each. "Erisa!" The pair of fourteen year olds cry out at the same time, both relieved to see the four year old.

As he drops her in the play pen, the seals flicker slightly, confirming that Erisa belonged with the other babies and toddlers. "She's going to give the wrong somebody a heartache one of these days..." Yasunori mutters as the teen comes over to make sure that Anko's four year old is fine, with no scratch on her.

"She'll make one hell of a ninja when she's older." Remika mutters as she moves to the changing table. "I'm sure Iruka is just so darn proud of her." Naruto says in a fake sweet tone and the pair chuckle.

"So, when does your squad get to do baby duty?" Yasunori asks and he shrugs. "Likely when we're on the move." He tells the other blond.

"I take it somebody found a body?" The teenager asks and he sighs as he nods. His right hand moving under the bandanna as he tells the two, "Grass nin this time. Pretty messy way to send a message too."

"Well, see you, Naruto. Thanks for bringing her back to us." Remika says and he just grins as he replies, "All in the days work of Naruto Uzumaki, ninja of the Wandering Ashes." He bows for effect, most of the two through four year olds giggle at his sweeping bow.

"Brat." Remika says fondly while Yasunori just waves him off. And once he's out of the tent, he sighs before heading to the tent he shares with four other twelve year olds.

"Home sweet tent." He muses as he touches the locking seal. Within seconds, the door appears and he pulls the leather back so that he can step into the surprisingly spacious tent.

"I'm so glad space seals were invented." The blond admits as he hears the door seal air tight behind him as he takes off his sandals

before stepping onto the wooden floor that's about half a foot in height off of the ground.

"Naruto? Naruto! Welcome home buddy, old pal!" Norio calls out, coming out of the office unit attached to their tent. "How much did you lose this time, old buddy?" Naruto asks as he moves to rest on the feather filled bag.

"Now, now, who says I lost a bet?" The white haired Genjutsu user asks and he just gives the other a wary look. Norio chuckles in a nervous fashion while his left hand rubs his right arm.

"Which of us mentioned anything about a bet?" Naruto points out and Norio collapses onto the wooden chair. "Oh fine, I need you to autograph something to give to Sana from squad nineteen."

"Thanks it?" The blond asks one of his roommates. "Of course that's it! Would I lie to my dearest and **bestest** *buddy* in the world?" The emerald eye preteen asks, going so far as to bat his eyes.

"Yes." Ouji says blankly as the tan, blue haired preteen comes to sit down on another feather filled bag, joining the current conversation. *I really wish they wouldn't group us by our names.* Naruto thinks as he cracks his neck while remaining in the feather filled bag.

"Is that why you were in the office, Norio? You were going to try and forge my signature?" Naruto asks and Norio just laughs in a hearty fashion while Ouji adds his two cents.

"Like anyone would pass Norio's chicken scratch as your hand writing, Naruto." And Norio shouts out, "Hey! I'll have you know my handwriting is getting better! Soon it'll be a work of art!"

He can't help but smile lazily as he watches the two bicker, it reminds him of watching Tenten and Shikamaru going at when they're on an away mission. After a while, it quiets down and he gets up out of the feather bag.

"Is there any hot water, Ouji?" Naruto asks the slightly younger nin. "Plenty left for a good soak." The blue haired nin says and he flashes Ouji a smile as he heads for that part of the tent.

*Yip, I love the fact that you can turn a small tent into a low level house, complete with a bathroom, office, and separate , **sound proof** bedrooms.* Naruto declares as he begins to run the hot water to fill the tub before beginning to undress.

Three Days Later

"You know, I really find these suit to be itchy." Heiwa complains as they guard the hovering nursery tent that's hovering above this small, seal covered wagon that Yabou is in charge of pulling. All around them, similar wagons are being used to move the more stationary tents, the ones that took too long to take apart and to rebuild in a single day.

"What's a little discomfort when it erases any trace that we were here? After all, this suit is the reason why our tracks in the dirt and mud tend to refill themselves back in after we've stepped in it. For the grass under our heels to unbend itself. Just suck it up, Heiwa, its not like we use these suits often." Jihi says flatly to Heiwa.

"I know, I know, it's just that, why couldn't they find a way to apply the seals without having us wear a full body suit?" Heiwa says in a whinny voice. Kibou and Yabou just sigh in unison as they tried not to pay much mind to Heiwa and Jihi's conversation, after all, there were other conversation that were much more interesting to listen in to.

Like... say a certain the history lesson that Iruka is giving the age group between the ages of five and nine.

"Though Hidden Leaf has fallen, many of its ninja have taken to scattering themselves among the many villages of our world. Some of the more notable clans found towns that welcome them with open

arms but most were given a cold shoulder." Iruka says to the large class.

"Like the Uchiha!" A girl's voice calls out while a few called out Hyuuga. He smiles slightly at that, after all, the Uchiha had been the main clan to have aided Orochimaru in destroying Hidden Leaf village.

Although the Hyuuga are just a bunch of snobs they are a family that creates its own slaves out of their own cousins, who knows what they'd resort to now that they don't have a village catering to their interests? Kibou muses, not that they had to worry about either clan for rumors say the Hidden Sound village and Hidden Cloud have bounties on the two clans, preferably for living members of the two clans.

It's a good thing it's not our problem, we have enough to worry about as it is without already trying to keep our own ninja out of the public eye. Kibou thinks grimly. *It helped that the Hyuuga slapped our offer for aid so they don't have anyone to blame but themselves for their current misfortune and grief. Well, beyond those clans that followed the Uchiha's lead in bringing ruin to Hidden Leaf.*

"Within two years, those few remaining ninja began to band together in the face of threats from other ninja, be they wandering ninja, missing nins, and villaged ninja. During that time, they were also gaining young run-away children who's dreams it were to become ninja began to hunt down our, then, scattered camps, eager for a taste of control over their life." Iruka says and the blond glances over at Heiwa for a few seconds before refocusing on where he's going.

"That's why this camp was formed, to train those kids!" A boy's voice calls out with a number of voices start speaking all at once. Kibou sighs, he didn't fully recall those early days, he had been about two or three back then.

As the young voices quiet down, Iruka then continues his lesson. "During that period, we did try our best to give them the education

they eagerly wanted, but as we slowly began to get organized and found that we needed a separate camp to not just house but train our children and those looking for training."

"They couldn't spare many adults to the task but in time, the council decided it gave the students and younger ninja a chance to learn by doing. They decided that from age ten and up, the students will become active ninja and allowed them to form their own squads with the adults getting final approval of the teams." Iruka and with that, the young man then begins to review what work is divided, giving the easier tasks to the less experienced teams, like doing night sentry duty, inner camp message duty, hunting duty, and water runs.

"I kind of miss hunting duty." Jihi muses and he nods in agreement. "Good practice at hitting a moving target." Yabou adds, showing that he's not the only one who had listened in on the lesson that Iruka had begun.

"Still, haven't you ever wonder what kind of life we'd have if Hidden Leaf hadn't been invaded?" Heiwa wonders and he snorts, which is followed by Yabou's own snort. Jihi just seems to sigh.

"Well, for one, you wouldn't have become a ninja, Heiwa, it was rare for them to accept anyone that wasn't living in Hidden Leaf at the time. I highly doubt it would have changed its policy by the time you slipped out of your grandparent's house." Kibou says to the teen.

"I also doubt that we would have the numbers we have now either. After all, they were very choosy about who becomes a genin." Yabou adds.

"Or maybe its better to say that the Jonin didn't want a team. After all, those guys who had the final say in it, it didn't likely help that they were so darn choosy about it. But then, they likely had to keep an eye on just how many ninjas they're allow to have in the first place." Kibou points out.

"Take Lee Rock in squad one for example, he wouldn't have been a good choice to become a genin under the old system because he can't use external chakra before that operation. True, he could have become a taijutsu specialist but who'd give him the time of day when there would be plenty of other kids that wouldn't demand so much attention?" Jihi says and he nods in agreement.

"While it sucks that we don't have our own village to settle in and fortify, you have to admit that there are benefits about our situation. It makes it difficult for them to launch any kind of organized attack on us because we're pretty much always on the move. We'd be lucky to spend a year in any given area, at our worst, we'd spend a good two month in a spot." Yabou picks up the conversation.

"We also don't have to worry about submitting to the scrutiny of citizens who come to set up shop in this fictional village." Jihi adds. Heiwa just seems to sigh, although as the blond glances around, he notices a few seem to be listening in on their conversation.

"You could also say our ability with seals is more advanced then any other ninja village because we're more likely to experiment with them in hopes of benefiting our life style." Kibou says thoughtfully before he adds, "I know I'm glad for those space seals on our tents and lets not forget the dimensional wards our scouts set up when they reach a new campsite; they allow us to create a huge amount of space in a very small, secluded area."

"Hover seals for our most important buildings." Uta from squad fifty-three muses from his far right. "Tape seals for stealing the surplus out of some greedy noble's private warehouse." Igen from squad five adds from behind them.

"Fine, fine, you guys win." Heiwa declares hurriedly as he's about to add something else for everyone to think about. Kibou glances at the older boy, feeling slightly guilty about overwhelming him with a lot of facts.

Although, the older generation likely wishes things never changed, that Orochimaru never attacked Hidden Leaf when he did. Kibou admits as he once more picks up Iruka's voice as the older ninja goes on to explain the finer points of what the young, ninja to be will likely experience when they're old.

Finally the silence among the guards is broken as Uta from squad fifty-three begins to sing a song. *Catchy tune.* The vessel of the Kyuubi admits as a few others begin to pick up the lyrics. A few of the genjutsu users cast a jutsu so that some instruments accompany their singing. Each of the casters helping to keep it going as the tune continues to gain in popularity.

While not perfect, it's better then dwelling on what ifs and what could have beens. Kibou muses as he feels his shoulder grow less tense as the song continues, it wouldn't be long before they're singing another tune either.

The End . . .

The List Part 1: Digimon

I don't own Digimon.

Kari sighs as she drops down onto the couch in the living room. It had been a particularly trying day, it didn't help that Davis had been trying out a new look and attitude either. Not that Kari blamed Davis, well, not fully since her brother had likely been the one Davis had turned to in hopes of creating a new look.

After a few minutes, Kari's D-Terminal begins to beep and it takes Kari a few seconds to realize where the device was. As Kari opens it and goes through the routine of checking her messages, something slowly begins to come forth from the depths of her psychic . . . Though it would take a few weeks before Kari would give in and begin to create: Things That The Chosen Children Are No Longer Allowed to Do: *(The List for short)*

#1) Tai is hereby forbidden to help Davis in his pursue of new looks and attitudes. ~ Kari

#2) Davis no longer has a valid excuse for not calling TK by his proper nickname. ~ Kari

#3) Tai is not allowed to eat candy while watching a horror flick; it keeps him up at night. ~ Kari

#4) Tai and Matt are not allowed to start any more pranking war between themselves. ~ Kari

#5) People are to stop putting hair dye and food coloring into Matt's shampoo; even if it is funny to see. ~ Kari

#6) Stop bribing Gatomon with catnip; you know who you are. ~ Kari

#7) Agumon is not a lighter; so stop encouraging him to light those bath candles. ~ Kari

#8) Stop making dog jokes when Gabumon is around; he's beginning to get a certain glint in his eye. ~ Kari

#9) Stop trying to set Joe up on blind dates on the excuse he needs to get laid; he'll do it when he's ready. ~ Kari

#10) Stop using Izzy's computer to watch porn; his mom went through his address history and is beginning to worry about Izzy's taste... in ***men*** . ~ Kari

Kari couldn't help the short chuckle at the last rule, after all, Sora and Yolei do prefer using Izzy's laptop and home computer because they download images faster then their own computers.

And so Kari puts the finishing touches on her website, never suspecting the chaos she had just unleashed throughout the multi-verse.

As Kari finishes checking through her e-mails, the Digidestine of Light moves to check out her latest website where her list of rules is currently posted.

#1) Tai is hereby forbidden to help Davis in his pursue of new looks and attitudes. ~ Kari

a) That's so mean, Kari-Chan! ~ Davis

b) So true, Davis. ~ Tai

c) So true! ~ Mimi

d) You go girl! ~ Sora

e) Finally! It's in writing! ~ Yolei

Kari couldn't help but stare in astonish the screen before moving onto rule number 2.

#2) Davis no longer has a valid excuse for not calling TK by his proper nickname. ~ Kari

a) Arrg! Bad Kari, like I'll ever call CK by his real name. ~ Davis

b) Well, sis does have you there, Davis. ~ Tai

c) Tai! How could you say that? ~ Davis

d) I didn't say it, I typed it! ^_^ ~ Tai

"Smooth Tai, real smooth." Kari mutters as she continues on to the next one, though there doesn't seem to be any comments for rule three.

#4) Tai and Matt are not allowed to start any more pranking war between themselves. ~ Kari

a) Ok, we might have gone a little too far with the last one... ~ Tai

b) A LITTLE?!?! You guys replaced my MOUSSE with GLUE! Repeatedly, I might add! ~ Davis

c) I thought I was replacing Jun's hair gel... Oops, my bad. ~ Tai

d) You bakas! Well, at least you're not allowed to do it again, so, ha! ~ Davis

e) Like we're agreeing to follow any of these rules. ~ Tai

f) And your own sister went to all this trouble to make this list, tsk tsk. ~ Sora

g) Yea, Tai! This rule seems very reasonable! ~ Yolei

#5) People are to stop putting hair dye and food coloring into Matt's shampoo; even if it is funny to see the results. ~ Kari

a) Oh boy, is he going to have a fit when he gets on a computer and finds this site... ~ Tai

b) All the more reason not to do it! ~ Sora

c) Or when TK finds it and reports it to Matt... ~ Tai

d) True. ~ Sora

#6) Stop bribing Gatomon with catnip; you know who you are. ~ Kari

a) Ah, but I already have her a month advance payment to destroy all those love letters that find their way into your locker. ~ Tai

b) You mean that's what's happening to those letters I've been dropping into Kari's locker?! ~ Davis

c) Here's a better question, why are you putting love letters into Kari's locker when you could have just hand them to her in person? ~ Yolei

'Figures that's what they were up too.' Kari muses with a sigh, though the brunet had to agree with Yolei on that before continuing on.

#8) Stop making dog jokes when Gabumon is around; he's beginning to get a certain glint in his eye. ~ Kari

a) But we're still allowed to give him raw hide bones and doggie biscuits, right? ~ Tai

b) I believe that falls under making dog jokes. I also believe that Matt will want to have a conversation with you about what's considered proper respect towards the other partnered Digimon, Tai. ~ Sora

c) You're probably right. Sorry Matt. ~ Tai

#9) Stop trying to set Joe up on blind dates on the excuse he needs to get laid; he'll do it when he's ready. ~ Kari

a) Ah, but he really does need to relax and getting laid would really help him in that. ~ Tai

b) So, does that mean your volunteering to help him? ~ Mimi

c) Sure! I know this great girl in my class would love to meet him. ~ Tai

d) I don't think Mimi means by introducing girls to Joe, Tai. -_- ~ Sora

e) Oh boy, Tai! What have you gotten yourself into this time? ~ Davis

f) Oh come on! What else could she mean? ~ Tai

g) NO WAY! Not even if we were the last two guys on the planet! ~ Tai

h) But you just said you would help. ~ Mimi

i) I believe Joe's going to be very horrified when he finds this site and reads all of this. ~ Sora

#10) Stop using Izzy's computer to watch porn; his mom went through his address history and is beginning to worry about Izzy's taste... in ***men*** . ~ Kari

a) Then who has been using my son's computer to look at porn? ~ Yoshie

b) Tai apparently. ~ Mimi

c) I do not look at men like that! ~ Tai

d) I don't know, Tai, you did agree to help Joe get laid. ~ Davis

e) I think Sora and Yolei might know more about this rule then the rest of us. ~ Mimi

f) Mimi! ~ Sora

g) It's not like any of us sneaks over to his apartment all the time... ~ Yolei

h) I see. ~ Yoshie

'Looks like someone dodged the bullet.' Kari muses and then Kari notices the time. Within seconds she turns off the computer screen and goes into a flurry of activity as she collect her things for high school. "Bye Gatomon!" Kari cries as she finishes in the kitchen and flies out of the door.

Meanwhile...

"Things That The Chosen Children Are No Longer Allowed to Do. Weird, must be a fan site." Terriermon muses to himself. As the little Digimon begins to read the List, Terriermon couldn't stop a smirk that slowly grew on his face. "Hehehe, let's see if I can't liven this conversation up. Although these guys are really dedicated to their on-line role playing."

Duh, duh, dah!

The List Part 2: Digimon

I don't own Digimon.

"Hey Henry!" Terriermon says from his position by his Tamer's collection of computer monitors. "You really need to learn to clean up after yourself, Terriermon." Henry says before the teen heads out of the room once more.

Within seconds something beeps and it didn't take the Digimon long to bring up the latest update on that fansite that he founded around lunch.

#1) Tai is hereby forbidden to help Davis in his pursue of new looks and attitudes. ~ Kari

a) That's so mean, Kari-Chan! ~ Davis

b) So true, Davis. ~ Tai

c) So true! ~ Mimi

d) You go girl! ~ Sora

e) Finally! It's in writing! ~ Yolei

f) Yea, you should be asking a girl's advice when it comes to cloths! ~ Terriermon

g) So very true, although I'm kind of surprised to find a Digimon making such a comment. ~ Mimi

h) Terriermon... how's things on your end? ~ Yolei

Terriermon blinks before adding his reply to that rule, kind of disappointed that they hadn't gone all gooy at the thought of having

a Tamer's partner adding comments to any of these rules. 'I wonder how long before they'll stay in character...'

#3) Tai is not allowed to eat candy while watching a horror flick; it keeps him up at night. ~ Kari

a) Does he have the same reaction when you just give him soda pop instead of candy? ~ Terriermon

b) We might want to test that one out. ~ Matt

c) Hey now, who says I'll agree to that? ~ Tai

d) I don't know, it kind of sounds like you owe me one for the whole hair dying thing. ~ Matt

e) Hey! I wasn't the only one to do that! ~ Tai

f) True, but at the moment, you are my closest target. ~ Matt

g) But I don't want to do it! You can't force me to comply, you know! ~ Tai

h) We could make a night of it! ~ Davis

i) Kari! Help me out here! ~ Tai

j) Well... It's worth a try, Tai. ~ Kari

k) Traitor! ~ Tai

Terriermon chuckles, more then a little pleased that something went according to plan before he moves on.

#4) Tai and Matt are not allowed to start any more pranking war between themselves. ~ Kari

a) Ok, we might have gone a little too far with the last one... ~ Tai

b) A LITTLE?!?! You guys replaced my MOUSSE with GLUE! Repeatedly, I might add! ~ Davis

c) I thought I was replacing Jun's hair gel... Oops, my bad. ~ Tai

d) You bakas! Well, at least you're not allowed to do it again, so, ha! ~ Davis

e) Like we're agreeing to follow any of these rules. ~ Tai

f) And your own sister went to all this trouble to make this list, tsk tsk. ~ Sora

g) Yea, Tai! This rule seems very reasonable! ~ Yolei

h) I guess this means Tai and myself can go to war with other members of our group, right? ~ Matt

i) I never thought of it that way! ;) ~ Tai

j) Well then, since Davis seems to be too obvious a choice, I'll just have to choice between Sora and Izzy. ~ Matt

k) Lay off Izzy for now, he's got enough on his plate with his mom's interest in his love life. ~ Yolei

l) I wish you guys would just stop mentioning it, especially during lunch today... ~ Izzy

m) Ah, but it's just so funny! ~ Tai

n) I highly doubt Sora will like this, after all, she is your girlfriend, Matt. ~ Yolei

o) Oh... you're gutsy Matt, going against your own girlfriend in a prank war. ~ Tai

p) Perhaps I should have given this some more thought... ~ Matt

q) I think you just committed yourself, Matt. ~ Izzy

#5) People are to stop putting hair dye and food coloring into Matt's shampoo; even if it is funny to see the results. ~ Kari

a) Oh boy, is he going to have a fit when he gets on a computer and finds this site... ~ Tai

b) All the more reason not to do it! ~ Sora

c) Or when TK finds it and reports it to Matt... ~ Tai

d) True. ~ Sora

e) You guys had better watch out. Matt might just try to get even. ~ Terriermon

f) Might not be such a bad idea. ~ Matt

g) Ah, come one! Haven't I suffered enough? You guys kept replacing my hair products with glue! ~ Davis

h) That doesn't help the fact that I had pink hair during my last concert. ~ Matt

i) Hehehe... Well then, might I say that it had been Sora who did that? ~ Tai

j) You don't say. ~ Matt

k) Well, he is telling the truth. ~ Yolei

#6) Stop bribing Gatomon with catnip; you know who you are. ~ Kari

a) Ah, but I already have her a month advance payment to destroy all those love letters that find their way into your locker. ~ Tai

b) You mean that's what's happening to those letters I've been dropping into Kari's locker?! ~ Davis

c) Here's a better question, why are you putting love letters into Kari's locker when you could have just hand them to her in person? ~ Yolei

d) I'm surprise at you! Your suppose to be a holder of Courage, Davis! You should have had the courage to hand her the letters in person! Cleaver plan though, Tai. ~ Terriermon

e) I have to agree with this Digimon on this one, Davis. ~ Matt

f) Ah, come on! It's not that sad! ~ Davis

g) I never thought of it that way. So, does this mean you'll start hand delivering them to her? ~ Tai

h) Hey now, that's not very romantic just handing them over! ~ Davis

i) Have you tried flowers? ~ Yolei

j) You think it'll work? ~ Davis

k) Not now that it's been mentioned in this format. ~ Matt

l) He's right, you know. ~ Tai

m) ~ Davis

#8) Stop making dog jokes when Gabumon is around; he's beginning to get a certain glint in his eye. ~ Kari

a) But we're still allowed to give him raw hide bones and doggie biscuits, right? ~ Tai

b) I believe that falls under making dog jokes. I also believe that Matt will want to have a conversation with you about what's considered proper respect towards the other partnered Digimon, Tai. ~ Sora

c) You're probably right. Sorry Matt. ~ Tai

d) On behalf of canine Digimon everywhere, not accepted unless you're willing to fork over a lot of ice cream to make up for that humiliation. ~ Terriermon

e) Since when do rabbits count as canines? ~ Davis

f) I have to agree with Davis on that one. ~ Yolei

It didn't take long for Terriermon to come up with a reply to that one. "I am too a dog type, haven't they ever heard of Terriers?" The green Digimon mutters under his breath.

#10) Stop using Izzy's computer to watch porn; his mom went through his address history and is beginning to worry about Izzy's taste... in men. ~ Kari

a) Then who has been using my son's computer to look at porn? ~ Yoshie

b) Tai apparently. ~ Mimi

c) I do not look at men like that! ~ Tai

d) I don't know, Tai, you did agree to help Joe get laid. ~ Davis

e) I think Sora and Yolei might know more about this rule then the rest of us. ~ Mimi

f) Mimi! ~ Sora

g) It's not like any of us sneaks over to his apartment all the time... ~ Yolei

h) I see. ~ Yoshie

i) I'm surprised he hasn't died from embarrassment when she confronted him! I know my partner would have at least locked himself up in a very familiar hideout until it blows over. ~ Terriermon

j) I was wondering the same thing! ~ Davis

k) I can't believe Kari even posted this... ~ Izzy

Terriermon just sighs as he hears Henry coming up to the door saying, "We have a meeting to attend; so exit out of whatever you're into now or Calumon and Guilmon will finish off the donuts." With a sigh, Terriermon does just that before leaving the room.

Meanwhile...

TK couldn't help but shake his head as the blond stares at the screen from behind Kari. "Why do I get the feeling you just opened a can of worms?" TK muses while Kari just sighs.

"Well, I might have opened a can, but I'm not responsible for them stirring it up." Kari replies and TK just sighed since he knew it to be true.

To Be Continued . . .

The List Part 3: Digimon

I don't own Digimon.

Joe could only slowly shake his head at the title of the site. Then he finally begins to read the rules that Kari's taken time to post on the site.

#1) Tai is hereby forbidden to help Davis in his pursue of new looks and attitudes. ~ Kari

a) That's so mean, Kari-Chan! ~ Davis

b) So true, Davis. ~ Tai

c) So true! ~ Mimi

d) You go girl! ~ Sora

e) Finally! It's in writing! ~ Yolei

f) Yea, you should be asking a girl's advice when it comes to cloths! ~ Terriermon

g) So very true, although I'm kind of surprised to find a Digimon making such a comment. ~ Mimi

h) Terriermon... how's things on your end? ~ Yolei

i) Doing fine on this end. Though I do wonder when my partner will find out about this site. Though it wouldn't surprise me if one of the others found it before he finds it. ~ Terriermon

j) Good to know. ~ Kari

k) Agreed! ~ Yolei

#2) Davis no longer has a valid excuse for not calling TK by his proper nickname. ~ Kari

a) Arrg! Bad Kari, like I'll ever call CK by his real name. ~ Davis

b) Well, sis does have you there, Davis. ~ Tai

c) Tai! How could you say that? ~ Davis

d) I didn't say it, I typed it! ^_^ ~ Tai

e) So... does this mean you'll obey it? ~ Kari

f) I never said that! ~ Davis

g) And yet, we're all in agreement that you should follow it. ~ Yolei

h) Ah, come on, it's just classic Davis, you know? ~ Terriermon

i) That behavior is now 'classic Davis' now? That's kind of scary thought. ~ Ken

j) Well, what else would you call it? It really defines his character. ~ Terriermon

k) He's got a point. ~ Mimi

l) I rather not be part of this 'classic' behavior of his. ~ TK

m) And yet I don't see it happening until he stops being jealous of TK and Kari's close friendship. ~ Terriermon

n) That's very insightful, especially since you live in the US. ~ Sora

#3) Tai is not allowed to eat candy while watching a horror flick; it keeps him up at night. ~ Kari

a) Does he have the same reaction when you just give him soda pop instead of candy? ~ Terriermon

b) We might want to test that one out. ~ Matt

c) Hey now, who says I'll agree to that? ~ Tai

d) I don't know, it kind of sounds like you owe me one for the whole hair dying thing. ~ Matt

e) Hey! I wasn't the only one to do that! ~ Tai

f) True, but at the moment, you are my closest target. ~ Matt

g) But I don't want to do it! You can't force me to comply, you know! ~ Tai

h) We could make a night of it! ~ Davis

i) Kari! Help me out here! ~ Tai

j) Well... It's worth a try, Tai. ~ Kari

k) Traitor! ~ Tai

l) Just as long as we're all on the same page. ~ Kari

#4) Tai and Matt are not allowed to start any more pranking war between themselves. ~ Kari

a) Ok, we might have gone a little too far with the last one... ~ Tai

b) A LITTLE?!?! You guys replaced my MOUSSE with GLUE! Repeatedly, I might add! ~ Davis

c) I thought I was replacing Jun's hair gel... Oops, my bad. ~ Tai

d) You bakas! Well, at least you're not allowed to do it again, so, ha! ~ Davis

e) Like we're agreeing to follow any of these rules. ~ Tai

f) And your own sister went to all this trouble to make this list, tsk tsk. ~ Sora

g) Yea, Tai! This rule seems very reasonable! ~ Yolei

h) I guess this means Tai and myself can go to war with other members of our group, right? ~ Matt

i) I never thought of it that way! ;) ~ Tai

j) Well then, since Davis seems to be too obvious a choice, I'll just have to choice between Sora and Izzy. ~ Matt

k) Lay off Izzy for now, he's got enough on his plate with his mom's interest in his love life. ~ Yolei

l) I wish you guys would just stop mentioning it, especially during lunch today... ~ Izzy

m) Ah, but it's just so funny! ~ Tai

n) I highly doubt Sora will like this, after all, she is your girlfriend, Matt. ~ Yolei

o) Oh... you're gutsy Matt, going against your own girlfriend in a prank war. ~ Tai

p) Perhaps I should have given this some more thought... ~ Matt

q) I think you just committed yourself, Matt. ~ Izzy

r) Well, if you ever need some advice, just message me and I'll set you right! Pranks are a specialty of mine. ~ Terriermon

s) I might take you up on that. ~ Matt

t) I shudder to think of how you gained that kind of experience. I would hate to be in your partner's shoes in dealing with the result of one of your pranks. ~ Kari

u) I'll have you know I never pranked my partner. His friends on the other hand... ~ Terriermon

v) And he likely got all the blame though, didn't he? ~ Izzyy

w) If only! I rather not get on Rika's bad side since she is very scary when provoked! Trust me on this one! Don't mess with the Digimon Queen! ~ Terriermon

x) She better not be trying to take Ken from me! ~ Yolei

y) I doubt she's after Ken, Takato on the other hand... ~ Terriermon

z) Just as long as she keeps her hands away from my boyfriend! ~ Yolei

#6) Stop bribing Gatomon with catnip; you know who you are. ~ Kari

a) Ah, but I already have her a month advance payment to destroy all those love letters that find their way into your locker. ~ Tai

b) You mean that's what's happening to those letters I've been dropping into Kari's locker?! ~ Davis

c) Here's a better question, why are you putting love letters into Kari's locker when you could have just hand them to her in person? ~ Yolei

d) I'm surprise at you! Your suppose to be a holder of Courage, Davis! You should have had the courage to hand her the letters in person! Cleaver plan though, Tai. ~ Terriermon

e) I have to agree with this Digimon on this one, Davis. ~ Matt

f) Ah, come on! It's not that sad! ~ Davis

g) I never thought of it that way. So, does this mean you'll start hand delivering them to her? ~ Tai

h) Hey now, that's not very romantic just handing them over! ~ Davis

i) Have you tried flowers? ~ Yolei

j) You think it'll work? ~ Davis

k) Not now that it's been mentioned in this format. ~ Matt

l) He's right, you know. ~ Tai

m) ~ Davis

n) Shouldn't this rule be: No Digidestine should bride another Digidestine's Digimon? ~ Terriermon

o) Maybe I should change it to that... ~ Kari

#7) Agumon is not a lighter; so stop encouraging him to light those bath candles. ~ Kari

#8) Stop making dog jokes when Gabumon is around; he's beginning to get a certain glint in his eye. ~ Kari

a) But we're still allowed to give him raw hide bones and doggie biscuits, right? ~ Tai

b) I believe that falls under making dog jokes. I also believe that Matt will want to have a conversation with you about what's considered proper respect towards the other partnered Digimon, Tai. ~ Sora

c) You're probably right. Sorry Matt. ~ Tai

d) On behalf of canine Digimon everywhere, not accepted unless you're willing to fork over a lot of ice cream to make up for that humiliation. ~ Terriermon

e) Since when do rabbits count as canines? ~ Davis

f) I have to agree with Davis on that one. ~ Yolei

g) Maybe you should change this rule into: No Digidestine should taunt another Digidestine's Digimon? ~ TK

h) Makes sense. ~ Matt

i) Maybe I should put this suggestion to a vote, along with the previous one. ~ Kari

#9) Stop trying to set Joe up on blind dates on the excuse he needs to get laid; he'll do it when he's ready. ~ Kari

a) Ah, but he really does need to relax and getting laid would really help him in that. ~ Tai

b) So, does that mean your volunteering to help him? ~ Mimi

c) Sure! I know this great girl in my class would love to meet him. ~ Tai

d) I don't think Mimi means by introducing girls to Joe, Tai. -_- ~ Sora

e) Oh boy, Tai! What have you gotten yourself into this time? ~ Davis

f) Oh come on! What else could she mean? ~ Tai

g) NO WAY! Not even if we were the last two guys on the planet! ~ Tai

h) But you just said you would help. ~ Mimi

i) I believe Joe's going to be very horrified when he finds this site and reads all of this. ~ Sora

j) It doesn't seem as if Joe's even aware of this site since he's yet to comment on this rule. ~ Terriermon

#10) Stop using Izzy's computer to watch porn; his mom went through his address history and is beginning to worry about Izzy's taste... in men. ~ Kari

a) Then who has been using my son's computer to look at porn? ~ Yoshie

b) Tai apparently. ~ Mimi

c) I do not look at men like that! ~ Tai

d) I don't know, Tai, you did agree to help Joe get laid. ~ Davis

e) I think Sora and Yolei might know more about this rule then the rest of us. ~ Mimi

f) Mimi! ~ Sora

g) It's not like any of us sneaks over to his apartment all the time... ~ Yolei

h) I see. ~ Yoshie

i) I'm surprised he hasn't died from embarrassment when she confronted him! I know my partner would have at least locked himself up in a very familiar hideout until it blows over. ~ Terriermon

j) I was wondering the same thing! ~ Davis

k) I can't believe Kari even posted this... ~ Izzy

l) I don't get why you couldn't just use the library or school computers if you don't want to use your own. ~ Ken

m) Or you could just erase the data tracks from your browser history. ~ Terriermon

n) Good point. Although I find it scary to think of a Digimon looking for and then at human porn. ~ Izzy

o) Good point. ~ Matt

p) Yea, why would a Digimon be interested in porn? ~ Davis

q) It's great for pranks. ~ Terriermon

r) That's a pretty lame excuse. ~ Yolei

s) He does, he really does. ~ Takato

t) Takato! What are you doing on this site? ~ Terriermon

u) Looking for the release date for the latest Digimon cards. Interesting site by the way. :) ~ Takato

v) Very interesting indeed. Especially when I tell Riley about the fact it was you who plastered the walls of the women washrooms with porn at Hypnos. ~ Tally

w) Ah, come on! There's not need to pick at that old scar. ~ Terriermon

x) Maybe somebody can expand on that story? ~ Matt

y) Well... it's kind of what it sounds like. During this black out at Hypnos, somebody took advantage of the power being out to plaster the walls of all of the women washrooms of the building. The act was discovered around lunch when one of the women entered into one of the washrooms. It wasn't long before they found that the other washrooms had received the same treatment. A few of the women fainted while the rest vowed vengeance on the one who did it. From what I hear, Riley's the head of the unofficial task force to hunt the person down and to punish them in the name of 'Women everywhere!' ~ Takato

z) It wasn't that bad... ~ Terriermon

aii) Really? I believe that group begs to differ. ~ Yolei

bii) Yea, I know that if I knew that somebody had done that at school, I wouldn't care how long it took to bring the villain to justice! ~ Mimi

cii) It seems as if you're doomed, Terriermon. Very doomed. ~ Sora

dii) I think I might just go underground for a while. I trust you'll give my regards to the others, eh 'Takatomon'? ~ Terriermon

eii) Only Guilmon is allowed to call me that, Terriermon! ~ Takato

fii) Well, I think we got totally off topic. ~ Ken

gii) And Matt want's to take advice from a Digimon who's current gone into hiding. ~ Sora

hii) He really did go underground if anyone is wondering. Calumon found him hiding out in this tunnel that leads to another town. I hear he's currently locked up in a vat of water. Just thought you'd guys would like to know since it's been a week since then. ~ Takato

"Kari on. I wonder what she's up to now?" Joe wonders as he finds that the host icon says active.

To Be Continued . . .

Animagus of FFVII: Harry Potter

Don't own any Harry Potter or Final Fantasy VII

Racing through the forest, he can hear the yowls of the two tailed terriers racing far behind him. His forepaws making a thud as they hit the forest floor and then as his back paws hit the ground around his rib cage, he launches forward again with his paws stretched as far out as they can. His jaws are parted as he inhales and exhales with each stride, air coming in from his nose and into his mouth and then exiting out of both once more.

He weaves around the tree trunk and bushes, leaping over fallen logs that lay before him. He doesn't know where he's running to but he sure as hell knows what he's running from.

Right now, he couldn't think beyond this moment let alone give any thought of how all of this happened as he charges through the forest that seems to be slowly filling with discarded webs hanging around the tree trunk or covering dead looking bushes.

Finally his adrenaline gives way and he kind of flops onto the ground as he take short and shallow breaths while he realizes that his pursuers had not followed him into this part of the Forbidden Forest.

Not that it didn't take long before he realizes that he now had something to take over his pursuers hunt of him as he spots a few cat size spiders creeping around. His ears pick up the sound of clicking mandibles.

He does what his new set of instincts tell him and bare his fangs as he moves to stand on all four limbs. His ears flattening against his skull.

His fur flattens as the metal collar choices that moment to hit his chest, reminding him that he still has it. His tail moves around behind him, the tip remaining on fire despite the fact that he raced through this forest as fast as his paws could move.

As he lowers his head, the bangs of his mane move to cover his right eye. The collar moves as he lowers his head with a growl erupting from his throat as more rat to cat size spiders coming down from the various large trees that make up this part of the forest.

The clicking coming from their fangs slowly decreased and he slowly backs around in a tight circle with the tip of his flaming tail less then a foot from his left eye, giving him a good view of the slowly creeping spiders coming towards him.

Even though he's so exhausted, he's not about to give up and die without putting up some kind of fight. He feels his frame tremble as he uses the last of his strength to not just stand but to move in a tight circle.

Giving his head a minor shake, he stops walking backwards and crouches down, beginning to tense for a pounce.

His ears perk as something sings through the air and finally, an arrow lands a few feet before him. The spiders pause before a hail of arrows fall from the sky, many killing of the spiders.

As he turns to where a familiar rhythm of thud coming towards his location. He spots a small party of Centaurs coming towards him with a very familiar pale golden horse body at the lead.

"Firenze..." He manages to say, if he weren't already blacking out he would have been stunned at the fact that he can speak while in his current body.

The first thing he can remember doing as he slowly woke up is the scent of cooking food and the first thing he hears before he opens

his eyes is the crackling of a fire.

As he shifts his position so that he's resting on his belly instead of his left side. As he turns his head, he finds his tail curled up by his rear right leg, the tip of his tail still ablaze.

Within seconds the tail moves and then thuds on the floor. He couldn't help but be amaze at the fact that the flame doesn't seem to harm him or cause the mat under him to catch on fire.

With a sigh, he moves to focus on the tent, not sure what to think before he hears the sound of hoof falls coming by the entrance of the tent while a fire at the center of the tent drove the darkness within the tent away but lighting up the whole tent far better then the small flame that remains at the tip of his tail.

He watches as the flap opens and a female example of the Centaur race entering into the tent where he has been placed. The crackling fire causes the horse part of her body to light up in a dull red with black hanging around the top part of the white socks.

It didn't take long before his mouth is watering at the smell that's clinging to this female Centaur. He swallows as he raises his head.

He could smell that she's nervous about getting close to him, especially since he's likely watching her with hunger every much in evident in his emerald eyes.

As she lowers the bowl by his forepaws, he couldn't help but wonder for a second if she's thinking, 'Nice kitty, eat the stew kitty, good kitty.'

Before he moves to consume what's in the bowl, he manages to mutter softly, "Thank you."

With that said, he begins to lap up the liquid and chew on whatever seems to get sucked into his mouth as he laps it up. His stomach rumbles within seconds of his first taste of the stew.

After a while he's licking the bowl for every last bit of liquid that's clinging to the bowl. The edge seems to have been taken off of his hunger and nudges the bowl a few inches forward before laying his chin on his forepaws.

Sleep came very easily after that, which brought the memories of his current predicament to play out in the form of a dream.

+- Y -+

He couldn't help but feel hollow as he sits at on the dock, during the frantic search through the library to help find a way for him to survive an hour underwater, he had accidentally came across a book on the Tri-Wizard Tournament before Dobby appeared with that Gilly Weed.

Later that night he found the book resting on his bed and after glancing around, pulled the curtains of his four post bed before he begins to read it with the tip of his wand lit up, giving him light he needs.

Within minutes of reading the book he discovered something that truly stunned him before it began to sting.

The reason? It seems that if he had kept protesting he wouldn't have had to participate in the tournament at all. **And he wouldn't have to worry about losing his magic doing so!**

As he skipped over the rest of the rules, he discovered the reason why. It seems that there's a very common practice of bewitching the goblet so that it would choice a fourth and in at least two stories, a fifth champion even!

Of course they don't get mentioned in the official history because they either died during a task or on hearing a task refused to participate, which stole their ability to use magic.

Years later the reason why they were chosen became known, which caused such stories to be suppressed in hopes that nobody else

would follow in those people's in their 'creative' way of getting rid of their enemies by forcing them to participate in the tournament.

The stories written within the rule book were meant to be warnings to KEEP such things from HAPPENING AGAIN! But it seems that Dumbledore either didn't read beyond the rules or thought nothing of forcing HIM to participate in this tournament.

It blew his mind so much that for this week he has either been out of the castle or in the library going through as many law books as he can get his hands on in hopes of finding some way to explain why the Headmaster wouldn't encourage him to keep protesting his not wanting to participate but he just kept coming up empty in that department, at least.

Although as he slowly went through those law books, especially those he stole out of the restricted section, he began to realize just how much power the old man had in the Wizarding world, which didn't help his already floundering trust in the old guy either.

He has so much power and he doesn't use any of it for the real important things, does he? He couldn't help but think bitterly as he glares down at the water below his feet.

Once more he felt trapped and only this time he had walk into it with his eyes staring into the sun, never bothering to see the shadows that were forming at his feet until they finally ensnared him.

But then, all Muggle-Borns walk into the same trap, only they're not aware of it until so much later. Poor Hermione, she'll be devastated about what kind of work she'd be allow to do without being a kept woman of a Wizard or marrying one. He thinks, after all, he never gave much thought as to why the government and the teaching positions seem to contain Pure-Blood Wizards and Witches.

Well, I guess if Pure-Bloods don't feel the need to follow their own laws, then why should I? Maybe I should follow the Marauder tradition of becoming an Unregistered Animagus while at school. He

muses with a slight smile as he can imagine the kind of meeting he'd have with his godfather over it.

At the thought of Sirius, he scowls as something finally clicks as to why Sirius never got his trial. *I wouldn't have had to live with my aunt if he had been found innocent.*

It didn't take much before one other thought follows the same thinking as the first. *And I wouldn't fall under Dumbledore's so call 'guardianship.'*

With something to focus on, he pulls himself away from the edge of the dock and begins to head for Hogsmeade, confident that it no longer matters what he did, he'll never be expelled from Hogwarts because he's too important to Dumbledore as a tool and needed to be where the old man could shape him.

Two Weeks Before the Third Task . . .

Glancing around the girl's bather where Myrtle 'lives', he finally allows himself to smile while Myrtle kind of hovers by the door, more then willing to play sentry for him so he can try to complete the final stages of his Animagus transformation.

It seems that given one on one instruction, he's more then capable of flying through the stages at a speed that put even the most informed Pure-Blood student to shame; especially if they're study it since they were children.

It also helped that Sirius kind of had a difficult time with the transformation so his godfather knew a few tricks that seem to help him learn it faster then if he had followed the steps Peter and his father had done to achieve their transformation.

Sirius had practically been beaming over his progress. He couldn't help but compare Sirius and Dumbledore in that one regard and found that Sirius's reaction to likely be more natural then

Dumbledore's beaming when he had been in the hospital wing after his first year confrontation with Tom.

Although he could be wrong since Sirius's reaction had been similar to his uncle and aunt's reaction when his cousin 'accomplished' something. *But then, I've seen such looks in other adult's faces as well, so maybe its suppose to look like that.*

Then he shakes his head as from now on, he's secure in the knowledge that Sirius is no longer in Hogsmeade. His godfather had listen to him about his concerns concerning Dumbledore. His godfather had decided to leave to investigate his 'findings' as well as to find a property that doesn't exist in the UK for them to live once this year is over.

After all, without a conviction, Sirius can still access his family vaults and transfer it all to a foreign bank while 'turning' himself in to another country's custody so they can give him a trial.

Finally growing tired of those kind of thoughts, he gave his head a shake before closing his eyes as he attempts to relax before he tries to transform into his feline form. He knew it is feline simply because he saw a clawless track in the forest of his mind.

The familiar feeling of feeling wet encompass his whole body as he focuses on the mental track that he had found. It didn't take long before another familiar feeling of numbness engulfs him and though he feels the urge to open his eyes, he resists as that action usual causes the transformation to reverse instantly.

As the feeling of numbness fades, he opens his eyes and finds himself standing on all fours. A simple glance down at the floor and he finds red fur covering him. Another surprise seems to be the fact that he has a black mane as black bangs fall to cover one of his eyes.

A simple shake of his head causes the bangs to alter position. As he's about to take a look of himself in a sink mirror, Myrtle tells him in

a low voice, "The Headmaster is coming this way and he's got some staff members!"

Blinking, he hurriedly tries to return to his original form for a few seconds but as the foot falls in the hallway get closer, he finally bolts to the opposite end of the bathroom and hides behind the stalls.

As the door opens, he could hear Snape's complain about his recent acts of delinquency . . .

+- Y -+

He wakes suddenly as he hears loud voices arguing outside of his tent. It took him a few sleepy blinks before he became fully alert to the two voices speaking outside of his current abode.

It takes him a few seconds to identify the two voices and he couldn't help but shrink back a bit at Bane's suggestion of handing him over to the Wizards.

"He's none of our concern, Firenze! He's a Wizard! A human!" Bane pretty much spat, causing him to wince.

After all, over the last few days he hadn't been treated like one, not when Dumbledore wanted his Animagus form studied to see what kind of magical properties it possesses. And of course the old man hadn't even blinked on seeing him in that cage and wearing that collar once Snape and Moody thought it the best and safest way to protect them from him.

And its likely they plan to erase my memories of that time as well, heck, they might even try and find a way to keep me from transforming in after they're through! He thinks bitterly.

He's thankful that Dobby's more loyal to him then to the Headmaster since it had been Dobby who got rid of the chain and opened the charmed locked door of the cage.

He swore he'd find a way to show just how much that meant to him and reward the House Elf as best as he can once he's in a safe place, likely by his godfather's side.

"That may be, but it seems that council thinks differently, Bane. The boy will remain until he's well again so that he can fulfill his new role." Firenze says in a calm voice.

He found himself relaxing after hearing that as it help smooth in nervousness. It didn't take long for him to be laying curled up on the mat.

Though he can clearly hear every word that the two Centaurs are saying, he's too busy musing on the row of memories that had replayed themselves last night, which causes him to feel depressed.

As the tent flap opens and the scent of that stew wafers through the air, his stomach growls and thus he snaps out of his thoughts as Firenze walks towards him carrying another bowl of that delicious stew.

"Well, you did give Bane's daughter spook earlier when she delivered a bowl to you." Firenze muses in a light tone and he squirms slightly in guilt.

"I didn't mean to... It's been days since I had anything to eat." He tells the blue eyed Centaur as he puts the bowl by him.

As he uncurls, he moves towards the bowl and begins to lap up the broth before moving onto the rest of the contents. His ears perk as he hears the fire get stirred back to life.

He sighs as he finishes licking the bowl and with a shake, feels stronger then when he woke up for his first bowl of stew. As he moves back to his mat, he finds Firenze watches him with a thoughtful look in his blue eyes.

"I heard you and Bane talking outside of the tent." He tells the Centaur resting by the fire. He's a bit surprised at how odd it looks seeing a Centaur siting on the ground since in his short experience with the race, they're always standing, walking, or running.

"Well, nobody quite expected you to be able to speak." Firenze admits and he just sighs.

"I didn't expect to either. After all, I look like some kind of mutated red lion who's tail is on fire." He states with a hint of bitterness.

"I find it hard to believe that the Headmaster would allow you to be caged." The blond Centaur admits.

He couldn't help but snort before explaining how he ended with that collar around his neck as well as caged. Firenze's blue eyes seem to harden as he describes his treatment by the trio consisting of Dumbledore, Moody, and Snape.

It didn't take him long before he's also telling Firenze about his findings in the Tri-Wizard rule book and his later discoveries in those law books he read while never attending classes in his pursue of that knowledge of why Dumbledore acted the way he did after confronting him when his name came out of the goblet.

"I see, but that doesn't quite explain why you choice to become an Animagus." Firenze says after a stretch of silence.

"My dad and two of his best friends became illegal Animagi while they were attending Hogwarts. And I knew if I would be discovered, Dumbledore would keep it quiet because he needs me fairly whole and in one piece or he wouldn't have gone to a lot of trouble keeping my godfather from having a trial so that I would be forced to live with my magic hating aunt and her husband." He explains with a sigh.

"This is very alarming allegations; highly disturbing." Firenze muses softly as the Centaur turns to look down into the fire.

"Disturbing, that's putting it mildly, it's down right scary that he's managed to get away with it without anyone either recalling it or seeing under his act. But then, having the ability to erase memories helps him hide the evidence." He says as he moves to curl up into a ball as he recalls how those three treated him as if he were a feral beast without any intelligences.

"And I had thought the man to be honorable." Firenze sighs and he glances at the Centaur.

"He trusts a known Death Eater and he's allowed rich ones to bribe their way out of prison. He had the authority to stomp out corruption in the Ministry, to shoot down the restrictive laws placed on Muggle-Borns and on Werewolves." He says.

"And it's very telling that they do get passed." Firenze adds and he nods.

"I know that phoenixes are good creatures but there are ways of binding magical beasts to serve Wizards. It seems that is what happened to Fawkes." Firenze states his thoughts out loud.

Within minutes, the blue eyed Centaur gets up off the ground and once he retrieves the bowl, leaves him alone in the tent. Within nothing to do or somebody to chat with, it didn't take long before he's once more allowing sleep to overcome him.

Five times he woke to find a filled bowl of stew resting about a foot or two away from him, causing him to get to his feet and walk toward said bowl.

Once he's polished off what's within the bowl, he would either return to the mat and get lost in his thoughts or pace around the fire a few times before returning to the mat and taking a nap.

While he didn't know how long its been since he escaped from the 'loving' care of Snape, did know that for the first time in a long time

he felt a certain need to . . .

With a sigh, he gets up off the mat and moves towards the flap of the tent. Poking his head out, he blinks slightly in surprise at how large the encampment is as he notices the number of brown or green tents that are laid before his eyes.

As he brings his front paws and shoulders out of the tent, he finds an elderly looking Centaur coming his way. After a few seconds of debate, he asks, "Err... excuse me, but do you know where I can... That is, do my business at?"

The buck skinned Centaur blinks and looks down at him, giving him a startled look before smiling slightly. Once the elderly looking Centaur tells him where to go, he says his thanks and moves fully out of the tent so that he can go do his business before he has an accident.

Once he relieved himself, he enters the Centaur camp, retracing his trail back to the tent he's staying at. Unsurprisingly he had a few admirers watching him as he walks through the encampment on his way back to the tent.

During this he spots his first viewing of child Centaurs as a few of them decide to trail after him, clearly wanting to watch him as long as they're able. It's not everyday one encounters a cat who's tail tip is always aflame.

After consuming a bowl of stew brought to him by one of his admirers earlier that day, he pauses as he hears a group approach his tent.

As he raises his head, the tent flap opens and in walks Bane with Firenze following after him. Then once those two were in, three elderly looking Centaurs enter, all of them seem to be Centaur women.

He moves into a sitting position, an action that causes Bane to scowl at him while Firenze adds some wood to the fire. Glancing away from the two Centaurs that he knows of, he regards the three elders.

"So, you are the child who is to be of Gaia." The center elder muses after a few minutes of silence.

He couldn't help but be confused at the reference. "Isn't that just another name for our world?" He asks and ignores the disapproving look Bane sends him while the left elder chuckles softly.

"So many believe." The right elder muses as the left one regains control over herself.

"There is another world, a world where all life truly connected. We had hosted a ambassador from Gaia before the Romans began conquering the world. One who told us that a child will be marked with fire who will be expected to leave this world, our world, to go to their world, to their Gaia. Though what destiny you'll have there has been lost over time." The elder on the left explains.

"So I am to leave this world behind to go fulfill a destiny on a different world?" He asks as he feels oddly relieved to have a way to leave the Wizarding world and Dumbledore, especially, behind him.

"That seems to be how it sounds." The middle elder admits in a dry tone.

"I don't suppose there's a way for me to bring two others with me when I leave?" He asks and the three elders glance at each other before the right one says, "And who do you have in mind?"

"I can't believe there's a full moon out and I'm not transforming!" Remus says while he's laying next to the daughter of Nanaki, also known as Red XIII.

"We are on a different world Remus, the magic here is different then what we're familiar with, so much so that it shouldn't surprise us at all." His godfather muses.

"Or perhaps Gaia has taken pity on your plight and had taken it upon herself to cure it." Bugen, his soon to be brother-in-law says.

"Well, whatever it is, I'm just grateful that you two could accompany me here." He states with a sigh.

"It's not like we had anything important going one back there." Sirius answers with a shrug while poking the fire to stir it up.

Well, I might not be able to control who I'm to marry but at least I'm not expected to go up against a mad man with a tyrant sitting behind me. He thinks as Aerith rubs the top of her head against his chin.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 1

I don't own Naruto.

"Ah! Come one, boss! You've got to have some tales to tell us!" The soon to be nine year old whines to him as he tries to focus on doing some taijutsu practice using his clones.

He sighs as both his clones and himself stop to glance at not just Konohamaru but also with a few other kids, likely other students from the academe too. He frowns slightly at the group, he really didn't have a story to tell the group of eleven, after all, he's only been a Genin for less then a week.

"The thing is Konohamaru... I haven't been a ninja long enough to go on any cool missions yet." His one of his three clones supplies as his mind begins to turn this over.

"I guess we can make one up... But I'm not very good at telling stories that aren't about me." A second clone chimes in. The other two clones and him nod in agreement with that.

"How about acting it out?" One of the girls asks. The other kids besides Konohamaru all murmur their agreements.

"Yea! You can have your clones Henge into different people and stage a play or something!" Konohamaru suggests and pretty much the whole gaggle of kids nod in agreement with that suggestion.

"Well..." "I guess..." "we could do it." Each of the three shadow clones muse before they glance at him.

I wonder... He suddenly flashes a foxy grin at the crowd of kids. "I think I might have a slightly better idea." He says and then cries out, "Huddle!"

The three clones move and they lean in to listen to his bright idea. After he outlines his idea, the three clones all seem to frown in thought before they begin to make a few suggestions on how to make that idea better.

"Alright, you guys go do that research while I trying their idea first. Although... are you sure this research is even needed?" He asks his three copies.

The three glance at each other before they chime in all at once, "Yes! After all, if we're going to do this, we'll do it right the first time!"

"Alright then, you each have your topics, so dismissed!" He says and with that, they break their huddle. He turns to regard the group of eleven kids as his clones head into the village, although they transform so they don't have to worry about getting banished from books stores and libraries.

Although it wouldn't surprise him if one of his clones will be forced to move from trying to find written information to asking various ninja questions about their respective subject topics. *I wonder if it's even possible to create shadow clone that size...?* He wonders but with a shake of his head, he dismisses that thinking since he is Uzumaki Naruto! Soon to be sixth Hokage of Hidden Leaf!

With a single hand sign, he creates a good ten shadow clones, which soon transform to look like total strangers. Complete with new cloths, looks, ranging from various ages and genders.

It didn't take him long to realize that he also needed props if he really wants this to work too. *I guess I just have no choice but to create them out of...* Seconds later he creates a larger force of shadow clones and then had them transform into wagons pulled by oxen, saddled horses on which some of his clones should be able to ride on, and etc.

"That... was tiring." He admits as the group of kids move to sit down on the grass while various clones move to get into position. He's

very pleased to note that those clones that were Henged into horses were capable to bearing the weight of his human clones.

It also takes him a few seconds to realize that the 'human' cast number had grown by at least five clones but decided that he likely needed the extras, especially as the five dart off to 'plot' an 'ambush' for the ' merchant caravan'.

Clone #1 - Code Name: **Paw**

Pay dirt! He thinks as he picks out an animal biology book off of the book shelf of the public ninja library. He flips to random pages and couldn't help but grin at the image of a skeleton of a cat.

Closing that book, he begins to find others to take to one of the free tables. Slowly the pile of books grows to be too heavy for him to safely carry without dispelling under the strain. With a sigh, he takes the stack and heads for one of the tables.

Just before he begins to crack open one of the books, he looks up to see Ram walking up to the front desk. It didn't really surprise him that this library didn't have any information about Shadow Clone no jutsu. The original had learnt it from the forbidden scroll, which means it's likely too high level for anyone but a Jonin to access.

With a shake, he dismisses his brother's quest from his mind so that he can focus on his own quest.

Clone #3 - Code Name: **Blade**

"What a large collection of miniatures you got there." He muses after staring at the miniature village that seems complete with mini figurines in various poses. The clerk's back is to him as the slightly overweight person seems to be totally absorbed with their task of adding more to the store's miniature display.

"Are you ready to buy something?" The clerk asks, not even bothering to turn to look at him.

"I'm just wondering if you can point me to any books on how to create your own miniature scenery." He asks, swallowing his original question about seeing if there isn't a jutsu that could allow one to turn regular sized things shrink to a smaller size without destroying them.

The clerk seems to sigh in such a way that makes him want to punch the guy. As the man's head turns to regard him for a few seconds before getting off the stool to waddle slightly to a desk.

Soon enough he finds himself out of the store with a scrape of paper with a list of book titles on it. "Ok... Mental note, never ever enter into that shop again if I can help it. Also, if they complain, charge them with getting the items from said shop." He muses before wandering away.

He makes sure to pick some pockets so that he might be able to make the book purchases, deciding that if they can't protect their own money from such a simple robbery that they desired to be robbed, especially when they're walking around in a ninja village.

Have to supplement the purse strings until I get my first pay check some how. He muses before remembering that since he's a clone, the money he was already carrying on him isn't real to begin with either, which only causes him to smirk at the thought of what would happen to it when he dispels.

Well, better hurry up before I run out of chakra and dispel before I'm done my task. He muses as he moves to enter into a jog.

Naruto

He wanted to collapse on his bed and call it a night, but the memories of his three researching clones; their 'names' Blade, Paw, and Ram, began to bug him. With a sigh, he picks to review Ram's memories first and he couldn't help but smile as he viewed the various answers Ram had received from various parties, although

most of those had been Chuunin who were asked during their lunch breaks.

So it is possible to make shadow clones that size... He muses before he grins at the idea of reversing that thinking to create giant clones. He could just imagine what kind of reaction he'd get if he 'summons' a dragon or something other mythical creature.

It goes without saying that if he goes down that path that he'd have to refine his transformation jutsu to such a degree as to create a chakra system that didn't look human. Also it seems that he would also have to figure out how such a creature would be able to fly, sound, attack, and a bunch of other little details.

As they say, Hell is in the details. So if I do want to be able to summon something breathtaking I better iron out such things. Though I guess it would be easier ironing out the details in them by first creating them miniature size and then work on make giant, functional versions. He decides.

That sounded like a fine plan in his mind and he already seem to have a group of people to bounce ideas off of since he doubts that Konohamaru and his friends will be satisfied with one 'play'.

He sits up and glances over at the table. He finds a bunch of books and a small note book on it. Seconds later, he remembers where they come from and what they're doing there, even though he feels a bit guilty about how he got the books in the first place.

"I'll work on that later." He muses out loud to himself once he's standing by the table and studying sketches of a spine that Paw had drawn.

"I'll make more clones to read through those and to go back to the library to continue to study those biology books. I'll just have to remember to buy more note books though." He says as he walks into his bathroom so that he can have a shower.

Month Later

"I still don't think you'll be able to make clones that small, boss." Konohamaru says while they set up the 'stage'.

Currently, they're alone and he send a Shadow clone to deal with his team today, leaving him fairly free today to try and perfect his attempts at creating clones under ten centimeters in size. He's hoping to have the smallest of them to be about two centimeters in height.

"I think I'll get it today, brat. I completed tree-walking and water-walking two days ago. Hopefully that will help me control how much chakra goes into creating them. Heck, if this works then you and your friends might be able to pull this jutsu off!" He tells the goggle wearing kid.

"You know, I hadn't thought of that, boss! No wonder you're the boss, boss!" Konohamaru declares.

"Yea, well, this is why I'm a Genin after all." He says with a slight grin on his face. He'll never admit it but he liked having somebody listen to him for once.

He gives himself a shake, refusing to dwell on how even after a month of being a team that their teacher hasn't been on time or started to train them beyond having Sasuke and him spar. He frowns as he recalls his various defeats at Sasuke's hands.

Shouldn't Kakashi be giving me... us pointers during and/or after those spars? He wonders, after all, he use to spy on training sessions similar before he became a Genin. Such sessions always had the teacher talking to both combatants about how they were standing, how their balance get screwed up by holding their arm in position A when it should be less tight, etc. etc.

As a headache threatens, he just leaves off the matter for now. especially since he had other things to be happy about, like how well

his biology research is coming alone. He's slowly putting a test form together, one that shouldn't share have many 'human' traits. *I wonder if the end result will be too cute for my tastes...*

"Done on my half, boss!" Konohamaru states and he snaps out of his thoughts to look at Konohamaru's section. He nods in agreement with the younger boy's declaration before turning to study his side with a critical eye.

"Well then, I might as well give it a try before the others arrive." He muses and Konohamaru watches intently as he goes through the whole series of hand signs.

"Shadow Clone Jutsu Revised! Seal Release Mini-mes!" He shouts and he holds his breath as tiny puffs of smokes erupt on the table containing the miniature landscape. As the smoke vanishes, he finds at least one third of his mini-clones look normal while the other two thirds looking horrid with huge heads.

"Well, it's not perfect yet, but at least it worked!" He crows and Konohamaru rapidly nods in agree.

"Oh boy, aren't the others going to be surprised!" Konohamaru states and he's sweeped away with a feeling of achievement. He thoroughly enjoys the sensation and hopes that he'll be feeling accomplishment more in the future as he finally finishes his current projects.

"So the bandits are going to attack the town's barrack today then?" Konohamaru asks as the tiny clones begin to move about the fake forest. Those failed clones soon transformed themselves into various forest beasts or farm animals.

Good to know that they can still transform even if they didn't turn out to be perfect little mes. He admits privately to himself as Konohamaru begins to try and drag out today's story plot from him.

As soon as the other members of the audience, which has grown by eight kids, begin to trickle in, he spots a small figure standing a few feet away. *She kind of looks like Hinata. I wonder if they're related?* He muses as most of the kids move to get a better look at his mini-clones.

It takes a few minutes for the kids to settle down and to stop jocking for better positions around the 'front' of the miniature model. Once they were, he begins by giving the kids a short summary of what happened last time and then stood back and allowed his tiny clones to start up their drama.

I'm so going to have nightmare later. He realizes shortly after the tiny clones started to wage war on each other.

Shaking his head, he prepares to create replacements as the tiny clones began to dispel after receiving their hits. *I think I need to find a way to make it so that these clones can take more then a hit.* He decides and files that idea away to ponder on at a later date.

The Mission Wave

Just my luck that Kakashi wants us to preform that. Blah! I've already got it down packed! He thinks as he watches his bemasked teacher walk up the trunk of a tree.

"But I already learned how to do that chakra control exercise!" He whines out loud once the Jonin is on one of the branches. *And I've got water walking down too.*

"Yea right, like a loser like you could even preform this technique!" Sakura declares with her arms crossed over her chest.

He didn't have to glance at Sasuke to know that the guy with a hair style in the form of a duck butt agrees with the pink haired girl. He scowls at the two of them before he walks at one of the trees and then up the tree trunk until he's resting on a branch higher up then their so call teacher's.

"Where did you learn to do that?" Kakashi asks him, he could hear a bit of controlled tension in the Jonin's voice.

"Nobody taught me, I just witnessed Kiba's team doing this a while back and after looking it up in the library, I found a reference about it in one of the books for Genin." He states calmly, though kind of puzzled as to why his teacher is giving him a disapproving look on hearing that.

"Can you go all the way to the top?" Kakashi asks and with a sigh, he proceeds to go to the very top of the tree.

"What next? Want me to go guard our client or something?" He calls out from his position. He really didn't like this for some reason, he didn't like it at all.

One Hours Later

He smirks as he finishes doing a drawing a few poses for an Oni Henge, the female version at that. He's privately glad that he created that clone to deal with whatever task Kakashi wanted him to preform once he demonstrated his ability of tree walking.

He pauses as he's about to start on a fresh page of his fourth note book to be filled with research of Henge creation ideas. Memories of a clone who had been among a party of shadow clones that he sent into town to check on those warehouses play out within his mind. He taps a finger on the note book before he creates a new clone.

He watches as the clone, one that appeared right off the bat in a disguise, runs off towards town to give those at the warehouses orders. Sure, they're only here to protect the bridge and the builder but he didn't see anything wrong with booby trapping Gato's places of business or stealing food from those crates to give to the town's people.

True, he just thought of doing so this morning and will be delivering the food late at night or early morning, but still, he figures that if

things vanish from people's shipments that somebody just might hire an assassin to put an end to Gato, even if it wouldn't be for the right reasons.

With a sigh, he dismisses those kind of thoughts to glance at the miniature group of clones attempting to perfect the two versions of the Tengu Henge. *"They're getting better at it. A few managed to use the wings to extend a leap."* A clone calling himself Lore tells him.

It didn't take him long to spot the four foot animorphic Lore. Much like his latest clone, Lore had been created in that Henge shape; a stepping stone on the path to creating the image of him having his very own summons.

"I see. Well, once we've got bother versions to fly, we'll move onto trying out the dragon Henge. The Chuunin exams are coming up and I get the feeling that Kakashi will be entering us just to smooth Sasuke's ruffled feathers." He says and Lore's reddish brown furry, almost cat shaped head nods in agreement.(Think of Moombas from Final Fantasy)

"Have we tried creating some kind of storage for lighter then air gas in those dragon Henge?" Lore asks as the four foot clone cocks his head to the side and regards him with emerald eyes.

Yip, I created a very cute Henge. He decides as Lore's tail flickers slightly from around the very slender waist. "We might just do that, but I'd also want to see if we can add a few skeleton tips from birds too. They some how pump air into their bones. Might be wise to see if doing both will support each other." He says and Lore nods his furry head before glancing back to where the mini clones were.

I'm still a bit stumped about where the telepathy came from. He muses as he studies Lore for a few seconds before returning to begin sketching on the latest inner workings of the dragon Henge; trying to incorporate what he knew of how birds manage to pump that air into those air pockets within the bones.

Clone #31 - Code Named: **Frost-Wind**

This is going to be so much fun! He thinks with a chuckle as he slows as he enters into the village, skittering around the buildings at the outer part of the village as he heads to hook up with the nine other clones.

Finally, he spots clone #23, code named Steel, sitting by a wall of a building across from the chain fence about the target. Slowing, he glances around to see if he can't find clone #27, code named Paw; the sixth clone to use that particular code name actually.

On spotting Paw, he begins to walk pass Steel, making sure to drop a stone onto the ground before his fellow shadow clone. He feels Steel's gaze at his back as he slowly turns into an alley. He waits a few minutes and he spots Arrow on a roof top.

Seconds later, Fire arrives and he nods at Fire. "#31?" Fire asks and he nods. "Frost Wind." He supplies and Fire grins in amusement of his choice.

"It's a go." He answers the unasked question.

Before Fire signals Arrow to signal the others, Fire asks, "How goes the Tengu Henges?"

"None of the nineteen have dispelled yet, so I say its improving." He answers before he frowns.

"Has #0 dispelled yet?" Fire asks once the signal to Arrow is given. He blinks before shaking his head in reply.

"I guess we won't know what kind of training Kakashi had wanted Naruto to do. Troublesome." Fire murmurs and he chuckles at how much Fire sounded like Shikamaru when he added the last part.

"If we get this done, we could always spy on #0. It's not like Kakashi will know that we're Naruto's clones, he would likely think Gato's

trying to keep tabs on Leaf nin." He remarks and Fire nods in agreement with that observation.

"You know your position?" Fire asks and he nods.

"Of course! I feel betrayed that you would think I won't! After all, Wind is like a *father* to me." He says with a foxy grin on his face. This time, it's Fire's turn to chuckle.

They parted soon after, both of them heading off to complete their part of the plan.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 2

Naruto

"Home sweet home!" He says with a sigh as he drops his pack down on the floor of his apartment. His arms were up in the air before he begins to stretch before he walks towards the fridge to grab something cold to drink.

He smiles at the sight of a filled fridge. *It really pays to send a team of clones ahead to refill the shelves.* He admits with a smirk as he opens a can of soda before closing the fridge door.

He rests on his couch to stare out of the window, at the Hokage monument that's overlooking the village. It wasn't long before his thoughts begin to drift towards the cold shoulder Kakashi seems to be giving him.

He gets startled by the sound of somebody knocking on his apartment door. He blinks in stunned surprise but recovers quickly and heads for the door.

"Hi." He says as he stares down at the girl who reminds him strongly of Hinata Hyuuga. For a moment, the girl looks like a deer caught in a flare jutsu.

It didn't take long before the kid to recover and give him a slightly icy look. "I would like for you to teach me how to create those mini-clones." The Hyuuga girl says and then, blushing slightly, which strengthens the resemble between Hinata and this girl, adds as weakly as she suddenly stares down at the floor, "Please."

He smiles slightly at the slightly shy and yet bold child standing before him. "Well then, can I at least know the name of my student to be?" He asks the young Hyuuga.

"I'm Hanabi, Hanabi Hyuuga." The newly dubbed Hanabi tells him as she looks straight up at him. He smiles and it wasn't long before he's ushering Hanabi into his apartment so they can discuss this.

After all, he had read up on the Hyuuga's bloodline limit and he could use some help with recreating the chakra system of his various custom Henges. He's sure that Hanabi had some thoughts on the matter since she has attended his productions using .

First Part of the Chuunin Exam

He allows his head to hit the wooden desk that contains the written test they need to complete. *I don't understand a single problem.* He mentally groans to himself and he turns his head to look out the window.

At the sight of a sparrow flying from a tree branch to another tree branch, an idea began to form. He manages to keep a grin off of his face and making a single hand sign, he creates three Shadow clones in the form of sparrows. Within seconds, the three move out from under the desk and take to the air.

"Hey! Check it out! Somebody put mirrors up here!" Sparrow clone #1 declares. He's so glad that he managed to apply the telepathy of his first custom form to all of his shadow clones, although it comes more naturally to that first Henge(the one that looks like a Moomba) then when applied to any of the other Henge and with his clones.

"Huh, why does this one have a vest under that jacket?" #2 muses while #3 seems to be trying to perch on somebody's shoulder.

He suppresses a sigh as he waits for his sparrow clones to get serious about looking at other people's test papers so he can write down the answers to these super hard questions. *"This guy's going pretty strong."* #2 says.

"Mind feeding me the answers then?" He asks #2 as he gets ready to write down the answer his clone sees on that one's test sheet.

Hanabi

She smiles as she watches as her little clones head though the small hole in the wall that leads into a special part of the library, the one that holds information about the Hyuuga's curse seal.

She activates her bloodline every so often to make sure that nobody is observing her and her mini-clones. Finally the last of the thirty-four clones vanished through the minor crack in the wall, she feels relieved at this as she begins to walk away.

Maybe Hinata's got the right idea about Naruto. After all, altering a jutsu can't be done by just anyone. She muses as she walks to the family dojo for some practice while she waits for her Mini Shadow Clones to complete their assignment.

Naruto

He walks out of the building in a minor daze now that they're out of the classroom. It takes him a few seconds to realize that he's alone. He stops and glances around for Sakura and Sasuke only to find that Sakura seems to be in an argument with Ino while Sasuke isn't anywhere in sight.

For a few seconds he felt angry and sad that neither of his team-mates were exiting the building with him after they entered it together. With a sigh, he shakes his head and tries to dismiss those feelings by focusing on something else.

I wonder... is there anything in the rules against scouting out this field and maybe, setting up various traps in it for kicks? He wonders and in the end, as he walks out towards the training fields, he decides that it's worth a try.

With a grin, he transforms into a very familiar form once he's created over two hundred shadow clones who range in various colors and fur styles. His fur is more of a dark honey brown color with a creamy gold for his belly fur and around his hands and feet. His tail tuff is a

darker shade of brown and finally, his eye color is a deep sapphire blue.

He grins at his army of clones and declares, *"Ok people! It's show time! Get yourselves organized in units. Some of you will head back to the apartment to get trap supplies, another group will begin gathering stuff to make more trap parts, and then most of you will first scout around this training field nicknamed the Forest of Death."*

He watches as his army gets organize and finally, he then leads the majority of the clone army to the right training field. A few of them drop to all fours and seem to pull out front of the group. It didn't take long before more of his clones mimic their actions and then, finally, he joins in.

It didn't take long before it becomes a race to see who arrives at the site of the next exam. *"You know, now would be a good time to see how long we can exist without getting dispelled."* One of his clones muses, one who's dark gray in color.

"And if you're still around, you can actively work to prank them." He muses privately to the gray one, one who he's already beginning to think of as an adviser of sorts.

"There is that." The gray one says and he says, *"Well then, consider yourself second in command..."*

"Stone-Child." Stone-Child supplies and he privately wondered if these code names weren't becoming active names among his clones.

"Stone-Child it is then." He says and then returns to trying to win this race.

Next Day

He suppresses a yawn as he waits for the gate to open. By the end of the day, he had lost about thirty clones to various natives within

the Forest of Death and had in turn, created twenty replacements for each clone that dispelled.

Finally, he decides to check in with Stone-Child. They didn't really exchange conversation, just thoughts and memories, which only took less then two minutes for them to be done. He felt more energized coming out of his trance and already had a good idea of how to control his team's progress.

Step one, take the scroll from duck-butt. Step two, taunt them into giving chase. Step three, wait for clones to supply the needed scroll next to the tower. He plots as he tries to keep his expression carefully schooled so neither of his team-mate had any inkling about what's about to happen.

Finally, the gate opens and he makes sure to bump into Sasuke to get the scroll. Within seconds, he's bolt ahead of his team-mates. "Let's see if you can get the scroll back, Mr duck-butt and Mrs duck-butt!" He shouts as he moves to get higher up in the trees to travel through the very tops instead of on the ground; where most of the large creatures were and where his clones and himself had set up the traps.

"Na-Ru-to!" He hears Sakura shout in a very acid tone. All he did was laugh at her unspoken threat as he continues to out pace the rest of his team.

Clone #346 - Code Name: **Laughing-Storm**

With a swish of his tail, a Genin team from Mist sets off one of the group capture traps. It didn't take long before Dull-Claw, Wet-Fur, and himself move to taunt the group into throwing things at them which should cause the pouch contains to fall out, giving them a chance to steal their scroll.

((Something that is slowly beginning to happen throughout the Forest of Death as various teams soon find themselves triggering traps set by Naruto and his clones.))

Tenten

"We're not alone." Neji declares and at a glance, she notices the veins around her team-mate's eyes were more visible then ever before.

A slight meowing sound erupts and it's answered by high pitched growl. Then, with a snarl, a group of four super cute creature step through the bushes. "Oh! Are you guys cute!" She declares within seconds of them getting about six feet towards them.

"Yosh! They do appear to have a large amount of youthfulness, don't they?" Lee muses and one of the mousy brown critter then flash Lee a toothy grin before giving the mini Green Beast a thumb up.

"Yosh! They truly do burn with the power of youth!" Lee declares with fire suddenly appearing around Lee's frame. She isn't the only one to back away, the cherry bay colored one sends the mousy brown one a minor glare.

The mousy brown makes a slightly clicking sound and looks slightly guilty about causing that. "Don't blame him too much, Lee's easy to set off." She tells the strange beings and that seems to do the trick as the others seem to let up on the mousy brown.

"Don't let your guard down, Tenten! They could be enemy summons." Neji says and she rolled her eyes.

"Oh yes, what blood thirsty demons these are. Eek, save me before they kill me and drain me of my blood." She say in a highly sarcastic tone before moving towards the group of... whatever they are.

"Can you help us? We're looking for a scroll like this one, only with a different character on it." She says to the group, even going so far as to show them the one she's carrying. She even went as far as to couch down to look so they didn't have to look up at her.

The group of four glance at each other and then back at the scroll. Then one of them grabs her wrist while making odd animalistic sounds. "I think they want us to follow them." She says as they begin to head off in a northern direction.

"I don't like it." Neji declares as she pockets the scroll.

"Yosh! Surely such youthful creatures won't trick us." Lee states, clearly supporting her decision.

"Besides, what kind of Genin's capable of summoning four of these guys?" She points out and then sprints off in the direction the furry beings had clearly been headed in.

It wasn't long before she hears the soft patter of her team-mates following her as she follows the strange being.

Clone #163 - Code Name: **Tail-Brush**

"There's the one they need." He cries out and as the other three slow, he keeps up his pace until he's at the site.

With a cry of trumpet, he picks the scroll out of the little hole. *"I say we bargain for Neji, not Lee."* Flash-Step grumbles with his arms crossed over his chest.

"No way! We could use that green jumper and force it on somebody else!" Thunder-Rider counters.

"Well, there isn't much cloths to chose from at this moment, but I agree, we exchange an hour with Lee for the Earth scroll." Fern-Pelt says firmly, which puts an end to that argument.

And so, they move to the agreed meeting point where they'll hook up with those closest so they can dress Lee Rock up in something other then the green spandex bodysuit. After all, it's not as if they'll likely have many teams willing to do anything but attack them.

Which makes Tenten's team to an unique team as far as they know. Which is why they'll be giving Tenten and her team the scroll they need.

Once they arrive at the old tree trunk that likely had belonged to a very tall and very old tree, they wait. By the time Tenten's team arrives at the site, more of their 'brothers' have arrived with what cloths they managed to steal from other teams pack or off their very backs.

All chatter stops as they turn to see Team Gai arriving. With a deep breath, he moves to greet the team. He's carrying the scroll that they needed as well. He makes sure to stop a few feet away from the group of humans.

He then holds the scroll up and he watches as the veins around Neji's temples pop, showing that the Hyuuga has activated his bloodline limit. He makes a odd meowing chirping sound which he hopes sounds like a question as none of them really want to give away that they're capable of telepathic communication.

"You found one! We have it?" Tenten asks and he turns to stare at Lee for a few seconds before he points a clawed 'finger' at Lee.

Neji seems to scowl, it seems that the Hyuuga had an idea of what they want before they'll turn over the scroll. Tenten sighs while Lee seems to scratch the side of his head as the bowl hair cut teen tries to make sense of their demands.

"I think they might want Lee's jumper in exchange for the scroll." Neji finally supplies and he nods rapidly in agreement.

"Oh..." Tenten says and it's about then does she notices the pile of cloths that they put out. Finally, Tenten moves over to her team-mate and pats Lee on the shoulder.

"We thank you for your sacrifice, Lee." Tenten says in a serious tone. Lee looks puzzled while Neji quickly knocks Lee out while Tenten

turns her back on what's about to happen.

"Do they really think we'd force him to go naked from here on?" Leaf-Stone wonders and he just shrugs.

"Anyway, what kind of colors do you think would work to totally be opposite of his attitude?" Fern-Pelt wonders and soon, they begin to debate on which cloths they'll use.

Naruto

As he walks down the hallway, heading for the washroom, he runs into Team Gai. "Didn't you wear a green jumpsuit at the beginning of the test?" He asks the teen with bushy eyebrows.

"We made a deal with those cute beings. They took his jumpsuit and in return, we got these new cloths and the scroll we needed." Tenten explains and he gives them a startled look before moving so they can make it to their rooms.

What do they want to do with his jumper then? He wonders thoughtfully as he continues to the washroom.

Ino

"I hate you." She declares in a flat tone as she walks out of the bushes wearing a very tacky green spandex jumpsuit.

The furry creatures that she had first thought harmless just got their faces added to the list of beings in her bad books.

"Look on the bright side, at least we didn't have to go up against any other Genin to get this scroll." Choji suggests and that earns a very hard and frank glare from her.

"Can we go now?" She demands and the one with the scroll tosses it at Shikamaru before they scurry away into the surrounding forest.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 3

Naruto

He glances around at the other four other teams that made it through the forest and his vast army of clones. He's not the only one to have found seeing Ino in Lee's spandex jumpsuit to be funny, though Ino had literally fainted when she found out that the suit belonged to Lee.

Five teams, fifteen Genin... He muses as he recalls what happen to most of the other teams. By the end, all his clones had to do was open up the scrolls and they'd be knocked out by whatever was written on them.

He suppresses a shudder as he recalls the encounter with a certain ninja that seemed to be part snake. He's a little more then glad that the scrolls affected that one in the same way as it did the others or else that ninja would have discovered that those creatures were actually shadow clones.

He tones back in as Kiba shouts out, "You mean we're not done with the second part of this test?" Akamaru barks out in agreement.

"But there's an odd number! Does that mean somebody has to fight twice or something?" Sakura asks from in front of him.

He's not as worried about this, well, so long as he doesn't fight Gaara he's fine with it since he's still not willing to let people know that all of those furry creatures they made contact with were his clones since he rather not get booted out of the Chuunin exam, not when he's so close to seeing it through all the way.

Although I wouldn't mind seeing Sasuke get his butt handed to him by Gaara. He admits as he looks over Sakura's shoulder to stare at the brooding Uchiha.

Before they headed up onto the catwalk an electric board appears on the wall. His name appears as does Kiba's. Kiba cheers something about having to fight an easy opponent while he just begins to think of a strategy to help him in this fight.

He also bite his tongue as Akamaru leaps off of Kiba's head and onto the ground. He already had a feeling that Akamaru is very much allowed to fight for Kiba since nobody seems to be asking dog boy to have his canine pet follow Hinata and Shino up the metal stairs.

Hope my plan works... He mentally prays as he waits for the match to begin. He eyes the master and his pet, wondering who's going to make the first move.

"I bet your puppy's got bigger teeth then you do, dog breath." He taunts Kiba and the other Genin just smirks.

"You want to know what your problem is, Naruto? You're all bark and no bite!" Kiba counters with his puppy arfing in agreement.

"I bet Akamaru's farts smell better then your breath, mutt." He says and then charges at Kiba as his hands form a single hand sign.

Kiba seems to snort, likely realizing that he over shoot the leap but as his tiny clones appear in his jacket, he manages to somersault just over Kiba's head. Tiny silver balls drop out of his jacket and onto Kiba's head.

As he lands, he finds that he has yet to receive any memories from the newly created clones. *"I just need two of you guys to get into his ear and then shout really, really loud when I give the signal, ok?"* He sends to his troop of tiny clones as he does his best to counter Kiba's attacks.

"Rogue!" The clones chime and he then creates a few regular sized shadow clones. He did in a distracted manner notice that these clones did take a bit more damage then a single punch but is too

busy trying to figure out where Kiba and Akamaru were going to attack from while a smoke screen is up to really think about it.

Finally he feels two chakra pulses from Kiba and manages to back a few feet away. "Well then, I guess its time to try this jutsu I've been working on." He then goes through a series of five random, de-powered hand signs and then shouts mentally, *"Now!"*

And with that, Kiba suddenly drops to the ground clutching his ears while howling for him to make it stop. With Kiba down for the count, Akamaru doesn't know how to help his master. "If you forfeit I'll cancel it!" He declares as loud as he can.

Finally, after two minutes Kiba forfeits and he wins the match. It didn't take long before he dispels the remaining mini clones so that they stop shouting in Kiba's ears. He did notice a pair of people in tacky white uniforms checking on Kiba to see if there's permanent damage from his experimental 'jutsu'.

"What jutsu was that, Dobe?" Sasuke asks and he snorts softly once he's with his 'loving' team.

"One that you'll never get to work, duck-butt." He tells the brooding boy as they wait for another two names to pop up. While Sakura decides to harp on about being disrespectful to Sasuke and Kakashi frowning in disappointment, the board finally settles on Sakura vs Ino.

"Sakura... Sakura! You're either going to forfeit now or get down there!" He shouts as he cuts in between Sakura's shrieking lecture.

"What are you talking about, loser?" Pinky asks as she turns to see what's written on the board. He also noticed a few disapproving looks from the nearest teams within hearing range, it seems that they didn't particular like listening to the pink banshee scream at him.

The match wasn't very impressive and he felt confident that if Kakashi had even once tried to do his job, Sakura wouldn't have

looked so pathetic as Ino possesses Sakura to causes pinky to forfeit, which apparently is a legal tactic within minutes of the match.

Sakura, of course, being horrified at how easily she had been defeated had left the arena in tears while Ino walks up to 'claim' a hug from the icy prick of the north, also known as Sasuke 'duck-butt' Uchiha before returning to her own team.

The next people to be call to fight were Shino and Kankuro, it had been a long match but it seems that Shino won simply because the Sand Genin underestimated Shino's ability to think a few more step ahead of him. Although if Kankuro had used the poisons he had on him then it might have been Shino being defeated.

Shikamaru vs Tenten appears once the floor is cleared. He could only imagine Shikamaru declaring this all to be bothersome, although unlike what he expected, Shikamaru actually walked down to fight against an older Genin, especially a girl.

He watches as Shikamaru used the shadows of the catwalk to maneuver Tenten. He shakes his head as he watches as Tenten hits her head on the wall behind her as she mimics Shikamaru into dodging a kunai. *Not a bad way to win a match without any real bloodshed.*

The board then flashes Sasuke's name and then Lee's name. He coughs to cover his laughter, after all, he just knows that Lee's going to win, hands down and ten minutes later, Sasuke's right arm is at an odd angle, he's got a bit of blood around his lips, and he's got this dazed look on his face.

He could tell that pretty much nobody seemed to expect Lee to walk away with a victory in that match. He notices how Kakashi slips to follow Sasuke and the healers, leaving him pretty much on his own.

He notices a frown on more then a few Jonin's faces. It seems that even they expected a better showing then that from the 'Great'

Sasuke Uchiha. Especially when the dead last of the class managed to win his match.

He just leans on the rails and waits for the next begin, of course that seems to be taking a while as Lee doesn't seem to be stopping in his victory ranting about how youthfulness and hard work wins out over born geniuses.

Finally, Gai intervenes and finally the match between Temari and Choji can begin. It didn't take long before Choji's too dizzy from rolling around the floor and getting blasted by wind that Temari creates using her fan.

The next match is Hinata against Neji. He did try and cheer Hinata on as she tries to prove to Neji that people can change. Sadly, Neji hit her square in the chest and as he watches on, he suddenly had a very good reason to complete his dragon Henge before the third part of the exam takes place.

It's about then does he realize that Gaara has of yet to be call down to fight. Although he's a bit surprise at how quickly some of the seven matches, including his own, had been.

And finally the old man ruled that due to the uneven number of participants that Gaara will automatically advance and this seems to cause Gaara to frown but he noticed a tension leave not just the Jonin with the Sand team but also Kankuro and Temari.

Huh, how odd. He muses before those that were moving onto the next stage of events were to be on the floor so they can see who's fighting who in the next round.

Neji right off the bat, too, huh? Oh boy is everyone in for a huge surprise. Nobody will consider me a loser after what I'm about to unleash. He muses as he watches as a board if filled with their names on it.

Two Weeks Later

As he;'s laying down on his back as he watches a few of his ten to five foot long dragon shape clones snake through the air. A few clutch pearls with kanji on them, these pearls solo purpose of gathering chakra to help power their body structure and energy blasts.

"Naruto?" He hears a familiar voice calls out and he sits up to find Hanabi Hyuuga struggling to keep from staring in awe at his collection of dragons.

"Hey Hanabi. How's it going?" He says with a warm smile at the young girl.

Hanabi smiles shyly at him before she gives him a questioning look. "I'm trying to perfect my ability at summoning dragons." He explains and Hanabi raises an eyebrow for a few seconds before she continues towards him.

"I need some help with my Henge jutsu." Hanabi says with a sigh and he stands up.

"Ok, let's see your progress so far." He suggests and Hanabi nods in agreement. Seconds later Hanabi transforms into an odd likeness of Neji, and by odd, he means slightly larger hands and what appears to be a third eye being covered by a headband with a symbol of spiral without the added bits that make it look like a leaf.

"Well, you're not as bad as Konohamaru was. He made a lot of them overweight." He tells her and in a puff of smoke, Hanabi returns to normal.

"Now then, have you tried doing this before a mirror?" He begins and Hanabi blinks as she shakes her head. He thinks about it for a few seconds before saying, "Ok, I'm going to go through a series of hand signs and I want you to copy them, ok?"

Hanabi nods and he begins going through the hand signs for one of his rarely used custom Henges. He goes as slow has he dares and

Hanabi is just a few seconds. It didn't take long for them they visibly sport a pair of large furry ears on the top of their heads, slitted eyes, claw like nails, and bushy tails.

He's very pleased that Hanabi managed to get it right the first time around. Their cloths altered to permit their tails to wag about behind them. "You got it one go! Pretty impressive, it took a whole day for Konohamaru to learn my Sexy jutsu. Congratulations." He tells her as she pulls slightly on her tail and yelps in pain after tugging a bit too hard.

"I don't get how come you're having any difficulty using the academe Henge jutsu." He admits as he frowns with his arms crossed before him.

"Well, I haven't practiced it much." Hanabi muses as she begins to notice that she's got a pair of furry ears on her head. "My clan doesn't use a lot of jutsus, especially genjutsu."

"Well, I guess that explains why Hinata didn't try a fire jutsu or something on Neji." He muses and Hanabi nods.

"If that's so, then try practicing the Henge before a mirror. It also helps if you make sure to focus on the details as well." He says and Hanabi nods in agreement.

"How long will this last?" Hanabi asks him and he blinks before shrugging. "Never thought to see how long it'll last without me dispelling."

"So if I want to end it now, I'd have to dispel it then?" Hanabi asks and he nods. Hanabi seems to be highly relieved by that.

"Anyway, if you get frustrated just do the variation I gave you to remind yourself that you're not hopeless in using Henge." He says and Hanabi nods before she holds up her hand as she leaves.

Once Hanabi is out of sight, he turns to regard those dragon clones. "Let's see just how large I can make the next set." He muses and before he begin on the handseals, he takes a few moment to gather chakra for the up coming clone.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 4

Final Exam

The crowd roars at Neji's name while he's trying to wrap his mind around just how many people showed to watch this tournament. He feels a tad nervousness about preforming before such a huge number of people.

I hope I don't choke. He muses as his name is called. He almost doesn't hear the bit of advice that the proctor gives them, which kind of helps settle his nerves.

And so, as the match begins, he already visualizes which dragon he's going to 'summon'. Biting his thumb while Neji begins to launch a verbal attack, he does the hand signs for a summoning jutsu.

Seconds later everybody seems to quiet down as the dragon Henge tagged Streamblast appears under him. He's standing on his clone's head. "Let's roar through the sky, Streamblast!" He shouts and Streamblast lets loose a high pitched call before they raise high into the air.

It didn't take long before the crowd roars loudly as Streamblast begins to circle high above the stadium since there wasn't enough room for Streamblast to do so within the confinements of the stadium.

"They look like ants from up here!" Streamblast muses and he glances downward to find that his clone is right.

He glance behind him and finds the string of soft green pearls rotating around Streamblast's midsection. "Well, let's see if you can fire off energy blasts." He muses and Streamblast growls softly in agreement.

The creamy green dragon moves into position in such a way that he has to use chakra to keep on his clone's head. As energy begins to gather between Streamblast's open mouth, he did wonder if a single warning shoot will be enough to get Neji to forfeit.

Neji

He couldn't help but stare in dumbfoundment at the dragon his blond opponent has just summoned. A dragon that's at least a good sixty miles in length. Naruto says something to the dragon and the summon takes to the air.

Maybe I shouldn't have tried a speech at all and just go for the kill. He decides as he feels something heavy weight down in his midsection. *I didn't even know there is such a thing as a dragon contract.*

As he recovers, he glances at the proctor and asks, "Does this mean I win? He's clearly out of the stadium." He really hopes there are rules about this.

"Flying summons are permitted to fly above the stadium." The proctor rules.

As he's about to say something else, something flashes off to his left and he finds a beam of blue light hitting the ground. Seconds later, the ground around the impact spot explodes and he's hit by the rumble that's blown up into the air because of the beam of energy.

"I think I would like to forfeit." He says as calmly as he can as he ignores the sudden wetness of his pants.

"Wise choice." The proctor says before declaring loudly, "Winner! Naruto Uzuamaki!"

The crowd goes wild and the dragon descends to the ground with its summoner. *Next time, attack before they can pull something like this*

out of their bag of tricks. He tells himself as he walks out of the arena floor.

Orochimaru

How dare such a child gain such a powerful summon without my knowing! And to think I believed Manda when he said there wasn't such a thing as a dragon summoning contract! He growls mentally as the dragon with a string of pearls slowly rotating the midsection of the slender scaly body.

He eyes the blond hungrily. *Too bad I can't have Kabuto befriend this Naruto Uzumaki and tempt the blond to come to Hidden Sound.*

Naruto

He watches as white feathers begin to fall seemingly from the sky. As he begins to feel sleepy, he manages to flare his chakra slightly and he felt more alert. As he glances around, he finds that Temari is now by Gaara while Ino's body lies on the ground.

He glances around the box but in the end, he heads down to find out what the heck is going on. Just as he lands, he notices action already erupting around the crowd. Without a thought, he creates a huge army of regular shadow clones as he sprints towards Ino's body.

"What the heck is going on?!" He demands as he crouches down to check on Ino's body. His army of clones were already moving to lend help where they can.

"You want to know what's going on?! That girl is trying to possess a person who's already possessed!" Temari snaps at him. He could tell that Temari is stressed out by this.

He watches as Temari jumps at least two feet into the air as sand begins to move. With a roll of his eyes, he performs a powerful water

jutsu and within seconds, Gaara and the ground around him is now very muddy.

He raises an eyebrow at the sight of the large gourd begins to run. Three water jutsus later and the gourd made out of sand is totally been made into mud while Gaara's voice finally gives and silence seems to reign while Gaara trashes about at random times.

"Ino... I think it's time you came out of there." He says while he begins to get memories of the clones he created. As Gaara turns to glare at him, he gets the feeling that Ino's silently declaring, 'Geeze, you think?'

With a mental groan, he walks up to Gaara and then, in a single punch to the head, knocks Gaara out. Seconds later, Ino's body is moving while Temari just stares in flat amazement at him.

"You just hit Gaara... You're still alive!" The teen says in dumbfounded amazement and he just shakes his head and sighs.

"Yea well, good to know that such a simple thing amazes you." He says as he helps Ino up off the ground.

"Do you know how much that punch hurt?" Ino asks in her best threatening tone. It didn't work since she's clearly exhausted and is swaying on her feet.

"Will you marry me?" Temari asks as she seemingly appears before him and clutches his hand in a death grip. As he stares into her eyes, he suddenly gets the feeling that his next answer could change the course of his whole life.

"We barely know each other! I don't know about you, but I kind of hoped to marry for love, you know?" He answers in a slow manner.

"Yea! You can't marry him, your village is currently trying to invade us!" Ino growls as she leans more on him to stay up right.

"I don't think they're trying, I think they're doing." He murmurs as he frowns at the number of battle scenes his clones are getting themselves in before they're 'killed'.

"All the more reason for us to marry! It could be a political marry to help repair the bridges between my village and your's! I am the daughter of our Kage." Temari says and he blinks.

"You do realize your father's dead, right? Gaara figured that some guy with snakes has been impersonating him a bit before you guys left for the Chuunin exam." Ino counters.

Temari looks startled before she gives Ino a slow grin. "Well then, it seems I'm not the only one who's interested in Naruto, huh?"

To his surprise, Ino's face reddens slightly. "Well... you have to admit that with him possessing the summoning contract he has, he's going to be one famous ninja in under a week's time." Ino says and he turns sharply to get a clearer look of Ino's face.

"And here I thought you were like pinky, pining after that Uchiha." Temari says with a smirk.

"Yes well, I'm sure that the village would rather have him marry a native then a foreigner." Ino counters and he suddenly turns away from Ino, suddenly feeling very light headed and not just from the memories of his clones.

While the two girls begin to argue over certain points, he takes the time to contact various clones. Once he's done that, forming a single hand sign, he creates about five hundred and some clones who then take off, already knowing where to go and who to help.

"Just how many of those kinds of clones can you make?" Temari asks as the last of the clones vanish out of the arena floor. He blinks to look at the Sand Genin.

"I don't know, over a thousand? I've lost count months ago." He admits and he feels Ino stiffen behind her.

"But you couldn't do a simply clone while at the academe!" Ino says in awe.

"If they had bothered to teach me how to control my chakra while at school, I might not have done too bad at performing those jutsus. I'm better at jutsus that need little chakra control but a large supply of it, the ones that are ranked over B and up." He admits sourly, not that he doesn't still like Iruka but he has to admit a little praise at the fact he had Kage level chakra would have been nice to hear while at school.

"You can make a thousand of those clone now? At your age?" Temari asks and he nods. It didn't take long before the Sand Genin's eyes seem to stare off into space without really seeing him.

"Give it a few years and you'll be able to make..." Temari trails off as awe and shock appear on her face. "Millions... you're pretty much an army onto yourself!"

"And you always did have good stamina..." Ino muses and he continues to feel out of his depth as this conversation continues on.

Finally a cheer erupts and Temari's other team-mate, Kankuro, appears with some Jonin who's hiding half his face. "What have you been doing all this time, Temari? And what happened to Gaara? Why haven't you escaped with him while he's occupied with the dizzy blond?"

"Who are you calling a dizzy blond, Mr who wears make-up while playing with dolls?" Ino growls at Kankuro and Temari nods in agreement.

"Knock it off! We have to go, now!" Barks the Jonin from Sand as Kankuro moves to threaten Ino. As Kankuro picks up Gaara off the

ground, Temari just sighs and the team vanishes, likely heading out of the village.

"Well, at least they didn't attack either of us." He muses as he feels Ino pull away from him. "Feeling better?"

"Much. You wouldn't believe what I found in his mind." Ino answers and he frowns but doesn't say anything since he's chosen to go through his latest set of memories.

He pales and Ino asks, "What's wrong now?"

"The old man Hokage... He's dead." He tells her and Ino gives him a look of disbelief but as her teacher comes towards them, Ino finally asks, "How do you know?"

"A clone who witnessed the battle finally dispelled and I just sorted through his memories." He tells her before he looks off in the direction of where the Third had fought against that snake ninja.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 5

Bar

As they stalk out of the bar, he's very intent on beating this old lady for totally dissing the title of Hokage. *She'll never know what hit her!* He tells himself as they space out while the old lady's student tries to stop their fight.

"Ready when you are, old lady!" He shouts out at the blond with a purple diamond mark on her forehead.

Tsunade snorts as she muses, "Confident little snotty brat, aren't you? All I need to defeat you is with a single finger."

He snorts as he just smirks at the seemingly young ninja. *Who says I'm even going to get within close quarters with you?* He thinks at the woman before him.

He goes through the act of summoning and calls forth one of his clones in a dragon Henge that's about twenty foot in length. He feels highly satisfied at the looks of shock at the sight of his dragon clone. *"This is just too easy!"* His clone declares as the robin blue dragon clone begins to power up a blast of wind to knock the woman off of her feet.

As the woman recovers from the sight, she's within half a second of getting hit with the attack. The wind attack blasts her about a foot away from where she's originally standing. His clone roars as he climbs a bit into the air before beginning to circle over him.

"Not exactly what I expected from you, brat." Tsunade admits as she picks herself up off the ground. He couldn't keep off a smirk from his face, not that he tried too hard though.

"That's just a warning shot, the next one won't be that weak." He informs her and his growls in agreement.

"We'll see if the next one even connects." Tsunade snaps at him and he just shrugs.

"She likely thinks you need time to gather the energy into your mouth." He muses to his clone with a smile. *"It would be true if I were at least forty feet in length."* His clone reminds him.

"Details, details." He says as he watches with a bit of confusion as the old lady before him seems to be judging something.

Then, suddenly, she stomps on the ground. He leaps back within seconds of her raising her foot. He lands on the side of a building and watches as the street between where he had originally stood and where Tsunade had been look like a minor earthquake just occurred. Tsunade gives him an annoyed look, forgetting about his dragon clone.

Big mistake as his clone fires off rapid energy blasts, at least eight of them. At least three connect while the others hit the street around her, causing minor craters to be created around Tsunade's fallen form. "Lady Tsunade!" Shizune calls out as she races to check on her teacher.

"Isn't that a little over kill, brat?" Jiraiya asks and he shrugs. "I warned her that the next set won't be as weak as the wind blast." He points out and the Toad summon just sighs.

"That's not the problem." The white haired man states while his clone comes to land by him and he begins to stroke the navy blue mane that belongs to his dragon clone.

With a sigh, the clone moves to lean in closer as the spring green eyes close slightly. *"So then, what's your name?"* He asks as they wait for Tsunade to recover from getting hit by those energy blasts.

"Just call me Tide." The clone replies and he just sighs. *Why am I not surprised?*

"How is she?" Jiraiya asks as Shizune helps Tsunade get to her feet. "Ask her yourself, you pervert." The blond woman growls as the pair take a few steps towards them.

As Tsunade spots Tide, she frowns. "Since when has there been a dragon contract?" The old woman asks him while she stares at Tide.

"Well then, what would you call him if not a dragon?" He asks her, wondering if she suspects the true nature behind the mask of the beast. Tide glances over at the Hokage to be, pulling away from his hand.

Though it takes a few minutes, Tsunade and Shizune stand before Tide and soon the pair are examining Tide before Tsunade finally sighs. "Fine, it's a dragon." Tsunade declares and he felt a mixture of achievement and relief on hearing that.

All that hard work, it seems to have payed off big time. He muses with a wide grin on his face with his arms crossed behind his head.

Six Days Later

"So that is a boss summon, huh?" He asks Shizune while once Kabuto has finish smearing some blood on the snake nin's arm. He also noted how blood thirsty the giant purple snake seems now that it's been summoned.

"Haven't you summoned the dragon boss yet?" Shizune asks and he shakes his head as the snake summoner and summon finish their discussion. As one, they turn to regard the toad with a dagger hanging from a belt.

"No, no I haven't. So far the named dragon I've summoned has been Streamblast and he's about sixty miles long." He admits while he

begins to consider ideas of what he wants his boss dragon to look like.

"And he's not the boss? Take Manda there, he's a hundred miles long! You should be more then able to summon your summon's boss." Shizune tells him and he blinks before he regards the purple snake with a calculating look.

"Really? I wonder if Streamblast could take that snake then." He wonders before glancing over to the prone form of Tsunade.

"Is she going to be any help?" He asks, he feels pity just looking at the grown woman who's proven to be very high strung individual. He thought she wouldn't have cracked the way she did.

"Sadly, Lady Tsunade is hemophobia after losing so many of her loved ones." The familiar voice of Kabuto supplies, he looks at where the voice came from and noticed that the white haired teen is no more then ten feet from them.

"Well, that explains why you've got blood running down your arms." He muses calmly. He hadn't really cared much about what this guy had to say at the first exam and finds that he still doesn't care.

"What? No shock that I'm a traitor, Naruto?" Kabuto asks and he just shrugs in a uncaring fashion.

"I never gave you any more thought once the test started. It's not like you didn't desire to vomit after mouthing off before a room of foreign ninja." He points out and this causes Kabuto to frown. It seems that the white haired teen had hope to have made a greater impression on him.

"Besides, you were sucking up to Mr duck-butt, so it's not surprising at what kind of boyfriend you picked up since then." He states with a smirk. "I'm sure he appreciates you're skilled hands too; in many ways and in may positions." He adds with a toothy grin in a very suggestive way.

He's very satisfied to hear Shizune snicker softly as she finally gets what he's implying but what really sells it is the slightly gaping look Kabuto is giving him. It wasn't long before Kabuto recovers and gives him a glare with a hint of killing intent.

"Oh? Was that just a secret I stumbled upon? Oh well, I'm sure it would have come out sooner or later, after all, the man is old enough to be your grandfather. It's a classic case of hand in the cradle if I ever saw one." He adds in a very authoritative way, complete with his chin resting on a fist.

He's more then privately bemused at how riled up Kabuto has gotten within the span of minutes. Finally Kabuto seems to finally realize that he's being made fun off and it's throwing him off balance. It takes Kabuto a few seconds to calm down, but he could tell that the teen still is simmering with anger, well for the moment at any rate.

"It seems you have a very active imagination." Kabuto muses and he replies, "Not half as active as pervy sage over there, but then, I guess it's hard to see your boyfriend's old flame court him, huh? Just look at the passion glinting from the pair of them! They must have been one hot item at one time."

And finally, Tsunade finally reacts by giggling at the image that brought up. *About damn time she snaps out of it! Heck, I'm not sure if Kabuto's realized that he's all healed up yet.* He muses as the ground shakes as the big old toad lands on the ground after leaping out of the snake's lunging bite.

"Besides, what kind of man did you expect to sign a snake summon, huh? It wouldn't surprise me if he has other uses for 'snakes' of all shapes and sizes." He continues on saying.

"I don't believe I'll ever look at Orochimaru the same way ever again." Tsunade muses while Shizune sounds as if she's suppressing her chuckles. He doesn't take his eyes off of Kabuto, he really rather not find himself dieing without knowing what hit him.

Kabuto pushes his glasses up in a manner that scream 'sinister'. "Well, enough chit chat. Lord Orochimaru needs Lady Tsunade's medical skills to restore his arms. So either surrender her or be prepared to die." The white haired teen says and he snorts at how corny that sounds.

"The sad part is that you're likely right about the only reason why he'd be insterested in a woman is when he needs their ninja skills." He says in bemusement and he finally gets Kabuto to develop a minor tick.

Without saying anything in verbal retaliation, the teen begins to launch his attack. The moment Kabuto seemed to vanish, he created a number of clones and managed to switch places with a rock. Just in time too as Kabuto suddenly appears and stabs the rock.

With their target sighted, his clones begin their attack while Shizune looks torn between guarding Tsunade and joining his clones in fighting off the white haired teen. It didn't take long before a clone and himself to create the Rasengan in his left hand.

"Try this on for size, you creepy boy toy!" He shouts within seconds of entering into a charge, a pair of clones racing in front of him as he charges at the white haired ninja. "Rasengan!" He shouts as the pair of clones before him puff out of existence as Kabuto slices through them with some kind of chakra blade.

He manages to hit the teen in the stomach but Kabuto manages to slice him in the right shoulder before the force of his jutsu finally sends the teen flying backwards while rotating about in the air. As he clenches his shoulder, his various clones move to make sure that Kabuto's knocked out.

"Here, let me see that." Tsunade says once she's standing next to him. He hisses as he tries to shrug his shoulder and he watches as a hand covered in green chakra moves over his shoulder.

"Thanks." He says as the strange mixture of numbness and pain begins to fade within seconds of having her work on his shoulder.

He glances up as one of his clones alert him to the fact that Kabuto's still awake. "He's still awake but it seems he's having trouble repairing the damage caused by that attack." He tells the pair of medic trained ninja.

"I do believe we have more immediate concerns." Shizune says and it didn't take him long to notice how the toad looks like it's on its last pair of legs.

"I do believe it's time to throw my hat back into the game." Tsunade says calmly and he glances at Shizune in puzzlement as he begins to flex his right side of his body. "Huh?"

"I think she's accepting the position." Shizune says and his eyes widen on hearing that. "Oh!"

And so, while his clones decide to see what kind of injuries done to Kabuto takes the most time to heal, he watches as Tsunade bites her own thumb and summons a giant slug. "..." He really didn't know how to comment on seeing that one.

Hidden Leaf

"It's my contract and therefore I get to decide who signs it or doesn't, you bastard! So bugger off and go get lunch from a pond or something!" He shouts angrily at his supposed all powerful team-mate, the one with the hair style in the shape of the rear end of a duck.

"Now, now, Naruto. Sasuke's your team-mate, it's only right for you to share your successes with your team." Kakashi says in a disapproving manner.

He turns to glance at his team's leader before noticing the disapproving looks of a few of the ninja that were now gathering

about them as he tries to have lunch in peace. *Oh, so that's how it is. I get a new trick and now I'm suppose to 'share' it with them. I don't see Kakashi pushing for Sasuke to share his fire jutsus.* He thinks sourly before turning his back on the pair of them.

He picks up his chop sticks and begins to eat his cooling bowl of Ramen. He's so tired of having to fight Sasuke off and now he just learnt that Kakashi is throwing his total support behind the Uchiha in the brat's current obsession with bullying him into allowing the ice prince himself to sign the supposed summoning contract with dragons that he 'discovered' during that month between the second and final part of the Chuunin exams.

He feels the tension rise but he refuses to continue speaking with them. "If you do it, I'll teach you a jutsu." Kakashi offers and that tears it.

"Oh yea, where was your offer of training while I getting ready to participate in the third event of the Chuunin exam? Oh wait, you were training the Genin who didn't even pass the preliminarily fight with Lee Rock! I bet you didn't even take Sakura along with you to give her training to help her get over her lose to her *former* **best friend** !" He shouts as he turns to face the pair once more.

The crowd gasps and its clear that many of the ninja gathered around seem to be highly disapproving of Kakashi's code of conduct.

"You know what? I think I'll ask the old lady to transfer out of this so call team of yours since it's clear you're more interested in a master and apprentice training then in *team* training! You never taught me anything, nothing at all! I learnt tree climbing and water walking all on my own with some vague hints I read from a few books in the library! I bet you can't even name any jutsu you ever taught me or Sakrua, tree climbing doesn't count either." He practically got Kakashi cornered as the crowd waits for the masked Jonin to prove him wrong.

Kakashi's silence proves very damning as seconds tick by. Sasuke seemed to have enough smarts as to not say anything about how useless training their pink haired team-mate as she'll never amount to anything. By the time two minutes have come and gone, the crowd begins to murmur among themselves, most of the whispers were on how sad it was that Kakashi couldn't live up to his teacher's example.

"If you want Sasuke to be able to summon, why don't you let him sign your dog contract, eh? Just leave me the heck alone." He states before he just sighs as he turns to once more face the counter so that he can returns to eating his very cold Ramen. He feels a kind of hollow feeling now that he's confronted Kakashi about his teaching methods or lack of.

I bet my clones are having more fun then I am at this very moment. He muses with a sigh. He felt old before his time. *Although that's likely because of witnessing that invasion from different view points.* He adds with a frown as he swirls his chop sticks in the broth.

Three Days Later

"So just how much is this building going for?" He asks Tenten as he passes by her with a full box of stuff. He has two clones packing stuff away into books in each of the rooms of this old inn.

"Why? You interested in buy it?" Tenten asks and he nods.

"Sure, why not? It's not like I have to spend a lot of my on hiring people to restore it. Heck, I could sell it after I do so for more money then what I bought it for since they wouldn't have to spend money on fixing it." He explains to Tenten and she gets a thoughtful look on her face, as if the thought of using a jutsu in such a way never crossed her mind.

"Just what sort of things do you use your clones for?" Tenten asks after a few minutes of thinking about this. He blinks and considers carefully about what to reveal.

"Well, they're good at gathering information, a simple Henge and they can spend all day in the library studying, having them practice jutsus, having them take turns entertaining Konohamaru and his friends... I guess I can use them for pretty much everything." He admits and Tenten looks impressed before Lee calls out Tenten's name.

"Maybe I should check in and see just what kind of entertainment you're providing those kids." Tenten says before she continues on her way to take Lee his lunch.

He then continues on his way carrying the box in his arms down to the trash pile since most of what's in the box is bits of ruined walls and ceiling. He finds a few of his fetch and carry clones currently taking a break. He waves at them once his arms are free of the box.

"Just remember, you guys only get fifteen minutes every three hours!" He calls out at the group of eleven clones. They all either just nod or wave in acknowledgment of that reminder.

He did notice that the owner seems to be grumbling about something while sorting through the other boxes, the ones that contain items that they founded in the rooms, like broken picture frames or dirty shoes.

He walks over to the table where his lunch is resting on and began to dig through the bag to get at his lunch. It wasn't long before Tenten comes out of the ruined inn to eat her own lunch.

"Hey Hanabi! Neji isn't here, he's joined in a patrol. And, what happened? How did you get that tail and those ears?" Tenten calls out and he turns to find the young Hyuuga child standing just out on the street.

"I've come to speak with Naruto. He's been helping me with my Henge jutsu." Hanabi says coolly and he waves the girl over.

"So then, what seems to be the problem?" He asks her once Hanabi is standing before him, complete with twitching tail and flickering ears.

"I'm still not getting it right." Hanabi admits with a minor hint of redness on her checks. He hums thoughtfully as he studies her for a few seconds.

"Have you tried transforming into somebody your age? I mean, the Henge you have on doesn't try and add height." He muses before he takes a bite out of his sandwich.

Hanabi nods and goes through the standard Henge hand signs. A puff of smoke later and Konohamaru appears, he nods in approval and in another puff of smoke, Hanabi appears once more. "Your Konohamaru is perfect! Try transforming into others of your age and then slowly advance through the age groups." He suggests to the child, who then nods thoughtfully.

Then, hasting slightly, Hanabi asks, "I don't suppose you can show me another special Henge before I go?"

He blinks before smiling as he puts the sandwich down. "Sounds fine. You ready to memorize this?" He asks and Hanabi nods her head rapidly.

He slowly does the hand signs for another body modification, the Henge is for one of the Tengu two version he created. Within seconds, he's wearing a bird mask with his cloths being replaced by a black set of robes that allows wings to stretch out behind him. A flute hangs off the belt with thick, sharp nails on each finger. His feet are now bare with only three thick toes tipped with talons.

On hearing a whistle, he turns and finds Tenten admiring his new appearance. He runs a hand through his even more spiked blond hair. "Tenten! I forgot you were there..." He trails off, his voice sounding a great deal deeper then it usual is.

"Do these really work?" Hanabi asks and he glances over to study the smaller masked Tengu flaps her black wings. "Maybe, it depend on the strength of your muscles." He answers Hanabi's question.

"How long does it take to develop those muscles?" Tenten asks and he frowns behind the mask as he tries to think up the answer.

"It's more like getting use to the flapping them, it also helps if you leap fairly high in the air while focusing a steady bit of chakra to the wings." He admits as he recalls the memories from his previous Tengu clones.

"Like this?" Hanabi asks and within seconds, the young Hyuuga is in the air and with a few flaps, lands a good twenty some feet away. "You might need to wait until you got more upper body strength, but good first try." He calls out to Hanabi.

"That's... kind of freaky." Tenten admits and he turns to glance over at the soon to be fourteen year old.

"How so? I'll admit, it's a different transformation from taking the likeness of others. I'm sure plenty of others have transformed in similar things. I mean, Kiba could get Akamaru to transform into a duplicate of himself and get that wild look to transfer onto him." He points out to Tenten as a few of his clones begin shouting out pointers.

"You do realize that Henge is only a genjutsu that enshrouds you, right?" The teen informs him and he just stares at her, although its likely lost on her as his face is covered by a mask.

"Really? But how does that work? I mean, it kind of sounds as though you can't impersonate somebody older or younger then you. And why would they even consider it a transformation jutsu if it doesn't alter your body in anyway?" He asks after a few minutes, lunch pretty much forgotten.

"It's just to alter your appearance, nothing else." Tenten explains and he sighs.

"I've never been good at genjutsu, it's why I can't do the basic clone jutsu." He admits with a frown.

And then silence reigns between them for a few seconds before Tenten asks, "Can I touch them? Your wings I mean."

"Just don't try to tug a feather out, they vanish in under fifteen minutes." He explains to the older Genin.

It takes a few seconds before Tenten actually moves to touch his extended left glossy black wing for her to feel. "Feels soft." Tenten says and he hums thoughtfully, he glances over to where Hanabi is on the ground, likely panting.

"I styled them off of owl feathers." He explains and Tenten begins to use the palm of her hand to pet his feathery wings.

"What do you look like without the mask?" Tenten inquires and he grins. "If you're envision a long nose, there isn't one on this Tengu version Henge." He answers.

"I think I'll be the judge of that, Naruto." Tenten says and he folds his two black wings. "If you say so." He replies.

With his right hand, he removes the bird mask and reveals an unaltered face that the mask hides. "So if Hanabi removes her mask..." Tenten trails off and he nods with a grin on his face.

"Her own face will be unchanged as well." He says and then puts the mask back on.

"I think it's time for us to get back to work." Tenten suggests and he nods. Within seconds the Tengu Henge vanishes and he returns to his original appearance.

He mentally tells one of his clones to stay behind to keep an eye on Hanabi. He's more then a little happy that the owner of the property had already left by the time Hanabi appeared. It, hopefully, mean that there won't be any gossip concerning his 'corruption' of a member of the Hyuuga clan.

"Err, could you kind of stay silent about how I'm helping Hanabi with her Henge jutsu? I really don't need people getting certain thoughts in there head about what kind of relationship is going on between us. It is a very stressful time and people are pretty nervous right now." He says and Tenten nods.

"I understand. I'll keep is hush hush, although I really do expect that the next time you entertain Konohamaru and his friends, that you at least extend an invitation to me so I can come and watch." Tenten says and he replies, "Sounds reasonable."

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 6

Tenten

As she walks through one of the training fields, heading to meet up with Naruto to see just what kind of dubious entertainment he provides for young academe students. Although she couldn't help but consider the suggestions on practicing the Henge jutsu. *Those tips would have helped while I was learning it.* She admits.

Although, I have to admit, I wouldn't have minded learning how to Henge into a Tengu. She admits as she recalls the few short flights Neji's young cousin had managed to pull off. She can't recall ever seeing a Hyuuga disregard their dignity and aloof stance to do something that would likely cause them to look like a fool in front of people.

But then, it's always been a flight of fantasy for any human to fly. Although you'd think ninjas would have achieved that considering like that by using chakra or seals. She admits and she soon spots a small group of kids walking a few feet in front of her.

It wasn't long before more kids appear out of the surrounding forest, which pretty much hinted that she's going in the right direction considering the number of kids slowly beginning to join up. They reach a clearing and she spots an unusual miniature landscape and she stiffens as she notices movement among the fake trees.

"What the hell?" She murmurs under her breath as she gets close enough to spot people, beasts, and Oni moving about in different areas of the model landscape. Most weren't even over five centimeters in height.

"Pretty cool, huh? I can't wait to see what's planned for today! Are they going to find the lair of Kilian and rescue Yolie from the Oni lord

of the South? Or will they all get there too late to save the priestess? Ooo, this is so going to be exciting!" The young girl with a pair of goggles about her forehead.

She just slowly nods, although privately wondering if this isn't a genjutsu. So, forming a hand sign, she tries to cancel it and finds that none of the moving beings vanish. "There's a type of shadow clones mixed with Henge jutsu." Naruto says to her from behind her.

She turns to stare at the blond Genin, not really sure if such a thing is possible... and yet, she couldn't detect that the blond is lying about it. With a sigh, she backs away and joins the academe students in standing about a foot or two away from the miniature.

Naruto moves to stand behind the miniature. As the bewhiskered Genin clears his throat, everyone of the kids quiet down. "I'm sure you've noticed a guest among us. I'm not sure if she'll be come a regular or not, but her name is Tenten and I expect you guys to show her some proper respect since she is a Genin." Naruto tells the group of youngsters.

They all turn to regard her briefly before once more staring expectantly towards Naruto. The air seems to be pretty thick with excitement as Naruto begins to give a summary of what's going on in the drama that Naruto's clones are acting out. Despite her reservations, it didn't take long before she's caught up in the story as the tiny clones begin to do their part once Naruto's done talking.

She takes careful note of what hand signs Naruto's doing and it didn't take long before they can clearly hear the conversation going on among the various actors. *I wonder where he learnt this jutsu...* She muses as she watches as the six heroes argue among themselves as they journey through a meadow.

After a few minutes, she finds herself totally absorbed in the drama slowly unfolding before her.

Naruto

He feels like groaning as he finds that he's expected to go on a mission with his old team-mate. He had been kind of hoping to remain pair with Lee and Tenten to help rebuild the village but it seems that the old lady had other ideas. He is privately glad that he's mission briefing is alone, without him having to put up with their comments on his behavior as he tries to wiggle out of the mission since he didn't think it's fair that he's expected to put up with any kind of abuse or bad mouthing from anyone on that team just because people think they should work well together because they had been team-mate.

He made sure to make a very detailed report of what kind of behavior he had experience while on Team 7 and by the end, he managed to get Anko admitted as an observer to judge if any of his accusations pan out. After all, he sure as heck didn't want to deal with people thinking that the rife between him and his ex-team-mates were just because Kakashi had supported Sasuke's bullying tactics as the Uchiha tried to gain the ability to summon dragons.

He's even more glad that Anko's presence isn't going to be a secret that he doesn't have to share with his 'team' since Tsunade admitted that Kakashi would likely alter his behavior while on this mission. He's to met with Anko to discus how to bring her along.

He's got a few ideas and he wouldn't have any problems with teaching her one of his custom Henge if it means that she'll remain unrevealed throughout the mission.

"Another plate of Dango over here, bar keep!" A familiar purple haired special Jonin calls out as he enters into the bar that one of his clones reported seeing her in before heading off to inform Konohamaru and them about his minor long term mission out of the village.

"I think you should hold up on that dango, Anko. Here, read." He says and tosses the mission scroll onto the counter top by Anko's left arm.

She gives him a look before picking up the scroll and opening it. Anko snorts a few times before rolling the scroll up. "Like I'd be able to hide in plain sight from three of Sharingan eyes." Anko tells him and he says, "I've got an idea or two on how to pull that off, if you're willing to learn something from a lowly Genin."

Anko raises an eyebrow before waving him to take a seat.

Anko

Ok, so maybe the brat wasn't just bragging about how well designed his Henge jutsus are. She admits from her position around the blond's neck.

Currently, she's a white ferret that supposedly belongs to a very rich family who asked for Naruto specifically to watch over their favorite pet ferret and they're currently offering such a large sum of money for this D ranked mission, that the fact that Naruto is heading out of the village isn't a good reason to void this D ranked mission.

I wonder if the brat hasn't gone through previous mission statements when he thought that story up. She muses from her position about Naruto's shoulders. If she got too cold, she's more then capable of sliding into the jacket to get warm.

Her attention is more on watching Kakashi reading porn as the actors do their jobs before the camera. So far, she's not very impressed by the starling performance of Kakashi's current students as they interact with their ex-team-mate.

Sure she expected some hard feelings but pinky seems more concerned that Naruto hadn't allowed the Uchiha brat to sign the dragon contract when the brooding brat demanded it from him. "He's so much more deserving to summon such powerful being they you are! You should be grateful that he even bothered to ask!" Were pinky's comments within minutes after the mission began.

The fact that Kakashi hadn't even bothered to explain that summoning contracts tend to be very personal and private things only made her more incline to see why the blond brat had fought to get out of the mission as well as to see for herself that the rumors about Kakashi's attitude.

And of course Kakashi hasn't shared his contract with his 'prized' student either. She muses before her thoughts turned to the brooding Uchiha.

I wonder if he's usually that aggressive when it comes to picking a fight with the blond? She wonders as she recalls how the Uchiha had, after Uzumaki refused to 'spar' with him, attack the blond as Uzumaki moved to head into town after Kakashi had vanished after handing them their tickets to the movie.

Uzumaki had managed to pick up that the Uchiha had been moving in to assault him from behind and had switched out with a bit of garbage. Naruto managed to KO the brooding brat with a quick and hard punch aimed at the back of the head. Of course pinky then punched Uzumaki in the jaw for knocking the Uchiha out.

She recalls the bit of killing intent the blond had sent at pinky, it only lasted for about a minute before Uzumaki regained control of himself. She's not sure how, but Naruto had all three tickets and before entering the theater, sold the other two cheaply to a couple of kids. *Sneaky, very sneaky.*

She hadn't been highly interested in the movie, so she slide into the jacket and took a nap, feeling that since the other two brats weren't about, there wasn't any need for her to stay alert.

How in the nine circles of Hell did this team survive their encounter with one of the seven swordsmen of Hidden Mist? This team is a MIA just waiting to happen. No wonder the kyubi brat wanted off, the bullying for the contract likely had been the final straw. She muses before turning her currently ruby eyes away from the masked Jonin.

She shivers slightly and within seconds, a hand begins to stroke her head. She felt slightly flushed as it continued. *This feels pretty good.* She muses before she decides to worm her way into the jacket sleeve.

As she wiggles her way to the shoulder, she can hear and feel the blond brat wigging out. Once in the main part of the jacket, she moves around the waist before poking her head out of the collar of the jacket. She makes a few ferret sounds before glance up to see the blond giving her a minor glare, although it's ruined by the slight smile plastered on his face.

I wonder if I could jump from this brat to... She wonders as she turns to study the bemused Jonin who soon returns to reading his book.

Crawling out of the jacket and balancing on Uzumaki's shoulders...

"Ami!" Naruto shouts as she leaps at Kakashi. In a flash, she's making her way into the Jonin's jacket and then...

"%$#!" Kakashi curses after she bites a very sensitive spot. She continues to move around until she slides down the pants and races off towards the Uchiha to see if she can get him to curse.

Naruto

"Move aside. That ferret is getting skinned." Kakashi orders and he just stands his ground before the bookcase.

"Sorry, but I'm first mission is to see to the safety of that ferret. Just because Ami did things that embarrassed you, doesn't mean that I'm going to let you harm my client's pet." He says firmly before the three thoroughly disgruntled ex-team-mates.

Besides, I really don't want you guys to force her to be normal again, not when this mission isn't over and give you guys a chance to put on some kind of act when you learn that she's spying on us. He admits privately.

"It dies!" Sasuke growls with his Sharingan active.

It remains a stand off as he and his clones remain firmly positioned around the bookcase, keeping Kakashi, Sakura, and Sasuke about four feet from the bookcase.

Hidden Leaf

"Is that all you have to report?" Tsunade asks after Kakashi finishes his report. He really wanted to roll his eyes, true, the report didn't leave anything of real importance out but it didn't say anything about their continued attempts at killing Ami the Ferret, AKA Anko.

As Kakashi remains silent, the old lady turns to him. He fishes around his jacket and pulls out a slightly bandaged ferret. Within seconds, he places the disguised special Jonin on the floor, Anko appears in a puff of smoke.

"Well, I do believe I've got my report pretty well ready to be filed." Anko muses and he notices how the other three all just stared wide eyed at the Chuunin exam's second test proctor before Kakashi sends a look towards Tsunade and on noticing the unsurprised look, Kakashi asks, "You sent her to observe us?"

"Naruto flat out refused to work with you and your Genin and the only way I could get him to go with you was to send an observer." Tsuande explains.

"And the blond brat's objections seem to have a lot of ground to stand on after what I've witnessed. While I'll admit that some of what I saw clearly had been created from some of Naruto's own actions regarding his leaving of Team 7, but I did find that his reasons for leaving to be still ingrained you three." Anko says and Sakura stares down at the floor while Sasuke just begins to put off an aloof stance.

"Like take pinky over there. She apparently doesn't seem to understand that the world doesn't revolve around the Uchiha brat. Within minutes of being with Uzumaki, you berated him for not

allowing the Uchiha to sign the summon contract. Clearly you haven't researched anything about summons and their summoners or else you'd know how rude the Uchiha had been in trying to bully Uzumaki here into allowing him to sign it." Anko states.

"And yet again, Kakashi, you didn't do anything to explain to her so she might correct her thoughts on this manner." Anko says.

"Well then, I believe Team 7 is dismissed, for now." Tsunade says and Kakashi looks like he's about to argue until Tsunade gives him a very flat look. He didn't try and stick around, he's the first leave the office.

Once outside, he creates about a dozen clones before exiting out of the gate of the tower. Most of his clones will be heading to the library to find books about northern animals, two clones will likely be pouring through his stretch books before working on a new set of custom Henges. He's got some new plot ideas as well as miniature landscapes that need to be created.

The rest of his clones were to go shopping while he heads to the hot springs. He currently believes its a good idea to hang around some very public places for the rest of the day. He really doesn't want to find himself getting interrogated by Kakashi about why he no longer feels safe to be with his 'team'.

I wonder how long it'll be until those around me finally put the pieces together about how I'm capable to creating such an army. He muses as he turns to regard the departing backs of his clones, taking his mind off of his situation with his ex-team.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 7

Ino

"What do you know about summons?" Sakura asks her dully while she's doing some window shopping. She couldn't help but blink as she regards her former best friend's reflection in the window before her.

"What brought this up?" She asks the pink haired Genin, curious since she had always figured that Sakura would have read up on everything in regards to all of the branches of jutsus.

"People seem to think that Sasuke's being rude for demanding for Naruto to allowed him to sign this dragon summoning contract." Sakura finally says and she sighs, she had kind of hope that rumor was just hear say and nothing more.

"Well, yea, it is. There is a reason why animal summons are highly coveted as they're highly prized. They can be very temperamental too. They're not mindless automatons that appear went ever you want that you to point them at your enemies, expecting them to go forth and destroy them in a bloody ways." She begins to lecture Sakura once she has turned to face her.

Sakura cringing after hearing that. "Sasuke comes from a ninja family, he should have known that there's more to summoning contracts then that! Even if you manage to sign one it doesn't automatically gives you authority to boss them around. Heck, the boss of the toad contract is said to have refused to obey the Fourth Hokage a few times!" That seems to impress upon Sakura about one of the reasons why summons aren't common.

"If the summon takes a huge dislike of you, you'd be lucky to walk away with your life!" She stresses, remembering the conversation

she had with her father about this branch of ninja jutsus.

"Naruto's very fortunate in not just finding one to sign but who obey him, it must have taken him the whole month to endure himself to any dragons he summoned during that time! Didn't you see the size of that dragon he summoned during the Chuunin exams? It could have swallowed him in a single bite if it had half a mind!" She says as she remembers how the dragon took to the air with Naruto riding on its head.

"I bet plenty of clans are beginning to look at Naruto with thoughts of marrying their daughters off to him. I doubt the Hyuuga clan will put forth an offer since they don't have any real use for jutsus besides their clan's taijutsu. Heck, that foreigner from Sand pretty much just purposed marriage to him within minutes of him knocking her brother out so I can get free from his mind!" She states before blushing as she recalls her admission to marry him not long after.

"But that's insane! He's nothing but a troublemaker!" Sakura shouts and she just sighs.

"Yea, well, opinions change as things change, Sakura and the bottom line is, Naruto's capable of summoning a race of beings that nobody in our history has been credited to summoning. Heck, did you know that he managed to create an army of Shadow clones without even needing to form a hand sign? If he's capable of making a thousand clones now, at his age, just imagine the numbers he'd be able to create when he is in his twenties and has better chakra control! One of these days, Naruto Uzumaki, the class clown, will be listed as one of Hidden Leaf's Legendary ninja, heck he might even be called the Orange Swarm of Leaf or even the One Man Army. Right now, his title probably is Naruto Uzumaki, Summoner of Dragons."

Sakura just blinks rapidly as if this information being very difficult to swallow.

"I have another name to toss in, the Creator of Mini Shadows." A new voice adds and she turns to find the girl who fought Shikamaru standing a few feet from them.

"Huh?" She asks and Tenten sighs. "Well, you know how a class of academe students head out of one of the training fields about twice a week?" Tenten asks and she nods.

"Well, it seems that Naruto's entertaining the lot by acting out a drama on a miniature landscape using tiny clones disguised in various Henge. He's pretty good at it, you should come see tomorrow afternoon." Tenten says.

"How do you know he's back in the village?" Sakura asks in a suspicious manner. "Well, for one, he did say he's gone on a mission with Team 7, so, seeing you're back, it's logical to assume that he's back." Tenten points out and she nods thoughtfully.

"Just how good are we talking about?" She asks and Tenten smiles.

"Well, I find it every entertaining, but come and see for yourself. Just follow the stream of kids that head into the training fields. They'll lead you right." Tenten says and then her name gets called by the Hyuuga on her team.

"Later!" Tenten calls out as she jogs over to join her team-mate. With that, she returns to studying her ex-friend, this time with her arms crossed over his chest. Although, truthfully, her thoughts circle around this latest development with Naruto.

"So, what happened to cause you to come to me with questions instead of trying to find the answers in the library?" She finally asks Sakura.

"We had an observer for our last mission. You remember the second exam proctor?" Sakura asks and she nods.

"Well, it turns out that the ferret Naruto had been charge to protect was the proctor and she mentioned how Kakashi should have corrected me when I started to rag on Naruto about him not handing over the scroll for Sasuke to sign." Sakura tells her miserably and couldn't suppress a sigh.

Well, I guess that means that Naruto really did transfer off of Team 7. She muses as she begins to consider that maybe the current set of rumors aren't just hear say.

"Well... what did you expect, Sakura? I mean, what have you been doing since your team passed Kakashi's test? Surely you haven't stop your training just because you're a Genin? How did you expect to become a Chuunin if you don't keep up your training? Sasuke isn't going to be around all the time to save your butt, you know." She lectures Sakura, privately glad that she's managed to bug her father into giving her more training since her encounter with Gaara and his resident demon.

Naruto

As Konohamaru and him finish adding the finishing touches to the model as Tenten appears with a pair of Konohamaru closes friends, Udon and Moegi. He flashes a smile at the three while Konohamaru calls out a greeting.

"Hey you guys! Come to take a sneak peak at the model before everyone else gets here huh?" Konohamaru says with a wide grin.

"Is the torture chamber complete?" Moegi asks as the girl comes surging forward to look at the model in hopes of finding it. He chuckles at her actions before nodding at Tenten as she moves to take a look at the tiny weapons that a few of the Oni clones were testing.

"I still won't want to met any of those in real life." Udon mutters and he regards his mini Oni clones, privately agreeing that he wouldn't want a real life Oni that his Henge Oni were based off of.

"Got any idea for the next part of the story?" Moegi asks him and he replies, "Of course I do! I'll have you know that I had been on set for a Princess Gale movie as well as help rescue a genuine princess during my last mission!"

"Really?" The other four asks in surprise and he nods. "Really! But that's another story for another time." He tells them.

And so, the kids began to arrive, he's a bit stunned when Ino appears with the last group. He watches a look of surprise flicker in her eyes as she gets a better view of his mini clones and a slightly jerky reaction at the sight of his Oni clones.

"They're really... detailed." Ino admits to Tenten. "You should see his demon wolves! Now those were scary." One of the kid says with a lot of the kids nodding in agreement.

"Good to know my hard work is appreciated." He says with a smile, one that's returns by pretty much all of the kids.

As he moves to stand behind the model, he takes a few seconds to see if he can't spy Hanabi around before he begins his summary of what happened last time.

Ino

"Too bad Sakura didn't show. I'm fairly certain that she would have loved that performance." She tells Tenten as they watch as Konohamaru and Naruto finish getting anything movable off of the table before storing it in a storage scroll.

"Well, it's like that old saying about leading a horse to water but not being able to force the horse to drink." Tenten points out and she just smirks.

"Well then, who ever said that never knew a member of my family it would seem." She says in bemusement. "My family's specialty is using jutsus to alter a person's mind by forcing our will on them."

"Ready to go, Tenten? I think the auction starts in under an hour's time." Naruto says and she blinks as she glances questioningly at the older Genin.

"But the only auction going on today is a property auction..." She admits in confusion.

"Yea, there's a few properties I want to try and buy so that I can fix them up to sell for a larger sum at a later date." Naruto explains and she feels her jaw drop at the idea of what Naruto just purposed to do.

"But how do you... Never mind, I get a fairly good idea of where the labor is going to be done by." She admits as she recalls just how many clones Naruto's capable of creating.

"You can come along if you want. Tenten's going to pitch in money if the price is going over my limit. I promised her a quarter from the sale if she helps me with the wiring and half if she helps me buy it." Naruto explains and Tenten nods.

"So... if I offer to help decorate it, can I expect to get a minor payment for my services?" She asks and Naruto blinks, kind of surprised at her interest.

I always wanted to decorate a house to prove what great taste I have. I just might be able to start with this one! She thinks with a grin.

"Well, most of the properties I'm trying to get are old inns. I'm not sure if it would be fair to expect you to decorate all of the rooms... But, you could always try for the lobby or for a whole floor." Naruto offers and she quickly grabs his hand and shakes it.

"Deal!" She cries and then they're off to the auction, she made a mental note to begin a color book for various things, mainly for carpet and paint, for now at least.

As he waits for the first lot to come up, he couldn't help but review how he managed to arrive with not just one girl, but two. *And I'm not even trying to date and I've already got at least three girls interested, well, I'm not sure if Temari is still in the race considering I haven't see her since the Chuunin exam...* He admits thoughtfully to himself as he glances first at Tenten's profile before turning to regard Ino's.

Well, at least I had those clones read through most of those home improvement books before my last mission. He admits as he watches as bidding wars erupt for certain manors that likely belonged to rich citizens who had either died during the invasion or decided to move to safer portions of the village, away from the walls that surround the village.

Finally, the first of the four properties comes up and he begins to finger his bidding paddle. Finally the time has come to try his luck at buying a property to renovate so that he can sell it at a higher price later. "The starting bid for this property begins at seven hundred dollars, do I have seven hundred dollars for this lot?" The auctioneer asks.

He waits as he glances around to see if anyone's going to bid. After a few seconds, he raises his paddle, it seems that nobody wanted the old inn because it's missing a corner edge of the roof. It takes a few seconds before the people to realize that he's here and that he just put in a bid for a property.

Unsurprisingly, somebody decides to bid against him simply to spite him. By the time the bidding ended, he didn't win the bidding but he managed to make one of his spiteful opponents buy it for a whopping seventy thousand and eighty-two dollars and nine cents.

"They would rather pay ten times what it's worth just to keep you from buying it? What an idiot!" Ino hisses softly as a new lot is put up for bidding. He notices that by now, the man who won finally realized

just how much he had paid for an already run down inn that will likely need a new roof.

"What can you expect when people aren't thinking rationally?" Tenten muses and he nods in agreement, though he did notice Tenten seems to be less tense now that the lot is gone.

After three lots, the second lot of interest to him appears and like before, once he started to bid on it, it suddenly became a very hot item, but unlike the last guy, this one stop doing hundreds and began doing tens, so this guy didn't pay as much as the first fool, but it's still a price higher then what the lot is worth.

He gathered a few evil eyes, although the auctioneer looks slightly pleased about the prices for both properties and as new lots appeared would look expectantly at him in hopes of him trying to place a bid on them.

"Must work at a percent commission." Ino muses as she caught the man with a grovel glancing at him with a slightly hopeful look.

"Well, we're not really looking for houses, just inns, at the moment." Tenten says and he nods slightly in agreement.

"You know, I think I just might save up my money and buy myself an auction house when I want to move out. A lot of these properties after going for a fairly cheap price." Ino admits.

"Well, some of these are ones that the Council inherited from families or confiscated when the owners are found to be traitors of the village. Heck, I wouldn't be surprised to see the Uchiha land up for sale later on since old man Third did buy them from Sasuke after the massacre." He whispers to his seat neighbors.

"Really? I thought he still owned it." Ino admits and he snorts softly before whispering, "He likely visits parts of it at times but he's got no real claim to it. Although if he ever marries, I believe somebody just might buy it and gift it back to him as a wedding present. I mean, it's

been up for years and nobody's ever been interested in them, believing that the lands are cursed because of what happened."

Tenten and Ino glance at him, both likely stunned by what he's said. "Then why not buy them if they're going to be up? We could totally renovate the whole district!" Ino says and he sighs.

He frowns but doesn't comment since he really doubts that they'd be able to buy it. *Oh well, it's not like it'll appear until after we're done here.* He tells himself.

"And before we continue, I would like to draw attention to lot number seventy-two, the Uchiha district. This lot has been offered since the last Uchiha of the village sold it to the Third Hokage, three month after the massacre occurred. Now then, the bidding starts at ten dollars, do I have ten dollars?" The auctioneer calls and he suddenly has a very bad feeling about this.

"Ten dollars right here!" Ino calls out and it takes him a second to realize she's holding his arms up. His eyes widen as he glances around at the stunned crowd, each and everyone of them were gasping at him, and a few at Ino.

Finally, three minutes pass and the auctioneer declares, "Sold for ten dollars to number fifty-nine." The gravel hits the stand, finalizing the sale.

"What just happened?" He asks Tenten as Ino lets his arm drop. "I think you just bought the Uchiha district for ten dollars." Tenten replies.

"I thought that's what happened, I had been kind of hoping that it had just been a daydream is all." He admits numbly as he tries to wrap his head around this sudden turn of events. *Sasuke is so going to try and kill me.* He decides as he just stares straight ahead in a daze.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 8

Uchiha District

As evening approaches, the three of them walk down the deserted district that seems to be more likely a small town then a clan district. "I could probably have some clones start clearing out the houses, boxing what they find and then tear down the buildings so that we can recycle as much of the materials as we can so we don't need to buy much." He suggests as they walk pass two story shops that had likely been family owned.

"Just how many Uchiha had there been? I mean, this place seems to suggest that a few hundred lived here." Tenten says and Ino replies in a matter of fact way, "There had been about ninety when the massacre happened."

"I wonder if they had their own library?" He muses as they come to the main house, its where Sasuke might have lived before his brother killed off the clan.

After all, the clan were the greatest copy-cat ninja in the world and surely they kept some kind of written record of jutsus for those few who hadn't or couldn't activate the clan bloodline limit.

"Well, think of it this way, your army of mini clones can fit in about every nook and cranny of the property. If there is one, I'm sure you'll discover it." Tenten points out and he nods.

"I won't ask Neji or Hinata to help since the village likely had the Hyuuga clan take a look around." He admits and Ino gets a thoughtful look on her face.

They stood there, staring at the main house for a while as silence hangs about them. "Well, I guess we'll let your clones do your idea

and come back in the morning to get a better view of things. Although are you sure your clones will manage to do all that tonight?" Ino asks.

"They should, especially if I create a few in particular Henges, after all, I just have to reverse the formula that creates mini clones to create giants." He admits thoughtlessly. He suddenly prays that they haven't caught on how else he can apply that, especially with Henges.

"You really are full of surprises, huh, Naruto?" Tenten teases and Ino just grins in agreement. "It's not as if it's hard to seem so." He admits and he waits until they're at the entrance before creating three different waves of clones.

The first wave are normal clones that look like him, the second wave stand about seven to eight feet and look like lizard people. The clones of the second wave were built for strength and durability, it also helps that those thick talon like claws will be able to help pry fixed wooden panels off the frame. Of course the second wave took various colors.

"Now those I wouldn't want to fight." Tenten admits at the sight of the lizard men clones.

"I wouldn't expect you to last too long against them either, they're made to be strong and durable, that hide isn't just for show either. I've tested this type and they're fairly hard to dispel using range weapons and simple kicks and punches." He pauses before continuing, "They also take more then a single hit too. I think it's got something to do with me mixing my Henge jutsu with the clone jutsu before it exits out of my body that makes them more superior to the human ones that I create."

"Which explains why those Oni could take more damage then those mini hero clones, huh?" Tenten muses and he nods.

"Yea, although I have been finding that if I form a hand sign while creating the normal type, they're capable of taking at least three hits before dispelling. In a few years, who know? They might be able to take five or even six." He admits to the pair.

With his third wave of clones, they were likely the strangest looking out of the three waves, but he needed them to check for left over traps. They stood about four feet high at the shoulder and a good six feet in length without including the long whip like tail that is about four feet in length. They're black in color with thick toes with tiny, yet sharp claws. He hopes that the toes will mimic gecko toes so that his clones could climb vertical surfaces without using any chakra.

"Trap finders. Although, I'll admit that their Henge is still in the testing phase." He explains to the two stunned girls as the third wave begins to advance towards the buildings with the other two waves bringing up the rear.

"You're just a regular zoo, aren't you?" Ino says dryly and he flushes.

"Actually, trap finders are a pretty smart move, especially if they're capable to surviving a beating." Tenten admits thoughtfully.

"You can transform into those two varieties then?" Ino asks curiously.

"Yea, but I prefer to use clones as Henge testers since if there's a fatal flaw in the Henge design, I don't die." He explains.

"How many clones did you lose to that?" Tenten asks with a concern frown.

"Too many, but I'm getting better at pointing them out on paper before I start physical testing. Although, you can't catch everything." He admits in a dull tone as he recalls the memories of those slowly dying clones who couldn't even dispel to have their misery cut short.

Such memories were just another source of nightmares but they're also the reasons why he tries his hardest to catch the mistakes

before he even begins to create them. *I better watch myself, those thoughts lead to the duck-butt side of life. And I'm sure as hell not going to travel that path if I can help it!*

"Well, I better head home before daddy sends out a search party." Ino muses jokingly and so, they split up for the night. They'll meet back here around eight to study a cleared district.

Tenten

His clones did a pretty good job at tearing down most of the buildings. She admits as she waits by the gate for Naruto and Ino to show.

She's not sure what to make of Ino's sudden intrusion into Naruto's life but then, a lot of things seem to be going loopy lately since the invasion from the villages of Sand and Sound. Heck, she never thought she's find herself enjoying the company of the villages biggest prankster, but here she is, waiting the the blond to show.

"You want to take a look at the boxes while you're waiting?" A normal clone asks her after a few minutes.

"Will, I guess it wouldn't hurt. You mind waiting here to tell them where I am?" She asks the clone.

"I'll direct Ino if she show up before Naruto. Naruto won't need me to do more then tell him." The clone states calmly.

"Isn't it confusing to be a copy of him? I mean, you're Naruto too." She says and the clone just smiles slightly.

"Well, we've gotten into the habit of picking names for ourselves. Me, I'm Cloud-Sight, the ninth clone to use that name." Cloud-Sight explains.

"So you all take names?" She asks, glancing over at a group of resting lizard men clones before staring back at Cloud-Sight.

"Yea, see that dun with pedal spots on the forehead? That's Daze. The green with black stripes is Soft-Field. The brown with dull red socks and the muzzle blaze is Battle-Rim." Cloud-Sight tells her with a slight smile on his face.

"I'm not sure if I should be concerned about Naruto having a mental disorder or relieved that I can call you lot by individual names." She admits and Cloud-Sight just chuckles.

"It's not as bad as that, Naruto's more then capable of knowing who he is not matter how many sets of memories he gathers. Naruto also doesn't have much time to review each clone memory in full detail, he's more incline to skim through important events of a clone's life then to relive it." Cloud-Sight explains.

"Well, I just as long as Naruto's mentally sound, it's alright. Though how he's managed to remain so after creating so many of you guys, I don't think I want to know." She admits and the clone named Cloud-Sight just shrugs.

"Each to their own, I guess. Anyway, the boxes are that way." Cloud-Sight tells her and she nods her thanks before heading off in that direction. *I wonder what kind of reaction Naruto would do if I called him Cloud-Sight?* She wonders briefly before dismissing that thought as she finally spots the large selection of boxes piled in neat stacks.

Naruto

He knew he should have expected to be called to the old lady's office but he had kind of hoped it wouldn't be until after he's visited his newly own district. *I wonder if I shouldn't rename it? I mean, I'm not an Uchiha and I really don't want something I own named after a dead clan.*

"You really ruffled a lot of feathers by your acquisition of the Uchiha district." Tsunade says as she enters into the office with Shizune in tow.

"Blame Ino! She's the one who held my hand up to bid on it. I just wanted to purchase of one of the run down inns being auctioned off. Tenten was there, you could check with her if you don't believe me!" He states in his defense.

"We do have reports that you were with to girls." Shizune tells him and he relaxes slightly.

"Ok then, why have I been called here then?" He asks as calmly as he could considering that he's very edgy about this whole meeting.

"The council wants to know if you plan to make any changes to the district." Tsunade explains.

"Oh boy." He says. "Err, are they for changes to it or against changes to it?" He asks nervously as he holds his hands together as he stares at Tsunade.

"I get the feeling they don't want you touching it at all." The old lady tells him with a raised eyebrow.

"Has anyone been out to check on the property since yesterday afternoon?" He asks and Tsunade shakes her head.

"Well... I'm not sure how to say this then... I've already have my clones working on dismantling all of the buildings and before I came here, sent a few clones to begin checking on prices for standard construction equipment. I'd say that by tonight, there won't be a building left standing." He tells the pair behind the desk.

"Just how much of the buildings have been disassembled?" Tsunade asks with a hint of amusement.

He shrugs as he replies, "Wouldn't know, I haven't visited the site since I set my army of clones to take it apart. I did create clones to find traps and then I created another group for heavy lifting. But I feel confident to say that maybe a third of the building have been done

with another third likely already in the process of being dismantled. They have been at it since yesterday evening."

Silence seem to hang thickly in the air as Tsunade reaches for a hidden bottle of sake. He notices a disapproving look on Shizune's face at this action. He begins to wonder if he's allow to go now that he's pretty much answered her questions.

"One more thing, might I examine another one of your dragons?" Tsunade asks him after taking a sip from the bottle. He blinks, wondering if she's caught on to his trick.

"Sure, how big do you want it?" He asks curiously, he wonders just what kind of tests the old bat will put his clone through.

"Nothing too big." Tsunade tells him and he gives her a calculating look before shrugging.

Within seconds he's created something highly unique, something he hadn't done before. He created a female dragon clone. *"Oh, exploring your feminine side, eh?"* The three foot neon green dragon clone muses with mischief glinting in her navy blue eyes. The horns on her head were just orange nobs and she lacked the characteristic whiskers that the majority of his dragon clones usually sport.

"A young one, eh?" Tsuande muses from behind the desk and he raises an eyebrow at her before asking, "So, does this mean I'm dismissed?"

"By all means, go." The first female Hokage tells him and he glances over to Shizune before doing just that. Giving the female dragon clone a look, he walks out of the office.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 9

Month Later

He watches as his clones cheer as they finally create a building using an earth jutsu that creates stone pillars. It had taken time to modify the jutsu to expand its surface between two pillars, creating a wall.

The next step that they needed to do had been getting the wall to be created with pipes running through it and small tunnels for wires with outlets for wall plugs. Slowly, with the help of his clone to help control when and how the chakra got applied, they created floors complete with stairways, windows slots, and door ways.

He's been thinking of adding an elevator shaft to the larger buildings, one that will likely be either apartment buildings or for a huge indoor market place that Ino wanted built. *It's a good thing that I've already got clones learning as much as they can to build that seal engine that are used in mines to bring up cartfulls of ore and rock to the surface.*

"Though how to adapt it so that they can chose which floor to stop at?" He wonders to himself as he watches at his clones finally stop cheering in favor to explore the contents of the two story house that's been freshly created.

"Sakura and Sasuke have been spotted coming here!" Rat-Cloth shouts, he turns to glance at the furry four foot clone in the shape of his first custom, the one he had his clones use while they worked within the Forest of Death during the second part of the Chuunin exam. They made good scouts and fleet footed raiders, though what really helps is that nobody expected them to be as strong as they are given their slender build.

He groans mentally before nodding his thanks to Rat-Cloth. He then jogs to the gates of his district to met with them, he's sure that they wouldn't spot his clones shadowing them as they come towards these lands that use to belong to Sasuke's clan.

He slows once he's withing a few feet of the open gate. He stops between them and spots the two Genin that he had once been teamed with. *Why did I have a crush on Sakura?* He wonders as he tries to think of a compelling reason why he had been sweet on her.

Such thoughts were interrupted when Sasuke says, bluntly, "What are you doing here, Dobe?"

"Here's a question, what do you think you"re doing here, duck-butt? After all, you no longer own this part of the village." He says calmly with his arms crossed behind his head.

Sasuke just sneers and tosses a bill onto the ground. "And now I do again." Sasuke says and he snorts.

"I'm not selling this land, not when I went to so much trouble tearing down the buildings. Although I am planning to sell the shrine and I guess that you can have it for ten dollars." He muses as he takes out the scroll and tosses it at Sasuke's feet.

"Kind of stupid secret, you know? But I guess if people knew it, they wouldn't be thinking that you're so hot, huh? Killing your best friend... you don't even have one to kill, do you? Unless you've somehow grown attached to Sakura there, I don't think you'll ever achieve that final version." He says as he puts a foot on the bill before it blows away.

Sakura looks pale, it seems that she hadn't believed it at first but on seeing that look of out rage which turns to blazing hatred, it seems she is now giving credit to his statement about the Uchiha's family secret.

"You read it?" Sasuke's voice seems icy and he shrugs.

"Actually, Ino found it and read it. She then told Tenten who in turn reported it to her teacher. He then came and confirmed what's written, made a copy of it while I tried to find a hint of a secret entrance. Later a group of Jonin came and took a look at the shrine within five hours of Tenten's teacher running off." He informs the pair and Sasuke's eyes seem to pop out on hearing just how many people were now likely aware of this secret.

"Then how's this the shrine?" Sakura asks as she picks up the storage scroll as Sasuke tries to kill him by glaring at him.

"Well, apparently, seals can store plenty of things like weapons, food, water, cloths... With a lot of help from Tenten and an anonymous student of mine, we managed to figure out how to seal a minor bit of land onto a scroll. Just think of it, if we continue with that line of research we can totally move huge tracks of land around." He takes a breather with a predatory grin.

"Need a mountain moved from your path? For the right amount we'll do just that. We'll make the impossible possible! Ino's practically drooling at the thought of what kind of money we can make by offering this kind of service! I swear she's already planning the wedding." He muses with a shake of his head, not really sure if the wedding is going to between the three of them or just two of them.

I bet if Hanabi was old enough, Ino would be adding her to the bride list. He muses. He did wonder what Hanabi has planned for her clan. He's not sure but knows that it seems to involve seals and using the few jutsus he taught her.

"She's already did." Sakura admits in a distracted way as she tries to hand the scroll over to Sasuke. *Not that Sasuke seems happy at owning that little bit of property.*

"Well then, I do believe that our business is concluded, you can go." He tells the pair and Sasuke's face hardens a fraction.

"This district belongs to ME , you **DOBE** ! You get lost before I skin you alive!" Sasuke snarls with his fists clutched and his Sharingan spinning.

He snorts, not very impressed with this action. *Thank god Hanabi gave me that seal proto-type.* He tells himself as he signals for his clone to stay back.

"You sold these lands to the village, duck-butt and I bought them after they've been up for grabs for years! If you intended to keep the land, you shouldn't have sold them to old man Third! Now get, you're not welcome here, little miss spoiled clan fan before you force me to do something to upset your supporting fan base." He tells the brat as his index finger rubs one of the seal tags in his pocket.

With a bellow, the Uchiha charges him and within seconds, the paper seal gets transferred from his hand onto Sasuke's bare arm. With a quick fire, the paper burns itself up and the spoiled brat stumbles to the ground.

"Sasuke!" Sakura shouts and rushes automatically to the brooding bastard's side, dropping the storage scroll that contains the Uchiha family shrine.

One the spot where the tag had hit, there is now the kanji that means Seal within a circle within a triangle. *I wonder how much it hurt to have your eyes turn off by an outside force? Did it blind him?* He muses, not that he can answer either question at the moment since Sasuke's face is blocked by Sakura's body.

Finally Sakura moves and he finds that Sasuke's eyes were back to their usual coloring. "What did you do?!" Sakura demands as she suddenly appears in his face.

"I warned him to leave, but did he listen? No! So I dealt with an aggressive intruder as I saw fit. Now get him out of here!" He tells the pink haired Genin with his fists around his waist as he dares her to try anything.

He swears he feels his clones tense up, ready to spring into action if she tried to hit him in the head like she has grown used to do while they were in the academe and were on the same team. He couldn't help but feel relief as Sakura looks away before she turns to try and help Sasuke get up off the ground.

Sasuke shakes her off as he gives her a glare before trying glaring at him. Within seconds, Sasuke cries out and covers his eyes with his hands. "Undo this." Sasuke growls and he just rolls his eyes.

"I haven't studied seals, try asking Tenten or a local seal master for help. Now, leave, I grow bored talking with the slow witted." He says as he picks up the bill.

He turns his back on the pair and other then feeling killing intent wash over him, nothing happens. He slowly walks away and one of his furry clones reports, *"They're moving away. Although, they're leaving the scroll."*

"Could one of you guys tail them and find a way to give it to them without being seen? I rather not have to deal with anyone who still thinks I 'stole' it when they already left it behind." He tells the group.

It didn't take long before the matter to be settled before he's out of normal range of their telepathy.

Tenten

"I still don't believe that this is going to work." Konohamaru says as they finish bundling up one of the bags containing copies of Naruto's orange jumper.

"Hehehe! You'd be surprised at how many people picked in to help pay for this misison and I'm not just speaking about Anko's contribution either! Heck, Lady Tsunade herself helped by giving this mission a discount!" Ino tells them.

"So troublesome." Ino's shadow using team-mate mutters and she sighs. *I can't believe I lost to him.* She thinks as she finishes dumping rotten milk down the drain.

"Boss isn't going to like this, that's all I'm saying." Konohamaru grumbles as he drags the bag over towards the open door.

"Why is he here again?" She asks Ino as she glances out of the window to stare at the Hokage cliff monument. She couldn't help but admit that the Fourth face seems to have a soft look as she gazes at it.

"He threatened to go tell Naruto if we didn't let him help." Ino admits and Konohamaru huffs. "Don't talk about me like I'm not even here!" The scarf wearing kid says hotly with his arms crossed over his chest.

"Well, I believe I've done what I can in the fridge. I guess we better start hauling them out of here." She tells the others.

Shikamaru pauses by the door for a few seconds to glance around the apartment as she begins to walk to join him by the door. "Maybe we should just..." Ino begins but Konohamaru shakes his head with a sigh.

"You guys are only suppose to be doing his wardrobe! Nothing more, nothing less! If Naruto wants that stuff off the floor, he's more then capable of doing the job himself." Konohamaru reminds the blond Genin with his arms crossed over his chest, pretty much daring Ino to try and do some house keeping for their fellow Leaf Genin.

"Well, let's hurry up and get these bags out of here so that we can then fulfill the second part of this mission before evening." She says as she picks up one of the bags resting by the door.

"So troublesome." Shikamaru says in his usual bored tone, well, she thinks it's his usual tone since she hasn't had any real reason to

spend a lot of time with the so call Rookie Nine, well beyond Naruto and Ino.

"Where's the third member? The one I'm replacing." She asks as she carries two bags out into the hallway.

"Choji's getting some private training from his father today." Shikamaru explains as he joins her in the hallway with a bag in each hand.

"Ah, I see. I know how that is since Neji has recently been getting special attention from Hinata's father. Gai's a fair instructor so he's been giving Lee and myself private lesson on different days when we don't have any team missions and when Neji's getting his private lessons." She tells them as she walks towards the stairs with both hands full.

"I wish Asuma would do more then sit around playing board game with Shikamaru. The only time we really do anything is when we've got a team mission." Ino states sourly.

"Gee, I didn't know that being a Genin could be such a hassle." Konohamaru says as he drags one bag out of the apartment.

She's startled as he turns to look at the academe student. It seems she's not the only one who's forgotten about the Third's grandson. "Well... Naruto did transfer off of Team 7 because of Sasuke and Kakashi." Ino admits slowly.

"I thought it had something to do with Kakashi not using that month to train him for the Chuunin tournament. That not only did Kakashi train Sasuke, who didn't make it, but didn't even invite Sakura along so give her training." She says.

"It's probably both." Shikamaru says as they walk down the stairs to the main floor. The bulky bags hitting the stairwell and the wall as they make slow progress downward.

"So, the boss doesn't have a team at this moment? I thought it was because he's not getting along very well with duck-butt." Konohamaru admits.

"It's that's what it takes to break up a team then mine would have been dismantled within the month of our formation." She admits as she recalls how often Lee and Neji had fought during that time.

"So it's not much different then being an academe student, huh? Only instead of a whole class to deal with, the instructor only has to deal with three kids and they earn money by doing mission." The kid muses as they continue down with the bags filled with cloths. "How come there isn't more Genin teams? I mean, teachers are suppose to take kids and 'mold' them into decent ninjas, right?"

She blinks before chuckling and Shikamaru answers Konohamaru's inquiry. "After you get the headband from your Chuunin instructors and get placed on a team, it's down to the Jonin to decide if they want to deal with a group of kids or not. Most prefer not to, so minimally, only three teams pass. Since this is peace time, nobody feels any pressure to put up with a bunch of brats if they won't want to."

"Then what happens to those that form such teams? I mean, doesn't that kill their chances to become ninja?" Konohamaru asks in puzzlement.

"I think they get sent to some kind of boot camp, that is if they still want to become ninja, to be trained in a different set of skills. From there, I believe most go into being mail-nin, other with the right amount of control to the hospital for Medic training, and others becoming undercover agents." Shikamaru continues on to explain.

He's surprisingly well informed for a Genin. She admits. She never really gave much thought about what happens to those that fail their Jonin instructor's test and now she knows.

"After a while, most of them begin to pick up other trades and in their twenties, they quit being ninja to become skilled tradesmen with a family to support." Shikamaru finishes and she sighs.

"And of course, most ninja never bother to start a family." She muses thoughtfully, it's likely why so many quit the profession once they have kids to support.

Silence descends upon them and finally they're at the main level of the building. She finds it a bit tricky to open the door leading out of the stairwell but she manages with before Ino makes it to the bottom step.

"You think Naruto's willing to continue to give me lessons?" Konohamaru asks as they finally toss the bags into the garbage. They made it just before they came to load up the trash bins.

"I think that unless he's sent out of the village, he be up to teach you, as long as you don't take it for granted." She says to the kid. Konohamaru nods his head with a thoughtful look on his face.

"Now to go 'kidnap' Naruto from the construction site." Ino says while rubbing the palm of her hands together. She raises an eyebrow at the glint that accompanies Ino's plotting grin.

Whatever it is that she's plotting, I just hope it won't cause lasting harm to the rest of us... She prays to whatever good spirits and gods were out there watching them.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 10

Clone #12 - Code Name: **Gem-Crow**

"Intruders! Intruders!" He shouts mentally as he spots a group of three ninja wearing the basic black cloths as the three leap from one branch to another.

He takes aim and throws a rock at one of them. This action causes the three to turn to look at him as he takes out another rock to throw at them with him growling at them.

"How many are there?" Silver-Tip shouts as the other comes to aid him.

"Three dressed in classic ninja wear! Don't see any headband either!" He replies as he dodges to the left as a few kunai are thrown at him.

He makes angry vocal sounds as he continues to evade the incoming weapons while still attacking the party of three with rocks from the seemingly small pouch that's strapped to his left hip. The three soon join him on the ground but they split up without saying a word.

"And here I am! The great Forest-Coat of the Moomba clones!" Shouts one of the four reinforcements that arrive, Forest-Coat makes sure to echo it by giving his best roar.

Maybe Naruto shouldn't spend so much time with Tenten's team-mate... Although why does he call us Moomba I'll never know. Sounds like some kind of festival then a race's name. He muses while Silver-Tip looks embarrassed about Forest-Coat's actions. Although it does seem that the three ninja seem to pause at Forest-Coat's arrival and his attempts at doing the good guy pose.

"Let's just hurry this up? We don't know when the regular visitors will appear." Silver-Tip asks and with that, Forest-Coat takes out a length of rope that has two stones at each end and begins to twirl it in the air while the two, yet to be named clones take out short wooden sticks as they move to confront two of the three black clad ninja.

"I've contacted Brass-Ring and Copper, they're moving their groups into position. All we have to do is get them to chase us in about ten minutes. So, keep them occupied until I tell you its time." Silver-Tip informs them.

"Rogue!" They chime as they try to play a kind of tag with the three ninja.

Ino

Where did these guys come from? She couldn't help but wonder as she does her best to defend herself from thrown rocks from a slightly familiar creature. *These guys are like the ones we encountered during the Chuunin exam!* She admits with wide eyes as she recalls their encounter with the strange cute beings that forced her to wear Lee's jumpsuit.

And nobody knew where they came from too! It's like they appeared out of nowhere and vanish the same way they appeared! She thinks as she tries to avoids the throwing rope that the one that did a good guy pose had been twirling about.

As Tenten takes hold of at least five kunai in each hand, the whatevers drop their tails and turn to flee suddenly from battle. Within less then a minute, Tenten's already pursuing them and soon, she follows after the older Genin. She silently curses the fact that she managed to get the others to agree to remain silent until after they've captured the bewhiskered blond since she would have called out to Tenten that they're running into a likely trap.

She couldn't help but notice that the beings were racing ahead of them while running on all fours, which makes it harder for her to get

a good look at where they're going since she has to look more towards the forest floor to keep them in sight. As they break into a clearing, she watches as they suddenly and sharply change direction with a few going right and the rest going left.

But before Tenten and herself could adjust their course, they've hop over a log and within seconds, they find themselves in a net trap. Ropes manage to lasso Shikamaru before he had time to switch out with a log or something.

"Well, isn't this just great." Shikamaru muses and at the sound of Shikamaru's voice, the furry beings seem to stiffen. They look at each other before one of them moves and takes off the black cloth head dress.

"Oh boy..." She hears a voice say within the depths of her mind as the strange creatures just stand there, staring wide eyed at Shikamaru's bared face.

"What do you mean, 'Oh boy'? Get us out of here!" She demands after a few seconds and with a start, the creatures turn to regard Tenten and her as they hang in the air in the net.

"..." Then one of the more reddish furred beings moves to undo the knot that is holding this counter net with large stones.

Before the rope shots up to send them hurling to the ground, the same creature takes hold of that part of the rope. Then, slowly, they're lowered to the ground.

Once out of the net, she takes off the head part of the out fit and finally asks, "You're all Naruto clones, aren't you?"

They glance at each other before they nod with guilty expressions on their furry faces. *"How were we suppose to know that you guys were who you are? Those cloths didn't help at identifying who you are, you know!"* A voice accuses them as one of the furry clones crosses their arms over their fluffy chest.

"I understand you but you're mouth's not moving..." Tenten murmurs in surprise.

She couldn't help but glance at Tenten first before giving her team-mate a questioning look. Shikamaru nods slightly, answering the unspoken question about whether or not he heard that too.

"So, Naruto's the one that made life difficult in the Forest of Death?" Tenten asks slowly and another one of the furry clones replies, *"Yea... but there wasn't anything in the rules against what we did you know. After all, you guys did get your scrolls without encountering dangerous foreign ninja."*

"He's got a point." She admits in a grudging fashion after a few seconds of silence.

"Troublesome." Shikamaru mutters as he begins to get out of those ropes with some help from Naruto's furry clones.

"That should be more surprising then it is." Tenten admits and she sighs as she nods in agreement.

"Well, carry on then. He should know that you're on your way." Another tells them and with that, the furry shadow clones head off to patrol their portion of the forest, leaving them alone.

"I wonder how long he's been using Henge shadow clones?" She wonders as they slowly head towards the district that's now owned by Naruto.

"Well, I'd say since he started to entertain those kids." Tenten muses and she couldn't help but agree as she thought about the few run downs she's gotten from those same kids.

Naruto

As the clones begin to experiment on how stable the new building is, he finds himself leaning on a wall, waiting for his friends to arrive.

He's kind of nervous about the whole episode with his clones.

I wonder why they were dressed up though? He wonders as he reviews the images of Ino, Shikamaru, and Tenten that were passed along by his two hundredth and under clones.

But finally, the three arrived and he couldn't help but shake his head at the sight of them. *It's so different to see it myself then when reviewing memories from my clones.* He muses softly as he straightens up.

"I can't believe you forced me to wear Lee's spandex!" Ino shouts accusingly at him and he scratches duck his head in embarrassment.

"It's not as if I have any real control over my clones once I create them. They've been developing their own personality faster and faster these pass few months." He admits and he notices a slightly alarming look in Shikamaru's eyes for a few seconds before the same bore look takes hold in his eyes.

"But they're still based off of you, right?" Ino asks and he couldn't help but give that thought a bit of thinking before he answers, "Well, I am suppose to be the top prankster in Hidden Leaf."

Ino gives him a flat look while Tenten looks bemused that he'd be proud of that. "So bothersome, can we finish this mission?" Shikamaru asks and he frowns in confusion while Ino sends a slight glare at her team-mate.

"Huh? What mission?" He asks the three. It didn't take long before Ino's glaring at Shikamaru while Tenten says, "Well, apparently some ninja managed to break into your apartment to get hair samples for a scroll. They ripped apart your cloths for those samples, so we had to throw them out."

He blinks, he couldn't help it but wonder if this wasn't another one of those tasks where people were trying to get him out of his typical

orange jumpsuit. "And what kind of scroll were they trying to create?" He asks in spite of himself.

"A summoning scroll." Ino states as Tenten's about to reply to his inquiry.

"Which village tried this?" He asks and Shikamaru seems just as interested as him in the answer.

"Ah..." The two girl trail off and he sighs. "Iruka sponsered the mission, didn't he?" He asks in a flat tone and the two girls get startled looks.

"Sure... It's Iruka's idea." Ino says and he gives her a blank look as he crosses his arms, waiting for Ino to spill the soy beans.

"Ok, fine, it was my idea but a lot of people donated money for this mission." Ino finally says as she crosses her arms over her chest with a scowl fixated on her face.

Well, I'll have to hand it to her, she actually managed to get this whole clearing out my closet into an official mission. I bet she went right to Tsunade too. He muses with a sigh.

"Ok, then who's paying for my new wardrobe?" He asks with a hand on his hip. "Huh?"

"You?" Tenten says and he just sighs before he frowns as some memories begin to slowly come into his mental reach. He couldn't help but cock his head to the side and stare off into space, busy trying to find fault with the idea.

Why shouldn't it work? After all, I always did manage to appear without anything but those clouds hugging my form or without them... Heck, my clones often appear in other kinds of cloth then what I have one... Well, as long as I focus on what I want them to be wearing... He think to himself as he slowly nods his head in agreement with those thoughts.

As he comes out of his thoughts, he gives the group a foxy grin and within seconds of forming a hand sign, his attire appears altered once the smoke vanishes. The cloths he pictured in his mind were now on his body, a simple orange top with soft brown pants. His various pouches and his headband have vanished, which causes him to frown.

It takes him at least three more tries before he finally manages to keep his ninja equipment where he had it before, although he did have to straighten his handband. Once that's done, he begins to see if he can take off the shirt to see if it'll vanish if it's not in contact with his body.

Within the hour he's fairly confident at his ability to manufactured chakra cloths as if it appears to be a natural skill. He knows that it'll take him some more time before he'll be satisfied with this technique, most likely to see how well it'll last as time pass as well as to see if he can work on the quality of the cloths, to see if he can't make them more durable and capable to self-repair if he channels a bit of chakra into them.

A slight cough causes him to remember that he's got company. After blinking a few time as he glances at the group, he feels his face redden. "Just what do you think you were doing?" Ino finally asks him.

"You remember that Sexy jutsu I used to use? Well, I usually appeared naked right? I mean, sure the clouds blocked certain parts but still... And you know that usually return to be clothed after ending it right? And then there's the fact that I can create clones that lack cloths or better yet, come with their very own set of attire! So why spend money on cloths when all I have to do is spend chakra to create whatever kind that I want? I have plenty of chakra!" He explains as he leads them through his sudden brilliant thought process.

Slowly the others begin to nod with Tenten muses, "Shadow Cloths jutsu." He blinks slightly at the name before nodding in agreement.

"Exactly!" He crows as he smiles widely at Tenten.

Ino's mouth moves but no sound comes out while Shikamaru has a thoughtful look on his face. Then Ino seems to recovers and within seconds he finds his hands being held by Ino's as she gazes at him, complete with stars in her eyes. "Teach me, great one! Teach me this jutsu and I'll be yours until the end of time!" Ino declares very passionately, causing him to feel like a deer caught in the path of a speeding fire ball.

All this 'cause of cloths? He wonders as he tries to think of an answer to Ino's offer.

The Many Shades of Naruto Part 11

Mission Code Name: Talent Show

Why are we doing this again? He wonders as he stays behind the curtains. His clones and him were putting the finishing touches on some plot outlines.

"I can't believe she went along with this!" A clone of his murmurs, currently called Steel, and he sighs softly while wondering just how it was that he managed to get the last slot of this supposed 'talent show'.

"I think the citizens wanted some excuse to see princess Uchiha's mad 'skills'." Another clone, Silver, remarks.

"Can we stick to our discussion?" The third clone, called Copper asks in an annoyed tone while giving Silver and Steel flat looks. Silver rolls his eyes while Steel looks sheepish.

"Well, I think we can pull this off even with the slight changes we made to the story." He says and then frowns as he asks, "Too bad we couldn't translate most of the words it's written in."

The three clones who's job will be switching the stage props just give him a flat look. "I'm just amazed we figured out that whoever created that thin book wrote it from left to right." Steel muses while Copper sighs.

"It wasn't hard to figure out, especially with those advertisements hanging around at the end of it." Copper explains.

"I'm sure we've got it figured out." Silver says, waving his hand in a dismissive gesture. "I'm more interested in the music and sounds that'll be helping to set the mood."

"Too bad I won't get to see their faces when we cause the right scene and set of actors to appear out of 'thin' air." Silver admits sorrowfully with a slight sigh and he groans while the other two clones just shake their head.

"I'll try and memorize their faces for you." He reminds Silver. "It just wouldn't be the same." Silver replies.

"I think Kiba's done." Copper says as the copper haired clone looks over the huddle. He perks up and glances to find a panting Kiba and a tuckered out Akamaru.

"Sakura, you're up!" Kiba calls out to the pink haired Genin. He watches as Sakura walks stiff legged towards the stairs that lead up to the stage.

"Well, we better get ready, I doubt she'll last the minimum of five minutes on stage." Silver says and then says, "I bet she faints."

"I bet she runs off stage." Steel says and he says, "I bet she vomits on stage."

"Very mature." Copper states with a roll of his eyes. "We're barely thirteen! We're entitled to be immature!" Silver remarks in a manner of fact way.

"We're Genin! We're pretty much legal adults!" Copper hisses and the silver haired clone just rolls his eyes while Steel and him glance between the two before a flash of white catches their attention.

Within seconds, Sakura is coming off stage on a stretcher. "I so win that bet." Silver says in a smug fashion and he snorts softly.

"Ok, the curtain is down. You guys know what to do." He says and before he climbs up the stairs, he creates the complete cast of mini clones on the large and diverse miniature stage. It wasn't long before Copper, Silver, and Steel were standing at the miniature.

"Break a leg!" One of the cat creatures calls out mentally.

He moves out from behind the curtain and once at the center where the microphone is, he makes a slight throaty sound before he addresses the audience. He did note a certain teenager with her red haired brother and wonders when they arrived in the village, let alone what they're doing here at this talent show.

"As you all know, I'm the great Naruto Uzumaki! And for your enjoyment I'll be doing a command performance using only shadow clones as the cast. While I haven't the faintest idea of what the play that you're about to see played out before your vary eyes, I've come to call it The Fall." He says into the mic.

"We are ready." Steel tells him and he smiles at the audience as he says, "Enjoy the show."

With that, he takes the stand and the microphone with him as he moves off to the side just as a bit of chakra flares up, signaling that the new stage has been set just before the curtains begin to raise up. Soft chirps begin to sound as most of the extra lights get turned off.

Soon he manages to alter his voice box and he begins to narrate into the microphone as his clones begin to take their positions. **"In the beginning, the gods wandered the land. In time they would grow bore and decided it was time to create life. And so they shaped a paradise, a place where all living beings were to lived in harmony."** He says into the mic.

"It was a place of beauty, a land where man and beast lived side by side, at least, until humans began to lust for more, for a place where they stand above the beasts of the land, the water, and the air." He says, he didn't bother to cast a glance at his clones, he knows that they're acting their part as typical sounds play from the speakers.

"No longer content to be part of nature, humans began to gather allies from various species that live along side of them. These beasts were willing to risk it all in hopes of sharing in the domination of their neighbors." He feels the scenery begin to alter and waits for it to end before continuing.

"But the gods did not wish for this to be. So the gods took two felines and took them from being four legged... to two." He says, pausing as his two clones let loose their roars and snarls. It wasn't long before the air simmers once more to reveal a battle field with two opposing armies.

"The two warriors now blessed by the gods lead those beasts against the legion of traitors." He says and then waits for the signal for him to continue.

He remains motionless as the battle rages within less then ten feet from him. He watches the audience's reactions to the fight on stage and more then a few looked highly pale, although Gaara, if he remembers that one's name correctly, looked on with a great deal of interest, so much so that the red head Genin had a slight smile on his face.

He did wonder briefly wonder how it was that his clones manage to 'bleed' but decided not to think too deeply on it. It wasn't long before a victory yowl and cries echo from the animal kingdom army.

"And so after a great deal of blood shed, humans and their allies were driven from the paradise that the gods had created. It wasn't long after that the gods decided to test which of the two cat demi-gods were to rule over paradise. Taking over man's duty of shepherding those that inhabit paradise." He says and it wasn't long before the scene has changed once more.

"The gods placed a stone ankh into a pit of lava and decreed that the one to take the ankh out of the lava shall rule." He says and continues after a brief snarl of anger and despair erupts from the Sabre clone.

"Sabre tried in vain to reach for the ankh, he stopped only when the pain became too great." He says.

"But Panther used his tail to reach the ankh, showing a swiftness of the mind as well as a toughness of the body. And so Panther became ruler of paradise with Sabre standing by his side in an advisory position." He tells the audience.

The simmer occurs once more and he prepares to tell the end of this part of the story. After all, this part, while brief, was the only part he felt confident in acting out, even if he's been unable to translate what's written on the pages of the story.

"In time, Panther grew wary of governing the realm he had saved from human greed. Instead of Sabre moving to take over, Panther's two adopted children were given a chance to rule side by side." He says and waits for his next signal.

"It wasn't long before White revealed himself to be more domineering and especially more cruel then his brother Black. So much so that Panther was force to step in before the balance the gods had wish to remain broke." He says as he hears a scuffle going on.

"Black and White were banished, as they left they were transformed. They became men. Forbidden to return until they have learnt their respective lessons, leaving their adopted father, Panther to reign once more over paradise." He says and within a few seconds, the curtains descend and the stage returns to normal with another flare of chakra.

He glances around at the audience before heading off stage. He lets out a sigh he's been holding and heads to where his clones were to see if they experienced any trouble with switching and enlarging the various sections of the model as well as the mini clones.

Next Day

"You were marvelous! The passion! The creativity! You're a natural actor!" He jerks slightly as he's eating from his bowl of Ramen.

"Huh?" He mutters once he's swallowed what's in his mouth. He turns around and finds that not only were the Sand Genin standing behind him but some guy with sunglasses.

A guy who seems to be addressing him...

"How did you get the set to change like that? Was it some kind of jutsu? But then, that would mean that those clones would haven't have been shadow clones..." The man says and within seconds of saying that, the man goes into a thoughtful pose and begins to pace.

He sends the team from Sand a questioning look but face painted teen seems to be rolling his eyes at their client's actions. Gaara seems content to stare at him instead of answering his question.

"Then there's the fact that they still weren't full size..." The man muses and he decides to comment, "I didn't do full size because I doubted the stage would have held under the weight of an elephant. So I down sized the size of humans and the others followed suit."

"You can control the size of your clones?" The man asks slowly and he nods. "That's... that's... that's incredible! The cost of using smaller sets would be tremendous! You're a producer's dream all rolled into one! Not only can you be the star but you can even create faceless masses..."

He swears the man literally began to drool, complete with glazed eyes. He could tell that face paint and Temari look surprised at the idea of creating such small clones. *Oh boy, if only they knew...* He muses softly to himself as he waits for the man to recover from his thoughts.

"Well, that's nice and all, but I'm a ninja. So it's not as if I can star in your movie." He says as he gestures to his headband depicting the village's chosen symbol.

"I'm willing to pay any price to have an actor of your caliber in my latest block buster!" The man declares with a lot of passion and with that, the man walks off towards the tower with the Sand siblings trailing behind.

"Well, well, well, it seems that we're soon going to be able to brag about having a famous actor eating from our restaurant." Muses Teuchi, the owner of Ichiraku Ramen bar from within the kitchen.

He rolls his eyes as he turns to face the counter once more. He places the bowl back on the table and within seconds, he's back to devouring the contains of the bowl.

Hanabi

She jerks her head as the door opens and a man walks into the office just as Lady Tsunade signed her name, allowing her to travel beyond the village with Naruto as her escort/bodyguard, after all, she needed to get away to perfect her skills in seals without any of her clan knowing of her interest in the subject.

Well, at least it got completed before my father remembers what it is he signed. She muses as she watches impassively as a team from Sand enter a few seconds into the man has started to speak passionately with Lady Hokage.

Isn't she the one who... She wonders as she realizes where she's seen this team before. She couldn't help but feel like smirking.

Well, isn't this an interesting turn of events? I wonder if she's going to jump in and join the race for Naruto's heart? Oh well, I just hope that Hinata's not too disappointed when somebody else wins his heart. She thinks as she studies the young woman from Sand.

It didn't surprise her much to find the red haired Genin is staring at her. She only gives the youth a blank look before turning to look out through the window behind Lady Tsunade.

I wonder if I shouldn't go for a flight tonight... She muses at the sight of a few sparrows flying through the air before they land on the ledge of the window.

"So you want to have a Genin of our village star in your movie?" Lady Tsunade muses and she couldn't help but blink slowly as she realizes that nobody's notice that she's still in the office.

"The blond who specializes in shadow clones." The man says in agreement and she turns to regard the man with new interest. *Sounds like I'll be leaving the village sooner then I thought.* She muses as the Fifth motions for the man to sit.

"Do you plan to leave with Uzumaki today? After you're done here, I mean?" She asks the man.

"Young Hanabi here has engaged Naruto's services as she trains outside of the boundaries of our village." Lady Tsunade explains and the man sighs. "As long as she doesn't interfere with my movie she's welcome to travel with us."

With that, she gets out of the chair and after bowing respectfully towards the Fifth Hokage, she takes her leave. *I should probably try to use those proto-type teleportation seals to get my stuff.* She muses as she begins to make plans on how to get her stuff using only her slowly mastering ability of seals and the few jutsus she's been taught.

After all, her father can't forbid her if she's not there to detain.

Two Years Later

"How is it that it took two years to finish filming that movie?" Naruto wonders the open gate of Hidden Leaf comes within view.

"He did decide by the end there that he's got so much film that he'll be releasing two movies instead of the original one he wanted to

film." She points out calmly to the now fifteen year old Genin as they pause to take in the sights of the village's walls.

"Really? When was this?" The bewhiskered teen asks her and she smiles as she replies, "When Serizawa and her friends were slowly herding you into that corner so that you'd agree to go out for dinner with them."

"Oh? Oh!" Her escort says with a slight blush and with that, they begin walking towards the gate.

"It's odd to see the village again and not through our shadow clones' memories." Naruto says and she nods in agreement with her almost sibling. After all the time they spend together, she's come to see him more as an older brother then a love interest.

"I still haven't a clue as to how that seal array managed to not just create a shadow clone but one where the scroll signer is the one the scroll creates shadow clones of." And then she muses, "Can you imagine how easy it would be to get an enemy to sign it and then to interrogate the clone?"

"It really would cut down on kidnapping enemy nins. Although you would need to add something to keep the clone's memories from returning to signer so they can't report about the interrogation." Naruto adds and she nods thoughtfully.

"I'll have to work on that." She tells the blond. "Well, if you need any help, I'm sure you'll find plenty of unprepared vic... test subjects." Naruto says and she just smirks in agreement.

"Although... are you sure you don't want me to undo.. well, you know." She says as she glances at his head and Naruto moves his bangs as he shakes his head.

"Nay, I'll keep them for now, you never know when I need to vanish in a crowd while being pursued by..." Naruto trails off and she decides not to press it.

"Besides, I'm fairly sure you haven't removed yours." The blond points out and she parrots the blond's words back to him. "Well, you'll never know when I'll need to vanish into a crowd."

Naruto chuckles but nods in agreement with that. "Amon, sister!" The bewhiskered teen says and she punches him weakly in the left shoulder while she works at keeping her face from burning up.

"You're never going to let me live that down, are you?" She says with a fixed scowl on her face. Her arms were crossed over her chest and silence hangs between them as they enter into the village after they left about two years later.

They show their passports to the pair of Chuunin guarding the gate. Once that's done, they head for the tower to report that the filming has finished and that the escort/bodyguard mission is over for her as well. *It's going to be odd not having Naruto sleeping in the room next to mine.*

Naruto

"Naruto!" He looks around until he finds Ino sitting with her team at the BBQ place. He waves at them as they walk pass.

"Hey boss! Hey Hanabi!" Konohamaru says as Hanabi and himself walk pass the much taller grandson of the Third Hokage as they enter into the tower where the Hokage office is.

"Hi Konohamaru, how are those D rank mission treating you?" He asks politely as they slow as they draw closer to the scarf wearing Genin.

"Eck, I can't believe that they're still ranking that cat retrieval mission as a D rank one when it should be ranked higher then that." Konohamaru complains and he chuckles.

One ruffled hair later and they're sitting before the old lady. He had made sure to have handed over the reports he's made over the

course of the filming as well as the documents that the filming company had wanted him to give. Those were mostly about his share of the royalties from the movie's release and sales from merchandise they'll be marketing before that.

"Well, everything seems to be in order. I'll need you, Hanabi, to sign a few things before you leave the office. Naruto, you're dismissed." Tsunade says and he nods.

Once he leaves the tower, he heads directly to the district to make sure that his clones hadn't edited their thoughts and memories, but he doesn't do so as a human. One Henge later and a crow stands where a blond human once stood.

With a caw, he leaps into the air and within a few flaps of his wings, he's ascending into the air. As he soars over the village, he spots other birds riding the thermals. It doesn't disturb him to see so many crows hanging about the village, after all, they're one of the more common animals that enjoy eating dead nins.

Once he's high enough, he directs himself to where the district is. He's yet to think of a name for that part of the village and he's reluctant to continue to call it the Uchiha district since Sasuke hasn't owned it for years and he's not willing to change his name.

I continues to amaze me that at how big Sasuke's ego is. I can't believe he still refuses to apologize about the whole incident or ask politely to have that seal removed. he muses as the site of said incident comes within his vision range.

He spots a few clones moving about the stone buildings. With a caw, he moves to follow the team of clones as they carry bundles covered in cloth. Finally the clones enter into a large building, one that's at the center of the district that he owns.

Resting on a ledge by a window, he glances in and decides an indoor market. *I didn't know they build it to be so big...* He muses at the sight of empty stores.

I wonder if the generators for water and electricity are up and running... He wonders to himself as he ruffles his sleek black feathers as he begins to wonder if his clones were waiting for his return before looking for renters or if nobody's willing to live on property owned by a demon container.

Finally, he shakes himself from his musings to leave the district to see if he can't find Tenten and her team. After all, it's not as if he's got anything else to do for the rest of the day besides kill time.

It wouldn't surprise me if by now even 'team' 7 have heard that I'm back. He thinks to himself as he circles around the district a few times before leaving the area.

As he soars through the air, his thoughts slowly drift back to his time outside of the village, in particularly about the collection of seals that Hanabi set on his head. He's not sure if would be able to keep him from losing his mind to the fox's chakra if he draws on it too much. He's also not willing to risk it to see if it is capable of such a feat either.

I never knew there were seals out there capable to altering your very thoughts... He muses once more whenever his thoughts drift to those behavior altering seals that Hanabi had used on him to help him transform into a totally different person, one that wouldn't scream 'I am Naruto Uzuamaki'!

I wonder if Ino wouldn't be able to tell if I'm really Naruto when I activate those seals? He wonders briefly before letting that idea go since he wants that persona to be a secret as long as he can keep it a secret.

I also don't want anyone to try mucking around with them too. He adds as an after thought. *I don't think anyone would trust Hanabi if that ever got revealed too. People would likely burn her at the stake just on principle.*

It hadn't been long before Hanabi created her own persona, complete without a bloodline limit. Although she had to add a sub-array to block her bloodline limit. *It had been so odd to see what her eyes could look like without her bloodline limit active.*

I wonder what kind of future there will be? Now that Hanabi and I have returned to Hidden Leaf? He wonders as he continue on his circuit of checking out the various training grounds.

He tries to keep his mind from going back to that last Cloud incident and how Hanabi had almost convinced him that they should just go to ground and never come up. To escape from the various plots that surround them.

'May you live in interesting times' indeed. He recalls that particular 'curse' that he heard on his travels with Hanabi while they left a few clones behind as their stand ins at times during the filming.

- o 0 The End 0 o -

House Kirin Year 0

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1981

Narrator: Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki

"Well, this bites." He muses after he has searches about his person for his ninja headband and weapons. He couldn't help but scowl out of the window as he begins to twirl the oak stick that he found in a pocket.

He didn't know much about where he is but he did know that he didn't really have anyone to blame for his being here other then himself and whoever those voices belonged too. *I wonder I should have waited until they explain more about what this mission is about...* He wonders as he continues to watch oddly dressed people continue to appear at the station.

"I wonder just where this train is headed?" He wonders but in the end, he decides to take a nap since he didn't see anything in the compartment to entertain himself with. True, he did spot a trunk but decided he rather be well rested for whatever awaits him at the end of this train ride then get frustrated with what's within the trunk.

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

He couldn't help but stare at the hat. *Great... Now I've seen everything. Who's bright idea was it to allow it to sing?* He wonders until he spots somebody with a worse color scheme then what Sakura and his friends accuse him of.

"Who's the butterfly?" He asks a kid with bronze tan. Said kid gives him a minor glare before answering in a voice oozing with disdain. "That's the Headmaster of the school, mudblood."

"Must be touched in the head to wear such a... 'fruity' dress." He muses softly as the stern woman reads names off of a scroll so that the kid can walk up to the stool and put on the singing hat. Another kid behind him snorts softly, he's not sure if its in agreement or what, so he decides to stay quiet.

Then after forty-six names had been called, the stern woman states calmly, "Uz-make, Na-roota." The hall quiet downs and he glances around, wondering where this guy who's name sounds almost like his own is standing.

"What's your name?" One of the five remaining kids asks him softly and he replies, "Uzumaki Naruto."

"Isn't that what she said?" The sole remaining girl asks and he blinks. "Huh... I guess she could be saying my name..." He admits slowly before he walks up to the stool, although before he takes the hat off and sit on the stool, he corrects the woman.

"It's Uzumaki Naruto." He says and makes sure to go through the proper pronunciation, only stopping when the graying woman finally says his name properly.

"Well, well, I didn't expect to see a member of that... mission so soon. I had hoped to have time to consider what to do with you lot but I guess I'll just have to wing it." The hat tells him and he sighs softly.

"Well, I believe I have it. It's going to trample on 'tradition' but then, change has to begin somewhere." The hat finally says after a few minutes of silence. "House Kirin!" The Hat declares loudly and he couldn't help but notice how different that declaration sounded when the hat was talking privately to him.

The whole hall just stare at him with their lips moving but nothing coming out. He gets up off the stool and places the hat down as soon as a small table appears between the staff table where the

teacher were siting and the head of the table where those wearing red and gold were sitting.

By the time he sits down, there are murmurs about how odd it was for a fifth house to be declared. He didn't really pay them much heed since he had other things to think about now that the hat confirmed that he arrived a little ahead of the rest of the team for this mission.

Once the last of the students names were called and they were sorted, the fruity Headmaster says a few words before the food arrives. At the sight of food at his table, he couldn't help but stare dumbly at it before sighing. *I'll just have to make request with the cooks to see if I can't get real food.* He decides before starting in with the chicken wings that were on one of the plates before his plate.

And ask for some chop sticks to use until I'm comfortable with these strange tools. He adds as he stares blankly at a knife, fork, and spoon.

Kirin Common Room

"Ok, let me get this straight... You guys aren't enslaved nudists midgets, but House Elves." He says and the almost naked group of tiny beings nod their heads in agreement with that statement.

"And you guys can't accept cloths because it'll 'free' you." He says in the same even tone. "Master Naruto is correct!" The leader, a House Elf named Poky agree with earnest agreement.

"Ok... but does that stop you guys from creating your own cloths to wear to cover up your nakedness?" He wonders and the total group of House Elves blink before they huddle together for a quick, whispered discussion.

While he waits for them to answer, he glances around the small room that's to serve as his house's headquarters. He already has a few ideas on how to make it look more presentable but before he

goes through with them, he figures it wouldn't hurt to study up on what kind of spells could be used to make it more... homish feel to it.

He knew for sure that he does want a statue of a kirin to stand within a few feet of the entrance. Maybe include shorter statues of a dragon, turtle, tiger, and phoenix standing at the correct points around the kirin statue, making it the center piece as well as giving it an Asian touch.

He also wanted a library off to the side, another room next to the library where study tables could be housed, maybe a small dinning hall off to the side where he could eat his meals without having to put up with hundreds of students and teachers eyeing him throughout a meal...

Would be nice to have an alarm clock to wake me up at the correct time... He mentally adds to the slowly growing list of items that would help make his stay at this school more pleasant.

"Master Naruto is such a great and thoughtful wizard! Anything that Master Naruto wants for his house sets, Master Naruto will get!" Poky announces with all of the other House Elves nodding in agreement.

He couldn't help but find the admiration with the little guy's eyes to be very amusing and a tiny bit creepy. "Good to know. Now then, I believe the first order of business is the library. I want the library off to the side and filled with a copy of every book that the school has. I don't care if you magically copy them or dig into some obscure bank account attached to the school. There will be a study room connected to the library, but I'm sure you've got a lot of spare chairs and table you can put in said room."

"Would Master Naruto want his own potion lab and ingredient cabinet as well?" Poky asks and he nods, not sure what a potion lab is but he gets the feeling it will come in handy in the coming years.

It was after midnight that he managed to hit the hay, mostly because the moment he let loose a yawn, Poky declared that for Master Naruto's own health, they will have to continue on at a different time so that he could get some rest.

Although the one thing he hadn't managed to settle on was House Kirin's colors, but none of the House Elves pressed him too much for him to pick a pair of colors.

November 1, 1981

He yawns as he heads down the stairs to the minor dinning hall that the House Elves had created at his request. He does pause to take in the sight of the ten foot tall kirin statue that's the center piece of the much larger common room. *They really out did themselves when they created that one and the other four statues.* He admits as he stares into the back of kirin.

The kirin's furry mane is colored a rich brow with the fish scales coloring being dull, tarnish orange. The belly scales being a creamy white and the hooves of the statue being black. Jetting out of the kirin's forehead is a single horn covered in gold. Even though he can't see the face of the kirin, he already has a good idea of baby blue glass eyes.

He straightens before he turns his gaze to the door leading to the minor dinning hall. Within seconds of his arriving at the table, a traditional Japanese breakfast appears just as he pulls his chair up. As he partakes of a sample of various dishes, a House Elf appears, Clicky if memories serves.

"Master Tao! Master Tao! He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Name is gone!" Clicky continues on that vein for while the House Elf dances around.

I should have picked a different name in that rant... But at least they've stop calling me Root. He thinks privately to himself as he tries to ignore the House Elf wearing a teal tunic and black pants tailored to fit the House Elf's small size.

It wasn't long before Clicky vanishes and he's able to continue to eat his breakfast in peace. He snaps his chop sticks and as they fall to his plate, everything on the table vanishes and within seconds, he's created roughly a hundred clones.

Without a word from him, the majority of his clones make a beeline for the library while the rest slip out of the common room in the form of cats to investigate the latest happenings of the day. He couldn't help but grin at the sight of the huge heated pool that the House Elves had created just beyond the washroom stalls. He had opted for co-ed washrooms instead of the classic men and women washrooms, although there is a wall separating the two sides just to give each gender some form of privacy.

He tosses his pajama pants into a basket next to the entrance way. A cold shower later finds him relaxing in the large, heated pool without anything covering his body. By the time fifteen minutes have passed, a clone of his dispels and he gains the memories of that particular clone.

So, Harry Potter is now an orphan, huh? Stupid title though, Boy-Who-Lived. Not the most pleasant ways to become known either... He muses with a frown, trying to ignore how similar this event calls forth Sasuke's own orphaning.

He's privately glad that today's a Sunday so he didn't have to worry about anything other then how he wants to spend the day, which will likely begin once he's out of the hot pool.

I wonder if I shouldn't try out that Come and Go room the House Elves told me about? He muses, after all, he's finding it harder and harder to find a nice spot outside to train at and he's kind of reluctant to find a spot within these stone walls to train in.

He rather not alert Dumbledore to the fact that he's more then capable to doing more then just magic and he's fairly certain that the paintings, ghosts, and the House Elves likely spy on the going ons of the school. Not that he holds it against the little buggers, only

accepting the fact that they can only do so much without running into some order or other that Dumbledore have likely given them.

It's pretty amazing that Dumbledore has forgotten to tell them to stop aiding the efforts of House Kirin now that the common room has been mostly done. Not that there isn't room for improvement but.... He muses, he really didn't like the old greezer for some reason and is very determined not to slack off in his ninja training and skills.

December 20, 1981

"So you're telling me that there are hundred, possibly thousands of porn cashes throughout the castle?" He asks the sorting hat as he rests within the heated pool. It seems that the hat decided that it wanted company... particularly his company and its not as if he's going to try and steal the hat...

"Considering that your likely looking for a challenge, why not try and find as many of these cashes as you can? After all, the money you can make by selling some of these... collectors items might allow you to broaden your horizons while at school and out of school." The hat explains and he sighs.

"I really don't have a place to stay when summer comes, do I?" He asks the sorting hat and the hat remains silent, but he could guess that the hat agrees with what he said.

"Well, it's not as if I have anything better to do while this break is upon us. I might as well take advantage of the pretty much empty school to look for these things. Who knows, I just might stumble upon something that doesn't relate to porn." He muses before picking up a glass of chilled fruit juice and sipping it.

After a few minutes of silence, the hat says, "I must say, the House Elves have gone the extra mile for you. I never would have imagined they'd create this pool area."

"Well, you have to admit, it does cause work for them to do and from what Poky has told me, it seems that the number of House Elves at the school is rather... high. So high in fact that they're complaining about the lack of work to fulfill every House Elf's time. Seems that an elf only gets a turn to work about every third to sixth day. They like me because I can always find something for them to do for me." He admits to the hat.

"I'm having them learn how to make Asian style meals for me to eat while in the miniature dining room off to the side. They've decided that it's their task to go out and buy or duplicate every book out there so that there's a copy of every book in the world in the library. I have them investigating in purchasing a film projector and films to watch. They're also busy with buying and/or harvesting position ingredients and I've asked some of them to start going through Hogwarts personal vaults to organize the lot. I'm kind of hoping that they might be able to find interesting artifact that I can experiment with." He admits with a bit of guilt to the sorting hat.

"But you're not the type to take without giving something back." The hat points out and he sighs.

"I might have pointed them in the direction of exotic styles like latest muggle fashions and then gave them the idea of maybe creating new cloths for the students instead of allowing those that come from poor homes to wear rags... I also believe I mentioned something about stables... Does Hogwarts even have stables?" He muses and the hat chuckles.

"To answer your question, there are stables at Hogwarts. You see, that pet rule only applies to First years students. In the past, when relations with the muggle world were closer then what they are today, students were often taught how to ride just about anything or to house their favorite mounts, be they Hippogriff or a normal horse." The sorting hat says and he couldn't help but get thoughtful.

"I don't suppose they could be used to house... I don't know, other large beasts? Of course, they'd have to be, at the max, the same

size of... what was the large mount to be house within the stable?" He asks curiously and the hat replies, "Well, let's just say there had been cases of hybrids that grew to be fairly large, say, about a foot taller then Hagrid."

"Interesting. I'll have to keep that in mind then." He muses with a slight grin on his face. "You do that." The hat says with a hint of amusement.

Farewell Feast

He tries not to fidget as he sits at a small table between the Gryffindor table and the Hufflepuff. He had forgotten what it feels like to be the center of attention and felt he should have just remained in his dorm. *Kami... I'm going to be forced fed European food aren't I?*

Anyway, the Headmaster finally finishes his speech by going over who wins the House Cup. He's not all that surprised that Kirin House came in last, more then a few people snorted and murmured, "What did you expect? There's only one guy in the blood house!' He didn't really react when Slytherin won the cup.

Finally the food appears and he stares at it a bit before shaking his head and using a spoon to fill his plate with some mashed potatoes, turkey, and various other food stuffs. He really didn't see how anyone could eat this type of food daily but from the size of some of his classmate's waist line...

Well, hopefully next year, I'll at least have someone to befriend. He thinks before he smirks as the potion he put into the staff's table interacts with the potion in their wine goblets and causes the teachers' skins turn bright red with various horns, claws, and fangs growing until the lot look like a bunch of devils.

That prank did work out after all. Good to know that I'm not the one who's going to get caught for it too. He muses to himself, after all, all he did was replace the potion some Seventh year Slytherin was going to sneak into their goblets. He's not sure what kind of potion

the guy planned to use and its likely he really didn't want to know anyway either from the way the guy's expression shifts into dawning horror.

So Ends Year Zero of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 1

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1982

Narrators: Yachiru Kusajishi and Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki

Yachiru

She sticks her head out of the compartment and glances both ways before exiting it. With a giggle, she races off in search of sweets and, of course, her friends. She almost runs into a young red head wearing a dress.

"Sorry!" She calls out as she continues on her way. "Just watch where you're going!" The red haired boy calls after her and she just waves back in acknowledgment.

By the time the train finally begins to move and all of the other kids were hold up in their compartment. Finally she did find the sweets but not a sign of her friends. So, after liberating a collection of chocolate frogs and a few pastries, she tries to recall where her compartment was as she walks down the length of the train, careful to snatch the leaping frogs before they touch the floor or walls.

"Huh... I don't remember a blond being in my compartment." She muses as she finds a slightly older blond boy in the compartment. The blond blinks and glances at her with a slightly raised eyebrow.

"Well... to be truthful, I did find the compartment empty save for the trunk up there." The blond points out before going back to reading a book called The White Dragon. "I'm Naruto Uzumaki by the way. Although most of the populace has taken to calling me Tao since they enjoyed mutilating my name."

She grins and replies as she sits down across from Naruto, "I'm Yachiru Kusajishi! And I don't have a nickname yet!"

With that said and done, she decides to continue devouring her liberated goods, leaving Naruto alone, for now at least.

Naruto

He glances up from his book to look at his pink haired compartment companion, one Yachiru Kusajishi. Placing a bookmark in the book, he closes it and watches Yachiru bounce in her seat for a few minutes before clearing his throat.

"So... what house do you think you'll end up in?" He asks the First year siting across from him. "House? We get our own houses here?" Yachiru asks as she stops bouncing to look at him with a hint of awe.

"I think that just answers my question..." He muses before taking the time to study her for a few seconds. "Did you know that we're on our way to a school that teaches magic?" He tells Yachiru and she shakes her head in a negative way.

He takes out his wand and says before she moves to take it from his hand, "You likely got your own pocketed on you." And with a slight flush, Yachiru searches through her pockets and brings out a yew wand.

"Oh!" Yachiru says as she begins to flicker the wand about, sparks sparkle causing the pink haired girl to say, "Pretty!"

"Want me to teach you a few spells?" He says and it wasn't long before Yachiru leaps forward and gives him a hug. "You're the bestest, Whisker!"

Whisker? He muses mentally before sighing. "Alright then, let's start with a simple light spell..."

And so for the remainder of the train ride, he began to teach his soon to be fellow Kirin a few first year spells. Something that unknown to him, pretty much cemented Yachiru's good opinion of him which falls just under Byakuya but above Ichigo.

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

Yachiru

She couldn't help but glance every which way as she enters into this huge room that have various students packed at each of the tables, although it took her a few minutes to find where Naruto is sitting as the table he's sitting at wasn't as large as the others and seemed to be more towards the table where the older people are sitting then with the larger students.

"Hey Naruto!" She shouts out over the dim and the blond waves in acknowledgment. She felt a lot of eyes on her after she shouted out that greeting.

Then the hall quiets and something begins to sing. It takes her but seconds to realize that the ratty hat resting on the stool is the source of the song. She almost couldn't keep herself from charging up to the hat and begin poking it and asking it to sing her current favorite song.

Polite clapping follows after the hat finishes singing its song and the stern old lady unfurls a scroll. Within seconds of this action, the old lady reads off a name and within the crowd of kids, somebody walks up to the stool and places the singing hat on their head.

The hat calls out, "Ravenclaw!" Clapping erupts from the table with the image of an eagle. And so a few more names were called before the old lady calls out, "Kusagishe, Yachu."

She makes a throaty sound and before walking up to the hat, correct the pronunciation of her until the old lady says it right. Apparently,

some of the students at the larger tables chuckled or giggled at this while the table with the snake seem to be giving her glares.

How rude! They don't even know me! She thinks as she marches up to the stool and places the hat onto her head once she's seated.

"Quite but then, the quality of Slytherins have degraded over time. Most of them are only in that house because they lack having the positive qualities in spades that are typically needed for the other houses or they wouldn't survive for long in any other house besides that one." The hat tells her and she just shrugs, although she mentally begins to think up ways to get back at that house for those glares they're sending her way.

"I see you've become well acquainted with Naruto, which is good since you'll be in the same house as him." The hat tells her and within seconds, the hat calls out to the crowd, "Kirin!"

Blinking, she glances to look at Naruto before shrugging. With a grin, she gets up off the stool and heads straight to the table where Naruto is sitting. Just as she's about to sit down, the blond says with a slight grin, "I think you're suppose to leave the hat on the stool for someone else to put on."

She sends a pouting look to the blond but the hat says, "I am not a MP3 player and while I'm flattered you enjoyed my singing, I really must continue sorting the other First year students."

Finally, she sulks back to the stool and puts the hat onto the stool and walks back to the table. "I didn't want that stupid ratty hat anyway." She mutters to herself and Naruto sighs.

"We can watch a movie once we get back to the dorms before we go to bed." Naruto suggests and she stares in astonishment at the blond. "Thanks Whiskers!" She says with a wide grin, thoughts of making away with the sorting hat banished by the suggestion that the bewhiskered preteen offers.

Soon the sorting ends and an other elder stands up to address them. "Fruity dress." She murmurs softly and Naruto snorts in wiry agreement.

Then the fruity man says something and food appears. "Ah! This isn't want I want to eat!" She whines and Naruto looks bemused as he nods slightly in agreement.

"Just eat it for tonight, tomorrow the House Elves will make us real food for breakfast." Naruto tells her and she couldn't help but find herself looking forward to that meal.

Naruto

Ok... how did she talk me into watching a second movie? He wonders as the credits for Disney's Robin Hood plays out after he's put the first movie, Disney's Jungle Book away, after rewinding it of course.

It might have something to do with the fact that she's got pink hair... Although Yachiru's shade of pink looks shiner. He muses privately to himself as he relaxing in the soft chair with his legs resting on a stool.

Midway through the movie, he finds that Yachiru has fallen asleep and with a sigh and a wave of his wand, the movie stops and with a flick, the movie begins to rewind itself carefully as he gets up off the chair to pick the sleeping eleven year old, not that he's one to complain since he'll be turning twelve come this coming October.

Funneling chakra into his arms, he cares the girl all the wait to her new room and within seconds of placing her into the bed, Yachiru mutters softly, "Thanks Kenny..." He smiles at the girl before heading off to his bed.

September 2, 1982

"Whisker!" Yachiru cries out and he just grins as Yachiru gives him a hug. "Good morning to you too, Yachiru." He says as he returns the hug for a few seconds.

"Hungry?" He asks as he hears a stomach growls and knows its not his. "Yip!"

Once Yachiru lets go, he shows her to the minor dinning hall that's connected to the house's common room. He watches as Yachiru's eyes light up before she races towards the table and takes a seat.

"Ya!" Yachiru cheers as food appears in the space before her. By the time he makes it to his seat, Yachiru already has a plate filled with food and seems to be content devouring a small bowl of steamed rice before moving onto the stuff on her plate.

Within seconds Clicky appears with their time table for their respective year classes. Yachiru seems to pause for a few seconds before remembering her introduction to Clicky and a few of the other House Elves last night as he had them help him set up those enchanted sound shells for the films they watched last night.

"Thank you Clicky." He says to the House Elf and Clicky nods his head rapidly before vanishing back to the kitchen. He soon sits down and its his turn to pile on food onto his plate to eat.

"You remember with the washroom is?" He asks Yachiru and she nods rapidly.

"Well, the right side is the girls side and the right the boys. If you go pass that part, you'll find a heated pool. I'm sure that the House Elves have supplied both sides with swim wear too. Now if you excuse me, I'll be relaxing in that pool for the next ten to fifteen minutes." He says just before breaking his chopstick, causing his plate to vanish from the table before he get to his feet and head out of the dinning hall.

Yachiru

She couldn't help but stare in awe at the various swim suits within this closet side door. With a squeal, she picks out a few colors and types to try on. Five minutes later, she enters the pool to find Naruto floating about in the middle of the pool.

"Cannonball!" She cries and with a short fast walk, she leaps into the air and causes a large splash. As she gives her head a shake, she finds the blond grinning in amusement instead of being angry about it.

"I wouldn't try that with an unknown pool, you never know the depth of the pool you're jumping into." Naruto suggests and with a blink, she then nods thoughtfully as she begins to see his point of view.

"I'll try and remember that, Whisker." She says in a serious tone and Naruto nods. "Thanks, I wouldn't want you to break a leg or something. I'm not confident in preforming healing spells just yet." Naruto explains and she finishes, "And it would be difficult to explain why I'm wearing a bathing suit to the school nurse."

"Yachiru... Just be careful, I really don't want your to hurt yourself simply because I was capable of preventing it, ok?" Naruto asks her and she suddenly feels very guilty about her little stunt as it seems as though Naruto really does care even though they haven't known each other for long.

And so she places Naruto just under Kenpachi in her list of favorite people because of his concern for her safety and health. She really didn't want to cause him any undo concern, especially within the Kirin territory like the commons room and its connecting rooms.

October 31, 1982

"So... what is it that you're having the House Elves add to the other houses' cups?" She asks as she watches as the twelve year old blond works with one of his three pets. "And will Big Nose notice it in his cup?"

"Oh, you witness that did you? Nothing harmful, just the third part of a series of potions for a prank of mine. This one is to help alleviate stress of the transformation that should happen around five pm." Naruto explains as War continues to trot about the circle room. "As for Snape noticing it... well, if he hadn't noticed the other two potions then he won't notice this one." Naruto explains with a slight smirk and she grins slightly too.

"But wouldn't it look odd if we don't... dress up?" She asks and Naruto pulls out two glass containers that contain a slightly different potion then the one he handed off to the House Elves. Naruto puts the two away and she feels impressed with that.

"So... what will it turn us into?" She asks and Naruto simply says, "That's... a secret!"

She giggles while Naruto probes War to continue trotting about the room. War glances her way but doesn't make a move inward towards them. She couldn't help but marvel at War, after all its not everyday you get to see a horse with thick scales about its back.

"So War likes those bones you give him?" She asks Naruto and just hums in a positive manner. "His scales are coming in nice and healthy, so I believe they are. He's mood is getting better too." Naruto adds and she doesn't say anything, just watches War trot at a steady pace around the room.

"Well, I'm going to go check on Sin and Grin." She says and Naruto glances at her as he says, "Just don't tease them. Sin is nervous and vicious enough as he is."

"I'll remember that!" She says as she walks to the door after War has trotted by.

Humming a cheery tone, she skips her way towards the habitat where the two almost six foot long otters that had been modified by some Jamaican witch. Naruto's not sure why she did it but it seems that the two modified otters seem to be highly intelligent even though

their coat colors are totally not natural since Sin now has dark purple with gold belly fur and Grin has teal with silver belly fur.

As she enters into the area with one-way glass as to not alarm the pair. She blinks at the sight before her. A minor pinch later, she couldn't help but squeal at the sight of the two ruby colored otter pups that were resting at Sin's side while Grin grooms Sin's neck.

She couldn't wait to tell Naruto about this and couldn't help but hope that the blond will allow her to name one or both of the pups. *I wonder if this makes me an auntie?*

Naruto

He stretches his newly transformed body while Yachiru seems to be more interested in giggling her head off. He's not sure what's so funny about his body design but the young pink haired lion cub just keeps on laughing. *Girls.* He finally decides as he gives his body a shake before he stalks down the hall.

He hears an 'Ouf!' and turns his head over his shoulder to see Yachiru trying to run up to him but keeps tripping. He snorts in amusement before sighing. He turns around and within seconds, picks up the pink lion cub by the ruff of her neck and carries her down the hall way.

When they encounter another group of felines, he gently lets Yachiru down and takes some time studying the mix group that contains a brown lynx, a black cheetah, blond tiger, strawberry blond puma, and a black snow leopard. "Having trouble walking?" He asks the group with a touch of amusement.

"What's it to you?" The lynx demands with ears flat against her skull. "Well, excuse me for offering to give you a tip!" He states with a flick of his tail as Yachiru decides to try walking once more.

"I did it! I did it! All I had to do was mimic War, Whisker!" Yachiru says and sure enough, the transformed First year is mimicking War's

trotting gate.

"Good for you, Yachiru." He congratulations and he could see that the other transformed students were studying her with intensity. "Now, let's see if you can walk all the way to the Great Hall."

With a nod of her furry head, Yachiru takes point with him slowly trailing behind her. He can hear the other students trail behind them with only a few stumbling at the beginning but as they continue to encounter other groups, more then a few of them being First years, they would stop and try to give them some advice on how to walk.

"Hey! Check it out, Whisker! Fruity is so much smaller then most of the other teachers!" Yachiru says and he takes a few moments to study the white feline before deciding that Dumbledore had been transformed into a bobcat, a smaller relative to the lynx.

"I wonder where all the tables are?" A voice wonders and he turns to find a red lion cub behind him. "Well, it would be kind of hard to feed a bunch of felines if they serve the meal as if we were humans, now won't it?" He remarks and the other cub looks embarrassed.

"Guess so." The red cub admits before giving him a curious look. "I'm Bill Weasely, first year Gryffindor."

"I'm Naruto Uzumaki, though since I don't want people massacring my name, just call me Tao. I'm sure you know Yachiru Kusajishi since you've likely have a few classes with her." He tells Bill and Bill looks bemused.

"I should hope so, she did knock me over as I was getting on the train." Bill states with a slight grin. "It's kind of hard to know who's who at the moment. I don't suppose you'd mind if I join you two?" Bill asks and he replies, "I won't mind and I doubt that Yachiru would mind."

"You do know she's not..." Bill says and he shrugs as best as he can. "Unlike most people around her, she's very easy to spot. She is the

only pink haired lion cub in the hall after all." He points out with a slightly toothy grin and Bill chuckles as Bill nods his head in agreement.

"So... what kind of cat are you?" Bill inquires as they move to a spot close to the center of the hall since most of the students and teachers were preferring to stick close to the walls, as if expecting to be attacked at any moment.

He hums as he takes a few minutes to examine himself before answering Bill. "I'm either a leopard or a jaguar." Once he answers Bill, he begins walking once more.

"What's the different between the two?" Bill asks and he replies, "Well, a jaguar is a little bit larger and more sturdier built then a leopard. Jaguars are the third largest non-magical cat, with tigers and lions being place higher up on the scale."

"Well, you certainly so look muscular." Bill muses and he hums in reply as he takes his time before finally laying on the ground. He also begins to pant as he glances about the hall in order to spot a certain pink furred cub.

He feels Bill take a spot close to his back legs and a unhurried look confirms that. Not for the first time does he realize just how much smaller the first years were tonight. **I'll just have to make a note for next year to not transform the Firsts into young animals.** He concludes privately as he finally spots the fearless Yachiru annoying a certain black clouded leopard.

"Who is she bugging now?" Bill asks curiously and he answers, "I would assume she's bugging Snape."

"How would you know?" Bill asks and he answers, "When she's bored, she usually goes off to bug those that take time out to single her out and Snape just loves to single members of House Kirin for the simple fact and I quote 'that there wasn't a fifth house when the

four Founders built Hogwarts so there shouldn't even be a fifth house', end quote."

"Harsh." Bill replies and he dismiss it with a flick of his tail. He's been center of worst things then just a lecture/rant from a man who's not even bothering to teach potion safety during his class. *Its not has if I care for the point deduction since it's not as if we actually have a chance to with the House Cup anyway.*

Finally, Yachiru grows bored with Snape and comes rushing full tilt over to Bill and him. He had noticed how most of the first years have come to rest a few feet away from Bill and him. It seems that they were very reluctant to associate with the 'grown' felines about the hall.

They stopped whispering to each other as Yachiru breaks through their ranks to pounce on his head. He manages to up the pink furred cub onto the floor by his belly. He noses Yachiru in the back while she giggles as she moves to lay flatly on his exposed side.

As Yachiru gives him a seemingly innocent look, Dumbledore finally decides to address them. "Can I have everyone's attention?" Everyone become silent as they turn to look at the white furred bobcat.

He still feels Yachiru's weight on his side as Dumbledore continues now that everyone is giving them their undivided attention. "Now then, I must congratulate the prankster who managed to pull this prank off and hope that our transformation isn't permanent, that we will return to normal in due time."

A few dark murmurs erupt after Dumbledore has said that but quiet down as the white bobcat holds up a paw. "Now then, I believe that we're all quite hungry so, dee little little of a cat's cradle." And he rolls his eyes at the non-sense that Dumbledore says to have the House Elves send up the food.

He's not that surprise at the sight of roasted bodies of various animals ranging from rabbits and chickens to the size of pigs and goats. The very smell of their meal causes a lot of stomachs to growl and with a cheer, more then a few students pounce on the roasted bodies that were resting on mats instead of plates.

He waits for all of the first years to pick out which of the selection they want to eat before getting up and claiming a roasted pig that none of the others seem interested in eating. It seems they prefer to eat something closer to their size like a rabbit or chicken then a roasted pig.

There wasn't any chatter since pretty much everyone is busy eating like the animals they resemble. He could even hear a few growls along the lines of 'bugger off! This one is MINE!' The first years were the first ones to finish eating and three large dishes filled with three different drinks appear for them to drink out of.

And so, after the meal and drinking from one of the dishes, the mood of the hall becomes relaxed. More then a few began to wrestle with each other. It wasn't long before games of chase erupt.

Although unlike with the other groups, he soon found himself being besieged by the various first years being lead to attack him by the co-leaders known as Pink, AKA Yachiru and Crimson, AKA Bill. He fought valiantly but in the end, numbers won the day.

Christmas Eve

"Where do the many yous come from?" Yachiru asks as they lay on a table in the Great Hall to stare up at the magical ceiling that shows the weather outside. He's more then enjoying the sight of snow falling without having to be outside to witness it.

He blinks before turning his head to glance at his house-mate. "You're asking about them now?" He admits in surprise and Yachiru nods. "Yep!"

He chuckles softly as he turns to watch the illusion of the storm clouds overhead as he tries to think of how to best to answer Yachiru's question. With a sigh, he answers, "How about I tell you tomorrow, when we're out trying to find those Unicorns you want to see? We can exchange stories then."

"Sounds good!" Yachiru says and he's relieved that she's willing to wait until they're out of the castle to hear that story. "Do you think we'll see those lizard horses while we're looking?" Yachiru asks and he snorts in amuses as he privately chuckles.

"I'm sure we might even see a Centaur or two tomorrow." He adds and Yachiru sighs.

Christmas Day

Yachiru

"Weee!" She cries as she weaves between the various tree trunks while having the school broom flying as fast as it can go. Finally, she spots a herd of those strange, winged skeleton horses that sport lizard features and slows to a crawl as she decides to watch them dig through the snow and snap up various rodents once they relax from her startling them.

"I'll give you points for your reflect skills but you really should be careful, these brooms aren't in the best of shape even though I did just renew their safety spells before we mounted them." Naruto says to her as he descends from the tree tops.

"How did you manage to find me if you weren't following me through the forest?" She asks him and he answers, "With a point me spell."

"I hadn't thought of that! We could use that to find the Unicorns!" She says with a dazzling smile and the blond nods in agreement before he turns to watch the strange winged horses.

"I wonder if War has a touch of their blood running through his veins." Naruto wonders thoughtfully. "He does considering how he's liking those organs I've been treating him too." She answers in an off handed manner as she causes her broom to fly down so that she can touch one of the horses.

It takes them about a half an hour to find the Unicorns but she decides it was worth it as she watches them graze on the grass under the snow. The herd would glance at them every so often but after a while, they slowly began to ignore them.

"Well then, I guess I can set up the blanket here since they don't look like they'll be moving on anytime soon." Naruto says as he pats the large blanket that's migrated to rest on his left hip before he flies to one of the trees in the direction that the herd is slowly moving towards.

She watches as the older blond manages to unroll it in a graceful manner and lays it on a branch. Naruto casts a few spells that causes the blanket to stretch and to stiffen as it begins to float in the air. Naruto's wand touches a rune at the center and within seconds runes appear at the corners.

Naruto looks satisfied and lowers his broom by the large tree branch before climbing off of the broom. Naruto then casts a spell to clean his boots before getting onto the enchanted mat. It didn't take long for her to follow his example.

"Hey! The air seems warmer then when I was on the broom!" She says and Naruto nods as he tells her, "I've been having my clones experiment with area control magic and found they work best when combined with runes. The runes also act like a switch, activating and deactivating the spell."

She's impressed by how much thought and effort Naruto put in the blanket. "Anyway, I did enchant this bag to carry our lunch and maybe supper so that we don't have to worry about going hungry or

putting off telling our respective stories." Naruto says as he takes a leather bag from within his jacket and lets it drop in-between them.

It didn't take long before she pulls out a tube that's slightly warm to her touch. Unscrewing the top, she finds that the tube is filled with hot chocolate with little marshmallows floating around. She hums in satisfaction as she drinks some of the hot chocolate.

"I enchanted the tubes to hold up to eighteen liters of hot chocolate as well as keep it warm, not too hot but not cold." The blond tells her and she leans in a bit to give him a hug. "You're the bestest!" She declares and Naruto chuckles in reply while looking kind of embarrassed about it.

"I guess I'll go first." Naruto says after they've eaten lunch and she didn't say anything, waiting for the blond to gather his thoughts. "Well, I guess it all began with my father and a giant demonic fox with nine tails..." (Read or watch Naruto to hear Naruto's story and dido for Bleach!)

June 17, 1982

Naruto

On opening the door leading into and out of the dorms and common room, he finds a group of eighteen students of various ages from first years to fourth years standing before him. "We're here for movie night." Bill Weasley explains and he blinks slightly before figuring that Yachiru likely had invited them.

He opens the door wider and moves to the side to allow them into the corridor that have a pair of Fu Dog statues resting about a foot from the door. He notices the reactions the group has at the sight of them. "There just Fu Dog statues." He tells the nervous group once he shuts the door.

"Do they come alive when you guys go to sleep?" A Hufflepuff third year asks and he snorts. "Doubt it, they're just decorations." He

replies finally as he resists the urge to feed them a lie that they do.

Gasps erupt from the group as they enter into the main part of the dorms, the common room. "Wicked..." Bill sums up as the group stands transfixed at the sight of the kirin statue.

I guess Yachiru was right about saying that adding that corridor would help add to the awe of the common room. He muses as he motions for them to follow him as he heads for the study which has likely been transformed into a theater for the night. The group takes a few minutes before they trail after him.

"I'm kind of surprise by the lack of orange and brown your common room has." A fourth year Ravenclaw says and he pauses to give the teen a questioning look. "Well, that is your house's colors, right?" The teenager presses and he nods.

"I kind of figured that a house colors is just to help the teachers tell which house you're part of from a distance." He admits as he turns the door knob to the study. Yachiru seem to be busy drinking some soda when they enter into the room.

The young pink hair girl waves a greeting as he moves to the film projector to get ready to set up the movie. Once the group of non-Kirin students settle down and begin to relax, Yachiru declares that they're going to vote on which films they will see tonight and reads off the list of films Yachiru and him had created.

Those few among the eighteen who weren't muggleborn students were confused but it takes about ten minutes for the votes to be counted and he then summons Star Wars: A New Hope. Once he's dimmed the lights and activated the enchanted film projector, he walks to his seat to enjoy the movie since he hasn't seen this one before.

Farewell Feast

I really got to thank the House Elves for getting those D&D manuals. He decides as he watches as all the teachers once more transform into hellish looking beings.

This time not only did he have two potions slipped in to their drinks but he also managed to tag them with certain blue prints that would interact with the two potions so that none of the teachers transform into the same body shape or style.

A quick glance at Yachiru reveals that she also finds what happened to be pretty funny. *I'm so going to do this next year too.* He decides as Dumbledore's two heads begin to argue with each other while Snape glares directly at Yachiru; as if believing that she's the one responsible for this prank.

So Ends Year One of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 2

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1983

Narrator: Yachiru Kusajishi , Kasumi Tendo , and Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki

Special : Christmas Day with William 'Bill' Weasley!

Kazumi

She couldn't help but stare at her reflection and the sight of a train station beyond. People dress in robes with trunks and pet cages floating after their owners. There were a few people wearing familiar cloths as they push carts containing trunks and cages.

She finally tears her attention from the window to look around the compartment she finds herself in. She spots a familiar items, namely a trunk. Then she goes through her pockets and finds a holly stick.

As she moves to take down the trunk, the door opens and a slightly taller girl with pink hair wearing a simple T-shirt and jeans stares at her for a few seconds before grinning. "Looks like we've got a friend already in here, Whisker!"

"Really?" A guy's voice inquires and as the pink haired girl moves to sit across from her, an older blond appears. "Nice to meet you! I'm Naruto Uzumaki, commonly known as Tao around Hogwarts. And that's Yachiru Kusajishi." Naruto says and once Naruto's within the compartment, she notices that their trunks were floating behind them too.

Naruto takes out a stick and with a slight flick, one of the trunks falls to the floor and Naruto moves to rummage through it. Yachiru takes out another stick and with a wave, causes the remaining floating

trunk to place itself on the overhanging racks. She almost dropped her own stick as it slowly dawns on her just what the stick really was.

"Are you wizards?" She asks softly and Yachiru chimes in, "Well, since I'm a girl, I'm suppose to be a witch! And seeing as you're here, you must be a witch too!"

"But I can't be... I mean, I'm just... studying to be a nurse. These kind of things happen Ranma and Akane, not to me." She explains and Yachiru looks slightly bemused while Naruto seems to chuckle as he takes out what seems to be a movie projector.

"I might not know who those two are, but I can tell you this, you're on the Hogwarts Express which will be leaving in about, oh, twenty minutes to take us all to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Which means that for all purposes, you're a witch and can use magic." The blond explains as Yachiru flicks her wand and the window seems to get covered up.

"What are you doing?" She finally asks as Naruto tosses a white cloth over to Yachiru before the blond begins to enlarge small tin disks which, once she's got a good view of, turned out to be movie films.

"Well... Yachiru wants to go some where during Christmas holidays..." Naruto begins as he glances at Yachiru.

"I want to go see a Nundu! Then go see the pyramids and tour their magical tomes!" Yachiru explains as she finishes hanging the white sheet up using magic.

"But instead of funding it with our money, she gets this idea of doing some fund raising like setting up a movie theater at school and charging students three sickles per movie attendance. For teachers, six." Naruto explains and she blinks as she glances at Yachiru, who nods in agreement.

"But at this moment, we're only charging ten knuts to anyone who wants to watch movies throughout the train ride." Naruto says before adding as an after thought, "I'm not sure what we'll do for refreshments but, oh well."

"And how will they know to come to this compartment?" She asks curiously as Naruto finally finishes with the films and the film projector.

"I've enchanted fliers to be sent to each compartment to let them know. We should have more then a few muggleborns showing up out of boredom then anything else." Naruto answers as Naruto takes out a bit of brown carpet with thin orange lines that remind her of creeping ivory vines.

Within seconds, Naruto has the trunk floating as he lays the bit of carpet down on the floor. Yachiru and her hold up her legs as the carpet begins to grow about the ground. With a flick of a wand, Naruto's trunk drops to the ground.

She's not sure what Naruto plans to do with the tin can, shell, and set of miniature furniture. Naruto closes the door before he closes the lid of his trunk and sends it to rest on the over hanging rack. "Ok, I'm going to have ask you to stand up for this part." Naruto says to her and she finds that Yachiru has already done so.

Following Yachiru's example, she does so and Naruto chants something and the orange markings of the carpet seem to wiggle about. Then the whole room seems to grow until she can't spot the seats and overhang racks. She also notices that the small white sheet has expanded as well.

She couldn't help herself but be dumbfounded at this action. "Can I do the next part, Whisker? Huh, can I?" Yachiru asks the older student and Naruto snorts softly before waving a hand for Yachiru to take over.

With a cheer, the pink haired witch enlarges the shell and and the miniature couch and chair set. Then with another spell, she duplicates the shells and then sets about having them hover overhead. Yachiru then does the same for the furniture and sends them about the expanded room in rows, duplicating more until she has at least seventy rows.

"I kind of forgot the one to create the stairs." Yachiru admits with a slight blush and Naruto then uses magic to cause the floor of the compartment to shape themselves into big steps and then into smaller ones along the isles so that people can walk up and down the various rows.

Naruto then causes the shells to light up as well as turn off the lights within the room, leaving only the shells to be the only source of light, for the moment anyway.

"So then, Kasumi, would you do the honors of placing this on the door? It's already been enchanted, all you need to do is tap it with the tip of your wand once you put it on the non-sliding part of the door. Just tap it with your wand and it'll lock the door until people up in the right amount of coins." Naruto asks her as he holds the tin out to her.

"But I don't have any money to put in it..." She trails off and the pair share a bemused look. "Just think of yourself as a temporary member of House Kirin. After all, it's free for our fellow house members." Yachiru supplies and with a sigh, she does as she's been instructed.

About ten minutes later, other students began to enter into the compartment and after taking a few seconds to gawk at the expanded space, they hurry to take their seats. Once the train begins to move does the film begin and the noise from outside of the room seem to disappear.

More kids would file into the room after the movie began, although, thankfully, they were fairly quiet since she couldn't help but enjoy the

animated movie, one that's called The Last Unicorn.

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

She sighs, she really didn't know why she's here and not either of her sisters or future-brother-in-law, but she had to admit that she enjoyed being out of the house and doing something other then buying groceries while out of said house. *I have to admit that I'm a bit curious to find out what kind of household and healing spells they have here...* She admits privately to herself.

Naruto had offered to give her private tutoring if she grows bored of the current course material. *It was nice of him to offer.* She thinks to herself as she glances at the smaller table where Naruto and Yachiru were sitting, for some reason, she had expected there to be more members of House Kirin since there seems to be a lot of students going to this school of magic.

"Tendo, Kasumi." Professor McGonagall calls out, startling her out of her thoughts. She flushes as she feels everyone's eyes on her as she walks up to the hat.

She puts it on as soon as she sits on the stool. *"No need to be so nervous, child. Nobody's going to harm you, well, right now at least. I can't promise anything beyond this feast you understand."* The hat's voice whispers within her mind.

"Tut, tut, tut, such a disappointing father you have, child. He'd be more at home at a daycare then as family head, and don't try to defend him. You have quite a bit in common with both Naruto and Yachiru, although unlike the two of them, you've just given up on having your own life; believing that you're only fit to be a home-maker." The hat says and she flushes but knows she had thought such thoughts about her father when she was younger.

"I can see why you were sent on ahead. This is your chance to finally do what you want to do instead of doing what's needed. You aren't a failure, Ms Tendo, you've got a lot of untapped potential

that's just waiting for you to use it. Just remember to, life is meant to be experienced!" The hat tells her and then out loud calls out, "Kirin!"

Yachiru cheers loudly while Naruto claps. It didn't take long until she's off the stool and places the hat on it before heading to their table. The pair congratulate her softly and she thanks them both, although she gets the feeling that they would have been surprised if she hadn't become a member of their house...

Naruto

He watches Kasumi's expression out of the corner of his eye as they enter into the main part of the common room, which gives the newest member of Kirin a good look at the statue featuring their house's name sake and symbol. He's not disappointed as Kasumi's face contains a star-struck look.

A glance at Yachiru, he gives her a questioning look and the pink haired preteen grows thoughtful before she grins widely. "I'll give you the tour right now! We can then discuss girl things along the way!" Yachiru says with excitement as the second year grabs Kasumi's wrist gently to drag her off on the tour.

He watches the pair and hopes that Kasumi will loosen up in Yachiru's company since it would be just the two of them, both of them were girls after all so it should help Kasumi to lower her guard and allow Yachiru to befriend her with ease. With a slight sigh, he glances at the old grandfather clock to see the time.

He briefly wonders if Yachiru would want to watch a film or not tonight. After all, they did get in at a few movies in while riding on the train...

War and them are fine. Yachiru's two were settling in. He muses as he reviews the memory of a clone he created to go check on Yachiru and his pets down in the stable before the feast began.

He checks out the wooden cabinet that's a new addition to the common room and confirms that the brooms he's created and enchanted were within it. As he stares at the brooms, he couldn't help but think of a hobby he picked up during the summer. *I wonder if I should enchant my skateboard so that it can fly a foot or two in the air?*

With that in mind, he heads for the library to find those books that his clones had noticed while browsing through the library last year, about the time he realized just how crappy the school's brooms were when compared to what's currently out on the market. He had been lucky to test fly one of the latest models early in the summer, which clinched his desire to supply Yachiru, himself, and any future member of House Kirin.

September 2, 1983

Yachiru

"You know what they should give out to first years? Maps of the castle with locations of where the classes are held." Kasumi says as she flops down on one of the cushy chairs in the main common room.

She blinks and glances at Kasumi in surprise, after all, she did remember seeing something like that in Meanie's office, in one of the filing cabinets at that. "Hold on, I need to go fetch something! Be back in a jiff!" She says as she drops her book onto the chair she had been sitting on.

Before she enters into the corridor, she glances at the broom closet that holds the brooms Naruto had created and then enchanted. She's pretty sure that he had used clones in carving up the wood since they couldn't use the wands that often appear on them, leaving the original to enchant the pieces.

Coming to a swift decision, she charges up to the cabinet and grabs one of Naruto's creations before charging out of the house dorms.

Without a thought, she empowers the broom and flies at high speeds through the castle until she finds Meanie's office, she ignores the cries from those walking below her as she flies over their heads.

It didn't take long for her to find the map and to leave a transfigured duplicate in its place. Hurrying out of the office, she once more climbs onto the broom and speedily flies back to her house's entrance while carrying the map.

It didn't take long before she puts the broom back into the closet and to return to her chair. "I didn't know we could fly through the halls." Kasumi muses and she blinks but shrugs it off, she really rather charge through the halls of Hogwarts on foot then to fly through the air since it would cause her to stop interacting with her fellow students.

"Anyway, here's your answer to your map problem!" She tells the very self-conscious first year. Kasumi takes the map from her and opens it. "There isn't anything drawn on it." Kasumi says and she shows it to her after she gives Kasumi a questioning look.

"Oh! I forgot the secret words to activate it!" She declares and within second, she casts a password spell on it and then declare, after tapping it. "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good!" She says and with that, ink writing begins to appear and then expand into more then just words but into lines that detail various floors of the school.

"This is a bit too much detail considering I just want something to show me the best and safest routs from here to my classes." Kasumi says as the map shows that Naruto's currently in the sable, likely attending to War, which reminders her that she has to go and check on Su Xia, a Chinese Fu Dog that Naruto bought her for her birthday, and Score, a magically altered crane that not just featuring iridescent feathers but also stand close to fourteen feet in height.

"Huh, this doesn't have those paths that Whisker shown me." She admits as she studies a particular floor. "Or about that entrance to that huge chamber where Whisker found that huge snake skin! Or

that the chamber leads to a huge cave deep in the Forbidden Forest."

"Maybe you can create an improved map?" Kasumi muses and she hums thoughtfully as she also begins to list a bunch of improvements and add ons to help make the map more complete and helpful. "I could make it 3D." She muses out loud.

"Don't forget portable." Kasumi points out and she nods thoughtfully. "And to sell them for about twenty galleons for our winter trip to Egypt!" She adds with a grin.

"I guess so..." Kasumi admits with a sigh. She then stands up suddenly and declares, "To the Map Room, Kasumi!"

"Do we even have a Map Room?" Kasumi asks and she pauses, making a mental note to talk with the House Elves into creating a map room. "Ok then, to the Study!"

Kasumi

"So, what movie are we showing tonight?" She asks Naruto as Yachiru puts the finishing touches on the room with Su Xia, an actually, magical breed of dog that the Chinese had developed, a legendary Fu Dog.

"Dragonslayer, it was made in 1981 by a fusion of two companies. It seems that not too many people liked it because of the mature themes." Naruto replies.

"And tomorrow? What films will be showing tomorrow?" She asks and Naruto raises an eyebrow.

"I would have thought Yachiru would have shown you the schedule already." Naruto muses and she shakes her head. Naruto takes a moment before listing the movies that will begin around one pm tomorrow afternoon.

"Disney's the Fox and the Hound, followed by Bambi, a break for supper hopefully, then a final cartoon movie of the day, the Secret of NIMH." Naruto then pauses before adding, "Then that night we'll be showing live action movies like the Black Stallion, the Wolfman, and Gulliver's Travels."

She blinks as she realize just how busy they're going to be tomorrow. "Nothing for planned for Sunday then?" She asks and Naruto nods. "I've got a number of projects I want to work on as well as finally saddle War up for a ride. I'm sure Yachiru wants to tinker with her magical map project too."

"I guess I've got to find something to work on too." She admits as she glances at a far wall. She notices Naruto studying her.

"You do realize we have a huge library filled with not just books on magic but muggle novels and comic books? Heck, you could spend the day making friends outside of the house." Naruto pauses before continuing in a soft, comforting tone, "You've got a fresh start, Kasumi, no matter what your previous role in life was before you came here, to this world. Don't let fear keep you from experiencing live! Don't be afraid to make mistakes or to appear to be a fool! Those are just part of the whole picture that makes life all that more interesting!"

Naruto stops and she couldn't help but feel her cheeks heat up. "You don't know that..." She trails off and Naruto snorts.

"Kasumi... my whole life has been defined by one action my father made. He scarified his life and his only son to have countless lives... I'll also have to admit, for a long time I didn't know what to feel about the course of action he choice since I could argue that by preforming it he destroyed any chance that I had of living a normal life." Naruto pauses and she couldn't help but think of Ranma at this point and the choices his father made concerning his life.

"Was it really terrible? This choice I mean." She asks and Naruto smiles slightly at her.

"I don't think the school is a safe enough place to continue this discussion, Kasumi. But, calling it terrible... it really depends on your point of view cause my father did become a legendary figure through the village and beyond because of his action." Naruto says with a sigh.

She remains silent as Yachiru comes charging towards them with Su Xia hot on her heels. "All done, Whisker!" Yachiru declares in a slightly sing song tone and Naruto just grins at Yachiru.

"Alright then, who's going to 'open' the doors of this 'grand' opening?" Naruto muses out loud with his arms crossed over his chest. After a quick game of Rock, Paper, Scissors in which Naruto wins, which leaves her alone with Yachiru.

"You really should take his advice, you know." Yachiru says as they walk to sit down at a special part of the make shift theater. She gives Yachiru a surprised look.

"How did you..." She asks and the pink haired preteen just flashes her a grin. "One of the enchantments is to cause sound to carry in here. It's why there isn't any of those sound shells floating about." Yachiru explains and a quick glance around reveals that she's right.

"Then he could..." She glances over at Naruto and Yachiru nods in agreement. She blushes as Yachiru begins to scratch behind Su Xia's right ear.

"You know, I have yet to think of a nickname for you." Yachiru muses after Naruto sits on the far right chair and puts his feet on the foot rest.

She does sigh slightly as she brings her feet up to rest on the rest of the couch. After all, its not as if she's expecting anyone to sit down next to her since both Naruto and Yachiru were occupying the two comfy chairs at either side of the couch.

Within minutes a large group of Hufflepuffs enter into the room and they quiet down as they stop slightly in their tracks. After a few seconds, they tear their eyes from the large white screen to walk down to their seats.

Minutes later most of the students of the Gryffindor House appear with Professor McGonagall following after. McGonagall looks slightly startled at the sight of the room but in the end, she picks a seat not too far from where they're sitting.

A few more teachers appear with each other while the next attendees appeared in either pairs or in groups up to ten people. By the time the movie is about to being, only five members of Slytherin appear to see what's what. The doors lock and the movie begins to play, the lights dimming a few minutes later.

Well, I guess this is a good showing all things considered. She decides as the credits finally give way to the actual movie.

October 31, 1983

Naruto

"So... what's your form?" Yachiru asks as all of the members of Kirin sit on the deck of the lake. He sighs, he should have expected that Yachiru would have figured out that bit of training from observing which books his clones left out.

"I'm a raven." He says in a blank tone, after all, he hadn't expected to find his inner animal to be so... so... connected black in color. "Tested to be a raven?" Kasumi asks and Yachiru giggles.

"You know how McGonagall can turn into a cat?" He asks Kasumi and her eyes light up within half a second. "Oh! But I thought that took a lot of training to become one of those..." Kasumi says.

"Oddly enough, a few of the other countries have discovered easier and safer ways to achieve inner animal transfiguration. I might even

attempt to gain a second form, though not now, I've decided just having the one form is enough for while I'm at school." He admits and Yachiru giggles.

"You must be highly disappointed, huh Whisker?" Yachiru says and he gives Yachiru a bland look before returning to staring out at the lake. "How goes your map project, Chi?" He asks Yachiru.

"I think I'm onto something, although if I don't get this thing done by the end of this school year, I'll get you to review it and get your thoughts on it." Yachiru says and he nods.

"How about you, Omi? You figure out how to get that film camera to work without causing the captured images to stay put while filming them?" Yachiru asks Kasumi, he could hear Kasumi's long suffering sigh.

"Stop calling me Omi, I'm not a guy, Yachiru." Kasumi says before answering Yachiru's question. "I think I figured out why they're moving and plan to stop using those potions the books recommend on the film at any stage. Hopefully before we go to Egypt I'll have it figured out so we can recorded our time spent there."

"Speaking of which... have you got Snape to sign that approval slip, Chi?" He asks and Yachiru hums thoughtfully before nodding.

"Good, hand it to a clone tomorrow and it'll land on Dumbledore's desk." He says and once that's said, a comfortable silence hangs between them.

The surface of the lake breaks as Grin and Sin leap out of the water to do a barrel roll before entering back into the lake. He notices that a tentacle seems to be trying to grab the adult pair of magical otters. Fire sighs and snuggles more into his lap while Sapphire just thuds her tail and chatters angrily at the lake before calming under a few good ear scratches.

"You would think Fire would be the more emotional one, wouldn't you?" He muses as the adult otters continue their adventure with the giant ocean dweller. The red and orange otter pup gives his left index finger a short nibble, he begins to scratch under Fire's chin as the young otter sighs in content.

"I thought they would have taken after their mother all things considered." Yachiru muses. Second later, the parents of Fire and Sapphire head for the bank, both chattering endlessly to each other before they sprinted a short distance away and out of reach of the latest tentacle trying to grab them.

The pair soon set about grooming first themselves and then each other. "So... what's this Halloween prank going to do to us?" Yachiru asks and he can tell that Kasumi stiffens slightly, it seems as though Kasumi hadn't expected that Yachiru would bring it up so... bluntly.

"I was thinking Slytherins but decided to go with the other egg laying mascot instead." He admits. "I guess you changed your mind after learning to be a raven, huh?" Yachiru asks and he sighs.

"I just didn't know there were so many kinds of snakes. It's going to take me a bit before I feel confident in having the whole school transform into the various types there are for that." He admits.

"And to brew a bunch of venom antidote potions too." Kasumi muses and he flashes her a grin. "Looks like you're catching on." He muses and Kasumi just sighs as she shakes her head gently, though it's kind of ruined from the slight up turn of the edge of her lips.

After a few minutes of silence, Grin and Sin come looping towards them to reclaim their two wayward off spring. The royal blue and navy blue pelted Sapphire slinks towards her mother while the lazy Fire just flickers her tail in dismissal, likely not willing to give up her position on his lap. Grin seems to huff slightly before walking stiffly pass Yachiru and Kasumi to get his wayward daughter.

Fire mews as Grin picks Fire up by the neck and stomps off to his mate Sin and other daughter Sapphire. He watches the little family walk off to the tunnel that will lead them back to their room within the stables. About that time does he note that Bill Weasley seems to be coming towards them, only to stop and watch the family of magical otters to walk off the deck and into a hidden tunnel.

"Hey Crimson!" Yachiru calls out at the sight of the red head. This causes Bill to flush lightly as Bill holds up a hand as he comes jogging towards them.

"I don't remember anyone mentioning that there were otters living around the castle." Bill admits as he takes a position next to Yachiru.

"They're Whisker's pet otters. You remember War, right? Well, there's a room that the House Elves modified to house them." Yachiru explains with a giggle.

"But I thought we're only allowed one pet at a time..." Bill says and he answers this one, "That pet rule only applies to First years and I doubt anybody really paid much mind to it beyond add anything more to it beyond killing those beasties who grow too violent and begin making meals of local humans."

"I guess that explains why Dumbledore hasn't done anything to Su Xia attending classes with Yachiru..." Bill muses. "Or keeping Score the crane from delivering her mail when the teachers tried to force us to eat all of our meals in the Great Hall during the third week of September." Kasumi muses and Bill sighs, few people know what to make of Score, at least they're getting to be familiar with Su Xia.

"You know, if I knew my mother wouldn't kill me for owning such a odd and likely dangerous pet, I would love to have something like War or Su Xia as a pet." Bill admits and he grows thoughtful. "Huh... I think I can contact that agent to see if I can't find something awe inspiring but mostly harmless as a Christmas present for you." He muses and Bill snaps his head to look at him with a hint of surprise.

"Err... Thanks, I guess..." Bill says and he waves it off. "Don't thank me until I get you one. Never know what kind of trouble I'd get you in just gifting it to you." He says and Yachiru just grins.

"Anyway, are you guys coming to the feast tonight?" Bill asks and he glances at the two before saying, "I think its a holiday feast we can't miss out on."

"How did you like being a lion during Halloween last year, Bill?" Kasumi asks out of curiously before Bill could say anything to him. "It was... kind of exciting. I mean, unless you train to be an Animagus, you don't really experience anything like that."

"There isn't any laws forbidding anybody about drinking a potion to transformation into an animal for a select amount of time. The only thing that comes close is dosing an unwilling person with one." Yachiru supplies cheerfully and Bill looks startled at this.

"Really? But I would have thought... How do you know this?" Bill asks and Yachiru replies, "We do have our own library and there is a school account that funds buying new books. Although why Fruity hasn't done so for the library... Ah well, just means that its just another duty he's slacking in."

"Huh?" Bill says, clearly still not over how casually they pick out the man's flaws and ignore the man's 'brilliance' or the fact that the man is hailed as the next Merlin.

"The man is either too busy in his other duties to do his job as a Headmaster effectively or he's come to the conclusion that the recent stuff is 'fit' for students to read." He pauses for a few seconds before adding, "Heck, he let's Snape control the student potion ingredient cabinet and let's face it, that overgrown bat has power issues since he keeps denying students from taking out ingredients for practice potions."

Bill blinks a few times before saying, "You mean we're allowed to make potions out of Potion class?" They all nod at that and Bill's

mouth moves but no sound comes out.

"You could always ask McGonagall for a permission slip but she might be too busy trying to fulfill Dumbledore's Headmaster duties and her own duties as Deputy Headmistress." Kasumi offers before Yachiru adds, "Doesn't mean that Meanie will let you do so without breathing down your neck."

Bill looks startled before nodding. Then something seems to dawn on him as he asks, "You guys have your own potion lab and cabinet, don't you?"

"Now you're catching on why our house is so much better then all the others!" Yachiru states as she pats Bill on the shoulder. "Almost makes me wish for a re-Sort..." Bill grumbles and then his watch begins to beep, meaning that the feast will start in thirty minutes.

"Looks like we better head to the dorms to change out of these uniforms." He says as he gets his watch to stop beeping just before he gets to his feet.

December 17, 1983

Kasumi

"Are you sure you wouldn't want to remain at Hogwarts for Christmas break?" Professor McGonagall and Yachiru cheerfully nods as she sighs. She couldn't help but notice the slight tightening of their teacher's shoulders before McGonagall holds out the Port Key.

"Are you sure that Meanie doesn't want to come in your stead?" Yachiru asks curiously and she hears Naruto chuckle softly at the thought that Snape would want to leave his dungeon behind. "That's Professor Snape, child." McGonagall corrects as Naruto and her move to touch the statue of a cat.

Within seconds, a jerking sensation occurs and the world around her seems to come out of focus for some minutes until gravity demands

that she falls to the floor, which she couldn't help but obey as dizziness causes her to lose her balance.

"Welcome to the Straw Back Inn. I believe you four are the Kirin party from Britain?" A slightly accented voice asks in English. "That's us." Yachiru pipes in while Naruto helps her stand up.

"It is nice to met you, I just need to see your passports before I give you your room keys." The tanned wizard says and Naruto produces their passports save for the professor's since the graying woman should be capable of getting her own.

With that, the man summoned a teen to take them and their trunks up to their respective single rooms. She's glad that she followed Naruto's advice about wearing light material since even though the inn seems to have some form of air condition, it's still quite warm. She's sure that Professor McGonagall was just find that out since she seems to be looking a bit red in her face.

Naruto thanks the teen and hands over two sickles before the teen vanishes. "I believe we still have time for lunch before we can go sight seeing." McGonagall says and they nod in agreement before they each enter into their respective rooms.

By the time they met up once more, McGonagall has switch out of her usual robes to wear something more akin to muggle cloths. The professor glances between the three of them before saying, "I believe we'll use the buddy system. Naruto you'll be paired with Yachiru and Kasumi shall be paired with me."

Naruto nods and they head out of the inn to find a place to have lunch. She's privately glad that Naruto's in charge of pretty much all of their money since it would greatly curve Yachiru's shopping spree while they're here. Although she's not sure if Naruto's capable of protecting it from pick-pockets... But then, Naruto's likely more then capable of tracking down said pick-pocket using his clones if worst comes to worst.

She did manage to renew her sun screen spell as well as a spell to help keep her body temperature down. About a few hours later, McGonagall finally asked her to cast the same spells on her to protect her from getting a burn and the heat, they had lost Yachiru at that point, which also meant that Naruto wasn't around either.

"Where did you learn these spells, Ms Tendo?" McGonagall asks her as they settle down under a shaded spot. They're both drinking a fruity drink as they do so as well.

"Naruto found them in a book back at Hogwarts and when Yachiru made known that she wanted to visit Africa, Naruto began searching both muggle and magical books on it. By the time we managed to raise enough money, he had use learn the most helpful local spells that he read from a book." She left out the fact that the book didn't come from Hogwarts library or the fact that most of the money came from Naruto winning at a game of poker with goblins and other beings while at Hog's Head during a Hogsmeade Weekend.

I wonder if I'll hear more about Naruto's life during this trip since they had promised that we'll exchange stories during Christmas break... She thinks to herself while trying to ignore the question of why those beings would allow a third year student to join in a hand or two.

By the time they're about to move on do Naruto and Yachiru arrive. "So, what did you two find, Omi?" Yachiru asks and she just sighs in defeat, knowing that nothing she says would alter Yachiru's chosen nickname for her.

"Just a few necklaces and bracelets." She tells Yachiru as she holds up her wrist to show off her new bracelets. "Cool! Whisker bought a bronze statue of a local canine god and I bought eight jugs filled with juice that the merchant swore were very sweet tasting. Whisker shrank our purchases so we can put them in our pockets."

"I'm not sure if I should be disappoint by this blatant use of underage magic or not but seeing as nobody came to arrest you, I guess the

laws might be a tad different here then at home." McGonagall says and Naruto nods.

"It also helps that we're in a large magical crowd, Professor. It's hard to track who's casting what with so many witches and wizards about. The same principle works during summer and holidays for those 'Pure-Bloods' and 'Half-Bloods' since they can't tell if it's their parents who are casting those spell or not." Naruto muses and McGonagall looks startled at the thought but a few seconds later, realization seems to dawn on her that Naruto's likely right on those accounts.

"Yes, well, let's be off then. It's been quite the draining day." Professor McGonagall says and they then make their way to the inn that they're staying at, only stopping to buy something for dinner.

And so day one of their trip comes to an end.

December 19, 1983

"So... that's what a Nundu looks like up close..." Yachiru says with a sigh as they watch as the huge leopard seems to be staring intently at Naruto and nobody else, particularly as the squad of wizards move to surround the disease spawning feline.

Naruto seems to be holding the cat's gaze with a slight frown fixated on his face. Then, with the swiftness that only a feline can pull off, the Nundu comes charging towards them. McGonagall manages to pull Yachiru and her a few feet a way with a pop, but Naruto remains grounded.

The leopard like beast halts just five feet from Naruto and lowers its head. The two seem to continue their staring contest for a few more minutes before the leopard seems to de-flat and looks away, which puzzles her since she's pretty sure that the leopard is more then capable of killing the blond. She chews her lip as Naruto slowly raises his hand and softly touches the Nundu's whiskers.

The Nundu once more turns to look at Naruto before sighing and butting its head to Naruto's chest. The feline then begins to shrink as Naruto begins to give the leopard beast chin scratches. From the looks of things, nobody's ever seen the like of it before.

"My word..." She hears McGonagall whisper breathlessly and she couldn't help but nod in agreement, especially as she recalls everything their guide had told them about the leopard beast.

Finally the Nundu draws away from Naruto and with a flick of its tail, the feline walks off in a manner that's typical of felines. None of the squad of wizards did anything but watch the beast walk away, likely going in any direction that tickles its fancy.

Then the preserve wizards charge towards Naruto, all of them talking rapidly in their native tongue while Naruto just seems to get this bewildered look on his face. "I would never believe it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes..." McGonagall says and she had to agree.

Naruto

"So... how did you keep the Nundu from killing you?" Kasumi asks as they stare up at the starry sky. He sighs, but had been expecting the question for some time now.

"It really wasn't anything to do with me, Chi, but with my furry renter." He admits, he's pretty sure that if he hadn't been a demon container that the Nundu wouldn't have singled him out. To challenge him to see who's the greater predator viva a contest of wills.

"Oh? OH! So it's because of that Kyuubi being that caused it to act like that? I was hoping it was a charm or something that I can learn how to do." Yachiru says and a glance in Kasumi's direction reveals that she couldn't help but be confused as to why a nine-tail being was involved with any of this.

"Well, I might as well start at the being..." He begins as he decides now is as good a time as any to tell his tale. Of course he also set up

any and all privacy spells he knew before he even began to say anything.

Christmas Day

Bill

"Ah, Bill... I think you should wake up now." He hears Percy say to him while his younger brother shakes him.

"Huh? Wha'?" He asks as he yawns and tries to fight through his desire to sleep to see just what it was that has Percy looking nervous and stressed out.

"You've got an unusual gift waiting for you outside!" Percy hisses and he blinks as he tries to understand why a gift of his would be outside of the house then in. Percy grips his wrist and pulls him towards the door.

With a sigh, he manages to put on something and put his feet into fuzzy slippers. "Charlie's outside with it and he's drooling over it too." Percy explains as his brother continues to drag him through the house.

He's also slowly going through the list of people who'd send him something that would cause his brother to drool over it as well as to be left outside. Suddenly he recalls a certain someone who promised to...

With a not so gentle shove, he passes Percy before they entered into the kitchen and bolts to the door leading out of the house to find Charlie examining the 'gift'. "He didn't... But how? He's in Eygpt!" He blurts out at the sight of his new pet.

"You know the idiot who'd send you something like this?" Percy asks, proving that he did indeed say that out loud. He feels his cheeks redden from something other then the cold as he nods.

"Yea, Tao came through, I guess." He admits as he then walks up to the chimera creature, who stands four foot tall at the shoulder, who seems to have a great deal in common with a canine if he's to judge from the shape of the beast's head and general body shape. Although he's a bit concerned about the fact that the chimera had two sets of antlers on its... his head.

"There's a card, though it won't let me open it." Charlie says and he chuckles dryly as he takes the card from his brother.

'Merry Xmas Bill!(Or should I say 'Crimson'?) Hope you like him, he came all the way from India; the breeder had been arrested for illegal experimentation on humans, apparently the man thought he should be allowed to continue his experiment on human targets. Talk about a god complex huh? If you turn the page you'll find not just the license of ownership but also this beastie's file which contains such things as dietary requirements and what kind of training he's gone through. Hope you're enjoying your holidays, from Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki and the rest of us from Kirin House!'

He flips the page over and sure enough, a file drops out and lands on the ground. Picking it up and with a sigh, he finds that there is a license for the chimera and that that is his name next to next to ownership part of it. He whistles as he reads the very detailed history of his new pet.

With a sigh, he closes the file folder and glances up at the chimera. "Well, I'm not sure what to call you but we might as well get you inside." He muses and then does the hand signal for the chimera to follow him, which the beast does.

"How did you do that? I tried everything I can think of to get him to move!" Charlie says and he answers once they've moved the table and chairs away, "He's been trained to obey certain hand signals instead of vocal commands, which is good since I wouldn't know how to pronounce any of the Indian dialects or words."

"Sweet!" Charlie says and he smiles slightly at his younger brother as he fills up a large bowl with water so that the chimera can have a drink. "Mom's not going to be happy about this... Nor will dad..." Percy says and he snorts.

"Well, I do legally own him since Tao did include a copy of his license here and my name is down as his owner." He says to Percy while Charlie does go through the file folder and holds up the license.

"I hope you'll introduce me to your friend Tao, Bill! He sounds like my kind of guy." Charlie declares while Percy studies the license. He smiles faintly as he recalls the other beasts that the Kirin house have lodged at Hogwarts.

"He's hard to miss, Charlie, very hard to miss." He admits as he finishes putting the bowl of water down on the ground.

Farewell Feast

Kasumi

"That never gets old." Naruto muses while silently chuckling at the prank that causes the teachers to take on traditional traits that define devils or demons.

"Makes you wonder if they're cursed or something." Bill adds, the red head had decided to sit with them for this feast to get away from the Gryffindors, the whole house seems kind of put off by the number of points Bill 'lost' them trying to wrestle potion ingredients from Snape so the Weasley could make a potion to clear up a minor burn he received during potions class.

"The muggleborns always look so horrified when this happens." Yachiru muses and she turns to look at the other tables and sure enough, various muggleborns seem very pale and nervous at the sight of their professors transforming into something reminiscent of devils and demons.

"Just means they're church goers." Naruto adds and she sighs in a disapproving manner but that's all since she rather not get anybody in trouble.

"What does going to a church have to do with them getting horrified by the prank that transforms them into, well, that?" Bill asks curiously and she couldn't help but be a bit stunned at the thought that Bill didn't know such a simple thing.

"It's a religious thing. The church is like an Egyptian temple only without it being a massive building or being filled with animal statues." Naruto admits.

"I prefer Shinto to Christianity, less preaching and lecturing." Yachiru admits. She blinks and looks between the two other members of Kirin, not sure what to make of either of their responses, particularity Yachiru's seeing as she had been a Shinigami.

"I'm kind of confused but I'll have to take your guys' words for it." Bill admits as the feast comes to an end, allowing students to head back to their dorms while the teachers head to the medical wing to get transformed back to normal.

So Ends Year Two of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 3

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1984

Narrator: Yachiru Kusajishi , Shuichi 'Kurama' Minamino , and Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki

Kurama

"Kurama? Where are we?" Yukina asks him as come to terms with their sudden surroundings.

"I'm not sure... But I'm thinking somewhere in the UK." He answers as he studies the going ons of the train station through their window. He notes the mix dress code of the various humans, particularly those who have floating trunk trailing after them or in front of them.

"How are they doing that?" Hiei's sister wonders, likely catching sight of the floating trunks. As they remain silent for a time, the silence breaks with a knock on the compartment door.

"Come in." Yukina calls out and he gives Yukina a quick look before turning to see who's at the door. "..." The blond with whisker marks on his cheek glances from him and then to Yukina, clearly surprised to see either of them.

"Err... I didn't expect there to be two of you." The blond muses and he catches the faint scent of a fox but a slightly stronger scent of raven coming from the blond. *A crossbreed maybe?* He wonders before he realizes what the blond had said.

"You were expecting us?" He asks but before the blond can answer, somebody manages to push the blond to the side and a younger looking teen with pink hair says, "Hi! I'm Yachiru!!"

"I'm Yukina and this is Kurama." Yukina says with a smile. Yachiru plops down next to Yukina and begins to chat with Yukina about what kind of candies she likes. He couldn't help but give the blond a questioning look and the blond just sighs.

"I'm Naruto Uzumaki by the way, though most of the other students prefer to call me Tao. Though Yachiru does like to call me Whisker." Naruto states with a slight grin.

"Why Tao?" He asks as he motions for the newly dubbed Naruto to enter. He notices the floating luggage entering behind the blond.

"Well, I got fed up with the lot maiming my name and listed Tao among a small list of alternate names to call me. Ever since then, the vast majority have been calling me Tao, although by now I believe they're more then capable of saying my actual name." Naruto admits with a sigh and then he watches as Naruto takes out a stick and with a flick, sends the floating trunks up onto the racks.

"How did you do that?" He asks and Naruto snorts softly. "Magic, well, that's what they call it. You'll learn to do it too, considering the fact that we're about to be on our way to this country's only magic school." The blond says and he just blinks before he realizes the presence of something in a pocket of his.

"For what purpose?" He asks the blond and Naruto sighs. "Not sure but apparently we're early for whatever the event is. So we've mostly just been pursuing whatever projects take our fancy."

He didn't say anything nor did Naruto, leaving Yukina and Yachiru to continue their conversation, which now seems to be about hot chocolate and what adds to its flavor. Just as the train is about to leave, there's a knock at the door and Naruto calls out, "It's open Kasumi!"

Sure enough the door opens to reveal a much younger girl with brunet hair. "I'm sorry I'm late, Bill wanted to introduce me to his

younger brother Charlie." Kasumi says before bow and introducing herself, "I am Kasumi Tendo."

"I am Kurama and this is Yukina." He says as he nods in Kasumi's direction. Kasumi smiles and within seconds Yachiru says, "Guess what, Omi! Snow here has this idea of adding chocolate covered marshmallows to hot chocolate!"

Omi? He wonders and mouths at Naruto, Naruto just looks bemused. And so as the train gives off its final whistle, the whole compartment jerks for a second before it finally gets going.

He watches as Naruto takes out a large mouth pouch and begins to rummage around until the blond takes out a notebook and then a pencil. After noticing the various frowns and thoughtful looks, he couldn't help but ask, "What are you working on?"

Naruto blinks, clearly forgetting that he's sitting there and replies, "I'm trying to how to create this portable warded base with a slot for a ward stone. I'm thinking about marking it as a home security device that I can sell to parents of the so called muggleborns witches and wizards."

He raises an eyebrow at the terms of traditional western mages. Naruto notices and with pressed lips begins to dig around once more in the pouch and brings out a leather bounded book entitled History You Won't be Told While Attending Hogwarts or at All. "It's thicker then it looks. The woman who wrote it fled England within three years into this V-something's reign of terror. It's self updating so when she adds to the master copy all of the editions get the addition without having to buy the latest edition."

He takes the book from Naruto and opens it to find a bunch of reviews, most of them originating from the America and parts of Asia. It even warns that if any of the European countries find this book on them during a search, that they can find themselves facing a prison term as well as a huge fine. "It's a forbidden book here?" He asks and Naruto nods.

"Yea but from my own research the book is a much truer account then any of the more 'modern' books written after 1820s. About that time most of European government began to create a censor council about keeping books 'pure'. The council is still going on and now controls at least one newspaper too." Naruto replies and then the blond returns to his notebook while the girls continue to chat about cloths surprisingly enough.

He studies Yachiru for a few minutes, he couldn't quite place the scent that seems to cling around her but he's fairly sure there's more to her then meets the eye. He knows that Kasumi is human through and through though. *Their mysteries will be waiting for me to solve later, for now, I might as well learn what I can of what kind of situation that Yukina and I have found ourselves in.*

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

The stern woman who's scent has a feline touch to it, a touch stronger then Naruto's at any rate, begins to read off of a list of names. The student who's name is called usually walks up to the stool and once the hat is on their head, the hat then proceeds to call out one of the five house names.

As he waits for his name to be called, he glances around the hall, making note of each member sitting at the staff table. True, he studies the man dressed in black who seems to be sneering down at the kids, but he ultimately dismisses the man as being too obvious to be anything more then a minor annoyance.

So, that's Albus Dumbledore, huh? I have to agree with that history book on his lack of fashion sense. I have to agree with the author, either this man has his own agenda in allowing Voldemort to spread terror or he's just a lucky old man who happened to be at the right place at the right time to defeat that previous so-called Dark Lord. He muses as he studies the brightly colored man who had seemingly dressed up like his name sack, only with various shades of yellow and thinner black bars.

Then he hears his human name being call, something that kind of disturbs him as he walks up to be sorted in turn. He pauses slightly in the process of putting the hat on his head, he takes a few seconds to study it. *I'm going to regret this, won't I?*

With that, he places the ancient looking hat onto his head and just sighs as he feels a slight sensation within his mind. *"Well, who'd have thought I'd be meeting another Yoko so soon, hmm?"* The hat muses and his gaze turns to Naruto.

"You're semi right about young Mr Uzumaki having Yoko blood. The truth is that within him lies a nine-tail Yoko. I'm not sure what the Yoko's story is but I do know that by making a bargain with a specter of death to seal the demon away within Naruto, the boy's father managed to save his village at the cost of damning his only son and offering his soul up to the being." The hat explains and he blinks as he begins to digest this bit of news.

"Has the boy made contact with his... renter?" He asks and the hat replies, *"Yes he has and quiet the bastard he is from the memories the boy has of said meetings."*

"It might be that they got off on the wrong foot." He muses and the hat seems to snort in reply. *"Good luck then."*

"Kirin!" The hat declares and there were a few claps as he takes off the hat and then sets it down on the stool. He ponders the situation concerning Naruto and his 'passenger'.

By the time he arrives a chair seems to appear out of nowhere for him to sit down in. "Does the hat usually have a conversation with its wearer?" He inquires and the three look bemused while Yachiru hums thoughtfully.

"Not really, I asked Crimson about it once and he claimed that nothing went on between them." The pink haired teen muses. "I see." He states and Naruto raises an eyebrow but returns to

watching the stool while two girls seem to go into deep thought, their whole being seems to be turned inward.

"Yukina." Professor McGonagall states and the hall begins to whisper at the fact that Yukina doesn't have a last name. Yukina walks calmly up to the stool and once she's seated puts on the hat.

Two minutes later the hat declares, "Kirin!" A lot of students murmur about this decision as Yukina walks towards the table. Yachiru snaps out to wave in encouragement for Yukina to hurry up while Kasumi and Naruto clap.

September 2, 1984

Naruto

"Where did Grin and Sin get those sticks of dynamite?" Kasumi asks him as they pause in their tour of Hogwarts' grounds at the sight of the two magically altered otters marching purposely into the Forbidden Forest with sticks of dynamite in their mouths and in a small sling on their bodies.

"I was wondering where my gun powder went..." Yachiru muses as Grin and Sin vanish from sight. "What were you doing with gun powder?" He asks Yachiru as they stood there, waiting to see the two otters to appear.

"I planned to make fire-works." Yachiru admits calmly and he sighs. "Shouldn't you be more concern about what they're using it for? Or why they took it in the first place?" Yukina asks.

"Well..." He trails off for a few seconds. "If they had wanted to escape they would have had plenty of opportunities to do so without needing to use gun powder." Yachiru supplies and he nods.

"Where did they learn to use tools?" Kurama asks them and he states, "Likely from the witch who altered their parents."

"Did you actually met her?" Kurama asks and he shakes his head. "I didn't nor did I met with the man who bred War or the people who bred Score, Su Xia, or Bill's Spike. I bought them all through the same agent, a wizard named Gill Zimeson."

Everyone just stared at him, clearly not believing that Gill Zimeson could be the guy's actual name. "If it helps, he's an Australian wizard who's also a lawyer." He admits after a few minutes of silence.

As Kurama opens his mouth to say something, a large boom happens and smoke begins to drift upwards from the Forbidden Forest. As they jog towards the forest's edge, they soon spot Grin and Sin carrying their respective offspring, both of whom are currently sporting sheepish looks as they hang from their parent's jaws.

Grin nods a greeting at them before the two six foot long magically alter otters continue pass with empty slings hanging around their frames. "Just how smart are they?" Kasumi asks and he shrugs.

"Heck even if they do suddenly develop the right vocal cords to speak a human language nobody in the Ministry will be giving them the status of Being." He says as they begin to walk back to Hogwarts. "Or willing to look beyond one's appearance." Kurama adds.

"Makes me glad that I'm not native to this world." Kasumi admits. "That I'm only visiting."

He had to agree with Kasumi on that one, he highly doubts that anyone would ever look at him the same way if they knew about the Kyuubi sealed within him. *Just look at how they treat werewolves...* He added mentally before he checks the time that appears on his Portable Positioning Device of Hogwarts, an item Yachiru finished just in time for April first. (Which caused many to believe that it was all just a prank they concocted.)

"You guys want to head to the Great Hall of lunch or back to the dorm?" He asks, after all, they've still got to set up enchant an empty classroom so they can create a private movie theater, after all, the latest StarWars movie came out last year and the House Elves had managed to get their hands on said film and duplicated it so that House Kirin can have a copy in their possession.

"They don't serve Asian food in the Great Hall, do they?" Yukina asks and he nods. He feels Yukina turning to stare at Kurama, especially considering that other then Yachiru, the rest of the group is walking behind him. "The dorms it is!" Yachiru declares after she glances backwards.

Yachiru

"So, what movies do you think we should show today?" She asks Kasumi and Yukina since Kurama decided to follow Naruto to help set up the make shift theater where they'll charge students and teachers for movie showings. Yukina pulls out one of the film tins and reads, "Zu Warriors from the Magic Mountain."

"Oh! Ghostbusters." Kasumi says as she picks out off of the shelf. Yukina giggles suddenly as she puts the film tin back onto the shelf.

"What's the joke?" She asks the first year. "It's... well, it's a long story is all." Yukina answers.

"If it's a life story we don't go telling those until Christmas." She says and Yukina looks a bit surprised before she nods. "It is, though I suspect that Kurama would be better at telling it then I." Yukina explains.

With a shrug, they continue to go through the film collection with Kasumi picking out Battle Beyond the Stars, Yukina picking out two Disney classics, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves and Fantasia, and finally with her picking Godzilla, The King of Monsters and Gigantis, the Fire Monster.

Carrying their respective picks, they exit out of the room and within seconds, they know where the two male members of the house were in no thanks for a special upgrade reserved for members of House Kirin that allows them to bring up a person tracking function.

"So all they need to do is pay once and they can watch all six of these movies?" Yukina asks and they nod. "How does it keep track of who's paid and who hasn't?" Yukina asks after a few minute pause.

"Whisker is the one who's enchanted the tin." She answers, she's beginning to grow bore of giving people nicknames, as if the older she gets the more it begins to appear as a chore then anything else. *Not that I'm giving up on all of them, maybe two of them at least.*

"I wouldn't mind having him explain how he managed to pull that one off." Kasumi admits with a sigh. They walk down the corridor that now sports a few more statues beyond the pair of Fu Dog statues.

Su Xia joins them after they exit out of the dorms. She smiles at the magical dog and scratches behind Su Xia's ear before she steps in behind Yukina while Kasumi takes point. Su Xia stays by her side as they head to where Kurama and Naruto were.

October 20, 1984

Kurama

"Aren't you being a tad predictable with Halloween pranks?" He asks Naruto as the blond begins to set up various cauldrons to hang over different areas about the potion lab. A few of Naruto's clones nods in agreement while the rest just glance at the original briefly.

He still trying to wrap his head around this particular ability that the teenage blond has. *A very useful ability to have.* He adds privately while the original lowers the book he has onto a side table.

"Which is why I've decided to go in a different direction this year." Naruto says before adding, "No, these potions that are to be made are for Kasumi and for Yukina. I'm not sure why Yukina would want me to brew Skeleton Grow but, who am I to argue with such a sweet girl?"

He smiles slightly while Naruto continues, "I'm a bit worried about the selection Kasumi wants me to brew but I'm sure that my clones will manage just fine without my supervision. Well, most of them do at least."

"I see." He states since it seems that Naruto doesn't want to touch on what prank he has in store for Halloween. He returns to his brewing his potion that he has modified in hopes of creating a potion that will repel harmful insects when poured on plants.

October 31, 1984

Naruto

"Ok, what's with the dragon plushies?" Bill asks while holding his golden stuff 'dragon'. "I find them to be very cute!" Yachiru says as she hugs her green colored one to her chest.

He's privately concerned as to why Bill got a gold one more then anything else but just shrugs, after all, the plushies were suppose to be from a store who had overstocked one stuff dragons. Well, that's the story he put in the letters when those summoning boxes were sent out to all of the students.

Which means that some girl has a... He muses as he touches his bronze colored one while keeping a frown off of his face, which was kind of hard even though he's had tons of practice keeping a smile on his face to cover up his real emotions.

"They did good workmanship on them." Charlie adds while his blue colored one is held up at eye level so that Charlie can try and find a

fault with it. "The eyes are differently enchanted though. Just look how they change color from green and blue."

"Ginny will like them." Bill admits and he just shrugs as they continue down the hall towards the dorms. It seems that Bill and Charlie want to try something different for lunch and Yachiru invited them to eat at their side bar dinning hall located in their dorms and common room.

It'll be Charlie's first time seeing the inside of the dorms, though Bill has visited plenty of times to use their potion lab, library, and to watch private screenings of films when they're in the mood of having a private showing. They've grown a custom to having Bill visit their inner sanctum of their common room.

"Kasumi and Yukina both have golds and Kurama has a brown." Yachiru muses and he nods, he had seen the others pull out their respective plushies after breakfast. Although Kurama and Kasumi had left theirs in their rooms before attending classes.

Pretty much everyone has taken them to their classes today. Even the teachers are tense and edgy; just waiting for the prank to spring into action. He adds privately to himself as he presses the door open and then hold it open for the pair of redheads and for Yachiru.

"Wow..." Charlie says as the first year stops at the end of the corridor, staring in flat out amazement at the sight of the kirin statue that's the center piece and focus of the common room. "It always takes my breath away when I see it too." Bill adds in agreement while Yachiru and himself head to the minor dinning hall with the pair of red heads following after once Charlie recovers from his awe.

"Hey you guys!" Yachiru calls out as she enters into the room, a room that's a heck of a lot different then it had been when he had been the single member of the house. Not that he's surprised since the decorations of the dinning hall seems to alter every year as well as grow to accommodate either a single large table or various smaller ones.

"Good to see you Bill, Charlie." Kasumi says as she nods at the two Gryffindors before she returns to eating her meal. He notices that Kasumi's new plushie is now resting on her shoulders.

He picks a table that's by one of the three windows, ones that weren't there before, while Yachiru decides to sit with Kasumi, leaving the two brothers to take one of the tables closest to the door. A menu appears before him and within seconds, he already decide on what dishes he wants to have today, he makes sure that his own plushie is secure on his shoulder before focusing on which of the dishes he'll eat first.

"Err... what's the difference between Wonton and War Wonton?" Charlie asks and then says, "Oh, never mind."

After a few minutes the two brothers have finish going through the menu and picked the dishes they want to try. "You know, they should have these menus in the Great Hall." Bill muses after trying some ginger beef.

"Or at least serve some of this stuff." Charlie adds while gently blowing on the wonton that's on his spoon. "I don't think the meal menu has changed much since the school opened." He adds while enjoying his bowl of sea food Ramen.

"Then they should think to do so, after all, a lot of what they serve is very fatty and poor in nutrients." Kasumi says and Kurama adds, "They should also add a fitness class. None of them are getting any real exercise. Most of the students who are thin are eating so little that they're practically starving themselves."

"Ok, you guys lost us." Bill adds after exchanging looks with each other. He sighs but stays out of it as Kasumi and Kurama begins to explain about how a balance diet and plenty of exercise helps people live a much healthier and richer life.

Kurama

It takes him a few minutes to realize that he's in his room and that either the size of the room has alter or his size has altered. He hums as he begins to move each limb in turn, only to find that he's got an extra set of limbs, discounting a tail.

Looking over his shoulder, he lets out a startled cry at the sight of brown wings on his back. It takes him a few seconds to realize that somehow, his mind has been put into the plushie that Naruto had sent to him. As he moves, he realizes that it's more then that too.

How did he manage to make this body into a fleshy one? It didn't have a powerful enchantment when I examined it... He adds silently as he finally manages to fold his wings onto his back.

He crawls over to where his mirror is and isn't all that surprised at the sight of his body, although the whirling colors of his eyes did concern him. He tries to swear out loud only to find that himself either chirping or making a hissing sound. The colors of his eyes continue to spiral between red and yellow with them picking up speed.

Ok, calm down, Kurama. Relax, getting angry isn't going to help anyone. He tells himself as he closes his eyes and tries to focus on taking deep calming breaths.

Now then, Naruto wouldn't do this if he thought it could be harmful, which means that given enough time, it'll reverse itself. He tells himself once his tail stops thudding on the desk. *Even if you believe he should have given warnings to his house-mates about this prank.* He adds sourly.

Finally deciding to give his wing a test flight, he opens his eyes and finds himself staring once more at his current reflection. *How strange...* He muses at the sight of two new colors being reflected by his eyes.

With a sigh, he returns to his self-appointed task and with his wings open, he launches himself off of the desk. Suddenly he gets the

feeling of taking a back seat within his mind as something takes over. It takes him a few minutes to realize that Naruto had somehow installed a set of instruction on how to fly and for that, he's grateful since he wasn't born with a set of wings.

Slowly the strangeness of having something take over his motor functions fades as he realizes that all he has to do is think of which direction to go to and his body would go there. *I wish I was with Naruto so I can **talk** to him about what else to expect from this...* He thinks and suddenly blackness erupts around him for a few seconds before he finds himself flying around the Great Hall.

His body adjusts the course as to not collide with the various other tiny dragons that were fluttering about. *"Hey! How did you do that? Appear out of thin air I mean!"* A girl's voice asks within his mind.

"Which house do you belong to? Who are you?" It wasn't long before a crowd filled with Golds, Greens, Bronzes, Blues, and other Browns appears and seems to hound him.

He couldn't help but find himself wishing he was back in his room... He blinks as the blackness and numbness returns before he arrives back in his room, far from that mob. As he lands on his desk, not trusting himself with flying as he needs to ponder this, he almost jumped with a Bronze appears in his room.

"I was hoping that ability would be there." Naruto's voice muses within his mind and he just sends a weak glare at the Bronze's direction. *"A little warning would have been nice."* He says and Naruto seems to drip slightly in his flight path.

"Sorry but I thought it best to keep it a surprise." Naruto admits as the Bronze moves to land on his bed. He studies the other but can clearly feel that Naruto truly is sorry about this.

"Just how did you manage to pull this off? And why are these bodies flesh and blood now?" He asks after finally forgiving the other since he couldn't really blame him for being a good secret keeper.

"Huh, well, you see..." Naruto the Bronze begins but they're interrupted by a Green appearing out of thin air. *"Weeee! I did it! I did it!"* Yachiru's voice declares and Naruto sighs.

"Yachiru? Yachiru? Chi!" Naruto calls out and by the time Naruto says Chi, the Green finally acknowledges their presence.

"Yes?" Yachiru asks in a drawn out way, which is echoed with a questioning chirp. *"Could you go find Kasumi and Yukina? If you focus on either, you're sure to be teleported to where ever they are. Meet us in the main common room, ok?"* Naruto asks and with an acknowledging chirp, the Green seems to vanish into thin air just as Naruto tenses up to take to the air.

"Just focus and wish to be in the main common room and you'll be teleported there, ok?" Naruto the Bronze asks and then vanishes before completing a circle. He blinks owlishly for a few seconds before launching himself into the air and focuses on wanting to go to the main room of the common room.

Once more the darkness erupts and he finds himself being numb once more before it fades and he's able to breath easily as he finds himself just over the kirin's head. He circles for a bit and before he can stop himself, chirps out a greeting to an incoming Gold.

"Yukina?" He inquires and Kasumi replies, *"It's just me, Kasumi."*

Seconds later Yachiru the Green and Yukina the Gold appear by the broom closet and come flying towards the chairs that were by a fire place. They all chirp out greetings before they land on the backs of the chairs. *"Huh... Yukina's the one with the broader wings and Kasumi's the one with the deeper chest."* Naruto muses as the Bronze studies the two Golds and he blinks before noticing that the two also had slightly different undertones too.

The two Golds glance at each other, even going so far as to stretch out their wings before they fold them up and they glance away from each other. *"Anyway, why don't you start by answering my two*

questions?" He says and Naruto nods his head before laying down on the back of the chair.

"Let's see, I guess I should start with where I got the idea of our current bodies..." Naruto muses while he sighs. *"Well, you see, these bodies are based off of the Fire-Lizards from Dragonriders of Pern book series. There are only two colors that were female and three colors that were male."* Naruto says and he glances between Yachiru the Green and the two Golds.

"In the books, Fire-Lizards were cousins to the much larger and more intelligent Dragons but has all of their abilities, which are teleportation, mental communication, and a few other qualities that don't really matter at this point in time." The Bronze says.

"Wicked!" The Green declares with a hum. He just waits for Naruto to continue.

"It didn't take much to create the plushies, the House Elves took the original five I created and set about not just making them, but mimicking the enchantment I set in the eyes that causes them to alter color to mimic their owner's mood." Naruto says.

"The real enchantments lay with the boxes. You see, I didn't pick out which one you'll get, the magic on the boxes summon a plushie of the right color gender and then the moment you touch it, you complete a minor ritual. This ritual's effects take place once the sun goes down and is over once the sun raises." Naruto explains and he felt like hitting his head. *The boxes... Of course, it had to be the boxes.*

"And just what are the effects of this ritual?" Yukina asks and Naruto blinks while blue and green swirl in a lazy fashion. *"Kasumi should have an idea of what the ritual does, after all, she did leave that book lying about on the kitchen table."* Naruto the Bronze says in a bemuse tone and as they all turn to look at Kasumi, she holds her head down and has her wings open slightly.

"Well, I had encountered something similar at home and well..." Kasumi says, trailing off. *"It's nothing harmful though and if he set the time then it'll end when it ends."* Kasumi adds quickly and Naruto nods in agreement.

"Ok then... That doesn't explain why the plushie bodies are flesh and blood." Yukina says and Naruto chuckles softly.

"Let's just say that along with our minds, something of our bodies tagged along and made an exchanged a body made of stuffing and cloth for one made out of flesh and what not." The Bronze says and it takes him a few seconds to realize...

"Our human bodies are now large dolls, aren't they?" He asks and both Kasumi and Naruto nod. He touches his head with his 'hand' as he feels slightly exasperated about this.

"This magic is so freaky..." He murmurs and the others all hum in agreement. *"Just where did this ritual originate from?"* He asks.

"Some place in Africa I believe." Kasumi answers before Naruto does.

December 25, 1984

"How beautiful." Yukina says at the sight of the unicorns below as they rest on an enchanted mat. Said mat had not only been enchanted to stiffen at a tap of a wand but also to cause the air within an area of seven feet to become warmer and to divert any snow that comes. The brooms remain hovering at either side of the mat.

"I can't believe we didn't do this last year instead of going to Egypt." Kasumi says with a sigh as she rests on her own mat, one that sports a pattern of butterflies on it. "We did this during Yachiru's first Christmas at Hogwarts." Naruto remarks from the navy blue mat; one that he's sharing with Yachiru.

Currently, only Kasumi is the only one who's not sharing a mat with anyone, although she's also the one who has the enchanted baskets of food and drink. He sighs as he glances about the snow covered trees before focusing on the snow covered ground. "Is the forest dangerous during the winter?" He asks.

"Not really, especially when you consider that during the warmer months you have to worry about Centaurs and the huge ass spiders. Or to be specifically, the spider webs that you can stumble upon on the forest floor. Those spiders kill anything they can get their fangs into, not sure if they eat Unicorns though." Naruto says.

"And the Centaurs?" Yukina asks and Naruto takes his time before he answers, "Well... they got bones to pick with certain types of people, particularly those with wands."

"They also think they own the forest too!" Yachiru says and Naruto sighs as he replies, "They live here, so I think they've got a more valid claim to it then most."

"Wizards and witches truly do make a mess of enemies without even trying." He muses. "And let's not forget their belief of superiority too." Kasumi adds, likely beating Naruto to said it.

Silence hangs between them as the Unicorns continue to plow through the snow to get to the rich grasses below. He wouldn't mind seeing what the forest was like during the spring, he's fairly confident at his ability to kill anything that tries to eat him or destroy the whatever traps there might be laying around.

"So, who wants to go first?" Kasumi asks as she begins to hand out containers filled with warm drink, after all, Kasumi's mat is seated between Naruto and Yachiru's mat and Yukina and his mat.

"I believe I would like to, though I'm sure Kurama will be willing to help me with parts I might have left out." Yukina says and he nods in agreement.

Farewell Feast

"And there it goes." Naruto muses softly as the 'adults' at the staff table grow ratty looking black feathered wings as well as gaining more youthful looks. Their cloths had already being altered before their physical features gave hint to what's to happen.

"Well, I guess this is better then gaining a more monstrous appearance." Professor Sprout muses as she examines her new body figure while the students begin to talk excitedly about the divergence of the 'traditional' year end prank.

"More tasteful then that time Albus developed that other heads." Professor McGonagall muses in agreement.

So Ends Year Three of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 4

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1985

Narrator: Kagome Higurashi , Kasumi Tendo , and Yukina

Kagome

"Shippo? Is that really you?" She asks and the young fox blinks at her before countering, "Kagome?"

It takes her a few seconds to glance at the window and finds that her face has changed, making her look pretty young. A second later she realizes that she wasn't wearing a... She just sides and allows herself to sink into the seat, she couldn't help but be dazed by her new appearance.

"Hey! I don't have a tail!" Shippo exclaims and with a blink, she turns to study the young Kitsune and had to admit that other then the pointed ears, she wouldn't have guessed that Shippo's a demon.

Then Shippo begins to search through his pockets and only pulls out a stick. With a sniff, Shippo gets a confuse look on his face. "It's wood is yew but its like there's something added to it." Shippo muses before asking after a few minutes, "Hey, where do you think Inu-Yasha or the others are?"

She bolts up as she recalls that Inu-Yasha had been standing next to her when they were given the offer. "Come one, you go left and I'll go right! If you find him, bring him back to this compartment!" She says as she slams the door open and bolts down the hallway of the train in search of the half dog demon known as Inu-Yasha.

Kasumi

"What's that?" Gin the dog golem she spent a good year creating from using actual silver. She even went so far as to etched runes diagrams on every surface of Gin, which includes within and without. Their very function were not just help empower the metal golem but to help the golem grow from the basics she installed in hopes of Gin will develop intelligence similar to the Sorting Hat.

She freezes as something races pass her, a something heading towards the final car of the train. "Inu-Yasha! You better not be getting into trouble!" A girl's voice declares in a manner that brings forth a slew of memories of her past.

Well, at least she doesn't expect him to be hitting on another girl. She decides as she turns to address the mid-size silver golem. "That was one very determined girl on a mission to find her boyfriend." She answers and Gin cocks his head to the side as the onxy eyes flash a few seconds before the golem nods, likely filing that bit of information away under the general label of Human Courtships.

"I wonder if Kurama and Yukina have managed to keep Yachiru from trailing after Naruto..." She muses out loud as she leads Gin to a very familiar compartment, a glance up at the rack reveals that at least new people had been within the compartment. She recalls the girl from not too long ago and realizes that she might be one of the owners.

"Gin, my trunk please." She says to the artificial canine. Within seconds, Gin manages to 'cough' up the tiny trunk that belongs to her. A simple tap of her wand and the trunk becomes normal size.

"Thank you Gin." She says to the golem. As Gin's tail wags at the thanks she gave him, she then enchants the space within the compartment to enlarge it since the others will likely be showing up in a few minutes, with a likely struggling Yachiru.

You'd think that Naruto and Yachiru were connected at the hip from the way they hang around each other. She muses as she places the trunk up onto the rack and pockets her wand. Gin waits for her to sit

down before moving to sit by her legs as she takes out a novel, one called Chanur's Venture, which is written by C. J. Cherryh.

She glances up as the compartment door slams opens by a girl with black hair with a hint of blue in it. "Have you seen a guy with silver hair and a pair of ears on the top of his head?" The first year asks her and she blinks before she begins to think about some.

"Was he here when you and your friend arrived in this compartment?" She asks slowly and after a few seconds, the girl shakes her head. With a sigh, she decides to explain, "It probably means that he'll arrive a few years down the road. That you and your friend were sent ahead of him and your other friends."

The girl just stands there with a bewilder look on her face for a few minutes before she sighs. "I'm Kagome Higurashi." Kagome says as she introduces herself.

"And I am Kasumi Tendo. And this is Gin." She says as she waves her hand at the still metal canine siting next to her. "Hello!" Gin says in a chipper voice.

Kagome blinks as she glances from her to Gin to her and then to Gin. "I do believe I've got to sit down now." Kagome decides before she does just that.

Taking pity on the new arrival and latest member of Kirin, she says, "Don't be overly surprise to see odd things happen. We are soon going to be on our way to a boarding school that teaches people how to preform magic. They even have a potions class, although you'll likely learn all the wrong ways of teaching a class from Snape."

With a sigh she adds, "He doesn't even make reading up on potion safety to be recommended reading for any of his classes. Luckily, we not only have the books on safety but our own potions lab in our house dorms. You can practice in it without that man breathing down your neck."

"Do we have lab coats and safety goggles at least? I mean, isn't potions kind of the magical equivalent of chemistry?" Kagome asks after a few seconds of silence between them.

She blinks at the comparison before answering, "You know, I don't think anyone thought about it that way. I know why neither Naruto or Yachiru or Yukina would know what chemistry class is, considering their back grounds, but I'm amazed that neither Kurama or I thought of that."

"Glad to be of help." Kagome admits in a slightly dry tone, one of which she couldn't help but smile slightly in response to. "Who's the other one who came with you?" She asks after a few minutes of silence.

"Oh! I forgot all about Shippo!" Kagome cries out as she bolts to stand up but before she could take a step towards the door, Kurama appears with Yachiru wrapped up in vines. "I take it you're Kagome?" Kurama muses and Kagome nods as Kurama enters while dragging the older Yachiru in as well, allowing a slightly nervous looking sandy haired kid who's ears are pointed like an elf's.

"So... Where's this candy you promised me?" Yachiru asks as the vines finally release her. "You ate it, remember?" Shippo says in a flat tone and Yachiru blinks in a cute manner before replying, "Really? I did?"

"Yes, Yachiru, you did." Yukina says after Shippo moves to take up a seat next to Kagome. Yukina closes the door as soon as three floating trunks enter into the compartment. With wand flicks, the trunks go to rest on the racks above the seats.

"Hi! I'm Yachiru Kusajishi." The pink haired teenager says to Kagome. "I'm Kagome Higurashi, nice to meet you." Kagome says, clearly unsure of how to react to Yachiru.

"So..." Shippo says after a few minutes and once everyone turns to look at him, Shippo clams up and begins to glance around the

compartment. "How come this compartment is bigger then it should be?" Shippo asks.

"I casted a spell to cause the space to enlarge itself for when it gets to be crowded within the compartment." She answers before returning to reading her book.

"What's this school like? The one that we're heading to?" Kagome asks and out of the corner of her eye, she finds that Kurama, Yachiru, and Yukina share a look before Yachiru says, "Well..."

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

Kagome

On entering into the Great Hall with the gang of first years, she couldn't help but be impressed at the sight above their heads. "Cool." Shippo whispers to her right and she nods her head in agreement.

Soon the crowd of fellow first year students stop just a few feet behind Professor McGonagall. Glancing beyond the professor, she spots a stool with a ratty hat on it. Before her very eyes the hat seems to shake itself and a song bursts forth.

Maybe I shouldn't have scuffed at the idea of a talking hat... She muses softly to herself as the hat finishes its... his song and a few of the seated students clap politely. The hat bows slightly while a kid cries out, "Hey! How come you didn't say anything about Kirin House?"

You could almost hear a pin drop in the dinning hall as the silence of the hall seems to suffocate all sound. "He has a point..." The man wearing very colorful robes muses from his position at the staff table.

"Fine, but don't come complaining to me if you don't understand a single word of it." The hat states and then the hat rhythms out something in Japanese, leaving few to know what the hat had said in the quick minute rendering of the 'qualities' of House Kirin.

"Wasn't that exciting." Shippo remarks in a dry tone and she stifles a giggle. Professor McGonagall recovers and takes out a scroll out of her pocket and begins to read a name on it, which causes one of the kids to walk up to the stool and put the hat on his head.

Seconds later the hat declares, "Ravenclaw!" The girl heads to one of the four large tables that had students sitting at, it took her a few seconds to pick out the table where Shippo and her's compartment-mates were sitting. She had only a few glimpses of the older blond, Naruto, while disembarking from the train. The only reason she even had those few glimpses was because the pink haired teen had made a beeline to that particular blond.

After about four names, her name comes up and she snaps her head to look at the stool and the hat resting on it. With a smile to Shippo, she walks through the slightly parted mob of first year students to take her turn to put the hat on her head.

"Well, well, well... I get to sort an actual priestess." The hat's voice muses within her mind. *"Could you inform young Mr Uzumaki that I wish to speak with him later tonight? It seems that we have a bit of a situation that needs to be discussed."* The hat says and she blinks but before she can ask, the hat declares out loud for everyone to hear, "Kirin!"

With a sigh, she takes the hat off her head and walks towards the smallest table of the Great Hall. "Now we just have to wait for Shippo and we'll be allowed to eat." Yachiru says.

"Oh, and this is Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki. He's also the only Perfect of our House." Kasumi says and the blond smiles at her as he says, "Yo!"

He's got... are those real? She wonders as she studies the bewhiskered cheeks of the blue eyed blond teen, the one she's to deliver a message too. "The hat says he wants to talk with you about a situation." She tells him and the blond blinks as his gaze turns to look at said hat.

"I wonder what's up..." Kurama muses and Naruto just shrugs. "Hopefully nothing too big." Naruto says with a frown, it wasn't long before the eldest student at the table gets this thoughtful look on his face as his gaze turns inwards.

"You know... I don't know who's our house head." Kasumi muses and that seems to snap most of the others out of their thoughts. "I always figured that its the sorting hat." Naruto admits with a sly grin on his face.

"How did you come to that?" Yachiru asks curiously and Naruto replies, "Well, during the first Christmas break I was here, he visited me while I was lounging in the pool. He's the one who told me about the porn cashes about Hogwarts. Hinted there were collectors out there who'd pay a pretty penny for a lot of it."

She's not the only one staring at the bewhiskered blond as she tries to wrap her head around *that* bit on information. "Isn't that how you discovered that chamber with that huge ass snake?" Yachiru asks and Naruto nods, but corrects her, "Don't you mean you and my clones?"

"Snake?" Kasumi asks and Naruto blinks while Yachiru explains, "I'll tell you the full story later but the summary is, I had been conjuring a snake, snake hissed something, a hole gets revealed, and a few hours later, we find this huge stone face with a movable jaw in which a huge black snake is sleeping in."

"It's how we now have the pipe system to the map that the PPD shows when you pick Show All Paths opinion." Naruto adds. "I wouldn't mind getting a look at this snake..." Kurama says with a slight frown.

"Shippo." Professor McGonagall calls out and she turns to watch the young Yoko walk up to the stool to put on the hat. Two seconds later, the hat cries out, "Kirin!"

September 2, 1985

Yukina

"Yukina... Do you know where the others are?" Naruto asks as she arrive down the staircase. The blond must have arrived down before she had finished changing out of her uniform.

"I think Yachiru got talk into showing them that entrance to that chamber." She answers and Naruto sighs before taking a few seconds to study her. "How good are you on a broom?" Naruto asks her out of the blue.

"Huh?" She asks, not sure what brought this on and Naruto sighs. "Well, apparently since we now have seven member to our house, we're expected to field a Quidditch team. Dumbledore is more then willing to bend the No First Year rule for our House this one year so that we can have a team." Naruto says with a scowl.

She blinks in surprise before she recalls what Quidditch was. "But none of us knows how to play!" She says and Naruto smiles slightly and nods. "It's like submitting our house for the House Cup; its not about *our* morale, but for the other houses. After all, even in my first year, Kirin was been in last place and I was the only student of the house!"

She blinks, she hadn't know that tidbit of information. "Which is why I have the beginnings of a diabolical plan in which we will win this years House Cup!" Naruto says and within seconds, the room fills with clones of the ninja and without another word, the clones all head off to the library while the original heads out of the dorms.

"Which reminds me, if you see the others, tell them I want to hold a house meeting in the Dinning Hall around ten pm but before one am!" Naruto calls out as the blond disappears down the corridor leading out of the main common room of House Kirin.

She didn't know what to think and did wonder if she shouldn't mention it to Kurama. A slight chirp reminds her that Marble the grey

kestrel was waiting for her by the fireplace. She smiles at the little falcon as she walks towards the perch where Jet is resting.

After stroking Marble's dark grey chest feathers, she sits down on the chair closest to the perch and takes out a novel. Once she's comfortable, she begins reading out loud for Jet's benefit, the novel is titled The House of the Wolf which is written by Basil Copper.

Chamber of Secrets

Kasumi

"That's a Basilisk alright. I just don't know how long it is though." Kurama states in a calm manner after they climbed into the stone mouth.

"How would you control something so huge?" Shippo wonders as the boy moves to touch the black scales. "So... do we kill it?" Kagome wonders and a glance in Kurama's direction shows that the red haired Yoko seems to be considering it.

"I know a charm that will make its eyes harmless. After all, wizards of all people had not just developed this breed but breed them..." Yachiru admits and she couldn't help but say, "But that doesn't keep its venom from killing us if it decides to bite us."

"How does Naruto direct War without using any reins or a halter?" Kurama asks Yachiru and Yachiru shrugs.

"I know he use to use a halter when he first had War. Then sometime during the summer he stopped and it seemed that he didn't need it either. Heck, it's about that time did he create that harness that allows him to float a few center meters over War's back and keeps his legs from touching War's body too." The pink haired teen muses.

"But then, Naruto had mentioned how the thick back scales seem to shred any saddle he puts on War." Yachiru adds and she blinks, it

seems that Naruto's fairly brilliant when it comes to enchanting items.

"Have you seen him wear anything special when he rides War or uses his flying skate board?" Kurama asks and Yachiru hums as she considers it. "Well, he did create that safety harness to help cushion his fall from the skate board..." Yachiru muses and frowns as she wracks her brain for the other bit of information.

"I don't know, I think he was wearing a bracelet or something like a brace on his right arm." Yachiru finally says after a few minutes. Kurama hums thoughtfully while she wonders just what kind of lair or rather, bunker, this chamber could make.

Kirin Dinning Hall

"Why are we holding a house meeting?" Yachiru asks as Naruto stands on a slightly raised platform that's been charmed to hover a few inches in the air. Naruto glances at Yukina before answering slowly, "It seem that we now number seven members."

"So?" Shippo asks and Naruto gives Shippo a brief look before addressing them once more. "Seven is the number that a Quidditch team sports." Naruto states in a ironic way.

"What's Quidditch?" Kagome asks and she says, "We've never followed it, so what does it have to do with us?"

"The headmaster seems to think it's time for us to field our own team." Naruto says in a flat tone. "Oh..." The room declares.

"But Kagome and Shippo haven't even had a flying lesson yet!" Yachiru says in an objecting manner and Naruto nods in agreement. "Think of it this way, if the headmaster think a house with one member could win the House Cup, then he can expect a house with seven member to try and win the Quidditch Cup." Naruto says in a bitter tone, she couldn't help but wince.

"So we've got time on the Quidditch pitch then?" Kurama asks and Naruto snorts as he says, "The Quidditch Pitch is all booked up, even during our respective History classes."

"Is he going to send somebody over to teach us how to play it?" Yukina asks and Naruto shakes his head in a negative manner. "Then how can he expect us to play?!" Kagome demands and Naruto is beaten to the punch by Kurama, "He doesn't."

"If the sorting hat hadn't requested a meeting, we wouldn't even have been ***told*** ." Naruto snarls and his eyes flash crimson as well as a presence seems to try and strangle her but it vanishes as Naruto calms down, though it seems to have left both Kagome and Shippo a bit dazed.

She felt kind of betrayed in a way by this action but since she never really formed much of an opinion about the man, it didn't really feel anything about it. "So then, I believe our opinions are these, we either make sure that the other teams keep forfeiting their matches with us or we can try to teach ourselves to play and find another spot to practice at." Naruto says.

"All those in favor of trying to learn this game, raise their hand." Yachiru says and only Yukina did so. Naruto smirks in a predatory fashion as he nods his head.

"Good, then I declare that other then Bill or Charlie, all Quidditch players among the other houses are FREE GAME for whatever you have in mind. I'll have the House Elves keep me informed of any reserves or sudden plans to substitute players. Although I do believe we'll need to at minimum choice who's to play which position and begin giving Kagome and Shippo private flying lessons using a safety harnesses styled off of the one I use when I'm out on my flying skate board." Naruto says.

"I'll be the one who flies around those rings!" Yachiru says after a few seconds. "I'll be one of those with that weld bats." Kurama says with Yukina adding, "I'll be the other one with the bat welders."

"Which leaves, if I recall correctly one Seeker and three Chasers." The blond teen says and she says, "Naruto should be the one who goes after the little golden ball since he's the one with the most flight experience."

"Makes sense since you are a raven animagus." Kurama muses in agreement and Naruto nods. "Then that leaves Kagome, Kasumi, and Shippo to be the Chasers."

Quidditch Pitch

Kagome

"Any moment now..." The announcer says for the fourth time as they wait for the Hufflepuff team to appear. "Now would be a very good time to come out of the lockers." The Ravenclaw says but still, the other team doesn't show.

"And Hufflepuff forfeits their first match of the season." The girl says as a buzzer sounds out, marking the end of the thirty minute wait. She sighs in relief and although she's not happy with the fact that they're technically cheating when... well, she's not sure who decided to take care of the Hufflepuff team but seeing as they weren't here she's sure that somebody had done something.

Or many someones. She muses as they walk to their own lockers. *I wonder what prank Naruto plans to do next week...* She thinks as she turns her mind to other matter that were coming up.

"I know why Baker and Kimbry weren't here, I had been hoping to get Fiberscythe..." Shippo says softly and Kurama looks very smug. "He had an accident with an young mandrake while he was trying to earn bonus points by doing some weeding in that Green House."

"Nothing I did, they just had a really bad potions accident. Got nervous." Naruto says with a shrug, explaining why the last four hadn't shown up. "Snape or you?" Yachiru asks.

"Everthor." Naruto states. "Had hoped to get Wynth's position as their Keeper I take it." Kurama says and Naruto grins slightly in reply.

"Well that explains why I couldn't find anyone to practice that directional curse on." Kasumi says lightly.

"Shouldn't we worry that Dumbledore has spell here to record this?" She asks and Naruto moves a crate he had brought with him and within seconds, he takes the lid off to reveal a tower like device that seems to have a hovering orb at the top.

"Remember that portable warding device I was working on last year? I finished it by Christmas, though I've been pretty rough on the last thirty-five models, this one has a nice layering feature that allows me to install updated ward types in the form of gemstones. I put one with a certain charm on Dumbledore's Lemon drops earlier this month. Its still in his office and its still working!" Naruto says smugly.

"I know that charm!" Yachiru says and Naruto just hums as he puts the lid back over the warding tower. "Do you plan to install a larger version at the manor?" Yukina asks and Naruto nods.

"Yea and I get the feeling it'll be fairly hard to tune down the magic in the wards then anything else. Heck, I've managed to use a Warding Stone that's 6 cm by 6 cm." Naruto answers and Kasumi muses, "So you've got around to creating your own, huh?"

"I had to have an idea of how they're created to 'tune' a device to that stone." Naruto admits and then they finish changing out of the safety harnesses that Naruto had supplied to the team.

"I'm just glad we didn't have to do any flying." She admits just before they left the locker room. "Here, here!" Kasumi agrees.

October 31, 1985

Yachiru

"Looks like Onyx is happy to eat those spiders." She remarks as a huge swarm of spiders ranging from various sizes try and killing the Basilisk from the Chamber of Secrets. "Well, spiders must fear them for more then the simple fact that they have eight eyes." Naruto states calmly.

"You know what would help? Having some kind of translator for Snake tongue." Yukina remarks from a few feet above her head.

"You think that Onyx here is *sane* ?" Naruto asks in disbelief up at Yukina. "What make you think she isn't?" Yukina asks and Naruto replies, "Oh, I don't know, the fact that spent centuries in solitary confinement? That she's yet to eat anything since we woke her up?"

"And by eat I mean something wholesome and filling." Naruto adds as an after thought as he moves as some young spider tries to leap at him. "I guess I can see why you wouldn't think that eating a couple of rabbits would be filling for a creature her size." Yukina admits and she nods in agreement.

"Maybe Kasumi couldn't mind cooking up some outer coat that can be filled with the right kind of potions that Onyx needs to become healthy." She muses and Yukina nods.

"I guess... but I'd have to create either various sections within the 'treat' so that the potions don't mix in one go or make various 'treats' filled with different potions to feed her over a course of a month." Naruto muses as she ducks down as a pair of spiders try and attack her.

"So, what's this year's Halloween prank?" She asks as Onyx finally swallows one of the larger spiders, likely only done because the spider swarm have decided to retreat and regroup. It didn't take long before Onyx to begin smelling out other dead spiders to eat while they hover in the air, keeping an eye out for any lunging spiders.

"I've created a series of illusion generators and area fields. Then just this morning you recall getting that ball?" Naruto asks and she nods.

"Well, those are actually recorders that will activate when the bottom most level area fields and illusion generators go online. The balls will turn invisible and produce at least three smaller balls to record from different angles. The main one will then rest on their person's shoulder so that the first recorder can record their thoughts and the sights from their own eyes." Naruto says. "Of course I also gave special recorders to the House Elves so they can participate in this. After all, I had promised those two years back to get them to add those potion cocktails for those two Halloween pranks."

"Including the teachers' point of view?" Yukina asks and Naruto nods his head in confirmation. "I hope to use this coming summer to edit the raw stuff and then set it on film." Naruto admits with a grin. "I haven't yet got a title for it but I've decided to call the company The Green Beast Productions."

"Did you did you include the Chamber of Secrets?" Yukina asks and Naruto replies, "No, I rather not aggravate Onyx any more then I have to."

"When it this suppose to start?" She asks and Naruto looks to his PPD. "In about... two hours, at seven actually." The blond answers and she grins since that means she can still witness the show.

"How long will it last?" Yukina asks and Naruto replies, "Which ever comes first, for the 'horde' to either conquer the school or for three days to have passed."

"So this will be your longest prank yet then?" She asks and Naruto nods. "Though the illusions will leave the House Elves alone since they will be following them around to record their progress in conquering Hogwarts."

Then Naruto continues to explain, "Also, those 'killed' will be put into a slumber while an illusion of what kind of injuries they got from the invading horde will remain wrap around them to show what 'killed' them."

She has to admit, he really thought this one out, but then, she knew that Naruto is currently bitter about Fruity's attempt at using their house to boost the other houses' morale. Not that she's trilled about it either but then, Naruto had to put up with a full year alone at Hogwarts before she arrived. *More then likely Fruity had been trying to force Naruto to ask for a resort.*

Fat chance of that ever working. She thinks with a smirk, after all, being stubborn wasn't a bad trait to have in a fighter. Something she knew from experience among the 11th division at Kenny's side.

It helps that being around Naruto helps whenever she feels homesick, after all, she truly misses living in the Scout Society. More so then the misadventures she'd get into.

November 2, 1985

Kagome

"So... it took an imaginary horde less then forty-eight hours to conquer Hogwarts? That's kind of... sad all things considered." She admits as a bunch of Narutos continue to sort through the various recorders and putting them into the right named boxes.

"And all I did with the field generator was give the illusions a way to react to the surroundings in a physical way as well as to be affected by physical magical forces in a believable way. Which includes the wards." The original Naruto says as he conquers more boxes with the correct names on them.

"So what you're saying is that if the staff and students had gotten organized, they could have fended off the attacks made by the illusion beings?" Shippo asks and Naruto nods.

"You have to admit that the heads were the weak parts of their constructions. All they needed to do was have good aim and use a force spell to 'kill' the illusion being." Naruto says answers before adding, "More often quality can win out over quantity."

She smiles as she nods in agreement with that sentiment, after all, it only took one swing of Inu-Yasha's sword to kill off over a hundred demons. And at the thought of the half-demon, she sighs as she feels a pang of home sickness as she thinks about Inu-Yasha, her friends, and then her family.

"Kagome?" Shippo asks softly with a hand resting gently on her shoulder. She smiles at Shippo as she says, "I just was overwhelmed for a few seconds there. I'm better now, thank you."

She blinks rapidly as she resists the urge to tear up and Shippo gives her a concerned look before drawing her in for a hug. "Thanks Shippo." She whispers softly as she returns the hug.

"I think I'll turn in early today since there isn't any classes going on." She says after the hug ends and Naruto nods. "Kasumi is a good listener... I mean, sometimes it's easier to talk to a stranger who's unaware of said problems then a close friend." Naruto says after she takes a few steps away.

"You've...?" She trails off and Naruto winces. "I kind of rant more then cry." The blond admits and Shippo says in surprise, "Really? I would never have guessed, after all, you seem so... calm."

Suddenly the memory of Naruto's eyes going red and that intense aura during that meeting plays out within her mind. She swallows, not quite sure if she ever wanted to see him angry for real.

Looking away, she marches up to her room and after a while, she finds it hard to stay in control so she allows herself to cry into her pillow. Although she's not sure what she's crying about, only that she just needed a good cry.

December 20, 1985

Yukina

"This was one of the best ideas you ever had, Tao!" Yachiru says as she stares out onto the beach below. "I figured with emotions running as high as they were that Hawaii was as good a spot to vacation during Christmas break." The blond explains and she glances around house.

"It's a beautiful..." Kasumi says while Gin seems to have set off to check out the house that Naruto had somehow rented. She moves to stand next to the rest of the girls, leaving the guys with the luggage.

"You set up a portable ward?" She hears Kurama asks and Naruto replies, "Complete with a space enhancer charm added to the matrix of the device. After all, this is only a three story house, not counting the underground parking lot."

"Just how much did this cost you?" She asks as she turns to regard the blond. "Oddly enough, the owner seems to think this place is haunted. Turned out that the house only suffered from a bad case of a Murphy's Law curse. The owner's a muggle so... you get the picture." Naruto says and she blinks.

"Muggle baiting." She says and Naruto just sighs. "Seems to be, must have annoyed the wrong woman." Naruto states.

"The curse is...?" Shippo asks and Naruto huffs as he crosses his arms over his chest as he says, "Of course it's gone, heck I even had it transferred onto a stone and given to our 'beloved' potion teacher as an early Christmas gift."

She couldn't suppress her satisfied smile on hearing that, after all, she is forced to attend potion class made up of Gryffindors and Slytherins. *He is a very petty man and I hope he suffers greatly because of it.* She declares before finally noticing something odd.

"Wasn't it evening when we left?" She asks as she glances up to judge the position of the sun. Kagome takes a slightly deep breath before she begins to inform her of how they're currently in a different

time zone then England, one that's behind the UK by quite a bit of hours too boot.

While she didn't understand a lot of that, she did get the impression that they now have more then a few hours to kill before it's evening once more. She concludes that this was why Naruto had slipped them something to cause them to sleep in an extra few hours since they weren't tried in the least.

I hope Marble will be fine at Hogwarts. She thinks as Yachiru and Kasumi begin to go on a tour of the house. She decides to trail along as does Kagome. "We could have a Girl's Night too!" Yachiru declares a bit loudly while she's talking with Kasumi.

Quidditch Pitch

Kagome

They mount their respective brooms and once the whistle is blown, Naruto is the very first player to raise quickly into the air. As the red ball gets grabbed by Shippo from one of the Slytherin Chasers a few kilometers by their hoops, some kind of blur attracts her attention and within seconds, Naruto is hovering in the air holding the Golden Snitch in his right hand.

"I do believe we just witness a new record for the shortest game of Quidditch in the history of Hogwarts." The game announce says after a few minutes of stunned silence. "So... I guess Kirin wins this match and ultimately this season."

She isn't the only one to sigh in relief and with that, they descend out of the sky and dismount from their brooms while the Slytherin team look ready to commit murder and spit on their corpses.

"So... that's what you had planned? Caught the snitch as soon as possible?" Shippo demands and the oldest Kirin student just nods.

"It was my only plan if we ever were forced to play." Naruto replies as they begin to get their outer layers off, though they do hand the safety harnesses to Naruto.

She snaps her head to the entrance of their locker room because she hear something fleshy hit something unmoving. A string of unimaginative curses get growled and seconds later a scream is heard. "Must have been the Slytherins." Kurama muses.

"I wonder what spell they tried to get through the wards? I hope nobody got too hurt." Kasumi states while Gin comes out from under the bench.

"Nothing that they didn't deserve since its only a typical spell reflector ward scheme." Naruto states calmly.

"It would be nice to win the House Cup too... Get a matching set." She muses as they remember to pick up their brooms, although Naruto did pick up the box containing his warding device.

"You never know... Miracles do happen after all." Naruto states calmly. She decides she didn't want to know how he plans to pull that off.

Farewell Feast

"And the winner of the House Cup is..." Dumbledore says but trails off. "Oh! Right, I forgot to lift..." Naruto whispers softly and within seconds, Dumbledore states in a shocked tone, "Kirin House with... I never thought a house could earn that many points..."

The decoration of the various houses transforms into brown and orange, the colors of their house with a stylized image of a Kirin between the two fields of color. None of the other houses knew what to make of this but Naruto looks very smug about these turn of events.

"Good job... Kirin." Dumbledore says with a slight miffed look flashing on his face before its replaced by his usual look. Although the glare that Snape is sending them pretty much says it all.

As Dumbledore sits down, it triggers something and before their eyes, Dumbledore gains not just horns, but his skull seems to be like clay that's being shaped by unseen hands. She glances at the other teachers but they weren't being affected as much as Dumbledore is.

Once the new features stop growing in, something fall right on the man, panic erupts as the man's skin peels away to reveal red muscle and blood veils. Screams and yells of horror increase as those begin to vanish until all that remains of the headmaster is his altered skeleton.

Then the teachers jump away as that skeleton moves... Blue flame begins to erupt out of the eye sockets while a mist begins to ooze out of the bones. Within seconds, a light covering of ice cover the skeleton but most of all, the ice seems to pool around the new horns or spikes about the skeleton, likely adding to the thickness of them as well as to the length.

The skeleton's jaws part and then move but no sound comes out. The teachers have their wands pointed at the icy skeleton while the students were all standing and slowly moving to the wall.

"You really hate him this year, don't you?" Kurama asks softly to Naruto as they converge at a spot at the wall that is slightly behind the staff table.

"It shows doesn't it?" Naruto asks wearing an ironic grin as the skeleton tries to calm the teachers down by getting up off the chair. Over all, the Muggle Studies teacher is the first to fire off a spell, one that is stopped as a small cup comes flying off the table to meet it.

"Oh good, it does work." Naruto muses and Yachiru asks, "Based it off of Gaara, huh?"

"Yea, I plan to make it so that it'll activate when ever somebody begins to fling the Unforgivables around. Nothing stops the death one like a large chunk of stone wall or something durable." The demon container explains as they watch as the more panic ridden teachers begin to fling spells at Dumbledore the skeleton.

"I wonder how long it'll take before one of the Perfects or seventh years race off to contact somebody beyond Hogwarts?" Kurama muses.

"Going to take a while, that's for sure." Yukina says as she waves to the fainted bodies resting between the tables.

Well, all things concerned, I don't think anyone's going to be thinking about how we managed to get the House Cup this year... She decides privately as more and more plates, cups, and what not continues to fly about to deflect the spells being cast at the icy skeleton who is also their headmaster.

So Ends Year Four of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 5

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1986

Narrator: Shippo , Iruka Umino , and Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki

Iruka

"Where are we?" He wonders as he looks from Anko and then to Shizune. Anko snorts by moves to look out the window.

"Since when do trunks not only float in the air but follow people?" Anko asks and he moves to take a peek out of said window. "Are those dresses?" He wonders as he notes at the fashion statement being made by of those with flying trunks.

"I don't believe we have our ninja tools or headbands." Shizune says and within seconds, he's patting himself down. They each find a stick, each made from different kinds of wood, each in their pockets but nothing beyond that.

"This thing doesn't even have a valid point to it!" Anko says in disgust as she tosses it to the seat across from her. "I won't toss it way, it might be something important to our mission." He says as he tosses it back to the purple haired girl.

The sound of something moving causes them to tense up and to reach for a weapon as the door opens and standing before them is a very familiar face. "Iruka? Is that you?" Naruto asks with wide eyes and clearly not believing what's before him.

"Tao, you know them?" A pink haired teen asks as she suddenly appears at his shoulder, looking into their compartment. "Well, yea, only they're grown ups back home." The bewhiskered youth answers before moving more into the compartment.

"This is Yachiru by the way." Naruto introduces the other teen. "Yachiru, this was my academe instructor Iruka. The one with the tench coat is Anko and finally, Shizune."

"I wonder if Kenny's going to be this small when he arrives." Yachiru wonders as a pair of floating trunks arrive behind the two. He watches as Naruto and Yachiru both take out two sticks and with a flick, the trunks fly onto the overhanging racks.

"Anyway, Yachiru and I will show up later, right now we've got Perfect duties to attend to." Naruto says and then pauses at the door, "If a red head shows up, that's Kurama, he's just another who's been assigned to this assignment too."

"I say Kasumi will show up first. After all, she is the one with the movie equipment." Yachiru says as she follows after Naruto. The door shuts, leaving them very much alone and even more confused.

He turns to gaze down at the stick in his hand and then begins to turn it over a few times, trying to figure out how to activate it after seeing those two's demonstration. "Where's the one switch for this thing?" Anko demands.

Then with a particularly hard flick of the stick, something slices into the cloth of the seat across from her. "All you had to do was focus chakra into it?" Shizune asks as he bends down to examine the thing scratch on the seat.

Just before they can give that a try, the door is open by a younger looking teen with bright red hair. "Kurama?" Shizune asks after a few seconds. The red head's eyes flicker up at the racks before nodding.

"Naruto and Yachiru been here then?" Kurama asks and they nod as the boy comes more into the compartment. "I'm Yukina." The girl standing behind Kurama says with a smile, one that oddly enough, put him at ease.

"I'm Iruka and these two are Anko and Shizune." He says, introducing the two girls and himself. "Oh! You were Naruto's academe teacher! It's a pleasure to met someone who Naruto holds in high regards." Yukina says and he couldn't help but flush.

Once more the two are trailed by two flying trunks and they were sent flying up onto the racks with minor flicks of their owner's wands. Once the door is shut, Kurama keeps his stick out and mutters softly under his breath as different kinds of energy are sent flying about the room, by the time the red head finishes, the space seems to have grown.

"How did you do that?" Shizune asks and Kurama smiles in an ironic sort of way. "By magic. You'll get a chance to learn these spells and others at Hogwarts, after all, you're just been enrolled simply by being on this train."

"Just how many others are there on this 'assignment' so far?" He asks after glancing at the other two.

"Let's see, Naruto arrived first, next came Yachiru, Kasumi, then Yukina and myself. Finally Kagome and Shippo arrive just last year. Seven last year, ten this year." Kurama states and then the door opens to reveal a sandy haired kid with noticeable pointed ears and a girl with black hair with a tint of blue to it.

"My ears were burning, you weren't just talking about us now were you?" The sandy haired kid asks with a mischievous grin. "This is Shippo and Kagome." Yukina pipes in as the pair enters into the room.

"Kasumi got dragged away by Bill and Charlie to met their family. But I expect she'll be here soon enough with those two in toe." Kagome says as she brushes her bangs to the side of her face before they walk into the room.

It came as no surprise to him when another pair of flying trunks enter behind those two and were sent up on the overhanging racks. The

two take seats across from each other.

"These are Anko, Iruka, and Shizune." Kurama tells the two arrivals. "Really?" The two say and they turn to regard them. *Just what has Naruto been telling these people?*

"Do you really summon snakes?" Shippo asks Anko and Anko smirks. "Yea, yea I do."

"Just how big do these snakes get?" Kagome asks and from the others, he gets the feeling that there's an underlying reason why they're asking. "Large enough to attack a town." Anko says before narrowing her eyes, "Why do you want to know?"

"Well, we've hear that you're snakes talk, like in a language you can understand..." Yukina says and Kagome seems to pick it up, "You see, we've got this ancient basilisk who we want to talk with. And you see, in this world there are people who are capable to speaking to snakes."

"They call it tongue Parseltongue and those that are born being capable of speaking it, Parselmouths." Shippo adds. He's not sure why this is important but decides to remain silent as Anko asks, "And why are you interested in this ability?"

The older student all share looks before Kurama explains, "Naruto think that Onyx is a touch insane because of living in solitary confinement and we're not sure if we agree with that assessment, which is why we'd like for you to summon a serpent and see if your snakes can speak Parseltongue and finally communicate with her."

"We also want to try and get more then a few potions into her to get her healthy." Yukina adds. "All this for a snake?" Anko asks and they all look bemused.

"Well, we've wouldn't mind getting her permission to gather up blood samples, milk her for her venom, and maybe get a few scrapings

from around her eyes. All without having to worry about such things containing a taint of being forcibly taken from her." Kurama explains.

"Just what's so special about this snake?" Shizune asks and Shippo replies, "Well, for one thing, just a quick look into her eyes alone can kill you instantly. Of course we've rediscovered an ancient charm used to neglect that ability of hers."

He couldn't help but stare, not sure if they're kidding or not about this so call Gaze of Instant Death. "We're not kidding about that, less then fifty years ago we know that somebody awoke her and that during that year, Onyx killed this one girl; who to this day, haunts the main entrance to the very place where this snake is resting." Kurama states.

As they thought about this, the door opens and a much older teen, not as old as Naruto or Yachiru, is revealed. "Sorry I'm late but Ginny tried to keep Gin." Kasumi, he believes, admits as a silver canine with odd tattoos peers from behind the girl.

"Gin, if you please." Kasumi asks once the door is closed and the others begin to get up off their seats. He mimics this action, though he's a bit confused as to why. "Thank you Gin."

"Welcome!" A voice chirps in reply while his view is block but it wasn't long before the room seems to adjust to so many people standing that he finally manages to see a trunk. Kurama takes out his stick and within seconds the who room expands so much that he can barely see the side seats.

Next Kagome takes out her stick and the far part of the room behind him suddenly sports a white sheet, one that you find in a movie theater. Shippo then takes out his stick and he soon finds that he's standing not too far from the edge of a step.

Yukina takes out her stick and within seconds a set of miniature furniture, comfortable looking chairs and couches moves by the closest step and then with another flicker, the furniture not only

enlarges but duplicates itself all over the larger steps, leaving the smaller steps alone.

His attention is turned to find Anko and Shizune on either sides of Kasumi as she slowly brings out a collection of tins. "We're going to watch a movie?" He asks curiously, trying to grab onto something before he faints from this bizarre scene he just experienced.

"Or three." Kasumi muses while Anko picks up one of the tins while Kasumi enlarges a projector. "Death Wish 3?" Anko muses while Shizune counters, "Ewoks: The Battle for Endor? The Last Dragon?"

"Might want to put aside the Ewok one." Kagome says. "How does Logan's Run sound to you guys?" Kasumi asks once she's finished with the projector.

"Sounds perfect." Kurama says and Shippo adds, "Then we can show that Ewok one to help them wine down."

He shouldn't help but shake his head as Kagome takes a small tin and heads for the door, leaving Kasumi to close her trunk after enlarging the two film tins and handing them to Yukina to thread them into the projector.

"Just how many films does this work make in a year?" Anko asks and the group just seems to pause to look bemused at the question. "Let's just say that there's live action films like Logan's Run and then there are animated films like the Ewok one. They both take different amounts of time to produce." Kasumi says.

"That reminds me, are we going to be showing Naruto's film this year? I know it's scheduled to be released this October." Kagome asks.

"Naruto made a movie?" Anko asks with a hint of disbelief. "It's more that he pulled a prank but made sure to record it. The 'real' acting and filming came during the first two weeks of summer, using miniatures to develop a story line to what he recorded." Kasumi

explains as they head to the first large step to take up seat on that bunch of furniture.

He couldn't help but sigh at the mention of the word 'rank'. "I thought he grew out of that phase..." He murmurs to himself.

"Don't be too hard on Naruto for it. It's gotten to be a kind of tradition for a prank to happen during Halloween. Though the end of the year prank is the one who's theme hasn't really altered." Shippo says to him.

"And a lot of these people are just asking for it too." Yukina admits. "Last year's prank had poked at one of the weakness of the school's defenses too. A poke that's hard to ignore at that." Kurama adds as the door opens to admit a group of students ranging in ages.

"Hey Charlie!" Shippo calls out and a red head holds up a hand as the group walks pass their step to take a spot more up front. And so with that, more and more student begin to appear as a whistle sounds out.

By the time the flow of people dies off, the movie finally begins and the lights seem to dim. He's a bit surprise at the fact that the movie is in color but gets over it as time marches on.

"Good movie, eh?" Naruto's voice whispers next to his ear, causing him to jerks but manages to keep from crying out as a chuckle and a giggle sound from a familiar young woman and a much older young man with red hair. "Shhh!" Most of the others hush at them and he just settles for leveling a glare at the blond.

It didn't take long before Naruto and Yachiru to sit down at the far right while the red head only moves down a row.

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

Naruto

"Looks like Meanie's had a hard summer." Yachiru muses softly as they wait for their three latest members to be sent to their table. "Bumblebee too, but then, that might be because he didn't get the right treatment after the prank." He adds.

"It's like he doesn't have any hair on his body..." Shippo admits and sure enough, Dumbledore lacks his usual beard and even mane of white hair. "Anything other after effects that weren't given the right treatment?" Kurama asks.

"Dairy produces likely causes him to... well, he'll spend a lot of time on the toilet depending on how much he either drinks or eats." He answers and a few snickers erupt from a few of the others. "His current diet should be a hefty amount of fruit and vegetables, with little meat if he wants to remain healthy. He's body temperature is likely a few degrees colder then normal, so he has to be careful of overheating since at this moment, that is his normal body temperature."

"I also wouldn't be surprise of those spikes try and grow during this coming winter. He should also try not to drink any cool liquids during that season too or else he might get slush for blood." He finishes after he finishes recalling the rest.

"Pretty harsh after effects." Kagome admits and he sighs. "Oddly enough, if he takes a general poison potion every four hours for three weeks, the after effects will vanish and he'll be fine." He tells her and Kagome looks kind of startled.

"That's it? That's the right treatment?" Yukina asks and he shrugs. "That treatment works because its been a month since that prank occurred. If feed a three certain potions within twenty-four hours of said prank, those effects wouldn't have had a chance to kick in. And those potions were a Pepperup potion, that general poison potion, and a powerful bowel potion, and they didn't need to be taken within that order either."

"Why would he need the laxative potion?" Shippo asks. "It gets rid of the last traces of the portion of the prank potion that's still in his body. That's what causes the after effects really." He answers.

"And the general poison potion helps neutralize what's already circulating in his body..." Kagome says, clearly impressed. "And the Pepperup potion to help get rid of the aftereffects of the coldness." Kasumi muses.

Iruka

"Mitarashi, Anko." Professor McGonagall states calmly and Anko moves toward the stool with a slight swagger to her walk. "She does know we're only eleven, right?" He asks Shizune, who shrugs in reply.

About two minutes after Anko has the hat on her head, it finally states, "Kirin!" Anko takes off the hat and stalks off towards the smallest student table of the hall, the same one where Naruto and the others are sitting at.

"The house name is Kirin? Really, Kirin?" He wonders out loud as the next student walks up to the stool after the old lady calls out their name.

Finally the crowd is thinned, leaving Shizune and himself. "Umino, Iruka." With a blink, he walks up to the stool, not sure what to expect from the strange enchanted item.

"Such a sharp mind. A very fine teacher you are, too bad that none of the staff have your ability. And don't beat yourself up too much when it comes to Naruto, you just arrived too late to fix the damage done by his previous instructors at that academe of yours." The hat informs him and he sighs in a defeated sort of way.

"I almost wish you hadn't confirmed that." He admits privately to the hat. *"He's been more then able to confound the headmaster more*

then once. His last prank was quite brilliant. Albus was very much alive despite the fact that he was only a icy, moving skeleton."

"Kirin!" The hat says before he can ask for more details. Try as he might, the hat doesn't reply for the next few seconds, so he's finally forced to take it off before he gets up to walk to table he's expected to sit at.

A chair appears as he arrives and he sits down in it. "Shizune." The professor calls out and he turns to watch Shizune walk up to the stool and put the hat on.

"What kind of prank causes a person to become an icy, moving skeleton?" He asks after the hat calls out, "Kirin!"

"Could we talk about that when we're at the dorms?" Kurama asks as the red head teen glances at the old bald man wearing some colorful robes. "Sounds like a interesting story." Anko muses while he glances at Naruto with a raised eyebrow.

"A few final announcements before we tucker into our feeding trenches..." The bald man says while Professor McGonagall moves to put the stool and hat away.

Kirin Common Room

"How did you not manage to kill him?!" Shizune demands after hearing about the Farewell Feast prank. He feel like shrinking away from her and she's just four feet away from where he's sitting.

"I managed to put a soul stabilizer rune scheme on his chair seat and a soul binder scheme on the back of his chair." Naruto answers with only a slight wince. "Well, that explains why he didn't die..." Kurama muses thoughtfully.

"Anyway, Naruto, I need your help with my Animagus training. I don't suppose you have another series of steps I can go through then the

three the UK has?" Kasumi asks while Shizune seems to be trying to figure out what exactly a rune scheme is.

"I think know the one, it's the same one I used since the others kept trying to pin a fox form on me." Naruto admits and he couldn't help but perk up at that. "How many tails?" He asks and Naruto gives gives him a bemused look.

"None, and I really do mean that they kept appearing tailless, no matter what kind of fox showed up." The blond says and he snickers while his fellow Yoko has a slight smile.

"What animal did you end up with, brat?" Anko asks and Naruto answers, "If you must know, I'm a raven Animagus. As in the one of the largest corvids which is also known as Corvus Corax."

"Well, you are a natural wind user." Shizune says though she seems to be frowning. "You think you'll take a fox as your second form, Tao?" Yachiru asks before adding, "Hey! Maybe I should join you when you help Kasumi! I wonder what I'll transform into?"

"I'm betting into some kind of weasel." He says with a sly grin while Yachiru huffs at him with her arms are crossed over her chest. He feels Kagome give him a slight push in the shoulder, though she is sporting a warm smile.

"Maybe some members of this house should attend this training." Yukina muses and he's not the only one giving the ice maiden a look. "I agree, it might come in handy considering that we need really can't afford to be caught doing, well, in anything." Kurama says.

"Not all of us can be demons, Kurama." Kasumi agrees and that causes the three newest members of the house to freeze. "I'm a Yoko, so is Kurama, and Yukina is an ice maiden." He says, breaking the thick tension, which causes the three to stare between them.

"Naruto can technically be a half-breed." Kagome points out. "I guess we should add that I'm a Shinigami and Kagome is a

priestess." Yachiru states in a matter of fact way.

The three just stared at Yachiru with wide eyes and their mouths moving but not saying anything. "I think we overloaded them. We should have waited until Christmas to tell them that." Kasumi admits with a sigh.

"Maybe we should come up with profiles for each member of our house?" He muses and the rest hum before Naruto stretches.

"Well, I say we move this discussion to the pool." Naruto says as he gets up. "I second that." Yukina says as she follows suit.

Being closer to the three, Kurama and Kasumi nudge the three and get them to follow them. He's more then a bit eager to relax in the artificial hot spring that the House Elves created because Naruto requested it.

September 6, 1986

Iruka

"Thanks for inviting my brother and I for this, Yachiru." Bill says as they wait for Naruto to finish walking and double back by this section of the wall. "More the merrier, Crimson!" Yachiru says.

"We'll keep it a secret, after all, a lot of people have access to the Animagus registration as it is." Bill says. "Especially since most of the Death Eaters got away." Charlie adds.

"I'll never know why your government never questioned them under that truth potion. Sure, torturing people for information has its thrills but you can get conditioning for it too." Anko says and he nudges her in the ribs while Shizune hisses at her.

Both Bill and Charlie look startled and Charlie asks, "And you'd know this... how?" Anko is saved from answering from Naruto whistling for

them to come. Naruto holds the door open as they enter into the room often called the Come and Go room.

"Why aren't Kurama, Shippo, and Yukina here?" Bill asks as Naruto moves put a large, heavy wooden beam onto the back of the door. Yachiru moves forward to this table to open this box, without the lip covering it, he finds something that looks like a toy tower with a glowing sphere hovering at the top.

"What's this?" Bill asks as the older Gryffindor bends down to get a closer look. "A portable warding device that Tao is thinking about selling to parents of muggleborns." Yachiru says proudly and he glances over at Naruto, finding it hard to connect the lonely prankster student with this young man who seems to be the leader of this odd group.

"Really? How did you manage to make it without a ward stone?" Bill asks as soon as Naruto moves to the table.

"Well, first off, I've gotten around to making my own warding stones. But for now, let's turn to the task we're here for. And yes, we are missing three of our number but they're currently managing our film club for today. I already arranged with Pocky to get lunch sent up here as well as our supper so that when we're done for the day, we can go directly to the theater." Naruto says as the teen picks up an incense burner off the table.

Naruto walks towards a circle and puts the incense burner at the center of the circle. Without a word or the use of a wand, the burner begins to smoke as they move to stand just outside of the circle. It's then that he spots out lines of skulls resting on the other walls of the room.

"Those weren't there before..." Kagome says and as he turns to look at Naruto, he jerks slightly at the image of a raven resting on Naruto's head. The bird looks more solid then the skulls but it also seem to have the same white outline that the skulls have.

"You have a..." Charlie trails off while Naruto just smiles slightly. "Be glad its not wrapped around me or else I would look like a humanoid raven." The blond says in a dry tone.

"Huh?" Charlie says and Naruto waves that away. "If one of is lucky today, you'll see it for yourself before lunch or supper." The blond says before motioning for them to take seats around the circle.

They spread out, though both Bill and Charlie look a bit unnerved by the strange skulls. *Not that you can blame them.* He admits as he tries to ignore the fact that the hairs on the back of his neck were perking up.

"Where did those skulls come from?" Yachiru asks curiously. "The best way to explain them are that they're the makings of this Animagus training. As you meditate or find yourself dozing off, some of those skulls will find their way into your mind and what happens after that is that which ever skull you 'feed' will become your Animagus form."

"That's kind of creepy..." Kagome admits while Naruto just sighs. "This is a very primitive way to get a form but it also allows you to pick in a way. How else would I end up with a bird through this instead of a fox?" Naruto admits as he moves to the only chair and picks up a drum.

With a sigh, he sits cross legged and as Naruto begins to gently beat the thin drum, he began the steps that he had been taught to enter into his mediation state on him.

Naruto

It's so much different to witness this then to experience it. He muses to himself as he watches as various skull seem to flirt between the various people resting in the circle. He wasn't all that surprise to see that Yachiru had fallen asleep, as had the two Weasley brothers.

Most of the others seem to have entered into their meditative states as he continues to beat the drum at a smoothing rhythm. There were times went instead of a human hand clutching the drum and drumstick, there were scale like forearms with talon 'fingers'. Slowly some of the skulls finally vanish from the collection as well as a few of them stop flirting about the various people within the circle.

Those skulls look more like shaped mists then ghostly outlines floating in the air. It's too soon to really made head or tails of which skull belongs to which animal, although he did take note of the few bird and lizard shapes that remain, though the mammalian types were the most popular.

It didn't surprise him much to see that the collection of skulls around Kasumi were thinning out faster while a select few were growing more 'solid'. *She has tried other methods to become an Animagus. So she does have a species she hoped to become.* He notices as many of the skulls did look very similar to each other, although they vary in different sizes.

Out of the group only two people still had misty skulls by the time lunch arrives. With a sigh, he stops drumming and the various skulls back away to rest beyond the circle before the others stir.

"Huh? What?" Charlie wonders before a stomach growls. Kasumi looks embarrassed but she wouldn't be the only one as everyone else's stomachs growl.

"Lunch is served." He says as he waves at the huge pot of stew with his right hand. They didn't need any more encouragement as they descend of the pile of empty bowls to fill them, they grab their spoons in as if as an afterthought.

He waits until they've had their second helpings to grab a bowl himself. He's not at all surprise by their ravenous appetite since he, too, had gone through this train and had needed at least four meals, two breakfasts and two lunches, before he had 'feed' his animal enough that it became solid.

By the time they were on their fourth helpings, they had slowed and with their fifth helping, they were full. "I never though that this training could be such hungry work!" Bill says as he pats his mid-section.

"I can't believe I ate so much!" Anko states and he hums softly. "The number of skulls seem to have shrank and some look like they're made of ice." Kagome notes.

"Or mist." Bill agrees before he gets up to put the dirty bowl on the table. It wasn't long before the rest follow his example before they return to sitting within the circle.

He knocks on the table and the dirty dishes and empty pot vanish before he begins to beat that steady rhythm on the drum once more. It takes a few minutes before they've return to their previous states, which is signaled by when the skulls move from their positions by the walls of the room to circle around their chosen.

And by tomorrow night, they'll be done feeding their inner beasts. Then they'll just need to learn how to transform into that beast. He muses as he continues to beat the drum.

October 30, 1986

Iruka

"Just what are these suppose to do?" He asks as he watches as a pair of Naruto's shadow clones sticking to the wall as they place something high up on the walls in the hallway. The clones glance at each other before puffing away just as a group of fifth year Slytherins rounds the corner.

They sneer at him and a few glance around before drawing their spells, likely to attack him. He just sighs as he prepares to counter attack them. "Fifteen points from Slytherin each for bullying a first year." Naruto says calmly as he comes out of a classroom.

"You can't do that!" The larger brute proclaims. "A hundred points from Slytherin for fighting with a Perfect. And ten points from Slytherin for every minute each of you remains in this hallway." Naruto says as he leans on the doorway of the classroom with his arms crossed over his chest.

"You won't get away with this! Just wait until our head of house hears about this." Another shouts and Naruto smirks as he says, "Five hundred points from Slytherin for threatening a Prefect and let me explain why I can take these points. It's because your own head of house uses the same excuses when taking points away from other houses, see?"

Naruto takes out a scroll and with a slight flick of his wrist, the scroll unrolls. "This is the calculation of points and reasons why Snape took them from other houses last year. Oh yea, eight points each from Slytherin for poking your noses into another house's business. And another four points from Slytherin for not being shining examples of your house."

The gang glare at Naruto and it wasn't long before one of them fire off a spell. "Five thousand points from Slytherin per spell you fire at me and at my fellow Kirin and decreed that your house is allowed to grain negative points too because of your idiotic bravery. Then you'll each be serving detention by being living targets for any first year and second year student for the next five months and that you can't even cast spells to defend yourselves or to counter attack them." Naruto states as the spells seem to get absorbed by something before they even reach Naruto.

With a roar the group charges towards Naruto only for Professor McGonagall to storm into this part of the hall and demand, "What in blazes is going on here?" But the group doesn't stop because she showed but because they rammed into something.

"These students challenged my authority as a Prefect, Deputy Headmistress, particularly my right to use the same reasons their househead used last year. Then when they fired off spells, I not only

took points away but gave them detention and, well, you saw what happened." Naruto says as he calmly rolls up the scroll and Professor McGonagall looks at him and asks, "Is this true?"

"It is, Professor." He says and now the group has finally realized that they were offically screwed. "To your common room and I double the detention young Mr Uzumaki has given you." Professor McGonagall states in a stormy tone and they pale even more before they turn away and walk off.

"And just what kind of detention are they to serve?" Professor McGonagall asks after she calms down. "Well, seeing as they're about to rough up a weak and unlearned first year, I thought they should know what it's like on the end of the victim."

"Oh?" Professor McGonagall asks and Naruto nods in a solemn fashion. "Yes, I had assigned them to serve as living, moving spell practice targets for first and second years for the next five months without being allowed to cast spells to defend themselves or to counter attack. And all things considered, they should be glad that I didn't include any other year in their detention since I'm sure they'd suffer more so at the end points of a third or fourth year then a first or second year."

Professor McGonagall just blinks before she nods slightly. "While I don't approve of this particular punishment, I can't exactly think of any other punishment to replace it, so I believe it stands." Professor McGonagall says.

"For the next ten months?" He asks dumbly and the professor looks started to see him there before she realizes what he meant. "I did double it, didn't I?" She muses and Naruto nods. "That you did, professor, that you did."

"Now if you excuse me, I believe I shall have to have a word with Professor Snape about this group's behavior in regards for Prefect's authority." The professor says and she heads off in the direction the group took.

"Too bad I won't be there when Snape not only learns that his house has gathered negative points, but the punishment they're to serve. His look will be priceless." Naruto says as he pockets the scroll.

"One would think you have something against authority figures." He remarks as Naruto comes to stand by him.

"Of course I do! It's just that I now have a much more legal way to get back at those bullies with legal authority. Just wait when your a fifth year and you're given this position, after all, you're the only boy in your year so you're bound to be a Perfect." Naruto tells him.

"And its not as if the man isn't a bully..." He admits as Naruto directs them into the room. "Err... why are we going into here?" He asks.

"Well, Kurama's been working on this teleportation platform to speed our way about the castle. The main problem is that they get destroyed within a week's time." Naruto says as he closes the door behind him.

He notices the platform and couldn't help but compare it to a tube or can. "By the way, what are those things your clones are installing?" He asks and Naruto answers, "Well, starting tomorrow morning there's going to be a masquerade. Not only will you not be able to say your own name but nor can you say the names of your house-mates. Also, it forces you to take a descriptive name like 'Archer' or 'MoonSong'."

"So do we have to dress up?" He asks after he arrives in the study hall of the dorms and once Naruto appears. "No, a stylized masked costume will wrap itself around you as you exit out of the common room entrance doors. It's not harmful and I've already got a few teacher to sign permission slips for a dance after supper. The illusion will fade around nine tomorrow night."

"That doesn't sound too bad..." He admits and Naruto smiles slightly. "Well, Kasumi and Yukina wanted a romantic atmosphere this year

and the fact that people are expecting horrific only adds to the surprise." Naruto tells him.

"And next year?" He asks and Naruto sighs, "Well, I think I'm going to pass the pranking duty onto someone else next year. I think Shippo's interest as is Kurama."

"Kurama, really?" He asks and Naruto gives him a slight smile. "He doesn't need much of an excuse to snoop around but I'm leaning more on Shippo since he'll be here longer to pursue them." Naruto admits as they exit into the library.

He shakes his head but doesn't really have much of an opinion on the topic. "I don't know why you trust them so much." He admits and Naruto snorts softly.

"Most are more worry that I seem so normal then anything else." Naruto states softly, causing him to pause as Naruto heads out of the library. He couldn't help but blink as he tries to absorb that statement before just shaking his head.

Something which I'm beginning to wonder about as well... He admits, not really use to Naruto being so mature or so willing to 'stick it to the man' in the most brutal way as possible. *Or maybe without having to worry about somebody reporting this to the council, he's finally revealing a suppressed and forgotten part of himself...*

October 31, 1986

Naruto

He takes a few seconds to study his costume before touching his mask. *Must be one of those unicorn templates...* He muses as he studies the golden cloths he has on.

He shakes his head and feels his new hair length whip about his back. "I believe I'll call myself Trail." He muses softly as he begins to

move away from the entrance, making sure to move out of Su Xia's path as Yachiru comes out into the hallway.

"Hey Su Xia, hey --- wait up! ---?" Yachiru calls out and he turns to find Yachiru dressed up in a fox costume. "You can't say my real name, remember? Just call me Trail!" He calls back and Yachiru nods as she scratches Su Xia behind the ear.

"Well, I guess for now I'm Yoko." Yachiru says with an ironic tone after feeling her mask and then notices the bushy tail. He smiles but the mask hides it as he nods in acknowledgment of her 'name'.

As he waits for Yachiru and Su Xia to catch up, most of the others exit out of the entrance and have their costumes wrapped around them, also keeping them from using their names and those of their house-mates. "Oh my." Kasumi says as she begins to study herself.

Kasumi's a dragon, Kurama's a satyr, Yukina's a swan, and Shizune's a falcon. He muses as the group takes time to glance at their cloth costume before feeling their masks. "I guess ----- was right with this years prank." Kurama says and he could just hear the frown when the Yoko finds himself unable to say Iruka.

"I'm Trail and this is Yoko." He says and Shizune just shakes her head while Kasumi declares, "Well then, I'm Tiamat."

"Call me Snow White." Yukina says while Kurama sighs, "I'm a...?" "Satyr." He says and Kurama says, "Pan I believe."

"GoldenWind." Shizune decides and with a parting way, Yachiru, Su Xia, and himself pick up the pace as they head off to their first classes, leaving those four to deal with the rest of the house.

He watches as SwiftRunner, AKA Kagome, dance with a student dressed as a stage, ironically making them appear to be a matching set since Kagome is dressed up as a doe. "Concerned?" GoldenWind, AKA Shizune, asks and he sighs.

"I'm not sure I know how to dance like that." He admits and Shizune sighs. "Neither do we actually, although Trail seems to be managing fairly well." Shizune say and sure enough, Naruto is doing very well as he dances with somebody dressed up as a masked priestess of a 'agan' god or goddess.

"It's not that hard, its all about matching and mirroring your partner's movements." Pan, AKA Kurama, says as he motions to where Sparkle, AKA Anko, is dancing with another fairy.

"I guess we could try it out together, if you don't mind my inexperience?" He says to Shizune as he offers a hand to her. Shizune takes his offering hand and pulls him up off his seat.

Glancing over to a few couples, he tries to mimic their timed movements as well as trying not stepping on Shizune's feet. But slowly he gets the rhythm as well as manages to stop looking either at the other dancers and at his feet. "This is kind of fun, once you get the hang of it." He muses and Shizune nods in agreement.

"The steps are easy to learn once you relax." Shizune agrees. "It's a different pace then what was expected." Shizune muses and he smiles, though the mask hides it.

"Yea, a few of my age group wish that there was a repeat of last year then having this dance and this masquerade." He adds and he feels more then sees Shizune raising an eyebrow at that. "Really? They rather face a group of demons then a dance?"

"Well, they are a bunch of second year boys, you know. They're not into girls yet." He answers and Shizune chuckles at that. "Seems to be very different then where I'm from, Brave."

"But then, a lot of these guys can live to see ninety years of age instead of forty." He points out. "True, but then, these people have a multipurpose tool in their wands, not only can it be use to clean a house and cook, but it can be used to conquer things too." Shizune agrees.

"Which might be why those 'ure-bloods' and some 'half-bloods' don't have any real commonsense, they just expect to solve all of their problems using magic." He remarks.

Shizune doesn't say anything but he could tell that she agrees with his observation. "So... where do you think Trail learnt to play those instruments?" Shizune says after a while as the song changes and they're forced to change their dance pattern to match the song and how the others were dancing.

"I'll wager he had his clones take lessons during the summer months and once they go the basics, began practicing while here at Hogwarts." He muses and Shizune sighs, "He's truly made that technique his own, taking it beyond what anyone expected to use them as. But then, he does have a huge reserve."

"So, how are you coming along with your training?" He asks after a while and Shizune answers, "Doing well, I'm just having some trouble getting the fur to become the right color but that's about it."

"Must have come as a surprise to have a bat as your form." He muses and Shizune sighs.

As a new song is about to begin, a pair of people cut in and soon he's dancing with a fellow shaman, only with what appears to be a rabbit skin hiding her hair then his bear skin. "I'm Singing Bird." She says and it didn't take long before he places voice with face.

"I'm Brave." He says. "So, what do you think of this year's Halloween prank so far, Brave?" Singing Bird asks him.

December 14, 1986

Iruka

"You know, I finally found that girl who received a male color 'Fire-Lizard'. Her preferred name is Tonks and she got a brown one." Naruto says as they all relax in the pool.

"How'd you find that out?" Yukina asks and Naruto smiles lazily as he says, "It seems she came to me in hopes that I can redo the enchantment on it because she wants to experience it again."

"What's a 'Fire-Lizard'?" Anko asks and Kasumi decides to explain, "Well, you've seen that golden plushie I have? Well, for Kurama and Yukina's first year here, Naruto's Halloween prank revolved around similar plushies being sent to all of the students. The thing what that at a certain time, this spell got activated that made the plushies exchange their cloth and stuffing for, well, organic material as well as our minds going into these newly organic plushies."

"It ended at dawn and there wasn't any real harm done." Yukina adds and he blinks as that sounds kind of familiar with the exception of a few things. "The plushies weren't enchanted beyond having those eyes light up in that array of colors." Kurama says.

"Then what caused the exchange to take place?" Anko asks and Kurama grins in an ironic way, "By opening the boxes and taking the plushies, we completed a ritual that was placed on the boxes."

"Last I heard, everyone still has their respected 'dragon' plushies and a few of them are looking for ways to re-experience that night, like Tonks." Naruto admits.

"Did you help her?" Yachiru asks and Naruto chuckles as he sports a bemused smile on his face, "Well, it was either give her a copy of the ritual or have her give her evidence to our 'beloved' headmaster, what do you think? I made sure to impress upon her why not to try and alter anything in the ritual I gave her. Heck, I even had her swear an Unbreakable Vow to that effect after I explain the dangers of messing with it."

"What deadline did you put down for it?" Kasumi asks. "Dawn." Naruto replies and nobody felt like continuing that conversation.

"So... what do we have planned for this Christmas break?" Yachiru asks after a while. "I think we should leave Hogwarts again this year.

Snape is on the war path, just waiting for any of us to step out of line while Dumbledore is trying to single us out." Kagome says.

To which Kurama adds, "Although I doubt he has any real evidence to bring forth to expel us or to attempt to blackmail us so that he can control us. I rather no stay in a place without a lot of witnesses to make Dumbledore cautious. We know he has that Elder Wand of legend in his possession and he might want to try and 'defeat' us just on the off chance that one of our number is its new 'master'."

Kurama looks pointly at Naruto who sighs as he looks down into the hot pool then up at them. "He never did really started sniffing around until that end of the year prank." Kasumi admits and Naruto just seems to flush slightly.

"Not that any of us tried to talk you out of it." Yukina admits and Naruto glances at Yukina with a slight tilt to his head. "We were all fairly angry and bitter by that man's actions last year..." Kagome states.

"Actually, I'm pretty sure how he allows Snape such free reign goes to show how double face he is. He's done nothing about him despite the stream of complains that are coming from students, their parents, and even from professor Sprout, although she stopped submitting them the year before." Naruto says with a sigh.

"How would you know?" He asks and Naruto smirks slightly. "It isn't that hard to enter into his office once Clicky gave me this Invisibility cloak Dumbledore has in his possession. And since the cloak doesn't rightfully belong to the man, the House Elves are never force to reported that its gone missing, although they did leave a convincing fake in its place."

"Who does it rightfully belong to?" Yachiru asks and it takes Naruto a few seconds to reply, "To James Potter, which if I recall correctly, means that since his father is dead, that the famous Harry Potter owns it."

"And Harry hasn't given Fruity permission to have it." Yachiru says with a wide grin. Naruto nods in agreement.

"Anyway, back to our previous topic. Where should we go for the upcoming holidays?" Kurama says and he really couldn't say since he didn't particularly care where they go.

"Mexico?" Kasumi offers and Kagome muses, "How about Japan?"

"Jamaica or some place in and around that island?" Naruto states. "I don't really care, just some place tropical will do." Yachiru admits with a wave of her hand and Anko nods in agreement.

"Egypt?" Shippo muses and the older three members of the house smile at that. "Nice place, although Naruto did get an odd reputation there after an encounter with a Nundu." Kasumi tells them and he's not the only one to give Naruto a startled look.

"It was just a staring contest really." The blond protests with a slight flush. "How you manage to remain alive is truly beyond belief, Naruto." Kurama admits as he shakes his head, clearly in disbelief at Naruto's dumb luck.

"They were giving Tao job offers with great perks as well as free stuff in hopes of getting him on board once he graduates from Hogwarts." Yachiru remarks thoughtfully while Naruto just sighs. "I sent it all back with a time delay to keep them from sending it back to me." Naruto adds quickly.

"You're one lucky bastard, brat." Anko states with a snort. "So is there any other reason why Egypt can't be listed?" Yukina asks and Naruto shakes his head.

"How about Disneyland or Disney World?" Yachiru says with her eyes lighting up. "I was kind of hoping we can go either next year." Naruto admits before adding, "I already made the reservation for next year too."

"You don't even now how many of us there will be next year." Shippo points out and Naruto answers, "We're renting a house a few minutes away from Disneyland in Anaheim, California for the first week and another house in Orange Country for the last week of the break."

"That's... very well thought of, but how did you manage to pull it off?" Kasumi asks and Naruto looks bemuses before explaining, "Well, there are people who make a profit renting out houses for the signal purpose of renting them out to people for a weeks time. The renters get a house to sleep in, a bit of security with their stuff, and of course, they don't have to pay per night."

"That sounds like a good deal." He admits even though he hasn't a clue why these places were so popular, especially since Disney is primarily a film company...

Silence descends as they keep company with their own thoughts, for now at least.

Australia

"What is that thing?" He asks as he points at this strange rodent that stands about four feet in the air while resting on its long legs. "That's a kangaroo." Kagome tells her before she takes raises her camera to take a picture of it.

The kangaroo then turns to look at them as it scratches its belly with both of its 'hands'. Then it bends down and 'walks' a few feet before beginning to graze on the taller stalks at the new patch. Finally they move onto another spot, though he does glance back to see where Anko, Iruka, and Shizune were since they decided to tag along with them instead of going with Naruto to some artificer.

"So... how goes your practice with your Animagus form?" He asks Kagome and she blinks before glancing at him before answering, "Well, I finally did manage to perfect it four days ago. I'm just not

sure how Inu-Yasha and the others will take the fact that I can transform into a magpie, to be specific, an Azure-winged Magpie.

"That's pretty good, Kagome." He tells her and means it since there were still members of their house who's having trouble 'giving up' their human form for that of an animal. Anko and Iruka fell in that classification while Shizune and the rest had perfect it during November.

Bill and Charlie were having trouble finding places to practice and in the end, have been given one of Naruto's warding devices so they can secure a classroom for said purpose. It doesn't help that both of their animals were larger then three feet in size, Bill's inner beast being a stag of the Red Deer variety and, finally, Charlie's being a Red Panda of all things.

Although I think the big surprise was when Yachiru's turn out to be a Przewalski's Horse. He privately adds as they continue to walk down the mark path.

In about an hour's time, they'll be heading into the magical reserve, at least according to his modified watch; a watch that now can act as a radio or a 'hone' at a touch of a rune around the rim of the face plate.

"I wonder what's captured their attention?" Kagome wonders and it takes him a few seconds to turn his hand to see where she's looking. "A wombat?" He wonders, it was a name he got off of the guide book.

"You don't know what that is, do you?" Kagome asks him and he flushes. "I got it from that guide book you gave to me to read." He admits and Kagome just smiles at him as she tsks him.

"Maybe you should have made sure there were pictures in it of the critters before handing it to me?" He suggests and Kagome smiles as she promises, "I'll remember that for next time then."

He glances away form his 'mother' figure with his cheeks feeling a tad heated. He reaches for his water container and takes a sip out of it. He really does enjoy spending all this time with Kagome without any of the others around, not that he doesn't miss them, it's just that...

Having some alone time with your mother figure is rather enjoyable, despite her current set of looks. He tells himself. It's not as if he's always going to have Kagome to himself either, he knew that the others will show up in time and then Kagome will be having a heck of a time concerning Inu-Yasha.

Farewell Feast

Iruka

"I can't believe she recited the negative number for Slytherin house." Kasumi admits as they listen with half an ear as Professor McGonagall continues on through the list before revealing who won this year.

"I'm more surprised that Bumblebee even entrusted her with the job, but then, he didn't have much say in the matter did he, beyond making her his deputy I mean?" Naruto muses softly.

"You swore you didn't do anything to him last week." He points out and Naruto sighs before whispering hotly in reply, "Of course I didn't! It's not my fault that the fool of a man has yet to try any of the potions I asked the House Elves to leave out on his desk in hopes of him drinking any of them! He's a stubborn old mule who refuses to look for help beyond this school's nurse!"

"Well, he doesn't really have much say in the matter now, does he?" Shizune points out dryly and he's not the only one to sigh. "I'm surprise he hasn't tried drinking his phoenix's tears." Yukina muses softly.

They all stop as their stand in headmaster finally gets to declaring their house the winner of House Cup. This, of course, causes the Slytherins to boo and for Snape to try and murder the lot of them with his gaze alone. The decorations transform into orange and brown banners with a kirin place between the two fields.

"I hadn't thought of using phoenix tears to see if that cure the effects." Naruto admits with a thoughtful look. "Why should you? The headmaster likely keeps any of those collected years under lock and key. I doubt even any of the castle's House Elves could give you a drop let alone a bottle full to mess around with." Kurama says in a calming manner.

"Well, I did use some of Yukina's tears when I made that potion..." Naruto admits and he glances at the ice maiden with a slightly startled look, he hadn't thought that anyone would use something from a demon in a potion.

"Aren't phoenixes beings of fire?" Kagome asks slowly as the food appears and they began to help themselves without giving the food so much as a glance since Naruto had already arranged for the more tolerant of English food samples to only appear at their table.

"So?" Anko asks as she pauses from sipping from a cup of butter beer. "Well, if a fire being's tears try and match an ice being's tears, which element would trumpet?" Kagome wonders and hears someone almost choke on something, it wasn't long before somebody is coughing with somebody patting their back.

"Well damn... that is a good one." Anko admits with a smirk. "I doubt it would help to remind people that her *twin* brother is a fire being." He points out.

Kurama waves his hand in a dismissive gesture as he points out, "Hiei wouldn't be Hiei if he wasn't *male* . Which pretty much ensured that he *wouldn't* weld ice like his own sister. I've never heard of a ice lord after all."

"Haku did bare a strong resemblance to a girl. Though it didn't help that he wore girl preferred colors or kept to a more neutral tone when speaking." Naruto admits with a frown, which reminds him that Haku had a ice based bloodline limit.

"He might have had leanings towards bi." Yachiru adds her two cents. "Well, he was with a man who welded a huge sword, if that doesn't scream masculine I don't know what does." Anko states.

"Anyway, I guess I would have to say that as long as water is in the picture, I'd have to say that the one with ice leanings would continually fend off the attacks without much difficulty." Kagome says, bringing them back to the original question.

"The teachers look edgy." Shizune muses after a bit of silence and he glances at the staff table to find that she's right. "Well, they don't know if something will happen without Bumblebee here, it has become something of a ritual after all." Kasumi points out, even using Naruto's nickname for said man.

"And before anybody asks, no, I didn't try to arrange anything with him in the hospital. I did how ever managed to locate this bowl filled with his memories. I manage to duplicated the lot before putting it back in its spot, although it wasn't hard to find since it was resting pretty much out in the open." Naruto admits and he's not he only one to stare at the blond.

"He must have been about to use it or finish with it when he fainted." Kurama says and Naruto nods.

"I did see one memory after I touched the surface of it and you know recall about that Potter kid? Well, I do believe I know what even we're early for. I think we're here to protect the whelp from Bumblebee's 'mercies'." His old student says.

"Why? What did you see?" Yachiru asks in a sharp tone. "That Bumblebee let an innocent man go to prison because it would 'ruin' his long term plans for Harry to be raised by anyone other then his

'caring' muggle relatives. So, I believe we need to get this Black guy out of this prison and start helping the man get healthy so he's ready to take care of his soon to be eleven year old ***Godson*** ."

And with that, the prank the students and teachers were waiting for happened and he glances to stare in dumbfoundment at the sight before him. *I don't think I'll ever forget this, not at all.* He decides at the sight of McGonagall sporting long elf-like ears, three sets of ram horns, and then he studies her altered facial features which includes bleached hair with the tips being crimson in color, purple slitted eyes, and both sets of her canine teeth jetting out between her lips.

Professor Sprout looks quite at home with the spring green skin, black eyes, with leaves and flowers seemingly growing out of her head and her skin. "Is Sprout sporting grass for hair?" He wonders.

"I'm more curious about if that's really is acid or sludge coming off of Meanie." Yachiru counters and has to agree with Yachiru that it really does look like those two materials erupting from the man's head. It doesn't help that the man's pasty complexion has become tinted with yellow and what appears to be decaying flesh beginning to appear on the man's skin while the white of his eyes were now green and his eyes were an almost glowing green color.

"Those kind of remind me of Inu-Yasha's eyes those few times when his demon blood took over." Shippo admits softly. "I wouldn't mind having my whites dyed a different color, especially one that complements my eye color." Yachiru admits and Naruto sighs.

"I can see how that would be a sudden fashion statement among wizards actually. Particularly rebellious teens." Kurama says.

By the time a ten minute mark passes, their appearance reverts to their normal ones and dessert is then served. "Well, at least we won't be troubling Poppy this year." Professor Flitwich muses as they begin to dig into their dessert portions.

So Ends Year Five of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 6

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1987

Narrator: Duo Maxwell , Shuichi 'Kurama' Minamino , and Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki

Duo

A knock at the compartment door signals that someone is outside of the compartment. Before anyone could really say much the door opens and standing there is a blond, who sighs and within seconds a stick appears in the guy's hand, with a wave, the compartment expands once the blond shuts the door.

The door opens once more and again the blond is there. He comes into the compartment and he tries to find some kind of weapon just encase he attacks them, only he wraps his hand around a stick from the feel of things. Before he could say anything, he finally registers the presence of a floating trunk of all things as the blond steps into the compartment.

The blond studies them each in turn before sighing. "I'm sure by now that you've noticed your lack of weapons and likely found a 'stick'." The blond says and he narrows his eyes. "You don't seem all that surprise to see us...?" Quatre asks.

"It's only polite to give your own name before asking for someone else's." The blond admits with an ironic grin and he feels Heero stiffen, as if he recognized that saying. "I may not look it, but I am Japanese, well, that's the closest comparison I believe."

"Well then, I'm Duo Maxwell, I may run, I may hide, but I never tell a lie." He says with a grin and the blond chuckles before introducing himself, "Naruto 'Tao' Uzumaki, seventh year student of Hogwarts

School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Currently the only seventh year Prefect for House Kirin."

"What's the difference?" Heero asks with a frown and Naruto shrugs as he replies, "Hell if I know. Although the most popular theory I believe is just for gender distinction then anything else."

"I take it we're to attend this... institution?" Wufie asks and Naruto grins. "Institution... nice word for it, I guess, and yes, you are. There's four original houses and they are Slytherin, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Gryffindor. Then there's Kirin which is a created house that the sorting hat started up to sort our sort into it. You'll find that we're all team members of that certain 'assignment' to carry out, though I do believe I won't start until the year 1991, which is about four years from now."

"Now, if you excuse me, I've got to head to the Perfect's car and I do believe that you'll be meeting other members of our house soon enough." Naruto says and with a flick of the wand, the trunk moves to rest on the overhanging rack before exiting out of the compartment.

"I like him." He states a few seconds after Naruto left, though he's still sorting out the information the guy gave them. "You would, wouldn't you?" Wufie states.

"Quatre?" Trowa asks and Quatre says slowly, "I can't get a good reading on him but he seems sincere about what he told us. He didn't really have anything to gain by lying to us."

Voices from outside of the compartment approach their door and with a second worth of quiet, the door opens to reveal first a pink haired hottie and a brunet beauty. "Huh, I guess none of us won that bet about how many will arrive in this group, huh?" The brunet muses and the pink hair teen beams at them in turn.

"I guess Tao's been and gone, huh? I'm Yachiru Kusajishi and this is Kasumi Tendo." The pink haired hottie says. "I'm Quartre Winner,

this is Trowa Barton, Chang Wufie, Duo Maxwell, and Heero Yuy." Quartre says and there's a surprised look on Kasumi's face.

"Gundam Wing... You're Gundam pilots..." Kasumi says and her gaze wasn't really with them, although he's not the only one to be surprised by this. "Huh? You know them?" Yachiru asks.

"Well, its just that... There was this Anime called Gundam Wing where the pilots had those very same names... There was even a OVA called Gundam Wing Endless Waltz too." Kasumi says before she flushes in embarrassment, not that it helped with their confusion, although he did have to admit that its good to know they did have their own show, somewhere out there at least.

"Do you know a Ranma Saotome?" Heero asks suddenly and Kasumi blinks but nods slowly. "Heero?" He asks as he gives the other pilot a questioning look.

"I do believe there's a series that's both a Manga and an Anime called Ranma 1/2." Heero admits slowly and he blinks before glancing between the two. "So... you're watched it?" He asks.

"No, I just found listings for it on the internet is all, it didn't seem like something I'd watch." Heero states and silence prevailed until a voice calls out, "Kasumi! Yachiru, aren't you suppose to be heading to the Perfect's car?"

"Hey Kurama! Guess what! Kasumi knows the latest batch of first years! And here's the kicker, she knows them from an Anime!" Yachiru tells whoever this Kurama is.

"Really?" A different voice says, one that's likely a girl's voice. "Yep! And guess what, one of them says there's this Anime and Manga called Ranma 1/2 that stars a Ranma Saotome!" Yachiru adds as she looks off at persons unknown and unseen.

"That is odd." The first voice says and he notices that the voice sounds closer to the door. The teenage girls move to allow the new

comer to take a look, the red head looks fairly startled and his eyes light up. "Well, it seems I do believe I know them from an Anime as well, after all, Duo's braid is his trademark." Kurama states and Heero sighs.

"Is the series called Gundam Wing?" He asks and Kurama nods. "Well... this is awkward, isn't it?" Yachiru says cheerfully and he has to agree with her on that one. *I wonder just what parts of my life did this Anime show?* He wonders before Kasumi says, "Oh my, Yachiru, we have to go! The meeting will be starting soon."

And there's a soft thud and he hears the young women take off, leaving them with Kurama and another teenage girl who nobody has yet to say the name of.

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

Kurama

"How's our guest doing in our absence?" Shippo asks as they wait for the group of first years to arrive. "Well, the golems Kasumi made should make sure that he's taking his potions, the inverted ward is finally tuned into him so he can't leave the property in anyway without one of us being around to escorting him off of it, well, that's all I know since the last of my shadow clones have puffed away."

"You think he'll figure out that they're just golems?" Kagome asks and Naruto shrugs.

"I'm so going to get my magical radio and tv signal device to work so we can at least give him a tv to watch since I don't think he'll know how to set up that film projector or be willing to read any thing from the library." Yachiru tells them.

"That might not be something he'll be interested in watching... Maybe we should find and get that Moony to visit him, I mean, after getting the man to vow to at least listen to our guest's story while he's taken three drops of that truth potion." Anko muses.

"We'd also have to get the man to vow not to tell anyone about the where abouts of our guest or try and confront the Bumblebee about all of this. Honestly, these people are grown adults and yet this still can't seem to form their own opinions without speaking to the man." Shizune says with a sigh.

"Well, consider the classes that Hogwarts sports, do any of those really promote one to think about what they've learn? Or teach a law class to inform the muggleborn of the current set of laws of this society they've entered?" He asks and around the table people either shook their heads or frowned.

"You know, we could offer to tutor any muggleborns interested in learning about the laws of this Wizarding World. If that doesn't shatter their rose colored glasses then nothing will. Heck, we could also tutor them in pure-blood tradition if they want to 'fit' into this society." Kasumi muses and he blinks slowly as he nods, he could see how that would help.

"And we'll need somebody older then the 'students' of those courses to teach it." Iruka points out. "Bill and Charlie should know a bit of the laws or at least traditions of the pure-bloods. We can ask them to help." Yachiru points out.

"We can charge a few knuts per lesson and give them a percent cut, that way they'll have a way to have extra pocket change as well as make it worth their while, even if it causes them to be busier then they expected." Yukina suggests.

"I might have a way to 'speed' up time in an enclosed space. We can make a fifteen minute lesson in real time go on for fifteen hours if we need too. I believe I solved how to keep the body from physically aging, which should also help to keep them from needing food or growing tired. It also means that if they only want one lesson, they'll get more then they bargained for." Naruto says slowly.

"And if that works, we can use that for those of us who are having difficulty finding time to do research." Shippo muses. "You can't really

use this ward to create any kind of potion though, especially if you're using organic bits. Although it's great for item enchanting." Naruto admits as he glances about the table.

"Just what did you use as a base for this age stopping part then?" Shizune asks and Naruto answers, "A heavily modified stasis spell that only targets organic things once the time ward is turned on. The original version was very common healing spell that helped out greatly on battlefields."

The hall quiets down as the doors open and McGonagall walks into the hall. A few minutes later she sets out the stool with the sorting hat on top of it. The deputy then heads back out of the doors before the doors open wide, permitting the group of first years to enter.

As soon as the group stops walking and stand behind McGonagall, the sorting hat gives itself a shake before going into a song about the other houses. None of them really cared that their house wasn't mentioned and most of them prefer it that way. Soon enough the first name is called out, marking the beginning of the sorting.

"Hey, is this years Halloween prank going to be a contest or something?" Anko asks as Trowa Barton is called to be sorted. "I guess I can put up a sign up list in our common room with a sign up deadline this Sunday." Naruto muses before the hat calls out their house name.

They watch as Trowa joins them and once he's seated, Shippo asks, "So, how would you judge those people who signed up?"

"Maybe give those that signed up a week to plan, another week to get the equipment." Iruka suggests and Kagome takes pity by whispering to Trowa what they're talking about.

"I do believe it might be a good idea to hold off on the pranks a week before Halloween, you know, give people a breather." Kasumi says. "Well, depending on the number who sign up, we could have people pull off a prank every second day." He suggests.

"Will our fouling the other Quidditch teams count towards a prank or not?" Yukina wonders and Shippo says with a frown, "We might want to stop doing that. We have been practicing during the last few summers, haven't we?"

"You know, we could always get the House Elves to create an indoor Quidditch pitch for our house. After all, Tao's supplied us with enough brooms, though I'm wouldn't mind having him make me a custom one..." Yachiru muses and Naruto looks bemused.

"You know what's funny? They'd be begging us for them to do just that. Really, there's just too many of them around here for all of them to get a share of the work." Naruto admits with a slight shake of his head.

"Well, you'd know best considering you're the one who interacts with them on a regular bases." Shizune remarks and Naruto says, "And that's another thing, somebody's going to have to keep up that relationship when I'm gone. Just remember this, they help out in pranks because they get to clean it up afterwards."

"Just what Duo needs, willing accomplices." Trowa states in a bland tone. He is just one of the people to glance at the group of first years to study the brunet who seems to be whistling something with his hands crossed behind his head.

"Be glad that electronics don't work within these walls because of how much magic hangs around this school and its grounds." He offers and Trowa seems to relax ever so slightly. And before Yachiru or Anko could counter that, Iruka and Kasumi manage to give the two looks, which causes the two to close their mouths.

"Maxwell, Duo." Professor McGonagall calls out.

Duo

"Maxwell, Duo." The graying old professor says and he walks over to the stool, he continued to whistle his tone. He glances at the table

were the Kirin house is located out of the corner of his eye.

They seemed to have stopped their conversation to watch him get sorted. Once at the stool, he grins mischievously and tosses the hat up into the air before getting onto the stool. It didn't take long before he catches the hat and places it on his head.

"The infamous Duo Maxwell I take it? Yes, yes, you don't need to go through your trade mark saying for my benefit." The hat says within his mind.

"Interesting life you've lead and although the setting is quite unique, I've witnessed worst, but I'll leave them to speak of their pasts." The sorting hat informs him before stating out loud, "Kirin!"

With a shrug, he takes off the hat and sets it down on the stool before walking towards the table. Most of the occupancies nod their greeting before they restart up their conversation. A chair appears out of nowhere for him to sit on as Iruka asks, "What kind of limits will there be? Rules?"

"Might as well stop before the twenty-sixth to give the winner of the contest to begin their arrangements." Naruto admits before adding, "As for rules, well, I guess no causing any permanent injury on the victim should be one."

"No getting catch in the act should be another." Yachiru points out and more then a few scoff at that, as if it was a given. "Might as well add a clause of harming innocent critters like mail owls or people pets." Shippo remarks.

"Just what are you guys planning?" He asks as a few people started talking at the same time. "Just a contest to see who'll fulfill Naruto's pranking duties once he graduates from school." Anko explains and he couldn't help but grin.

"By way of a pranking contest?" He asks and most of them nod. "There will be a sign up sheet in the dorms." Naruto says calmly.

He couldn't wait, after all, it shouldn't be a too difficult to win this contest.

September 7, 1987

Naruto

"Something's riled Onyx up tonight." Yachiru says with a slight frown. "I think it's got something to do with whatever was howling off in the distance." He says as they fly a few feet away from Onyx's head.

"Aren't there suppose to be werewolves in this forest?" He asks suddenly as he glances up at the full moon shining down. "Wasn't that just a rumor that was spread during this summer?" Yachiru counters as she adds, "After all, we've been here plenty of times and seen no werewolf village or anything."

Onyx pauses and raises her head slightly, her thick tongue tasting the air. With a hiss, Onyx seems to change direction and heads. "For all we know, Bumblebee started one." He says as they follow after the great snake as she weaves through the mighty trunks of some of the oldest trees of the Forbidden Forest.

"Should we reapply the veil spell?" Yachiru asks as they match Onyx's speed. "No, we'll leave her eyes as they are, if it is werewolves then they had to be invited onto the land and since these lands belong to Hogwarts..." He trails off.

"Fruity either invited them or is just flat out ignoring them." Yachiru finishes and he just nods as they continue through the forest. He can already hear Onyx beginning to murmur to herself as her blood-lust raises up at this challenge to her 'domain'.

He rubs the thin leather band around his head and it wasn't long before he sees, smells, and feels what Onyx feels for at least twenty seconds. "It's something canine she's smelling." He admits with a sigh.

They stay silent as they finally spot a huge pack of the strange beings that look like somebody had put a head of a wolf, tail, and paws onto a man. *How can they run with such long legs? True, they've got that two bend design but that really should help them travel so fast without tripping on their own paws or each other.*

It's clear that the werewolves could smell their scent from up in the air as well as from Onyx, although he also realizes that for some reason, Onyx must have her eyes shut for up coming battle since none of the werewolves were falling over dead. *:They're all yours, Onyx. Enjoy!:* He tells her in Parceltongue.

:Like I need you to tell me that, bird-fox.: Onyx hisses at him before she rams into the front lines of the pack. Those werewolves from the outer rim of the pack leap into the air in order to attack Onyx's face.

There were a few that came to circle below them but they couldn't leap up to reach them and neither Yachiru and him felt like trying to tease the victims of a magical disease. *I wonder what would happen if a Centaur or a Goblin survived a bit from a werewolf?*

It wasn't long before the pack of werewolves soon found themselves conflicted with the desire to flee from this giant predator to their hunger for spilling human blood for the sake of it. It didn't take long before that indecision causes Onyx to finally bring her eyes into play and thus end the fight.

"Well, that solves that." Yachiru says with a sigh and he nods. "Yea, it does, doesn't it? Well, hopefully she'll be content enough with this 'meal', even if it isn't spider-meat."

October 31, 1987

Duo

"So... has Kurama hinted what what his prank is going to be?" He asks Shippo and the sandy haired teen glances up from his book, Dragons of Winter Night, to stare at him for a few seconds. Shippo

studies him intently for a few seconds before sighing as he shakes his head.

They were pretty much alone at their four man table as he picks up the menu and glances through today's dish opinions. "No, he didn't. Although, it's likely be more clever then his Stud Riding booth he set up as a 'kiddie' ride." Shippo says while continuing to eat his meal while reading his novel.

"That was a good one." He admits, although he's a bit embarrassed to be counted among the 'studs' that girls paid to ride. *I'm glad they opted for a rubber bit.*

"Even though you were a 'stud'?" Shippo asks, looking over the top of his book to look at him. "Well, I did make it onto the list." He admits and Shippo just chuckles.

"Just how was it that Kurama managed to get away with that one though? I mean, he was standing right there without a disguise!" He says and Shippo sighs as the elven eared teen answers, "The illusion was targeted for everyone beyond members of the Kirin house. I bet you even had trouble saying his name while he was operating the booth even before and after you got transformed."

"I guess magic really is multipurpose tool isn't it?" He says with a slight frown he finally picks out a few dishes. "Well, spell damage can be heal with spells and with certain types of potion. Potion damages effects usually take another potion to reverse it, although there are spells that allow the halt of said damage." Shippo explains.

"Personally, I rather be affected by a spell then by a potion since it could take months to brew the correct potion when it only takes a wave or flick of a wand to heal the damage of the spell." Shippo adds.

"Maybe I should make use of that time ward in the study." He muses as he realizes that he had a lot of subjects to study if he wants to be proficient with all branches of magic. "Yea, we can't all create

shadow clones to aid in that effort can we?" Kagome says as she comes to sit down at the table, she manages to stifle a yawn as she picks up a menu.

"Is there a reason why the second years often call Tao a show off?" He asks after a few minutes. "Well, for one, they're suppose to be Naruto's superiors since Naruto never did gain Chunin yet. Anko's considered a Special Jonin, I believe Shizune is a Jonin, and finally, Iruka was Naruto's academe instructors in his last few years at the school. He ranks Chunin." Shippo says while Kagome chews what's in her mouth.

"Really? That's why Anko likes to call him a brat?" He asks and the two nod. "Well, you learn something new every day, don't you?" He remarks as he focuses on his breakfast then on chatting the two up.

If he finishes, he can likely use the study for about five minutes real time, five hours with the time ward up, before he heads off to his first class.

Kurama

"I believe your field and illusion generators are up and running." Naruto says as the blond seventh year leans on a wall as he's coming down from the room. "You sent out some clones?" He asks as he turns to study the demon container.

"Nay, I just used a magic detection spell on the door and then an array of analyzer spells to check on the source of the magic." Naruto answers and he blinks before making a note to study up on those spells. "I'm a bit surprised by the time ward you set up, though. Nice work on it considering it's tricky to set up on such a large scale."

"Are there going to be classes today?" Naruto asks after a few seconds of silence and he blinks before shaking his head. Naruto seems to be relieved and he asks, "Why did you want to know?"

"I managed to find Moony and I've got a few ideas on how to cancel out his condition, but I've found it near impossible to sneak out of Hogwarts to confront the man. So... I was hoping you wouldn't be too disappointed if I sneak out today to visit the man and maybe if things go right, take him to visit our guest." The blond says and he blinks but in the end, couldn't see any reason to deny Naruto his chance.

"You can go, but could you try to make it back before noon though?" He asks since that's when things are to get interesting. "Sure! No problem." Naruto says with a smile as the blond bends down to pick up his bag.

"Now, if you excuse me, I'm going to use that teleporter of yours to head to back to the manor before heading off to the meeting I set up with the man." Naruto says and then holds up his hand as the blond says, "Later!"

He watches as the blond vanishes into a the library room as the door closes. *Hopefully that will keep Black from 'whining' about being bored.*

Naruto

Well, hopefully Remus will recover from that pendant tuning before the next full moon... He thinks to himself as he walks out into the main common room. He glances at the clock and sighs in relief. *Well, I'm early so I might as well take a bath and relax a bit before heading out into the corridors.*

He smiles as he drops the bag by the entrance to the bathroom. "I might eat a meal too, after all, I've got about an hour and a bit before it's noon." He muses out loud as he begins to undress as soon as he makes it to the male side of the bathroom.

After spending a half an hour in the hot pool, he did note that the pool's side has increased in size, but figured it was only natural since their numbers had grown a great deal since his first year of school.

He notes that a House Elf has picked up after him as he enters into the male side of the bathroom.

He heads up to his room with a towel wrapped about him, he picks up his bag before he does so. About ten minutes later he heads down to the dinning hall to grab a bite to eat. Once that's done, he heads to the exit of the common room and before he opens the door, he sighs and stretches his shoulders.

He grips the handle and with a twist, the door clicks open and with a pull, the door swings inward. As he enters into the hallway with the door closing behind him with a click, he blinks at the sight about him even as he feels his whole body going numb for a second.

With a frown, he finds that his cloths have changed and that around his waist is a fur skinned belt that looks like it was made of leopard skin. He finds a pouch filled with what appears to be thieving tools and a pair of goggles resting around his neck. He stiffens as he feels thuds on the wooden floor and without thinking about it, he finds himself scaling up the wall and squeezing into a space between the ceiling and the wall.

He watches as a huge, purple towering monstrosity walk pass. In its wake are what appears to be ghouls who range from one wall to the other. He couldn't help but shudder as a few hang about the spot where he entered into the hall, sniffing at the spot but as the towering monstrosity turns the corner, the ghouls picks up their pace to catch up with it.

He couldn't help but remain in the gap between the ceiling and the wall for a few more minutes. Then, he finally recovers and instead of crawling down the wall to the ground, he decides to try for this door that's resting in the ceiling. It takes him a few minutes to get it open and then to climb through it.

He makes sure to close the trap door before he begins to check and recheck what items he has in his possession. Beyond the thieving kit and goggles, he has some bandages and this black stone bit that

looks like its a key or half of a complete stone. *That's it?* He thinks to himself before just sighing as he puts the bandages back as well as the stone.

With a sigh, he moves the goggles up to cover his eyes. He freezes as he gazes through them and he takes them off before putting them back on. *Ok, I'm keeping these on, since it'll at least help me see through this darkness around me.* He thinks as he begins to head off in the direction where that purple monstrosity had come from, although in this space.

Duo

This is so empowering! He decides as he feels as if his whole body is aflame and a glance at the others show that they, the other pilots were undergoing the same experience as well. With a snarl, his cloths and everything he has on him drop to the ground as his transformation surges until its done, leaving him just one of the many werewolves in the room.

"Too late, the day has ended and night has begun." A man's voice rasp. **"Now you're furry and full of fury. Anything that moves shall feel your wrath! You no longer fear the monster for you are one! Werewolves work best in packs, so stick with your team-mate or you'll find yourself overwhelmed by those seeking an opportunity to pick you off before you find the stuffed body of the viking Urk the Wolfkin."**

The feel of the room seems to alter as the voice fades and he gives himself a shake. *"I wonder who else are looking for Urk?"* He wonders but the door leading out of the room bursts open as the barricaded they erected to keep the horde of horned goblinoids who sport blue skin.

The goblinoids take one look at them before they flee out of the room, but without even knowing what's come over them, they give chase as the tables have turned and the three foot tall beings were now their prey instead of them being theirs.

Kurama

"The day has ended and now true terror stalk the night. New dangers awaken in the form of werewolves and others who's true nature surges forth this night." The programed raspy male voice says. **"Whether you decide to chance the dangers in hopes of finding Roger's Journal or finding a bunk to wait out the night is your choice."**

He sighs and glances over at Yukina and Shippo, he couldn't help but find it ironic that they've been chosen to play ordinary teens. Although that does have its upside in the fact that they won't be controlled by the nature of their inner monster. "We're not safe even if we try and find a bunker, are we?" Shippo asks him and he sighs as he shakes his head.

"There are plenty of monsters who need to feed off of ordinary people, be it from their feelings or their bodies." He admits to Shippo as he grips his spear. "I guess we could try finding those hidden pathways you mentioned." Yukina admits and he smiles slightly.

"And hope we don't encounter anything that's found them in turn." He says as they began to glance around the kitchen for any hint of that something is in there with them as well.

I wonder who got to be the Leopard man of all of this... He wonders, he's not sure if he should congratulate himself on this haunted house or not. Although he's pretty sure that Naruto would enjoy viewing the recordings of it even if the blond never made it in time before the prank went into lock down mode, which was just after one in the afternoon in real time.

Naruto

He blinks as the voice fades away, leaving him feeling very confused but with a goal he needs to accomplish. Although finding out that he can transform into a humanoid leopard was good to know, especially

as he had come across various skeletons, some clearly inhuman, along the 'highway' he's traveling in.

To complete the relic of my tribe... I wonder just what I missed out on... He wonders as he gives himself a shake before continuing forward, glad that his goggles gave him a very good view of his surroundings since he didn't have anything on hand to defend himself with if he ran into any of those monsters he's witness patrolling below him.

With a thought, the skin around his mid-section expands and transforms him into a humanoid leopard, although his cloths and goggles seem to vanish once activated. He decides it has something to do with the fact that he can activate and de-active the transformation. *It wouldn't do to lose the other half of the stone, would it?*

He pauses and shivers slightly as he hears a chorus of howls. The sound dislodges some dust and it now hangs in the air for a few seconds before it slowly drops to the stone ground that he's treading on. Flexing his 'hands' he flickers his tail before stalking forward on all fours, after all, he rather not find himself tangled up in an old spider's web again...

Kurama

The enraged vampire seems to freeze up as does the ghouls that were under the vampire's sway. **"The house rattles as one's goal is reached."** The raspy voice says and all around him, the setting begins to fade which includes the monsters as well.

"The magic keeping the mansion in this world causes all those living within its walls to vanish as the mansion retreats into another dimension to await a decade passage, leaving all those visitors still alive on the side of a forested mountain." The recorded voice says. **"Without the mansion's magical aura, all of the magical visitors take human form just hours before dawn."**

"And so ends the our tale." The voice declares and he sighs as he feels his usual strength and abilities return to him. "Those that 'died' are just sleeping, right?" Shippo asks and he nods as he adds, "In the medical wing at least."

"I wonder who won..." Yukina muses as they begin to head out of the classroom. "I do believe I don't want to be part of the sequel, even if you were willing to pay me." Shippo decides calmly and he sighs, but had to agree on that one.

Naruto

"Ok... where am I?" He wonders as he glances around the room, one he's sure he's never been in, which also includes his clones. He scratches the side of his head as he glances around for a hint or a window, anything that would tell him his location.

It doesn't help that he didn't have his PPD on him either...

December 20, 1987

Duo

"This is going to be the greatest Christmas ever!" He crows as he glances around the living room. Naruto had sent one of his warding devices to the house yesterday, so the house's living room is more then large enough to hold their current number without causing them to elbow each other in the ribs.

"What's so great about this Disneyland and Disney World?" Iruka wonders as Shizune adds, "After all, it's just a film company, like Naruto's The Green Beast productions."

"You have your own production company?" Heero asks Naruto and the blond sighs. "We could always watch my only film later, although if Kurama would allows me to use what he recorded to create another or three film..." Naruto says as the blond glances sideways at Kurama.

"We'll see, Naruto, we'll see." The red head says and Naruto smiles as he says, "I just want you to know that I wouldn't keep your name from the credits as the director, writer, and, maybe, lead actor."

They all chuckle as Kurama smiles every so slightly at that but in the end, they decide to put their stuff away in their respected rooms so they can head off to the local amusement park.

I wonder if Yachiru will try and sneak her stuff into Naruto's room so they can be room-mates...

Farewell Feast

Naruto

I find it hard to believe that I won't be returning next year... He muses as he finishes off his dessert. He pays half a mind to the whispering conversations going on around the table, although Yachiru seems content to eat as much of the sweets resting on the table as she can stomach.

He glances up at the staff table and studies the headmaster for a few seconds as he recalls how sickly the man looked most of last year. Snape is the next one to grab his attention and he couldn't really find it within himself to really feel any kind of pity for the man. *He truly desires his masters, that's for sure.*

He then begins to think about the number of jobs he'll be working in the coming year before he settles on any one job. *Can't forget that I've got War and that otter family to look after too.* He thinks to himself and smiles as he recalls how healthy Fire and Sapphira were the last time he saw the pair.

They're not pups any more, are they? He thinks to himself as the two were now five feet in length and it's clear that Grin and Sin's attention were going more and more to each other then to their two independent, teenage daughters. *I'm going to have to increase the size of their quarters at the manor.*

"So... what job are you going to make your 'official' one?" Kasumi asks as the untouched desserts and their plate finally vanish, the conversations at the table have finally stopped, all of them were waiting for the prank to happen to those members of the staff table.

"Well, I can't really become publicly known for selling wards to muggles, so that job is going to have to remain out of public eye." He answers and before he could say anything more, Kurama's prank finally occurs.

Their cloths seem to vanish, although the female portion of the staff already had altered bodies that didn't include the certain things that scream woman on their chests. As their skin colors began to either darken or brighten into shades of black, gray, red, or green, their hair falls off and vanish in tiny flames as they grow in height and their frames began to take a more bulky look.

The staff table vanishes as does the chairs they were resting on as the faculty stand up on their newly altered lower half of their bodies. He snorts softly at the sight of Dumbledore's lower body becoming that of a snake's slender body and chuckles at the sight of Snape's legs splitting apart into three sets of insectoid legs without the lower part becoming like a centaur body.

Their skin slowly thickens becoming thick hide or scales or chitin armor. Professor Sprout manages to sprout an extra pair of arms while a pair of insect wings grow out of her back. Professor Flitwick now sprouts a number of tentacle eyes while his mouth seems to be sealed up by dark gray hide and he now sports at least four sets of nostrils about his face instead of a single nose.

The transformation complete, the teacher glances at each other, each pointing at their fellows but their attempt at speech seems to be mauled by their altered mouths or they remain silent because they lack a mouth. The tallest of the demonic looking faculty is Snape as he stands at least a eighteen feet and the shortest is Dumbledore at ten, but then, he couldn't rear up too high in the air because he's lower half is all tail, leaving him without any legs to stand on at all.

Cameras flash at this sight and he could only begin to imagine which paper these pictures will be featured in and how much they sold for.

So Ends Year Six of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 7

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1988

Narrator: Hiei , Inu-Yasha , and Kasumi Tendo

Hiei

He couldn't help but stare at the preteen with silver hair and odd triangular things on the head. He senses more then saw that Yusuke, Keiko, Kuwabara, and Botan. He did wonder where the fox was although he's slightly relieved that Yukina wasn't with them.

"Where's Kagome?" The girl sitting across from Botan wonders and the triangle things on the guy's head twitch before the silver haired preteen begins to glance about. "And Shippo's gone missing too!" The black haired preteen declares as well.

"So has Yukina!" Kuwabara says in alarm and he felt a strong urge to ask why Yukina was doing in his company. "Kurama is missing also." Botan points out and they began eyeing each other.

The door opens and they all turn to find the fox standing there with Yukina just behind him. "Well, isn't this a pleasant surprise?" The much older Yukina admits as she stares at him for a few seconds before looking at the others.

"Unusual too since there's two group instead of just the one." Kurama agrees. "It's a good thing we put permanent expansion charms in this compartment."

Yukina raises her wrist and a chiming sound rings through the air. A minute later Yukina lowers her arm and says looking at the others across from, "Kagome and Shippo are on their way."

"Just what's going on here?!" Yusuke finally demands as the preteen stands up. "And how come you didn't appear when we appeared?" Kazuma adds.

Kurama sighs while Yukina seems to be glancing down the hall, likely waiting for those two who are familiar with the other group. "Makes you miss Naruto, doesn't it?" Yukina whispers to Kurama, though he heard it perfectly as the red haired smiles slightly in response to that statement.

Kurama and Yukina then enter into the compartment and the room seems to grow a few feet, which only causes him to realize that this might be that expansion charm Kurama mentioned acts. Though he's not the only one startled at the sight of floating luggage, he's just the only one who managed to keep his startlement off of his face.

"What the hell?!" The silver haired preteen exclaims at the sight. "Get use to it, you'll not only be witnessing such things but expected to duplicate them." Kurama says as he waves his hand, causing the trunks to fly up onto the overhanging racks.

"Those are ours, I take it?" He says calmly as he takes time to study the various trunks. "Yes they are." The fox says and the silver haired preteen sniffs the air. "Kagome!"

With surprising nimbleness, the stranger makes it to the door just as a teen with blue tinted hair appears. "Inu-Yasha!" The newly dubbed Kagome says with a smile. "So that's what you looked like as an elven year old!" Another voice says as a bemused teenage boy stands just at Kagome's back.

"Shippo?" The three preteen mutter out in surprise and Shippo hums with a slightly smug look on his face. Inu-Yasha just stares from Kagome to Shippo and back again.

"So... Where are we?" Keiko asks and the older four people glance at each other, clearly they really didn't know how to begin. "Maybe

we should have radioed Yachiru here to help break the ice..." Shippo says after a few seconds of silence.

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

Inu-Yasha

"Inu-Yasha." The old cat lady calls out and with a sigh, he walks up to the foul smelling cloth hat. True, the smell of it wasn't as foul as the smell of ink and blood but it was up there.

"Let's just get this over with." He growls as as soon as the hat is on his head. He still finds it hard to put out the fact that Kagome has a scent of some kind of bird hanging about her.

"She's likely an bird Animagus. In fact, I do believe that the human members are getting in the habit of going through Animagus training to gain an animal form." The hat tells him and he couldn't help but blink.

So that's why so many of them have that extra faint scent clinging to them... He muses as he recalls his meeting with the older members of Kirin. *"I might not know who's what but that can be cleared up by asking them."*

"Kirin!" The hat says and he lets out a sigh as he begins to breath through his mouth once more. He manages to find a seat by Kagome.

"So... what kind of bird do you become, Kagome?" He asks as the old lady calls off the next name from the scroll. "I'm a magpie Animagus." Kagome says after she glances up at the table where all of the so called adults were sitting.

"And Quatre's a sparrow." The one called Duo says as he pats the blond Quatre on the shoulder. "I find it very appropriate that you ended up with a ferret." Wufei remarks dryly.

"Wait, what are you guys saying that you can transform into those animals?" Keiko asks and most of those at the table nod with the exception of Kurama, Yukina and Shippo.

"We thought it best for those... un-special members of the house to have a second form to fall back on if they're in a tight spot." Kasumi says and he frowns as he that seems to confirm that there were something odd going on with not just Kurama, Yukina, and most of their friends.

"I transform into a very rare type of wild horse." The pink haired seventh year, Yachiru, says with pride. It wasn't long before silence falls between them as the final member arrive at the table.

Then some old goat in a dress stands up to address them, he just rolls his eyes at the sight of the clearly color-blind man.

At least I don't have to worry about that damn wolf.

Kirin Common Room

Kasumi

She studies the newest members of their house, Yachiru has already slipped away and headed to the study room to work on one of her projects. *It's hard to believe that she's the same preteen who use to call Naruto 'Whisker' and me 'Omi'. She's grown to be fairly responsible and doesn't seem to mind not being center of attention too.* She muses to herself as she starts off at the library door.

She glances back to the mix 'mob' of Kirin students in time to watch Kagome demonstrate her Animagus transformation. With a chirp, Kagome takes to the air and after circling over head a few times, drops down to the floor and returns to her usual self. It wasn't long before the first years begin asking questions about where she learnt to do that.

With a shake of her head, she heads to sit by the tv that Yachiru finally manage to enchant, although she had to put the enchanted signal receiver on top of the tallest tower. There's a ring of same runes that act as a wire between the two so that nobody could disconnect the wireless signal being sent to their tv.

Summoning the remote wandlessly, she turns on the tv itself and begins to go through the various recordings that the receiver had not just recorded but also sorted in various ways like by language, genre type, title, episode or date, the date one is usually used for tv movie recordings. As she's flipping through the recordings, she's slowly joined by Shippo, most of the Gundam pilots, and those three ninja that were suppose to be Naruto's seniors in age.

"Oh! Can't we watch Superman?" Anko asks and she sighs before telling Anko, "It's not a porno."

"Are you sure?" Anko asks her and she nods as does the Gundam pilots. "I wouldn't mind watching Werewolf." Shizune admits and she liked that show too, even if it's a tad violent.

It didn't take long before she's finds that sub-category and selects it. "It's surprising that Yachiru managed to make it so modern in allowing one to record tv shows." Quatre says and she glances at the calm blond.

Modern? I guess it is for them at least. She admits with a sigh. "I wonder who long it'll take Naruto to finish deciding on what kind of tv show he'll produce." Iruka muses thoughtfully as the credits of Werewolf finally end and the show finally begins.

"True, but he's going to be busy with sorting through those latest recordings from last year's Halloween prank so he can make those movies." She points out.

September 10, 1988

How did I get talked into this? She wonders as she glances at the four first years who'll be gaining their Animagus form through the same way that Naruto helped them get theirs. She sighs as she finishes walking back and forth before the Come and Go room.

She opens the door and finds that the room looks very much like the one Naruto had created when he had been helping them. She waves the four over as she keeps the door open. She glances around slowly before she enters the room herself.

As the four glance around, she heads for the table to pick up the incense burner so she could place it at the center of the circle. "This doesn't look so tough." Kuwabara says.

"I don't see how this will take two whole days to complete." Miroku admits as the monk turned eleven year old moves to examine the room, particularly the circle on the stone floor. She doesn't say anything, after all, they had read the books that Naruto had listed as reference material.

She struggles to keep from jumping slightly as those skulls make their appearance within seconds of having the incense lit. Although she had to admit, there wasn't many of them as when she and the others went through it. She sighs as she finds all eyes on her and likely on the 'bear' skin she is now wearing.

Hopefully it won't shift into that other mode. She thinks to herself as she motions for the four of them to take their seats around the circle on the floor before heading to the table and chair to begin beating the drum resting on the table.

"I've never seen anything like these before..." Sango admits as the eleven year olds glance at the three walls where the outlines appear. "I take it those are our would be Animagus forms?" Keiko asks and she nods.

"Well, I'll complete this training in a day if not sooner!" Kuwabara brags from his position within the circle. She sighs as she begins to

examine the drum before she slowly begins to beat a very smoothing rhythm on the drum.

It might not sound like the one Naruto used but as long as the beat was steady and she could keep it going it doesn't matter what it sounds like. *Naruto did admit to using an animation spell on the drum and stick so they would fulfill this role. Why couldn't we stick with that?* She wonders as the sound finally seems to activate whatever magic this ritual holds.

She stiffens as the skulls begin to either slither over the floor or hop to be with the four who were within the circle. *I know the books said it would happen but it really is something to actually witness it.* She admits before realizing that this likely happened with them as it also signals that they're all in the right state to achieve this training.

She didn't even try to keep track of the time as she continues her part in this. Her attention is divided on the status of the skulls and on her drum playing. She couldn't help the goosebumps that seem to rise up as skulls began to vanish while others were gaining strength.

Is it any wonder why few go through this training... She admits to herself, waiting for the stew to appear to signal that the first part of the day was over.

October 31, 1988

Hiei

He could feel the tension among the students and staff as this holiday, Halloween, drew closer without even trying to read the thoughts around him. He also noticed how Kurama has been distracted lately as well, not really spending much time with them.

In short, he's gets a headache just by going to class and it only worsens as the day goes by which means that he's usual more short tempered then usual. The only time he gets any relief has to be

when he's within the connecting rooms of Kirin dorms and common room.

So, as he waits for the fox to descend down the stairs, Yachiru pauses at the sight of him leaning on the wall at the bottom of the stairs. "If you're worried about the prank that Kurama is pulling, he won't talk to anyone about it." The pink haired teenager informs him.

"Prank?" He asks slowly as he turns to regard the young woman with interest. "It's gotten to be a yearly tradition actually. Much like pranking the staff at the farewell feast with a demonic theme." Yachiru says before she asks, "Didn't you hear people talk about it? It's all everyone's been speaking of over the last week with many of the older students telling stories about the other Halloween pranks they've experienced."

"And Kurama is in charge of pulling off this year's prank." He states and Yachiru snorts softly. "Not just this year's pranks but the years before he becomes a seventh year and then it's likely we'll hold a contest to see who'll take over the job like we did last year."

"And who's expected to take over the job once Kurama is gone?" He asks slowly as he suddenly feels a type of dread. "Well, Shippo is the most likely, although Duo would love the job but well, he's more into off the cuff type stuff then making over elaborate plans and following through with them." Yachiru says and he makes a mental note to keep an eye on said teen.

"Come Christmas and you'll likely learn why Shippo's a favorite candidate unless you've already figured it out." Yachiru says before her stomach growls. "Later Hiei."

He watches as she walks away as he slowly realizes that he should have investigated a bit more into his fellow students' pasts. Before he could decide whether or not to try read Yachiru's mind, Kurama appears with the sixth year student, Kasumi.

"What are you up to, fox?" He asks as soon as he meets Kurama's gaze. Much to his irritation, Kurama just smiles slightly as he replies, "Nothing that will cause permanent harm, Hiei. Mental scarring on the other hand..." The red head teen shrugs while Kasumi glances between them.

He narrows his eyes as he crosses his arms before his chest. "Oh leave off, Hiei! It's suppose to be a surprise, that's how its been done when Naruto had the post and likely how it will continue to be." Kasumi says after a few seconds, startling him as he hadn't expected her to address him, let alone so familiarity.

With that, Kurama and Kasumi walk away and after a few seconds, he follows after. He just knew that he'll have more then a headache when this was over...

Inu-Yasha

"Damn it!" He curses as he feels something take a hold of his being. He sorely wishes he had his sword with him but on the plus side, he didn't have that stupid obedience necklace around his neck either.

There's a flash of light and soon he finds himself with a group of strangers who clearly weren't human. He's tempted to say demon but considering the magical beasts that exist in this world...

"We got another new team-mate and he's got a staff on his back, wonderful, we got a shaman, finally." One of the females state in a drawl voice as she checks something off. "What are you..." He stops as he glances at his back to find that he did indeed have a staff strapped to his back.

"Here, you can use this as a mirror." A guy says and he takes the offered shield. Flipping it around, he finds himself staring at his face and finds that he's gained the same features as they got, which are pointed ears on the side of his head, red mane of hair with the tips of his bangs having yellow touch to them, and three creamy colored

horns jetting out of his forehead with the center one being the largest of the three.

He hands the shield back to the guy as he tries to make sense of any of this. "Same bracelet too, only got an image of a feather where we got a fang or claw." Another muses after taking his left hand to study the bracelet that's got the stone he received at breakfast on it.

"I'm Raider Music Thrill, just call me Thrill though." Thrill says and the one who lent him the shield also introduces himself, "Grunt Voice Away, Voice for short."

"I don't recall anyone having those names..." He finally says with a frown and then says, "Shaman Love's Gift... Love's Gift... damn it, I'm Love's... call me Gift or better yet, just call me Shaman."

"Yea, we all experienced that when we tried to say our own names." Voice tells him and he just sighs. "We've decided to call ourselves the Tridents." Thrill says and within the next few seconds, another three arrived in the room and he notices that two of the three have axes like Voice's in their belts and the last one has a claymore strapped to their back.

"Oh joy, a raider and two more grunts." That girl says and it wasn't long before others with shields offer the new comers their polished shields to get a good view of their new looks.

"What is she?" He asks finally as he sits next to Voice since he has noticed that she lacks the usual weapons of the raiders and grunts. "Her? Magus Crow Doom. She's also been appointed as troop leader simply because she was the first one to arrive."

By the time a clock on the door slowly finishes its count down, they now number about fifty some with the bulk of the troop being made up of grunts and raiders. There were another two shamans who appeared, a smith, two scouts, four more magus, and then three beast-tamers.

Once the clock and door vanishes, a voice that's slightly higher pitched says, **"For the sake of Yinuma, the father of all, you have been tasked to locate and secure the archway of Beyond that will lead shall allow your people to return from your exile, leading you back to your races homeworld. Once it is under your control your magus shall set up a secure teleportation gate to allow your people to arrive at the archway safely, so remember to protect not just your magus but your shamans for they are the more then capable of resurrecting fallen comrades."**

With that, they find a huge hall beyond the room and they slowly began to exit out of the room. "Huh, it's not so different then last year's Halloween prank, only that we in larger groups and better armed." The smith known as Ice, short for Burning Ice.

"If you say so." Beast-tamer Puzzling Wall says and he had to agree with that sentiment.

Kasumi

She glances at the group of beings with navy blue skin with silver lined tattoos, feline faced, and scorpion tailed. She could only guess that they're classmates who were also catch up in this prank of Kurama's. "Should we...?" Knight Red Eye wonders.

"We'll take up defensive positions and only attack if they attack us." Monk Flashing Storm states calmly and she grips her bow before glancing at the other rangers. "Should we move to stand behind the defensive lines, Storm?" She asks.

Storm glances at her, giving her a good view of his broad, reptilian face with purple eyes. His scale color is much more flamboyant then theirs with it being primarily purple and teal. Although his claws and spines were orange in color, the same as their own. *But then, there's only one Monk in the company.*

"No, we don't want to provoke them, Ranger Steel Heart." Storm says slowly and she nods in understanding. *I wonder Kurama managed to have pre-made names assigned to us...* She wonders as their commander turns to watch the other company as she gives their own forces a sweeping gaze before staring at their usual guests.

Hiei

He frowns as he checks the time on the PPD strapped to his wrist and finds that the date was still October 31 of the year 1988 with the time being nine something pm. "Well, that was fun." Charlie Weasley says as the teen, like the other non-Kirin members of their unit, checks out the thumb size diamond.

His own diamond is resting comfortably in his pant's pocket. "I wonder how they got their hands on these!" A Slytherin fourth year wonders. "It involved using coal, a lot of pressure, and a lot of trial and error." Shippo states calmly.

"Well, we did win the quest so it's only right we get some kind of reward for running through that rat race." A Ravenclaw remarks and many of the others nod in agreement with that sentiment.

November 1, 1988

Kasumi

"So let's get this straight... All you really need is coal, an air tight box, and then a spell that causes titanic pressure to create your own diamonds." Bill repeats and she nods.

"Muggles have been creating their own gems using science and those are often called synthetic gemstones. But they're still technically not imitations since all lab created gems are still composed of the same chemical content and physical characteristics as natural occurring ones. So, no, there isn't anything to mark them as being fake." She tells the two Weasley brothers.

"How would you know all of this?" Charlie asks and she smiles a bit before replying, "I'm the one who created them after all. I started doing so when I was in my fourth year."

The two couldn't help but stare at her with wide eyes before taking a look at the various equipment around her. "That reminds me... Where are we?" Bill asks.

"I guess we're technically in the Chamber of Secrets, though I do believe that Dumbledore knows the general location of one of the direct entrances leading into the very halls of Hogwarts." She says before adding, "He also knows that the beast within it is a Basilisk since the girl who was killed by her is still haunting the place where she died."

"So he kill it?" Charlie asked and she shakes her head. "No, he just didn't do any, pretty much sat on his findings and let the wrong student get all of the blame."

The pair look stunned before Charlie asks while Bill seems to be thinking about it, "And who took the fall?" She looks him calmly in the eye as she answers, "Why, Hagrid of course."

"You're kidding, right?" The two ask at the same time but she sighs as she shakes her head. "No, we even check the school records and even spoken to the ghost for the right year."

She pauses before adding with a sigh, "The sad part is, if our conclusion are to be believed, the young Voldemort is responsible for setting Onyx loose simply because Voldemort is the only known Parcelmouth who would have been around during that time."

"So Hagrid is the first victim of... Voldemort?" Bill asks and she sighs. "We don't really know, although we do have a lead in the form of a Tom M. Riddle but, well, we're have run into some trouble tracking down his past and what happened after he left Hogwarts."

"Just how is it you guys seem to know any of this?" Bill asks with a frown. "Well... let's just say that Naruto never did warm to Dumbledore and, well, the man never really tried make it up to us or even attempt to apologize for them either. I mean, would you really expect a house with only one member in it to be a heavy weight to win the House Cup?"

"I always wondered why your house was included in that race... I mean, you guys still do have a lot of members..." Bill admits and Charlie muses, "Or why your house name never seems to appear on the Quidditch pitch schedule..."

"He's been trying to use our house as a moral booster, you know, as long as we kept coming into last place the other houses can say, 'at least we're not Kirin! They're always in last place.' You remember when our number became seven? Naruto had to hear about us participating in the Quidditch Cup from the Sorting Hat and I've got it on good account that none of the teachers ever planned to tell us of our sudden admission into the Quidditch Cup." She tells them and the two sport stormy looks before it finally dawns of them about why accidents happened that year to the other Quidditch team members.

"I never knew..." Bill admits with a slight wince and she sighs. "You do have to remember that you and pretty much everyone else grew up hearing their parents praise the man as if he's the second coming of Merlin." She points out.

For a while, silence reigned as she continues to brew a few boil cure potions. After all, they do a great job of getting rid of acme.

"So... What have you guys done to the Basilisk?" Charlie asks before Bill remarks, "Onyx?"

She sighs and she taps a rune scheme on the table next to the potion cauldron to summon a golem to take over. Within seconds, she's got the lab coat and safety goggles off before leading them through various tunnels until they reached the main underground 'hall' where the stone head is resting.

Taking the small collection of leather headbands off of a hook that's hidden with a special spell, she hands one to each Weasley brother as she says, "We've made some startling progress in creating Parceltongue translators so we can speak with Onyx without resorting to a control device."

"Wicked." Charlie says and once the headbands were on their head, she hisses out, *:Open.:*

The lower mouth does as its told and it wasn't long before Onyx hisses out without coming out of the comfy room within the head, *:What do you want, bear?:*

:I have two new people who wish to met you, oh Queen of the wood.: She says and Onyx hisses softly before she comes out of the statue with her eyes closed.

"That's one huge snake..." Bill admits and Charlie seems to be admiring Onyx's size. Then as Onxy comes close, she touches Onyx's nose and the Basilisk opens her eyes, causing the two teens to give an alarmed cry.

"Oh, hush, we've set the veil spell on her eyes to keep their magic from effecting us." She says, though she figures that Onyx is clearly enjoying the panic her simple action has caused.

"Veil spell?" Charlie asks and she nods. "How else do you expect your ancestors to not only create but work with her kind?" She asks and the two glance at each other before shrugging.

:Odd smell on the other one, what beast is that?: Onyx asks after flickering her tongue to sniff to two. *:Red Panda.:* She informs Onyx and then Onyx draws away to yawn.

Ti didn't take her long to summon one of the potion treats that's filled with the minerals and vitamins that the snake still needs, after all, it'll be years before Onyx's body recovers from her centuries long

hibernation and starvation. *:I hope it taste better then the last one.:* Onyx states as she eyes the cow size treat.

:The last one was suppose to taste like goat, this one is suppose to taste like rabbit.: She tells Onyx politely and it didn't take long before the gel treat is swallowed by Onyx. After a few seconds, Onyx says, *:Not as good as that chicken flavored one.:*

With that, Onyx slithers back into the mouth of the statue and with a hissing command, the mouth closes, leaving them alone once more in the ever-flame torches lighting up the 'hall'.

"Is she always like that?" Charlie asks and she nods. "You have to remember that until recently, she's been in hibernation for centuries with only a short waking period about forty-fifty years ago. We're slowly fixing her under fed state by feeding her the minerals and vitamins she hasn't had during her slumber. She's even slowly beginning to trust us because of that." She tells the two.

"Is that veil spell an easy one?" Bill asks as they return to her lab. "Very easy, although it needs to be renewed every New Moon or so though." She informs the two.

"Thanks for... well... being honest with us." Charlie says and she nods. "How's Naruto doing?" Bill asks.

"He's doing well, although I think he's doing some filming to fill in the gasps of his latest movie he's putting together." She says and Bill raises his eyebrow. "Is it a sequel to Incoming Tide?" Bill asks.

"No, he's going to be using last years prank recordings to create a series of movies, likely based on the various 'groups' questing within that mansion." She says and Charlie blinks but then smiles slightly. "Do you know if there's any recordings from this year's prank?" Charlie asks.

"You'd have to ask Kurama." She says and after wards, the topics that came up weren't very serious before they use the teleporter to

return to Kirin's common rooms, leaving her alone once more within her private lab.

December 23, 1988

"Tao!" Yachiru cries out at the sight of the blond and within seconds, Yachiru has engulfed Naruto with a huge hug. "Good to see you too, Yachiru!" Naruto says as he returns the hug.

"Black!" Duo shouts as the large dog pounces on the guy as a greeting. Black just barks in reply while not getting up from pinning the preteen to the floor, the tail just keeps wagging.

"So you're the infamous Naruto." Yusuke says as the preteen sizes the young man up. "Infamous, huh? When did I become infamous?" Naruto wonders as he glances over towards Kurama and then to her.

"Well, you were in charge of pranks." Yukina points out, a loud bark echos and she glances to find Sirius Black still in his Animagus form giving chase to Duo Maxwell in his Animagus form, that of a ferret. She smiles as Duo manages to evade Black's attempts at picking him up in his mouth.

At her feet, Gin sighs and she gives her creation a little nudge as people begin to head towards the huge living room. Gin looks up at her and she smiles at the silver golem and with a wolfy grin, Gin bounds off after the two with his own tail wagging. She watches as Gin manages to roll Black over onto his side and gives a bark of excitement.

She turns around as Black moves to try and wrestle Gin onto the ground, she could only guess whether or not Duo has managed to slip pass the two 'dogs'. She already notes that the House Elves have already put their luggage away and could only guess that the same is true for Yachiru's two pets since Marble likely found the Owlry to stay in while Kirara and Pu likely were resting in their 'partner's' room or are waiting for them in the living room.

December 24, 1988

Inu-Yasha

He couldn't help but watch the blond who not only has the scent of a raven, which he had been told to expect since Naruto was a raven Animagus, but the faint odor of a Yoko, he guesses Yoko since he can only compare the scent with the two other Yoko of the group and it was a very faint scent at that.

Maybe he's got a quarter of Yoko blood in him? He wonders as the ex-student speaks of the various letters addressed to the Green Beast productions for a sequel to Incoming Tide. He had seen that movie during the first weekend of October, he hadn't particularly like it considering he grew up in a world full of demons and was half-demon himself.

He isn't the only one who's been eyeing the blond, most of Kurama friends were as well. He did give the occasional looks at Sirius Black and at Remus Lupin, but that's morely because Sirius was either at the center of some prank and Remus was taking the time to lecture the other man or busy conspiring with Duo while Remus looks on.

Finally silence seems to fall among them and he takes a sip of his chilled butter beer. He finally asks, "Which grandparent was the Yoko?"

Iruka and Shizune send him a disapproving look while Kagome just shakes her head slightly as Shippo and Kurama just trade bemused looks. "Neither I believe since I do believe that the Yoko no Kyuubi preferred to kill every human that crossed his path." Naruto says before glancing at him before glancing expectedly at Yusuke and his male friends, with the exception of Kurama.

"Is he a local demon lord where you're from?" Miroku asks curiously. "Wouldn't know and I doubt I'll ever bother to ask him." Naruto admits and he frowns.

"The Kyuubi was sealed in Naruto within hour of his birth by his father." Shizune admits and he blinks as he tries to understand the concept of why anyone would want to seal a demon away within a baby human, in particular as to why Naruto's not possessed by said demon.

"Why not seal this demon in a cave or in a rock?" Miroku asks and Naruto sighs. "Well, for one, the village was currently under attack at on that particular day and monks and priest or priestess with that kind of ability are very rare as before I met Kagome, I only knew of one priestess like that." Naruto says.

"And there had been, in the past, eight other demons in other villages where they would then seal those same demons within babies to create human 'weapons'. It also doesn't help that the Kyuubi is suppose to be the strongest demon of the nine so they didn't believe an inanimate object could contain him. Hence why I was selected to house him." Naruto finishes.

"How about if we start at the beginning to fill in the unanswered questions you have. After all, tonight might as well be a good time to begin exchanging life stories." Shizune says as she holds up her hand.

"Go ahead." He says and Yusuke nods in agreement.

Farewell Feast

Hiei

"Is this prank even necessary any more?" He asks Heero and the second year just shrugs. "It began in Naruto's first year so..." Kagome just shrugs slightly as they watch as those members of the staff slowly gain more inhuman looks.

"Look at their hands, just how far are those fingers going to stretch?" Sango wonders as their cloths finally vanish as skin begins to stretch

from between the fingers and their sides. Pointed teeth get revealed every time the teachers open their mouths.

Fur or scales began to sprout as their newly developed muscles and newly altered bones were finish with their changes. Once their new skin covering finishes growing, some, like Dumbledore, begin to sprout some kind of element with fire being in Dumbledore's case, gas for Snape, and leaves in Sprout's case.

Cameras flash as various students take pictures of their altered staff members in the form of demonic looking bats.

So Ends Year Seven of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 8

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1989

Narrator: Kagome Higurashi , Ranma Saotome , and Ino Yamanaka

Ino

Ok... who are these weirdos? She wonders as she watches as this kid sporting an unfashionable pigtail looks ready to bolt at the first sign of movement while the two girls eyeing each other, another with a page hair looks highly comfortable as some guy in a white robe hugs her, and the final one looks like she's about to erupt.

"So... this is the famous Kirin compartment eh?" A red haired kid asks after opening the door. "The what now?" Neji asks and it wasn't long before she's seeing double.

"Excuse me, I need to get through." Another voice says and the twin red haired preteens move out of the way to allow some silver dog statue with strange tattoos enter. The dog glances around at them before asking, "Is there a Ryoga Hibiki presence?"

"I'm Ryoga and why do you want to know?" The kid with the tiger striped bandanna asks. "Kasumi instructed me to give you a special gift. I'm Gin by the way." Gin says as he bows his head politely at Ryoga.

"Wait, why can't Kasumi come herself?" The girl with the page hair cut asks and Gin gives her a passing glance before approaching Ryoga. "Could you please stick out the hand you don't write with?" Gin asks and Ryoga looks confused but does has he's asked.

Gin then coughs something up and within seconds of hitting Ryoga's hand, it borrows directly into it. Ryoga yelps and waves his hand about as Gin backs away. "What did you do to him?!" The angry girl roars and the silver dog gives her a disapproving look.

"He's only surprised, not in pain." Gin says and Ryoga just nods in agreement. "This feels really weird but it doesn't hurt, not one bit." Ryoga says as the metal finally stops growing out of his skin, forming a very stylish watch with small gemstones as buttons around the glass face.

"What is it for, if you don't mind my asking." Pigtail guy asks and Gin smiles at kid, clearly approving of his use of manners, she notes.

"It's a GPPD, it stands for Global Portable Positioning Device. It should counter act your directional curse and if it doesn't, well, it can act as a radio and tell you where you are in the world. If it doesn't work, we'll likely add an upgrade so we can teleport you back to Hogwarts or to the manor." Gin explains and Ryoga looks dumbfounded.

"But why did it have to grow out of his skin like that?" Sakura asks and Gin sighs before answering, "Its so it can never come off since if he does take if off, there's a good possibility that it would get stolen or left behind. It'll also adapt if he finds himself being transformed against his will into something with a very tiny wrist."

Ryoga looks alert while angry girl just frown. "Is that a problem around here?" Ryoga asks and Gin does a doggy shrug. "It depend on who's pranking you or if they're just being spiteful." Gin says.

"I remember! There was this one prank where the student would transfigure guys into horse and then charge girls for the chance to ride their choice 'stud'." One of the twins says with a broad grin. "That was one of our favorite stories." The other agrees with a smile.

"That doesn't explain why Kasumi couldn't come to deliver this herself." The girl with a page hair cut says, clearly annoyed that her

previous question hasn't been answered. Gin moves to sit by the door, continuing to ignore the girl with the page hair cut.

"Kasumi... isn't she a Prefect?" One of the twins muse and the other nods. "I do believe so, George, I believe so."

"What's a Prefect, if you don't mind my asking." Tenten asks and the twin glance at each other. "Prefects are students who have been given a certain degree of power to help enforce rules and are capable of taking away house points." George says and the other twin adds, "They also patrol after hours and have their own bathroom."

The door opens and another red head arrive along with a young woman. "Hi Gin, I take it Kasumi send you here?" The girl says and Gin nods. "She did, Kurama. Nice to see you, Yukina." Gin says as he turns his head to look at the two young adults.

"Ah, I see, so you guys know Kasumi?" Kurama asks and there's a frown on his face. "She's our sister." Angry girl growls and Yukina says, "And you must be Akane then? Let's see, the one getting hug is Nabiki, the one hugging her must be Mousse."

Mousse blinks and then puts his glasses on, once they're on, the be-robed preteen backs away while Nabiki gives the preteen an icy look. "Nervous one is Ranma, the one with Kasumi's gift is Ryoga, which leaves the one with long blue hair to be Shampoo, and the final one to be Ukyo." Yukina finishes up and that group all nods while Kurama studies them for a few seconds.

"You lot all know Naruto, Iruka, Shizune, and Anko." The red head says and she finds herself nodding in agreement. "Well, its unlikely you'll see Naruto at all for the most part of the year. He doesn't go to Hogwarts." Kurama says.

"He flunked out didn't he?" Sakura asks and Kurama, Yukina, and the twins all blink at the question but before they could say anything,

somebody calls for Kurama and Yukina. "Well, we've got to be heading off, we do have Prefect meeting to attend."

As they're about to go, Kurama pauses to turn to one particular person. "And Nabiki? We will know if you try to blackmail any of your fellow house-mate while we're away, particularly if you try and hold old 'debts' over certain people's heads. You've been warned." Kurama says as he stares intently at Nabiki as if she were a mouse and he a hawk.

Nabiki seems to swallow and she makes a note to keep a particularly close eye on said preteen. The door closes and Nabiki seems to find herself the center of a lot of attention. "Seems like you've been warned. Makes me wonder what happens if you ignore warning, huh?" Shampoo muses with a slight predatory smile.

"Leave my sister alone, you bimbo!" Akane growls but Shampoo clearly doesn't view said girl as a threat. Ryoga seems to glances between the two while Ranma just sighs.

"Well, that was informative, wasn't it Fred?" George says and Fred nods. "Indeed it was, George, indeed it was."

"Looks like you're usual style of operating isn't going to cut it around here, huh sugar?" Ukyo says with a very satisfied grin which only causes Akane to growl and to begin to have a red flame appear around her frame.

She raises an eyebrow at this and glances over at Lee then back at Akane. "So... who are you guys and who were those others that Kurama mentioned?" Ranma asks, likely trying to relieve the tension within the compartment.

"Ranma! Are you flirting with those girls?" Akane demands and she's not the only one to frown at Akane's reaction, let alone the fact that Ranma seems to cringe every so slightly. "Well now, looks like your sister isn't the only one we've got to look out for, huh? Particularly if

you think that's flirting." Temari states and Akane just growls at Temari and then settles for glaring at Ranma.

The door opens and Anko walks in with a group of guys. "Looks like we arrived just in time, huh? She really does look ready to blow her top and there's your source of nervousness too, Q-man." Anko says as the teenage special Jonin glances from Akane to Ranma and back again with a sneer on her face at the look of Akane ready to blow.

"Hey! Q-man is my nick name, Anko." The one with the braid says before introducing himself, "I'm Duo Maxwell, I may run, I may hide but I never tell a lie!"

"You're an Anime character!" Ukyo shouts while Nabiki just stares dumbly at the group. "You're all Anime characters from Gundam Wing!" Ukyo adds after glancing at the guys with Anko, pointing to the guys.

"And you lot star in an Anime called Ranma 1/2, but you don't see us gawking at you, do you?" Duo points out which causes the others to drop their jaws in surprise.

"Gin, would you mind giving us the film equipment please?" The blond asks Gin and Gin moves from his position at the door to stand before the blond. Within seconds something drops to the ground and the one with the really long bangs closes the door.

It wasn't long before sticks were out and they find themselves standing, which includes her lazy ass team-mates. By the time it dawns on her that the size within the compartment has increased, the twins were asking Anko about what spells they use for not just expanding the size within the compartment but on creating the two types of steps.

"What are you doing?" Lee asks and Duo answers, "Why, creating a movie theater within this compartment."

It wasn't long before the door opens and in steps another group of people, only this time, Iruka and Shizune were part of this new group. "So, are we late to help pick the movie selection?" The older girl with blue tinted hair.

"No, you're just in time, Kagome." The blond says as the guy with the stony expression somehow causes tiny furniture to enlarge as soon as it touches the ground. Seconds later, she witnesses it duplicating on all of the large steps.

"I so got to learn how to do that." She decides and Gin says, "Well, you do have your own wand, so you can easily learn how to do the same."

"You mean this is a wand?" She asks Gin as she shows him the stick that was in her pocket and the silver dog nods. "That is more then likely your wand."

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

Ranma

One by one, he watches as those others that he arrived in that compartment with got called up to be sorted by wearing the singing hat of all things. He did have to wonder if those two Hyuugas were blind or something but pushed it out of his mind as he reminds himself that as soon as she could, he just knew that Nabiki will be trying to make money using him or trying to get him in her debt so she can use him.

To say the least, he didn't enjoy that prospect but he couldn't really see anyway to avoid her since she knew him too well. He could only hope that those others will keep her in line but he didn't get his hopes up since it likely won't be long before she gets something on them to keep them from keeping her in line.

"Saotome, Ranma." He jerks slightly but with a sheepish grin, he walks up to the stool so he can be sent to Kirin house.

"I see, so that's what you believe will happen, huh? Let me reassure you that they won't give her any kind of control and let me point out that it doesn't matter what she thinks she has on them, they won't allow her to operate like she has in the past. After all, Kasumi's already agreed that if Nabiki 'slides' as it were, they're allowed to use certain means to... correct her behavior." The hat informs him.

"Like Kasumi would agree to that." He thinks with a snort but the hat says, *"I believe she has and even signed a contract to that extent just encase she begins to 'slide' back onto her previous behavior with such familiar people around her, particularly her sisters around."*

He blinks and couldn't help but feel... comforted by this bit of information. *"I also see you're a bit fearful of magic itself and don't try to say that you fear nothing, young one, only a fool would ignore and forget the lessons they've learnt from their experience with such things."* The hat says and he flushes, but, again, fines himself comforted by this hat's words.

"Magic can create wonderful things but it can cause chaos as well. It's all about intent." The hat tells him and then sighs as it adds, *"There is a branch of magic that you might want to begin studying as soon as possible, it's called Occlumency. It's a defensive practice of securing ones mind from the art of mind reading."*

"And yes, there are those that practice Legilimency, the art of mind read, here at Hogwarts. I shouldn't be surprise if that Nabiki girl tries to learn it as soon as she finds out about it. She's clearly got control issues as does another two I could name." The hat tells him and he decides it really would be in his best interest to learn this Occlumency before Nabiki ever learns about this Legilimency.

"Kirin!" The hat tells the world at large and before he slips if off, the hat adds, "And I'll be meeting weekly with young Saotome here until I say otherwise."

Whispers erupt from the students as he hurries to the right table. As the people recover from their shock, another name is called, leaving

him to sigh in relief. "Don't worry about it, we all use to get strange looks whenever we got sorted into Kirin." Yukina tells him and it takes him a few seconds to realize that he's sitting between Kasumi and Yukina.

A glance in Akane shows that she's not pleased but he's surprised to note that Shampoo, Ukyo, Mousse, and Ryoga look like they're thinking deeply about something and he decides its likely because of their own private conversation with the talking hat. He watches as Akane blinks, looks confused before shrinking into herself.

It takes him a few seconds to realize that most of the older girls' were staring disapprovingly at Akane but he just sighs as he pushes it out of his mind, for now at least. He's just happy that he's not sitting anywhere close to his usual group of people.

He hears a familiar name get called and it takes him a second to realize that the guy walking up to the stool was one of those twins who had arrived at the compartment before Gin had. "Gryffindor!" The hat says after a few seconds and the table with red and gold cheers.

"Weasley, George." The last twin walks up to the stool and puts on the hat. A minute later, the hat growls, "Kirin and yes, your twin brother did agree with my idea. Now get yourself to that house!"

George sighs but does as he's told while the whole hall just stares in a dumbstruck way as George Weasley walks to their table. Suddenly an older red head stands up and begins to clap, soon Fred joins his older brother and it didn't take long before a few more students were clapping and cheering until George sits down next to the pink haired girl named Sakura and the one named Kiba.

"Well, its only right that a Weasley finds themselves at our table." Kagome muses and Kasumi sighs. "Bill and Charlie are honorary members." Kasumi agrees, which seems to end the matter before it even begun.

September 2, 1989

Kagome

How did I get talked into this? She wonders as she watches as the skulls around Naruto's friends get thinned out fairly quickly while the Kasumi's sister's group took a great deal longer, although Ranma seems to have collected canine types if she's any kind of judge, particularly after glancing at the thin flip chart that's listing the names of which animal skulls are which.

Oh look, Kiba is done already. She thinks with a sigh as the picture next to Kiba's name displays the image of particular breed. *African Wild Dog, huh? Very interesting.* She admits as she watches as Kiba slowly wakes but before he could shout out, Kiba is transformed into his Animagus form.

Finally, Kiba comes trotting towards her and once she reaches her, he transforms back into his usual form. "What's an African Wild Dog?" Kiba asks before looking at the picture by his name.

A sheet detailing said animal appears as soon as Kiba's wand touches the picture. Kiba sits on the newly arrived chair as he reads the information provided by their research in creating other sheets like that one that Kiba's reading.

October 31, 1989

Ino

"So, why did you spend the night here Fred?" She finds herself asking as she finds that most of the older members of their house have decided to go use the co-ed pool then to have breakfast first thing this morning.

Reason why she's not sitting with her team-mates or with the other girls was because she wanted somebody different to talk with today

and her usual choices were currently enjoying the pool. "It's Halloween." George tells her as if that should explain everything.

"So?" She asks and the twins blink. "Today is when a castle wide prank will commence." Fred says and she frowns. "You helped Duo with another prank then?"

The two laugh as they shake their heads in denial. "Today's the day when a certain Kirin member traditionally pranks everyone in the castle, with the exceptions of the House Elves and pets." George says and she blinks slowly as she begins to realize that they're very serious about this.

"How do you know it's a member of our house?" She asks. "Well for one thing, it's become a very common occurrence at Hogwarts." Fred says and George adds, "Same with the year end prank that's pulled on the teachers."

"And if you haven't notice, Kurama has been fairly busy." Fred tells her. "Technically nobody really knows who's behind the prank." George says.

"Then how do you figure that Kurama is behind this years prank?" She asks and the two sigh. "Because the older years have been talking about who's going to be Kurama's most likely successor as Kirin traditional prank planner and executor." Fred answers.

"A position that was held by the very first and founding member of our house and was passed down to Kurama the year before the founder graduated Hogwarts." George says. "Tao." The two say in unison.

"Just what does this position entail?" She asks after a few seconds. "They are the one who's always behind the prank pulled on Halloween and at the Farewell Feast." Fred says and George nods.

"Then everybody knows it's our house behind these two pranks?" She asks and the twins shake their heads. "No or else the teachers

would be hounding all of us around those two times." George says.

"Bill did suspect but he never pursued it nor has Charlie." Fred admits. "And how come nobody beyond your brothers have considered it?" She asks.

"Simple, why would a prankster allow himself to be affected by the prank that he's pulled?" The two say in perfect unison. "You mean people are really that stupid in the Wizarding world?" She asks and the two nod.

"It's why we've managed to get such a basic understanding of potions, really. Nobody monitors potion making but they do monitor muggleborn, underage wand magic." Fred explains and she snorts softly as she files that away.

"Dumbledore suspects, doesn't he?" She asks and the twins shrug. "Even if he does, he really doesn't have much in the way of evidence or he's just embarrassed that his school continues to be caught up by said, yearly traditional prank."

"Bill and Charlie both still own their miniature dragons from this one year's prank where their real bodies became cloth and stuffing and those little dragon plushies not only housed your mind but became real." Fred says and George nods.

"I know Kurama, Yukina, and Kasumi still have theirs." George says and she stopped herself from asking how he knew that. "Sounds like something Kankuro would be interested in." Gaara remarks from behind her since her back is to the door.

"He's the one who wears that makeup that finally caused the teachers to ignore his... 'self expression'?" Fred asks and Gaara and her both snort softly. "Yes, that's him." She says and Gaara moves to the side of her and sits down.

"Well, since you two are so knowledgeable about Kirin house traditions, what does Kurama have planned for this years prank?"

She asks after Gaara's breakfast arrives.

"Beats us. Duo's been unsuccessful in finding out." Fred answers and Gaara frowns.

"Prank?" Gaara asks in a drawn out way before glancing at each of them in turn. She sighs and wonders if anyone of their house year even knew what's to come this day.

Ranma

"Well, it could have been worst." He muses and his 'fellow' satyrs turn to look at them as they're drifting down the river on their make shift raft while a group of humans fire arrows at them. "Oh? And what could be worst then having arrows come whistling towards us?"

"We could be going over a waterfall." He points out and the others just blink before Cone the blond satyr nods in agreement. "He's right, we could be heading over a waterfall."

"Fine, we'll give you that." Stone, AKA Ryoga, admits. He can ID Ryoga because his GPPD can be spotted on his left wrist, although it looks kind of broken since it's been reading the same time for the last few minutes now. *We might be in a time ward...*

"So, what's our goal?" Arrow asks and with a sigh, he takes out another scroll that's resting in his pouch. "Huh, this isn't another mission scroll. It seems to be list of seeds we need to gather before leaving the area before the humans make these specimens extinct." He says and he hands it over to Arrow, who then scowls.

"What's the point of all this anyway?" Arrow demands as the black haired satyr hands the list to another member of their party.

"I believe our overall task is just what that odd voice told us. We're to gather up as many magical plants, living creatures, and weapons before the invading humans begin to destroy said the first two and use the later against the 'Elder' races like us, centaurs, and etc." Flint

says and the only earns Flint a look from Arrow before Arrow glances back at the distant point where the human archers waited.

I do believe that Kurama is using this prank as a learning experience too. Showing what things are like on the other shoe sort to speak. He adds privately to himself, kind of glad that he had managed to keep quiet about the upcoming prank, although none of the Kirin member beyond the Weasley twins really seem to be expecting this prank.

December 22, 1989

Ino

"And this is where we're living during the summer months." Kasumi says and she couldn't help but be a bit impressed considering it's winter and it looks like within the wall of the manor, snow hasn't lasted long the lawn.

"How come there isn't any snow within the property?" Shampoo asks and for the first time, the older students of Kirin house glance around in slight surprise before somebody mutters a spell.

"Tao perfected the weather wards within the first week it started to snow." A pink haired woman says as she steps out from the shadows of the wall, causing a lot of them to jump slightly. "He's having some slight difficulties making the weather within here match a spring or summer day but, well, at least we're at a nice autumn day temperature."

"Hey, are you related to Sakura?" Ukyo asks and she blinks before she glances from her best friend and then to the woman with pink hair, a color both seems to share. "I'm from a different world, even if we share one characteristic. I'm Yachiru by the way."

"Where's Tao?" Kurama asks and Yachiru raises a slight eyebrow, as if slightly surprise by something. "He's out on a ride with War at this moment. I do believe that's him over there." Yachiru says before something seems to dawn on her, which causes her to grin.

"Well, come along, Black and Remus are currently playing basketball in our new multi-purpose courtyard and I believe that Su Xia is busy watching their attempts at the game." Yachiru says and then, with her hands clapped behind her, she takes the lead.

"Come along, I'm sure you all can't wait to met Tao." Yachiru says once her back is to them. She glances at the others but in the end, Gaara begins to follow the older members of their house and they all began to fall into step behind him.

She goes through the list of things they know about this 'founder' and she found it wasn't long enough or rather, in the physical description department there's nothing beyond the fact that he's not even in his early twenties and is considered handsome by most of the girls, including Anko.

Once they arrive, they find a stable door open and she concludes that Tao's within the stable. "Hey Tao! You might want to come and see the latest batch of first years!" Yachiru calls out as soon as she reaches the open doors.

"Coming!" A rich, deep voice calls out and she watches as something moves within the shadows of the door until... "Naruto-kun?" Hinata says at the very built blond standing at the doorway.

She feels her jaw drop as the man nods. "Wow, you guys look young. I can't believe I was that age not once but twice." Naruto says as he studies them.

"It seems like decades ago." Kurama agrees and Sakura just repeats a few times, "But... but... how... your... this can't be!"

"Can't be what, Sakura?" Naruto asks as he glances at his team-mate with a slightly raised eyebrow. "They never told us you..." Sakura just moves her hand up and down, clearly not believing the sight before her.

"That I graduated from Hogwarts?" Naruto guesses and she nods along with the others. "They've been referencing to me as Tao, haven't they?" Naruto asks with a roll of his eyes and a slight shaking of his head, before glancing over at the older students.

Students who were clearly enjoying their reactions. "Just how did you end up with that, as your nickname?" Kiba asks and Naruto just sighs. "Well, for one thing, a lot of people seemed to be very happy mauling my name and when I lost it, I had thrown Tao out there and within hours, that became the name most people refer to me ask." Naruto explains.

"They don't do that with us..." Tenten says and Naruto sighs. "That's because of Yachiru's actions whenever somebody mauled her first or last name. I mean, she held up Snape's class once and wouldn't let him continue until he pronounced her name right." Naruto says as he sends a slight smile at Yachiru, who looks slightly embarrassed that he recalled that.

"So... what kind of horse is War?" Mousse asks and Naruto cocks his head to the side before motioning as he says, "Well, come and take a look for yourself. And if you want something similar, well, we've long since had an arrangement with the House Elves about the stable at Hogwarts and our... 'pets'."

It seems that the second years, too, were interested and followed Mousse into the stable. "What the hell is that?!" Inu-Yasha demands at the sight of a very scaly horse who seems to be busy drinking from a trench.

"That's War, he's an experimental breed that I got during my second year along with a pair of six foot long otters, you remember those, right?" Naruto says and Inu-Yasha nods in a dumbfounded way.

"But the rules say that first years are only allowed either an owl, cat, rat, or toad!" Akane says and Naruto nods in agreement. "Yes, *first* year are only allowed said animals, there's nothing saying that a

second year and up can't have something that's not any of those critters." Naruto says, stressing the words first and second.

"And yes Kuwabara, I got that kitten you wanted, although I couldn't forward her because she had gotten sick and should be more then recovered enough for travel once Christmas break is over." Naruto says, glancing at the carrot top preteen.

"Can I see her?" Kuwabara asks and Naruto says, "She's been staying in your room so she can get use to your scent."

And with that, Kuwabara seemingly vanished from their group, leaving them with Naruto and a scaly horse who seems to be glancing at them, as if blaming them for something.

"Anyway, go explore the grounds, just don't harm anything 'scary' since its more then likely something the House Elves are raising for potion ingredients." Naruto tells them as the blond moves to War's side and begins to use a rag that's resting on the saddle to polish War's scaly hide.

January 14, 1990

Ranma

"Nabiki's been caught trying to blackmail Shippo and Kagome." Kasumi tells him after gently shaking him awake. It takes him a few minutes to realize what that meant and likely why Kasumi came to see him.

"Which punishment are they going to preform?" He asks her as she comes to sit on the bed next to him. He found it hard to get a hand over both of her shoulders, not that Kasumi seemed to notice his inability.

"The ring is what they decided on." Kasumi says. "And I take it that Akane 'happened' to be 'awake' at the same time as Nabiki was meeting with the two?" He asks and Kasumi nods.

"Her third strike as the Americans say." He mutters and Kasumi nods. "I really hope that they would have behaved... but I guess their habits are too well ingrained for them to break them without help." Kasumi admits.

"I guess that same could be said about me." He admits and Kasumi laughs lightly as she shakes her head. "No Ranma, you're behavior really has changed as has most of the others, although in Ryoga's case, I had added a mood modifier since he was in a downward spiral with his depression."

He blinks before glancing sideways at the young woman sitting next to him. "Ukyo and Shampoo... they don't such a large quantity of bad habits, kind of like you actual in that regard." Before Kasumi adds with a slight sigh, "I can't say that Mousse doesn't but I think the sorting hat kind of opened his eyes and he's trying very hard to keep them open. He had been stalking Shampoo for a very long time and Yukina and Kagome have been there to help him when he really needs somebody to talk too."

"And he's comfortable with them because they're not involved in the mess and have that... aura about them." He adds and Kasumi nods. "Shampoo and Ukyo seem to find girl-friends among those ninja." He muses out loud, not that he's unhappy by that either, since it gave the two something new to do other then hound him.

"Did you know that a certain rat had arrived at Hogwarts when Percy Weasley arrived?" Kasumi says after more then a couple of minutes of silence. He's kind of glad for the change in the subject as he frowns.

"What kind?" He asks in a dry way and Kasumi seems to be slightly amused but says, "The Wormtail variety. Naruto offered Percy an exchange, his rat for this spiny lizard after giving Bumblebee a chance to capture said traitor. Of course we've never told Black or Remus about us having the... guy in our custody since we're fairly sure what they'd react."

"So when will you tell them?" He asks and Kasumi tells him, "When we manage to get the two to hook up with their friend's son. We figure they'd been more willing to hear our ideas about how to proceed from there."

Silence once more descends between them and he just couldn't help but feel as if he could have prevented this from happening. And yet, he felt as if a huge weight had been lifted from his shoulders, particularly since it means he can finally interact with the opposite gender without having to worry about getting beaten to a pulp.

Farewell Feast

Kagome

"Err... ah! Imps!" Shippo says at the sight of the sudden flock of tiny look-a-like demonoids that were also members of the teaching staff. "Dungeons and Dragons, right?" Duo asks and Kurama just smiles ever so slightly.

"Don't be so surprised, Naruto's borrowed descriptions from said books before. Heck, I still remember Yachiru mentioning how he even arranged for Bumblebee to grow a second head. It was Yachiru's first year as a student too." Anko says and she had to nod in agreement, she had been there when Yachiru described that prank.

"Bill mentioned that one too. We though he was joking when he told us Bumblebee grew a second head." George says as they all watch as the imps seem to be arguing about something but in the end, they return to normal just as the last of the students exit out of the Great Hall.

So Ends Year Eight of the Kirin House

House Kirin Year 9

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1990

Narrator: Daisuke Niwa , Takeru 'TK' Takaishi , and Shippo

TK

"Is that a Patamon sitting in your lap?" The guy to his right asks and with a blink, he turns to regard him. "Would you believe that he's a stuff toy?" He asks as he notices the shaggy blue tinted hair.

"Hey, TK, isn't the one to your left Ryo?" Patamon asks, causing the three sitting across from him to jump slightly as the two girls pull in close to the only guy sitting there. He turns and finds that the kid to his left really does look like a younger version of Ryo.

"Hey... TK. Long time no see?" Ryo says and the Digimon resting on the other side of Ryo leans over to greet them. "Hi, I'm Monodramon and who's that to your right?"

"I'm Koichi." The guy to his right says. "Nice to met you, Monodramon." Koichi adds and he glances to the preteens across from them.

"I'm Daisuke and these two are Risa and Riku." Daisuke says and he nods in agreement, as he glances around the compartment. "So, what are those things?" The girl to Daisuke's left asks.

"We're Digimon, its short for Digital Monsters." Patamon answers as he begins to pat himself down. He finds only his D-3 and a... stick.

"Where's my cell phone?" He wonders before he turns to look above his head. "Mine's gone too." Koichi says the others seem to nod in

agreement. He moves Patamon from his lap so he can take down the trunk.

As has he brings the trunk down, the compartment door opens and he finds himself staring at an Anime character from a popular show. "Inu-Yasha?" He wonders and the teen blinks before his amber eyes narrow.

"And you are?" Inu-Yasha asks. "Sorry, it's just... Well, there's an Anime with your name as the show's title." He says and Inu-Yasha just seems surprise before he slowly begins to shake his head as he turns to study the others, particularly the two Digimon.

"And what are they?" Inu-Yasha asks and it wasn't long before he finds the other members of the compartment looking at him with looks pretty much expecting him to answer. "They're Digimon." He says and Inu-Yasha hums thoughtfully as the half-demon muses, "Usually pets are sent on ahead..."

"We're not pets!" The two Digimon say indignantly as he picks Patamon off the chair so he can sit back down. "Well, that's going to cause the old Bumblebee a few problems." The silver haired teen muses with a slight smirk on his face.

"Where are we anyway?" Ryo asks before a floating trunk finally comes into the compartment. "On the Hogwarts Express." Inu-Yasha answers as a stick appears in the supposed 'fictional' character's hand. With a wave, the trunk literally flies up onto the rack and Inu-Yasha closes the door.

"Hogwarts as in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry?" Koichi asks in alarm and Inu-Yasha isn't the only one to glance questioningly at the partnerless preteen. "Oh, so at least one of you have heard of it." Inu-Yasha says.

"Well, it was a book series and they're still producing the films for the books..." Koichi says with a hint of redness in his cheeks. "Really?

Have you read the books?" Inu-Yasha asks, clearly curious about this as Inu-Yasha takes a seat across from Koichi.

"It was about a kid named Harry Potter and his seven years of schooling." Koichi and Inu-Yasha's eyes light up. "What year is Harry in?" Koichi asks after a few seconds and Inu-Yasha answers, "Well... He hasn't started yet, next year will be when he attends."

"Oh..." Koichi seems to shrink into his seat. Before anyone could ask another question, the door of the compartment opens and he finds himself looking at another Anime character, only this time, he's not the only one to know him. "Ranma Saotome..." One of the twins says in a faint kind of way and Ranma seems to stiffen before glancing at Inu-Yasha.

"I think we're Anime characters in their worlds." The silver teen answers the unspoken question. "Oh! Like with those Gundam pilots." Ranma says.

"Which Gundam pilots?" Ryo asks and Ranma answers, "Those from Gundam Wing."

"So, not only are we in a book universe but we're in some kind of massive crossover too?" Risa, or Riku, demands and he just shrugs. "So... which house did you two get sorted into?" Koichi asks as Ranma repeats Inu-Yasha's actions with his own floating trunk.

"Kirin House." Inu-Yasha says and Koichi just looks confused. "The what house?"

"Well, to be fair, it was founded in the autumn 1981 when Naruto Uzumaki, also known as Tao, arrived as a student." Ranma explains. The name didn't mean anything to him or the others actually.

"What colors are Kirin house?" Riku, or Risa, asks. "Orange and brown." Ranma says and after a few seconds, the door opens and he's not that surprised to see more members of either of their shows

but from Ryo's jerking, the other likely knows who the young man with red hair is.

It takes him a few seconds to realize that something isn't right but when it hits him, he realizes that the compartment seems... bigger. He listens in with half an ear as the new comers talk among themselves after making introductions. "Is it just me or does the compartment seem... bigger?" He whispers to Patamon.

"There's a permanent expanding charm on this compartment." Trowa says as the non-descriptive teen sits on Monodramon's other side. "Any way, everyone needs to be standing for this part." Duo says and in the end, they get to their feet.

Within seconds, the size of the compartment increase so much that he no longer can see the original sides of the compartment. Within the next few seconds, the space is transformed into a movie theater. Another group of students, these ones don't look much older then him, arrive.

Chaos reigns as people had movie suggest they would like to watch. *This is like some kind of dream or something.* He couldn't help but think as he moves to sit down on one of the lazy boy like chairs while still holding Patamon in his arms.

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

Daisuke

"Monodramon." The graying professor calls out and he couldn't help but turn to stare at the much larger Digimon since they kind of ran out of kids to sort. It didn't take long before Ryo gives Monodramon a nudge that has the strange creature go up to the stool and instead of trying to sit on the stool, just puts on the hat.

A few seconds pass before the hat declares, "Kirin." Silence seems to greet and and Monodramon soon puts the hat back on the stool before he returns to his previous seat.

"Patamon." The professor lady calls out after a few minutes of silence and this causes the little orange Digimon to fly from TK's head to the stool. There are cries of cuteness at his passing.

Patamon crawls under the brim of the hat and a few seconds later the hat declares, "Kirin." The hat almost falls to the ground as Patamon manages to bite the brim.

Professor McGonagall moves to help Patamon in his struggles to keep the old, leatherish hat from falling to the ground. Once that's over, Patamon comes flying back to their table to rest on TK's head once more. "Guess you two are going to be students." Temari muses.

Kirin Common Room

Hard to believe the latest non-human members of the house could look like that. He thinks to himself as he studies the two Digimon, but particularly the one called Monodramon. It had surprised everyone to hear Monodramon get called up but he couldn't help but find it entertaining about the whole thing.

"I think we should put the two through Animagus training right now if only in hopes that they achieve a human form." Wufie says and Kagome points out, "We've never really asked for those that weren't human to go through that training. We just have to hope they get the same schedule as their partners."

"Fat chance of that happening, we all know that the man would be more then happy to cause a problem for us. Remember, he's the one who decide to bend the rules so that a pair of first years can play Quidditch when the house finally had seven members to its name." Anko reminds Kagome.

"Are you guys talking about Albus Dumbledore?" Koichi asks finally. "We are." Kurama admits after glancing around at the much older students.

"That doesn't sound like him, I mean, in the books he's a nice guy." Koichi says and he's not the only one puzzled by that. "Oh yea, you're the one that's read about this universe." Inu-Yasha says and he blinks at that.

"He is the one who left Sirius Black imprisoned without pressing for a trail." Iruka states and Shuzine adds, "He also left Wormtail in Percy's care and the rat would still be in his care if that trade hadn't gone through."

"He allowed Hagrid to take the fall for Tom Riddle." He decides add. "He left Harry in the care of relatives that their will said were unfit to take care of a wizarding child." Yukina adds calmly.

"He expected a house with less then ten members to win the House Cup." Quatre says and Koichi holds up his hands in a sort of surrendering gesture. "Ok, ok, you guys win." Koichi says.

"I was going to point out he keeps Snape on staff but it seems that isn't needed." Yusuke says with the two Weasley brothers glancing at Koichi in a curious kind of way.

"So... what happened in these books?" Fred asks as everyone seems to be busy thinking their own thoughts. "Well, for one thing, you two were suppose to be in Gryffindor." Koichi admits.

"I'm willing to do this training." Patamon finally says as the twins walk off with Koichi between them, more then likely going to squeeze as much details out of the first year as they can. He blinks and glances at the orange Digimon who's resting on the back of the couch.

"Patamon..." TK says softly but Patamon presses on, "If it'll solve this situation you're all foreseeing, then I'm willing to give it a try."

"Monodramon?" Ryo asks his own partner softly. "I might as well go through with it too, I mean, how hard could it be?"

"Is it hard?" TK asks and the others all shake their heads. "We go through the same training to become Animagi, preferably in our first year." Kagome says.

"Then I guess we'll be going through it along with the two Digimon?" Riku asks and he answers, "Depends if you want to spend the rest of the night resting on a cold floor."

"Then why do they have to go through this training now?" Risa asks and with a glance around at the others, Iruka explains, "Classes start this coming Monday and we do need at minimum of two days set aside. So unless they want to get frustrated with their... in ability to carry their own book bags around, and trust us, Snape is very good at hounding people just to take points from their houses, then we best start them off tonight."

The preteens didn't look thrilled at the idea of losing sleep over this but in the end, Ryo and TK decided to go through this training with their partners. He watches as Kagome leads the four to the teleporter so they can make it to the Come and Go room to get started.

The meeting ends and people begin to drift off, soon nobody is paying him much mind. He heads to the dinning hall to practice a technique he finally asked Naruto for help with since he could use all the help he can get for winning this upcoming prank contest.

September 2, 1990

TK

He yawns as they arrive back at the Kirin common rooms. He glances down at his exhausted partner and he couldn't help but smile slightly at him. "We'll try and finish it after lunch." Kagome says as she stretches.

He's too tired to nod so he just climbs up the steps, it didn't take long to find the door with both his name and Patamon's on it. He smiles at

the sight of the second bed but decides that for now, he'll rest with Patamon sharing his bed.

He doesn't even bother to take off anything over then his runners. Thankfully, the room is nice and dark as he drifts off to sleep.

Daisuke

He watches as Wiz seems to enjoy the lettuce that has been provided for Wiz's breakfast. He stifles a yawn since he had done a minor tour of Hogwarts after hours just to test his new PPD. *Well, at least I don't have to buy it like the others first years do and I get extra features that they don't get either.*

"Hey." Koichi says and he turns to look at the other preteen. "Hey, you look worn." He says and Koichi smiles slightly as he replies, "Well, not only did I stay up last night with the Weasley twins, but this morning most of the house wanted me to tell them what I know of the cannon plot line for this universe."

"Where's Ryo, TK, and the Digimon?" Koichi asks as he looks around the main common room. "I think they're sleeping, Kagome was found on the couch and Shippo took her up to her room, leaving Sango to change Kagome's cloths." He tells the other.

"So they went through with this training last night?" Koichi asks and he nods. "Yea, though it sounds like we'll be going through it next weekend during the daylight hours instead of doing it during the night." He explains.

"What animal do you think you'll become?" He asks Koichi after some silence. "Some kind of feline." Koichi admits and he smiles slightly as he says, "I'll likely get something with wings."

"Do you know if that tv works?" He asks as he glances at the tv set. "Well, electronics don't work here because of all of the magic." Koichi says and he gets up to grab the remote. "Only one way to find out,

huh?" He says and with a click, the black screen changes into a menu.

"Wow." He says before he recovers. It didn't take long before he found something under the title animation to watch. A few other members of the house drift over and settle down on the arranged furniture that's set in a circle with all facing the tv set.

"Why is the tv working?" Koichi asks Yukina as she's about to walk pass to get to the library. "Yachiru did some tinkering until it and the signal receiver runs on magic." Yukina explains and she continues on her way to the library.

He relinquishes the remote to Duo once the pilot takes up the seat next to him. By the time, lunch arrives, he's more then a bit stiff but Duo studies both Koichi and himself.

"So... what do you guys got planned for this afternoon? If you don't know, I would suggest taking a few books and activating a time ward on one of the study rooms so you can start cramming away at various charms, jinxs, hexes, and curses since you never know which upper year group will try and bully you before they relearn the reason why nobody bullies Kirin first years."

"Time ward?" Koichi asks and Duo doesn't seem offended, "It's a complicated ward to set up and I'm told it's a hassle when you're asking it to engulf something say the size of this castle." Duo says and continues, "It speeds up time within the room so a minute could be a hour or maybe a day, heck, I wouldn't be surprise before a minute within it could equal a whole month at the rate Tao and Kurama have been playing around with the ward."

"Plus, let's not forget this part, it keeps anything organic from in essence from 'aging', which means you won't get hungry or tired not matter how long you spend with it activated." Duo says and he decides he might as well get a start on this studying. "And the down side?" Koichi asks.

"You can't do any potion work with it active since it involves combining organic breakdown material together to form something new, which is the potion." Duo says and he's not the only one with their mouth forming an 'oh'.

September 3, 1990

TK

"It's so weird seeing you..." He couldn't help but wave his hand up and down, it helps that the House Elves already had cloths that were Patamon's size. "At least I don't like some kind of mirror twin like Monodramon." Patamon remarks and he nods, it really was disturbing to see Ryo and Monodramon as a human standing side by side.

There were very few differences between Ryo and Monodramon, the most striking is the fact that Monodramon's hair is a steel gray color with bright blue in color. *While people could mistake Patamon and myself as cousins or even brothers, we're definitely not twins.* He thinks as he studies inch shorter human that is his partner, who also sports slightly brighter, orange tinted hair and silvery blue eyes.

"And here I was thinking it was odd that there had been two extra trunks in the over hang." He says, although he hated the fact that the older student's were right to worry about Ryo and him getting different schedules then Monodramon and Patamon. "With out wands in them too." Patamon says and finally, they head off into different directions since they have different classes to attend.

"See you at lunch!" Patamon calls out and he nods in agreement before turning on his PPD so he arrives in time for his class.

October 31, 1990

"So, let's get this straight, today is the day a school wide prank occurs and Shippo's the one who now in charge of this 'tradition'?"

Koichi asks and Ryoga nods without taking his eyes off of his unopened 'gift' box.

Pat and Mono were busy enjoying a game of wizard chess while eating their breakfast. The reason why they're able to play was because you order your pieces around and they move to that spot on their own, which, considering that the two are actually Digimon, was a good thing since they never miss a meal. Though he's not sure why Mono picked up the chess set either...

"And how can the teachers not pick up on the fact that a member of our house is behind this tradition?" Ryo asks while Koichi seems... bemused by it. "Oh, Bumblebee and Snape likely suspect but then, they either have too much on their plate or they just can't be bothered." Ryoga says.

"And that's why you're not opening your gift box to see what toy you have within it?" He finishes and Ryoga nods in agreement. "That's right. I'm not opening it until I'm good and ready." Ryoga says before draining his bowl of soup.

He sighs but glances down at his stuffed unicorn who's colors are teal with dark purple socks on his back legs and a silver horn. Koichi received a stuffed hippogriff who's colors are yellow with blue markings, Ryo received another unicorn who's colors are navy blue with white spots on its rump and a gold horn, Pat received another hippogriff who's colors are red with black markings, and finally Mono received another hippogriff with soft green with brown markings.

"Are you worried that you'll end up with one with girlie colors?" Ukyo asks as she heads out of the dinning hall. Ryoga's face flushes but he says, "At least Ranma ended up with not just a unicorn one but one who's colors are white and pink one."

"Whatever you say, sugar." Ukyo says with her yellow hippogriff with pink markings resting on her left shoulder. Mousse arrives and after dropping his un-open gift box before sitting down next to Ryoga.

"Fearing you'll get a girlie one like Saotome?" Ryoga asks and Mousse just nods. "Why couldn't Shippo stick to using Kurama's method? It didn't cause this kind of dread!" Mousse says before gulping down his drink.

He glances at Koichi and they decide to leave the two Anti-Saotome group alone. "Well, I think I'm going to head for a soak in the pool. How about you?" He asks Koichi as they head out of the hall. He pauses when Pat cries out and Mono says, "I think I'm going to find a free study."

"I think I'm going to join Yusuke and the others before the tv." Koichi says and with that, they head into different directions. He does glances at Koichi for a few seconds, he still didn't really understand how it is that Koichi knew about Digimon and yet doesn't have a partner. *He's a nice guy.*

"TK, wait up!" Pat calls just as he reaches the door. He turns to watch his partner transform into his natural body and fly through the air. He's more then a bit relieved that whenever either either Digimon transform into their human forms, they appear with the cloths they previously been wearing.

"Ready?" He asks and Patamon hums in confirmation. He holds the door open for his partner to fly into before stepping in himself.

"Are you going to bath like that or as a human?" He asks as he pulls his T-Shirt off and tosses it into the wide mouth basket resting by the door. "I don't feel comfortable bathing as a human." Patamon says with a hint of crimson engulfing his body, managing to make itself known through his orange fur.

He smiles slightly at that but decides to re-frame from teasing his partner, for now, but he'll likely begin teasing Patamon after New Years since by then, Patamon should be a bit more comfortable with the idea that he's capable of turning into a human.

Bet nobody expected this to happen when I handed out those plushies. He muses to himself as about the gang of elves standing wearing an image of a hippogriff on their various cloths. He could see that all over them were more then a bit stunned by all of this, which only makes him even more glad to have held off springing the prank until all classes were out for the day.

He did make sure that the appropriate teachers received a six limbed lizard, causing them to become goblins, and then the rest of the staff receiving one of the two birds plushies, one was an owl and the other a falcon, which will cause them to become a fey beings. Those staff members with those with falcons being daylight specialists and the owls being nighttime specialists.

I've been looking for a good empire building video game, but I do believe this will not only be something better but something that everyone will remember. He thinks to himself, more then a little glad to have had collaborated with Yachiru and Kasumi during the summer holidays to figure out how to made ten years pass for ever minute that passes in the real world.

They also helped him create a reincarnation system so that when somebody 'dies', they get to be reborn and then go through a childhood before once more becoming an adult with full memories of their 'fore-more' lives. The students themselves don't need to worry about aging, food, water, and sleep, but the characters that's engulfing them are affected by said things though, which makes this a very real Role-Playing Game.

And all of this will end an hour before classes begin tomorrow morning, giving us all the time we need to perfect a wide variety of skills like hunting, farming, warfare, crafts, etc. Heck, I wouldn't mind seeing what kind of political system arises by the end of this prank. He thinks to himself as he begins to 'feel' a bit hungry.

December 21, 1990

Daisuke

"So this is going to be the first time you two have come along on a vacation with the house?" Risa asks the Weasley twins as they wait for Kurama, Yukina, Kagome, and Shippo to arrive with a portkey each so they're not crowded around one single portkey.

"Well, our mother didn't like the idea of us leaving Hogwarts but not to spend it with our family." Fred admits after the two glance at each other. "I think she's afraid that we'll end up buying another pet like Bill's Spike." George admits while a soft snort seems to come from Heero's direction.

"What's so special about Spike?" He asks curiously while Wiz makes an echoing sound as Dark and his familiar's head continues to remain sticking out of his winter jacket that the House Elves made for him.

"Spike was a gift from Naruto and the other two members of the house. He came from an India breeder who got arrested for something, well, that's what the documentation on Spike says at any rate." Fred says and George nods.

"Spike's what we call a chimera, a well bred one at that. He has two sets of antlers, retractable claws, grew two side blades on his tail, and he came pre-trained, which is likely is why our mom never did managed to get our dad to push Bill to sell Spike." George says and its Fred's turn to nod.

"Of course mom did send a scratching letter to Tao about sending dangerous animals as gifts. Much to Charlie's annoyance since he's been hoping to get a similar gift during his time at Hogwarts." Fred says and George did add, "Though he did receive many gifts for Christmas and his birthday that ranged from various muggle candies to animal statues, even sent this four course meal for his sixteen birthday."

"Mom was a bit tiffed about that." Fred remarks. "Yea, particularly because he proclaimed it the best birthday meal ever." George says with a wide grin.

"Didn't they send Bill gifts like that?" Riku asks and the two shake their head. "Nay, more of what they sent to Bill after Spike were along the lines of ready made potions or little souvenirs like a tacky copper necklace with semi-precious stones on each of the copper plates."

"What did you guys get last year for Christmas and for your birthday?" Risa asks and he had to admit that he's curious about this as well. "Well, for Christmas, I got my own portable potion set." Fred says and George picks up by saying, "I got enchanted Game Boy with two games which are Alleyway and Castlevania: The Adventure."

"Which is why I got my own Game Boy, with a red and gold enchantment on it, for our birthday with The Final Fantasy Legend." Fred says with a grin while George just seems to shake his head before George says, "I received a mirror that gave me a clear views of what's going on in the Slytherin common room to see who's plotting what."

"I still got the better gift." Fred says and George just snorts as he slowly shakes his head.

Finally the two seventh years and the two sixth years arrive with Kurama with a slight frown while both Kagome and Shippo's features could be chiseled out of stone. Yukina seems to had a slightly sadden looked on her face, which seems to cause Hiei to look ready to... kill somebody. Tension seems to erupt out of no where, so much so that Wiz decides to pull his head out of his jacket collar and shiver close to his mid-section.

"What did the old coot try to pull now?" Anko demands while more then a few of their number seem to be getting ready for a fight. "I don't see why we can't just arrange for him to have an 'accident' by the end of the year so we don't have to put up with his crap." Yusuke mutters next to Anko's side.

He glances over at Koichi to find that the preteen just seems to be shaking his head slightly and Iruka places a hand on Koichi's shoulder. "The man is becoming very... vexing." Quatre agrees and he has to admit that the headmaster just keeps trying to put controls on their actions.

Luckily or not, the potions teacher has given them a great deal of reasons to keep the blocks from being permanent. *Even the Ravenclaws are beginning to wonder why our house isn't mentioned in Hogwarts official history book. After all, Kirin house has existed for about nine years already with admission slowly growing from having one to two members getting sorted to the house to groups numbering over six.* He thinks.

"I can't believe that Bumblebee hasn't been removed from his post simply because of all the pranks and student unrest that exist within Hogwarts' walls." Sakura says.

"Let's not dwell on that right now. We did manage to unravel the tracking charms on them before we made it to the main floor." Kagome says and Shippo adds, "You'd think considering he knows of his wands history he would begin to wonder if all of those pranks pulled on him hadn't cause his wand to switch its loyalty by now."

Finally they all move towards one of the four and touch whatever object the portkey was. He's glad that they shrank their trunks so they can put them into their jacket pockets. Within seconds, the world around him shifts so fast that he felt as if he were on a roller coaster.

Sadly, his stomach felt worst then if he were only riding a roller coaster and he feels a bit of dinner trying to crawl up his throat. It took every ounce of will to keep his dinner from entering into his mouth. He winces when he discovers that Riku hadn't had much luck keeping her dinner inside of her.

"That's worst then it usually is!" Duo complains. *Good to know that it doesn't always feel like that.* He thinks privately to himself.

"So... this is Egypt." Pat muses at the sight of the shops below. It takes him a few seconds to realize that he's not overheating, not that it stops him from hurrying to take off his jacket, he's careful to grab Wiz before the rabbit falls to the ground.

"Glad you like the view." He turns to find a red haired young man standing there and within seconds, both of the twins are crowding around him. "Bill! What are you doing here?"

"Well, for one thing, I did get transferred here as a curse breaker." Bill says with a slight smile. "Tao told me about your guys' plan to vacation here and I was more then happy to make the booking arrangements for you guys."

"Is Tao and the others going to be here?" Fred asks and somebody enters from the front door. "No, Tao's a bit busy starting up filming for that Pern television series now that he's managed to buy the rights to produce it." The young woman with pink hair ways.

"What about Kasumi?" Akane asks and Yachiru, if he remembers correctly, sighs. "She's busy making the necessary legal arrangements for Black's custody battle with an American lawyer." Yachiru answers before adding, "Of course it helps that we have so much overwhelming evidence of Bumblebee's guilt, although it sounds like we won't be allowed to use the man's memories against him."

"It helps that we also have Wormtail on hand to prove that Black's supposed 'crime' never happened either." Botan muses. "That truly goes without saying." Yachiru says in agreement.

"Will Kasumi manage to make it for Christmas day?" Akane asks and Yachiru answers as she comes more into the room, "That will be up to her, she just might return to help Tao with his fish golems."

"Which book is he going to start the series of at?" Ino asks curiously, they had lost him at the mention of fish golems.

Duo is the first to excuse himself to go claim a room, a course of action that soon becomes popular with those not interested with this current topic. "Just what book series is this Pern?" He asks Ryo as he walks in the same direction with Mono at point.

"I've never really read the books, though I know they did create a game based off it." Ryo admits and Koichi says, "Maybe we should read one of these the series books. Must be interesting if one of us enjoyed them."

"I wonder who's going to be staring in the lead roles?" Mono wonders.

Farewell Feast

TK

"This sucks, I finally get the title and next year I have to pass it on." Shippo says as the final stages of the staff's transformation into classic array of humanoid devils with features making them appear more 'beautiful' or 'handsome'.

"Well... who made it to second place?" Sango asks, clearly curious about who made runner up. "Shampoo oddly enough." Kurama admits and everyone turns to glance at the Chinese Amazon.

"Why you all look surprise? My prank did, and I quote, 'Rock'." Shampoo reminds them and Shippo nods in agreement.

"Didn't your prank have everyone racing about in go karts while wearing animal costumes?" Iruka asks and Shampoo nods. "That was pretty fun." Duo admits.

"So does this mean that Shampoo gets the job of prankster next year?" Ranma asks and Shippo shrugs as he says, "I don't see why not. She did make a good showing during this years contest."

"I hope I won't let you, my predecessors down." Shampoo says in a very sober tone.

So Ends Year Nine of Kirin House

House Kirin Year 10

I Don't Own Harry Potter or Naruto or Bleach or Ranma 1/2 or Yu Yu Hakusho or Inu-Yasha or Gundam Wing or DNAngel or Digimon!

Hogwarts Express

September 1, 1991

Narrator: Toshiro Hitsugaya , Harry Potter , and Gaara

Harry

He blinks after he steps into the hallway as a sudden headache erupts and then fades, leaving only memories behind. He sighs as he rubs his temple slightly before he continues to walk down the hallway to a familiar compartment. He did get a chance to glance out of a window and he couldn't help but notice how many trunks were not just floating in the air but following various wizards and witches around.

It's such a unique sight that it causes him to stop and stare out of the window in a dumbfounded manner. It didn't take long before he spots an unfamiliar group of people without any luggage at all. With a sigh, he turns away from the window and heads to the compartment.

Once hears somebody arguing about something in another compartment and curiosity eclipses his better judgment and he opens the door to find that not only was there two preteens circling each other, but the compartment seems... bigger then it should. The two boy who were facing off stopped to stare at him along with the rest of the occupants.

"Can we help you?" A girl with purple tinted hair and really dark skin tone asks. "Why are you two fighting? And how did you manage to increase the size of this compartment?" He finally gets around to

asking as he realizes that not only is this group going to be in the same year as him, they also had some wacky hair dos which causes him to wonder if they weren't Metamorphicmagi.

"Why not fight is what you should ask yourself." The one with normal looking hair says and this causes the kid with orange hair to give the other a scratching look with a slight frown on his face. "So... you can see us, can you?" This girl that seems to have this mothering aura about her asks.

"Ok..." Now he's a bit freaked out and before he could say anything, he feels someone stand behind him. "Any of you know a Yachiru Kusajishi?" This six year prefect asks while still wearing normal street cloths.

"If you've harmed her in any way..." The one who's standing across from the kid with orange hair says in a very threatening tone. "She's fine, last I hear she was busy asking Naruto to borrow War for some kind of intimidation thing at the bank." The teen states in a calming tone.

"She's not going to be here?" Asks one of the white haired boys and the teen nods. "Why not?" The aggressive one asks. "Well, it could be because she already graduated from Hogwarts, but that could just be a theory." The brunet teen says with a slight ironic smile on his slightly scarred face.

More then a few just seem to roll their eyes but the aggressive boy just humfs slightly before asking with narrow eyes, "And you are?" The teen behind him doesn't seem offended. "I'm Iruka Umino, sixth year prefect of the Kirin house." Iruka says before adding thoughtfully, "And I just might know who you all are, but I can't stick around for long, so I hope you'll make young Mr Potter here comfortable until another member of the house arrives."

Before he could asks Iruka how he knew it was him, he finds that the teen is already walking away after pushing him more into the

compartment. "Hi, I'm Harry J. Potter." He says to those within the compartment.

"Nice to met you, Harry. I'm Retsu Unohana." The motherly air girl says. It wasn't long before that causes most of the others to introduce themselves and he's beginning to get the feeling that things this time around will end in a very different manner then they usual do within his Loop.

Hogwarts Sorting Ceremony

He couldn't believe the fact that the Kirin house is a ligament house as those kids that had been in the compartment get sorted into it and the fact there is a table that's slightly below and to the right of the staff table. He couldn't help but notice how those members all seem to be talking about something, often times so absorbed that they don't notice the latest new arrival.

Another thing that he couldn't ignore was the fact that it seems that one of the Weasley twins had been sorted into Kirin house instead of Gryffindor. *I wonder if that stops them from getting into trouble...* He wonders but then, he had heard some of the older members mention something about a Halloween prank that's going to be happening this year.

"Potter, Harry." Professor McGonagall states and shaking himself out of his thoughts, he walks up to the sorting hat. Like usual, people are having whispered conversations as he does so.

"Just get this over with." He thinks to the hat as soon as he puts it on. *"Are you not a bit interested in why there's even a fifth house?"* The sorting hat asks in a bemused tone.

"Is this some kind of fusion loop with other loopers?" He asks. *"More like fulfilling that wish you made before the last loop restarted actually. All of Kirin house have plenty of experience in dealing with people like Dumbledore and Riddle. All of them are here to help you fulfill your destiny in the soonest possible time as well. They've*

already freed your Godfather, captured Wormtail, and already found the Chamber of Secrets."

He's kind of impressed with that. *"So the basilisk is dead?"* He asks curiously. *"I believe they've named her Onyx and have taken to taking her on walks through the Fobidden Forest, clearing out a lot of those spiders and Greyback and his pack from the rants 'Bumblebee' had thrown a while back."*

"Why would... Bumblebee be ranting about the death of that villain?" He asks the hat. *"Have you forgotten your detention into the forest to find that injured unicorn? The bit where Draco complained about werewolves living within it?"*

He felt cold as that memory plays out within his mind's eye. *"I'll leave it to Kirin to set you straight. And if you feel the need to chat with me, just mention it to young Saotome and he'll make the arrangements."* The sorting hat tells him as he finally recovers from the shock that bit of news caused.

"Kirin!" The sorting hat declares and a murmur of chatting happens but Dumbledore standing up seems to put a stop to it. "Surely you're mistaken." The headmaster asks and as he turns to look at the man, he couldn't help but notice how tired the older man looks. Heck, the eyes look like they're more then capable of burning the hat on his head.

"Young Mr Potter here has been sorted into that house and unless you're trying to imply that I'm incapable of doing my job? That an ancient and valuable artifact who's sole purpose is to place students in their proper houses can be mistaken about which house best suits this particular student?" The sorting hat asks in a very dangerous tone.

He notices out of the corner of his eye that members of Kirin were all staring at the old man with what appears to be predatory, hateful looks. "Are you sure you didn't mean Gryffindor?" The old man asks while most of the teachers seem to be glancing back and forth from

the Kirin table to Dumbledore and seem to decide to edge away from Dumbledore after a few seconds.

"I cry insult!" The only guy seventh year says as he stands up before the others got to their feet. "I cry insult on you, old man! I and my fellows have grown tired of your meddling in our affairs! Of your attempts at pressuring members of our house into trying for a resort! Of you allowing that bully of a man to continue teaching here!" The young man says.

It didn't take a genius to figure out which teacher this Shippo was talking about. "You can't go around challenging member of the teaching staff you brat." Snape snaps as the pale man rises up.

"On the contrary, it's headmasters and teachers who can't challenge students, there's nothing against a student challenging them." The sorting hat says. "Particularly when the student is a seventh year since they are adults in the eyes of the law." The hat adds.

Instead of trying to break up this foolishness, he's stunned at the fact that Dumbledore has this spark of happiness about this. Finally, the staff table vanishes and the other teachers back away. "Snape will, natural, be my second." Dumbledore says.

"Anko will be mine." Shippo says and a certain teenager with purple hair stands up. He shivers at the joyful, blood-thirsty look in the young woman's eyes as the two move to stand at opposite ends of the hall while Dumbledore and Snape take up positions at the other end.

None of them bow at each other and it's Dumbledore who fires a spell. The spell seems to hit something, slow down and then, with a flick of his wand, Shippo seems to destroy the spell. Instead of countering with a spell, Shippo twirls his wand as he begins to walk slowly towards Dumbledore.

"Isn't this foolish? I mean, Dumbledore has years of experience behind him." He says softly as spells continue to be fired at Shippo

but they begin to slow down and stop within four feet of the young man.

"Not to mention the Elder wand." He adds softly as Shippo finally makes it within ten feet of the headmaster. "Who says that Bumblebee is still the true owner of said wand? If I recall correctly, I would say that young Uzumaki is the wand's master considering the number of times Bumblebee has been caught unawares by that one's pranks." The sorting hat says as finally Snape fires off a spell at Shippo, which pretty much breaks the rules of a dual.

Not that anyone seems to be moving to call it off as Dumbledore seems to team up with Snape. Then appearing behind them, Anko has two swords in her hand and they're both resting by Snape and Dumbledore's necks. "Are you two going to surrender? Or am I to be taking your cheating heads?" Anko says in a deadly soft voice that seems to echo through the Great Hall.

"And before you say we cheated, I don't remember where in the rules it said that the second can't go first, after all, all I did was walk towards you lot. I didn't even preform any magic either. I'm willing to have my wand tested to that effect as well." Shippo says with a very satisfied smirk on his face.

"Filthy..." Snape manages to say that one word before his head rolls onto the ground as Anko's sword goes through his neck as if it were a hot knife through butter. "The next words out of your mouth had better be 'I surrender' or your head rolls like his did." Anko says as she moves to have both sword resting on Dumbledore's neck, crossed over each other and appear to be like a pair of scissors as they rest on either of Dumbledore's shoulders.

It wasn't until Dumbledore has a few trails of blood flowing down the sword blades before the man whispers something. "I didn't quiet hear that, could you repeat that in a much louder voice?" Anko says and finally, Dumbledore croaks out, "I surrender."

"Shippo, his wand." Anko says and once the wand is within Shippo's hands, the man snaps it in two and then into four pieces, which causes Dumbledore to cry out in despair at the sight of four pieces falling to the ground. The swords vanish as the two Kirin members begin to walk back to their table.

For a few seconds Dumbledore is staring at Snape's wand but in the end, the man just drops to the ground to gather up the broken pieces of the Hollow to cradle. Snape's body vanishes as does the head and the staff table appears within seconds after wards. His eyes land on their Defense teacher and notices the hungry look within Quirrel's eyes at Dumbledore's suffering.

Finally he realizes that he had better get a move on so that the sorting can continue. Taking the hat off his head, he gets off the stool and begins to walk towards the house he's been sorted into once the hat is on the stool. It takes a few more minutes but finally, McGonagall reads the next name.

"You'd think we killed his pet rabbit the way he's acting." Yusuke mutters in disgust. "Oh lay off, Yusuke, not only have we destroyed his plans for that Hollow but we also destroyed his good guy reputation." Keiko says to her boyfriend.

"He did bring it upon himself. It's just karma really." Botan says with a sigh. A glance at Slytherin showed that they've got this defeatism going on with the exception being Draco, who looks ready to do something foolish and stupid.

"I wonder if we'll finally get a potion teacher who'll teach potion safety procedure?" Sakura wonders and he just couldn't help but shake his at how guiltless they're acting. *Or maybe its because they really don't think they have anything to be guilty about...* He realizes once the sorting is done and the food appears on their table.

Kirin Common Room

He's not the only one to be struck by awe at the sight of the strange statue as they make it to the end of the corridor that's lined with various Asian statue types. It takes him a bit but he finds that there seems to be a tv by the fireplace that is also where there are various couches and chairs.

At another point along the wall, he finds a clock, a cabinet, and various doors that seem to lead off from this main part, though he's fairly sure that the stairs lead to the dorms. "What's in that cabinet?" He asks the closest upper year student, a guy with a bandanna.

"A bunch of flying brooms, safety harnesses, and a few flying board proto-types. All of which were created by Naruto Uzumaki, most commonly referred to as Tao by most of the other houses." The guy says and he couldn't help but be interested in what these items looked like.

So, which the other first years drift towards the tv set, he walks up to the cabinet and opens it. He finds that the space within it to be pretty large and that there were rows of at least two different broom types. He steps into the space and takes one of the brooms down.

At the top of the handle a flat part has an image of a bird's head with a roman number for one on it. He glances at the next broom handle to find that it sports the roman number two on it. With a shake of his head, he re-hooks the broom in his hand up before taking a look at the next broom set.

He takes the first one of that example down and finds it a bit heavier then the previous one. On this one's handle, there is an image of a bull head on it with a roman number under it as well. He had to admit that the broom has a solid feel to it, unlike any broom he's ever had the experience of encountering.

"Naruto created the Falcon for those who like speed while the Ox is a better for those who want a comfortable ride. The Ox also can remain in the same place in the air for a time even if the rider falls unconscious while riding it. That helps with rescuing said rider

because the broom has a sticking effect that takes hold as soon as that happens." Quatre explains as the older teen comes to stand within a few feet of him.

"I see." He admits before he puts the broom back on the rack. "We also keep our trophies in here instead of on display in the common trophy room." Quatre says as the blond begins to move deeper into the expanded cabinet.

At the back, pass the brooms, he finds about six different boards that seem as if all they need are wheels to become skate boards. Although he had to admit that the leather straps on the boards were likely there to fasten around ones feet. "How do these work?" He asks before glancing over at the collection of trophies that's next to the boards.

"You'd have to ask some of the others since they're the ones who use them. I'm sure they'd be more then happy to display their skill with them." Quatre tells him.

He moves from the collection of boards to get a better look at the trophies. He's a bit surprised to see that most of them were about the house winning the Quidditch Cup and House Cup with dates on them. Finally, he couldn't help but blink as he realizes that Kirin house have won the two cups every year up to last year.

"Impressive." He admits as he also glances at the Prefect badges that were part of the display with names of their previous owners under them. It also gave him a good idea of what his new clothing emblem will be.

"Do you want a tour of the dorms?" Quatre asks and he thinks about it for a few seconds before nodding. "If you wouldn't mind." He says and Quatre smiles warmly at him.

September 20, 1991

Gaara

"Looks like Britain going to be getting a lot of negative press now." Tenten says as she closes her copy of an international news paper. "Yachiru's is sending these out." Ukyo says as she tosses a magazine onto the table as they were eating breakfast.

The magazine's main headlines were 'Why was Albus Dumbledore allowed to Kidnap Boy-Who-Lived?', 'An Interview with the Original Kirin member!', 'Could Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape have been a Couple?', and then finally, 'Tom M. Riddle and You; The Life and Times of the Most Recent Dark Lord to hit the UK!' He raises an eyebrow at the collection of various photos for each of the major articles.

"That's a good picture of Naruto." He muses in his usual voice tone while Tenten picks up the magazine to read it. "Well, he should have plenty of experience with lighting and what not. He is, after all, in the film business." Ukyo points out as she sits down next to Tenten.

"So... do you really think that Snape and Bumblebee were lovers?" Ukyo asks as Tenten continues to read the magazine that Ukyo brought to the table. "There had to be some reason why the man never tried to correct his in class behavior to be more... light oriented." Tenten says with her gaze not moving from the open pages of the magazine.

"I wonder what Koichi and Harry would make of that idea." Ukyo muses and he figured that the two would likely just find it to be a really, really amusing.

Harry

He couldn't believe that not only was the international press having a field day about Sirius's trail and a 'dead' man's capture, but about speculation in regards to the supposed relationship that's suppose to be going on between the dead potion teacher and the highly disgraced headmaster.

But his thoughts turn from such things to drift onto his Animagus form and how that particular training he went through to achieve it. "I can't believe they ever printed such lies about the headmaster!" He hears Hermione exclaim as they enter into their last class of the day.

He glances at Hermione's badge on her robes and couldn't help but smile slightly at the image of the image of a bird. *She's definitely happier as a Ravenclaw then she ever was as a Gryffindor.* He admits at how comfortable Hermione is among her fellow housemates.

He moves to sit with Toshiro since the other six members of his house were already paired up. He didn't have anything against most of his fellow first years, he just couldn't hep but to find some of them to be really intimidating to spend a lot of time with. He also found that there seems to be some kind of hidden dialog going on among his fellow year-mate.

Particularly why some of them are referred to as Captains. He admits as Toshiro nods a greeting at him as he rests his book bag on the ground before he slides into the chair. "Hasn't he learnt his lesson by now about the hazards of doing that?" He ask as he notices Zaraki's position with his feet resting on the desk and his chair looking ready to collapse under his weight or to fall the rest of the way to the ground.

"You'd think, wouldn't you?" Toshiro murmurs as they wait for the class to begin. He notices the minor glares sent at Zaraki's direction and he finally sighs as he decides to leave things be.

October 31, 1991

Hitsugaya

"That doesn't really give incentive to leave the dorms." He says with a frown as Miroku finishes explaining what makes this day so special. "I'm more stunned that neither Duo or the twins managed to

win this position considering the various things they get up to." Harry says with a frown.

"Ah, come on Captain! Other then it being a likely embarrassing situation it hasn't really caused any real damage." His lieutenant points out and he gives Rangiku an icy glare.

"In the end, curiosity will likely drive everyone out of their houses at some point today. After all, last year, classes were in session and Shampoo might mimic that before the prank activates." Ichigo's friend, Tatsuki, points out and Miroku smiles in agreement.

"Just how is it that this tradition continues unmolested if always happens every year?" Harry wonders and Miroku just shrugs. "It's been a common thought that Bumblebee never felt motivated to put an end of it." Miroku says.

"That, sadly, does sound like him." Harry admits as they continue to linger at the table as more and more members of the house appear for breakfast. One or two would leave to go do other things, like watch tv, go cram, or for a soak in the hot pool.

"So... how often have you've been practicing your Animagus transformation?" Miroku inquires and he couldn't help but sport a sour face, after all, he hadn't really expected that training to work. "I think I'm finally getting the hang of using echolocation with the help from Shizune." Harry tells them.

"I'm just waiting for my winter coat to grow in, then I'll make a cute fox." His lieutenant says with a smile on her face. "I know that Toshiro hasn't been practicing his transformation into a Snowy Owl." She adds and he glares at her for revealing that.

"I've got my fisher transformation down." Tatsuki says before Ichigo's friend frowns as she asks, "Just what kind of animal do you become? I mean, those two Digimon become human and that Kagome is a magpie, Duo is a ferret, Fred is a red fox, and George is a hooded crow..."

"I'm a Tanuki, or a Raccoon-dog." Miroku says as he glances over at Harry when he said that last part. "My dear, sweet Sango is a Maltese Tiger, Keiko is a barn owl, Kuwabara is a cat, both Trowa and Koichi are lions..." Miroku says before frowning as he tries to recall who becomes what.

"Naruto's a raven, Yachiru is a tarpan, Bill Weasley is a red deer, and Charlie Weasley is a red panda." Miroku finishes. "What's a tarpan?" Harry wonders and he answers, "Also known as Przewalski's Horse, it's a breed of horse that looks like the ice age horse."

"Why is it we don't keep a record of who becomes what?" He asks curiously and Miroku answers, "Well, for one, that list could easily be stolen by a House Elf told to take said list under direct order of the school's headmaster and they really can't do much other then follow the exact wording of their orders. They're fairly good at figuring out loop holes with they want to find them though, which is why we're capable of having an actual breakfast then what they serve here in the West."

"So if we want to know somebody's animal, we've got ask said person then?" Harry muses and Miroku nods. "Good to know."

"Hey Gaara! What's your Animagus form?" His lieutenant asks as said red head walks by. "Javan Hawk-Eagle." The seemingly emotionless teen says as Gaara glances at them with his teal eyes.

He couldn't help but suppress a shiver but it seems that his lieutenant didn't seem to care about stopping since she next asks Kankuro and Temari, Gaara's siblings. "None of your business." Kankuro snaps while Temari answers for the both of them, "Kankuro here is a Golden Jackal and I'm an Oriental Hobby."

The three continue on after Rangiku says, "Thanks!" He elbows her in the ribs as he hisses, "Quit it! If you're going to ask, ask them some place private."

"Alright, alright, shesh, you don't have to rib me, sir." Rangiku says while the others look on with a hint of amusement at their antics.

"Well, I think I'm going to go get some studying done before leaving the safety of the dorms. See you guys later." Tatsuki says once she's standing. "I think I'm going to go see what's playing on the tv." Rangiku says as Tatsuki makes it half way to the door.

"Well, I'm going to go and keep my sweet Sango company in the hot pool." Miroku says as Sango walks pass while engaged in a conversation with Keiko and Yusuke. "I think I'm going to recheck my homework." Harry says after a few seconds of silence at the table.

"Do either of you mind if we sit here?" Ranma asks with Shino, Kiba, Lee, and Tenten. "No, go right ahead. I do believe I'm going to head to the library to find something to read." He says as he gets up. "Before we go, you any of you mind telling us your Animagus forms?" Rangiku asks and he rolls his eyes at her antics.

"I'm an african hunting dog while Ranma here is just your run of the mill dog." Kiba says with Ranma just rolling his eyes. "I'm a whiskered flying squirrel!" Lee declares while Tenten just shakes her head at his antics. "I'm a crane hawk and Shino here is a beetle." Tenten finishes.

"Thanks for the intel!" His lieutenant says as they finally walk away from the third, long table. "Well, I'm off to get a good soaking in before we have our first class. See you later Captain!" She adds as she heads for the co-ed washrooms.

Gaara

All around him were trees, massive trees that seem older then those he saw during his few visits to Hidden Leaf. The leaves of the trees seem bigger then they should while odd ferns grow about the tree trunks. He seems to be all alone as he glances about the forest.

His fingers go to his ears and finds that they're fine, not pointed in the least. As he struggles to stand, the color around him seems to go gray while everything stops moving. Finally, a slightly familiar voice begins to speak.

"A forest of primeval beauty stands around you as you awaken. A realm where dreams and nightmare can come true with a single, heartfelt wish when the mist rolls in. So be careful of what you wish for because it just might be the last wish you make." The woman says. *What does this mist have to do with wishing?*

"Player Hint: All mist wishes shall cancel out in a year and a day, so be prepared to live with a handy cap for that length of time." Another voice says and he blinks as he considers that. **"So be warned that any monster or beast around you might as well be another player."**

"Player Hint: Also your wish can not affect another play, for example, 'I wish _blank_ were a dog' would result in nothing happening. As would 'I wish I were back at Hogwarts'." The voice continues and he couldn't help but muse, *What would happen if the player wished for the power to turn people into dogs?*

"Goal of the game is to find the source of the wishing mist so you can get rid of it." The first voice continues. **"There old ruins about the island which could lead to the source of the mist."**

"Player Hint: Not only are their actual other student players among the population of this continent, but made up players who just illusions, these illusion players might appear as yourself or as other students you actual know. Or those with said appearance could truly be who they appear to be." The second voice informs him and he scowls as another thought of another wish could land somebody the appearance of another student.

"Player Hint: Wishes are capable of bonding you to a certain things or spot like say you wished for some monster to be your pet or bodyguard. You will then find yourself incapable of moving far from said monster for the duration of the wish." And he had to admit that did sound like a decent rule.

"Good luck, young adventurer and may you enjoy your game." The second voice says finally does the color returns while things finally unfreeze. With a sigh, he takes one last look around in hopes of finding a pack of supplies or a weapon, anything really to help him on his way.

He thing takes off in the direction of running water to see if his appearance has changed like that hint had mentioned. He also noted that there doesn't seem to be any mist hanging about the forest. He also decides that it's about noon from the position of the sun.

He finally makes it to the bank of a fast flowing stream and glancing at his reflection. "Great..." He says and finds that his voice matches his new appearance. "At least I didn't change gender or age." He adds with a sigh as Ryoga's reflection looks back at him.

I wonder... will I find myself answering to Ryoga then to Gaara? He wonders as he frowns down at his reflection. Finally, he stops looking at his reflection, for now at least, to think about following the direction of the stream or not. He also tries to ignore the 'watch' around his wrist as well.

Week Later

"Hey Ryoga! Man are you a sight for sore eyes!" Somebody who doesn't look like anyone he would know shouts at him. "Err, hey?" He says in a puzzled tone as the unknown teen comes racing towards him, he's not the least bit surprise to have found himself turning on hear his 'name'.

"Name's Even, Even Willis Hammett, well, it is in here at least." He studies Even up and down, taking note of the semi black hair with

bangs threatening to fall over his hazel green eyes. "I'll give you a hint, my pet's name is Kyla." Even says with a confident smirk.

Kuwabara. He thinks but finds himself unable to say that name out loud. "I've been known to carry a gourd made of sand." He tells 'Even' and it didn't take long before 'Even' realizes who he really is.

"Well... It's better then looking like a stranger." 'Even' says and he sighs as he nods, knowing that 'Even' had a point. "Have you made a wish yet?" 'Even' asks and he shakes his head.

"You?" He counters and 'Even' nods. "I wished for the ability to transform into any big cat that roamed earth." 'Even' says with a slightly mischievous grin on his face. "I can now transform into extincted felines like a saber-tooth tiger and cave lion."

"Interesting." He states and silence seems to hang between them. "So, you want to team up?" 'Even' asks and he shrugs as he says, "Why not? It'll be nice to travel with somebody I know. Maybe we'll encounter the others along the way."

"Sounds good to me." 'Even' says and within seconds, a large lion is standing before him with his head cocked to the side in a questioning manner. He smiles slightly before motioning for 'Even' to lead the way.

It isn't a question of me not having any idea of what I should wish for, it's that I've got too many ideas for wishes. He tells himself but in the end, he's got an idea of what he'll be wishing for this evening as the wishing mist rolls in. *Let's see if I can wish for the location of every person in this game.*

Harry

He couldn't help but be glad that there seems to be some kind of rule when it came to 'sexual' expressions. True, there were people who had wished for the ability to control gender while within the 'game' but at least they couldn't force people to do such acts.

It's one thing to alter ones gender and species, it's a different kettle of fish to force them to preform sexual acts. He thinks and a simple glance shows that other then another two students being slightly dazed, it seems that the one who had turned him into a female dog never really existed, thankfully.

"That was beyond freaky." A sixth year Hufflepuff says and the third year Slytherin just nods. "Yes, yes it is."

"At least there seemed to be something prohibiting sexual acts." He says and the other two guys nod rapidly in agreement. "I wouldn't put it pass a few guys in my house to have actually wish for *that* ability." The Slytherin spats and he couldn't help but sympathize since he had spent a few Loops shadowing sick individual Slytherin who had found some ritual that, for a single evening, gave their victims a woman's things but the desire to use said things just to know what it's like...

Which reminds me that I still got one to kill off before he passes that 'ritual' on. He reminds himself, after all, if he kills this particular Slytherin before the guy gets the chance to teach those three students it.

Christmas Day

"Why are we heading into the forest now of all times?" He asks Heero who's flying next to him since he's pretty sure that Ichigo doesn't have a clue as to what's going on either. Most of the house were flying around the forest on broom stick while Heero, Ichigo, Duo, Ranma, Daisuke, and himself had manage to get short strings so they can use the flying board as their mode of transportation through the Forbidden Forest.

"Well, for one, if we tried to take a vacation beyond Hogwarts, Dumbledore will make it his personal mission to see that we're followed by every reporter in the world looking for some news about your Godfather and yourself." Heero explains calmly. "True." He admits before he asks, "But why do we need these mats?"

Heero doesn't answer but does slow down. He glances down and finds a huge herd of unicorns moving about. "Hi Berry!" He blinks while Ichigo seems to stiffen.

He glances down to find a group of people resting on floating mats with brooms and flying boards hovering close by. "Yachiru?" Ichigo asks in a dumbfounded way at the sight of this pink haired woman sitting on her own mat.

"Heero." This blond says while he finally spots somebody he's been longing and yet dreading to meet. "Harry..." Sirius says on a particularly large mat that he shares with Remus.

He couldn't help but stare dumbly at his godfather since he's never seen Sirius look so healthy and stable. *I know they freed him a few years early but... What the hell?!* He thinks as he slowly floats to the large mat where his godfather and Remus were sitting.

"You look good..." He says as he ignores Yachiru shouting out a hearty greeting to 'Kenny'. "You look a bit underfed. Have you been eating enough?" Sirius asks as in the background he hears Zaraki demand about who's that blond guy on the mat next to her.

"Well, I have been eating Asian food, though most of the older students keep trying to pour some potions down my throat." He admits before he glances to see various people holding onto Zaraki's limbs as the kid tries to attack the blond who seems to be sighing while Yachiru seems highly bemused about most of this.

"Who's the blond?" He asks as Zaraki finally seems to calm down after being told that yes, Yachiru is a virgin as is 'Tao', though the blond just rolls his eyes as he shakes his head, clearly not seeing why Yachiru had to bring that up.

"Oh, him, that's just Naruto Uzumaki, also known as Tao. Nice guy, heck, I've managed to land a role on his second season of Dragonriders of Pern based off of the second novel Dragonquest and the Harperhall Trilogy books." Sirius says with a very wide smirk.

"You mean he's the guy who's in charge of that show?" He asks as he recalls the episodes he's seen a few time. "Yea, he has the actors act with golems while under the impressions that they're acting out before a green or blue screen. He uses miniatures golems for Threadfalls, going between, general flying or travel scene, and then mix them with some life size scenes." Sirius tells him and he couldn't help but be impressed with how little magic Naruto seems to use to pull it off.

"It's much warmer on the mat." Remus says and he blinks before realizing that everybody else seems to have their own mats set up and resting on them. It doesn't take more then a few seconds to cause the board to hover in a level fashion before he unstraps his feet so he can walk onto the enchanted mat while Remus does something to causes the board to remain hovering.

It didn't take long before he realizes that it was much warmer on the mat then standing up in the air. As he sits down between the two remaining Marauders since Wormtail has been executed within a week of his sentence and the two wands on him were snapped, destroying his holly's 'brother' wand.

"I'm kind of surprised to see so many unicorns..." He admits after a few minutes of silence. "Amazingly with so few Acromantula living within the forest, the population of rare animals have risen. Gee, I wonder if the two are linked?" Sirius says with a great deal of contempment coloring his tone.

"We're not blaming Hagrid, let's face it, Hagrid has an unusual taste in animals. But, sadly, Hagrid never thinks about what kind of impact the species he raises can have on resident species. While he does love the animals around, he tends to forget that he can't just release them out into the forest since it is suppose to be a preserve for creatures highly endangered like those unicorns down there." Remus admits and he sighs as he nods.

"The Acromantula know better then to eat unicorns but that doesn't stop them from killing them and many other 'light' creatures." Sirius

says before adding, "The Acromantula just love to kill anything just because they can. They got a taste for human flesh and there have been disappearances from Hogmeade since their release in the forest. Although Dumbledore doesn't seem to have any troubles covers it up their disappearances."

He sighs, he might not have spent a lot of time in Hogmeade but he had wondered why nobody seemed to live there. "Kids especially." He says as he glances at the two and the men nod.

He recalled the 'walks' the Kirin members do with the basilisk and realizes that perhaps, he might want to begin doing the same. "I'm still amazed that basilisks actually like Acromantula meat." He admits. "Well, there's got to be some reason why spiders fear and hate those serpents." Sirius says.

"Particular since they're large enough to be a snack." Remus muses with a wiry smile. It's about then does he realize just how different Remus looks, though it's not as noticeable as with Sirius. "You're hair..." He says as he finally realizes the lack of grays.

"Well, they did mention you would know about my... furry problem without them saying otherwise." Remus admits and Sirius couldn't seem to help adding, "It was like you were a woman."

Remus growls and before opening a simple button flap. He blinks at the sight of a picnicking basket that is uncovers. "... how?" He couldn't find any words to describe it.

"Naruto's very handy with space enhancement spells and wards. Heck, Naruto's got to be the most talented spell user and crafter in the UK." Sirius says with a grin like a proud father, although he's not sure if Naruto didn't already have a father out there, proud of him.

"It helps that he's got those shadow clones to do most of the mathematical and potion work since they don't need to use a wand for it." Remus points out and he couldn't help but raise an eyebrow. "Huh?"

"You have to see it to believe it." Sirius admits. Even Remus nods in agreement as Remus closes the flap before resting the basket on it. Within seconds, he has a simple metal tube that feels only faintly warm.

He twists off the head and finds hot chocolate. As he rests his lips on the edge, he finds that the hot chocolate wasn't too hot but nor was it very cold. "It's just the right temperature." He admits after he gulps some of the liquid down and screw on the head.

"There's like eight liters in each tube." Remus explains and he just had to shake his head in disbelief.

Silence seems to reign among the various groups. Then, it was like a switch was turn on and he can hear a guy say, "Well, I believe introductions are in order."

He glances around and finds that the blond seems to have some kind of energy pattern floating in the air before him. "I'm sure that by now everyone knows me, Naruto Uzumaki, also called Tao." And once more, it was as if Naruto was with a few feet of him instead of at least ten feet away in another tree.

"Is there some kind of pink hair fetish I should know about with him?" He asks the two grown ups. "Sakura and him were on the same team and he did spend a year alone with Yachiru, so they kind of became very close friends." Sirius says as Naruto continues, "And before anybody asks about the scene from before, Yachiru and I aren't boyfriend or girlfriend, nor are we friends with 'benefits'."

Naruto did the air quotes on benefits and most seem to snort as they shake their heads. "We aren't, damn it! And yes, I am still a virgin as is Yachiru." Naruto continues, tossing a look at Yachiru. "Now then, I'm going to activate this spell so that Kasumi, then Kurama, and Yukina can introduce themselves since most of you new ones already know Yachiru." Naruto says and the floating pattern alters color as the blond's hand seems to hover over a rune then move it

out of the pattern before taking the one symbol at the center and exchanging them.

Within seconds a much more simple pattern of runes and Asian characteristics appear where Akane and Nabiki sit with a woman who seems to have a metal dog with her. The woman stands up and says, "I'm Kasumi Tendo, older sister to Nabiki and Akane Tendo. It's nice to finally meet Yachiru's friends since I was worried that you won't arrive at all."

"She seems nice." He admits before asking, "What's up with the dog?"

"Kasumi's into alchemy and specializes in golem creation. Gin is her most successful self thinking golem to date, but then, she hasn't really needed to go to the lengths she took in creating him." Remus says as Naruto alters his rune scheme once more.

Another rune diagram appears where this girlie looking red head is sitting with Kuwabara. "I am Shuichi Minamino, most commonly known as Kurama. My specialty is plants." Kurama says and he sighs, he should have expected something like that, especially given the fact that Neji does look pretty girlie.

As Kurama sits down and the lates rune scheme appears where Hiei is sitting with a young woman. The woman stands and introduces herself. "I am Yukina, Hiei's twin sister." Yukina says and he couldn't help but stare from one to the other before the scheme vanishes.

"Huh?" He couldn't help but say. "Well, I do believe story time is about to begin, so just sit back and you'll find out the hows and what nots." Sirius says as Naruto finally puts the finishing touches on his glowing rune scheme with Asian characters.

He jerks slightly as light diagrams of runes seem to appear at all four edges of the mat, their colors finally enter into a lazy blue with the outer most characters moving counter-clockwise as the most inner ring of runes circle clockwise. "Ok, I just need a single person to say

something per mat just to make sure everything is working." Naruto says in a cheerful tone and one by one, they do so.

"Excellent! Now then, who wants to begin?" Naruto asks as the blond man sits down, though Sakura does shove him slightly, clearly believing that he's being impolite.

"Well, I guess I wouldn't mind being the first." Ranma says slowly as he glances at Ryoga and Mousse. He couldn't help himself as he leans forward slightly, wanting to know just what kind of story the proud teen has.

January 4, 1992

"Ok, so we have the stone, now what do we do with it?" He couldn't help but ask, particularly since he had been kind of surprised to find out that Dumbledore hadn't installed the stone in that chamber where that trap door lead.

He barely sees the stone for longer then a few minutes before he gets attacked by Voldemort's spirit, causing him to black out to be waken in the medical wing of the school. "Well, I for one, want to analyze it using this ward proto-type I've been developing since my third year." Kagome admits.

Kagome, Heero, Neji, and himself were currently the only three awake who weren't watching movies in one of the study rooms that are connected to the library. "Getting a sample of this water and using that ward wouldn't hurt either." Heero points out and Kagome's eyes light up for a second before she smiles and nods. "True, very true."

"Well then, should I go get some water from the washroom tap?" He asks and Neji gets up. "I'll do it."

It didn't take long before Neji arrives with a bowl of water and they then, carefully, lower the stone into the water. The stone glows softly for a second once its surrounded by the water. Before he picks up

the stone, Heero casts more then a few analyzing spells on the water and stone.

"I'm not sure what that is, but it's not something I would want to drink." Heero says and he says, "The stone... it's a fake?"

"I believe so, which means that Dumbledore has either created this or was fooled by his so-called friend. I believe the latter since anyone who's lived this long wouldn't be willing to die now any more then they would then." Heero says and he couldn't help but sink a bit into his chair as he tries to wrap his mind around this.

"I would still like to analyze the stone." Kagome states. "You ok, Harry?" Neji asks and he finally lets loose his laughter.

It takes him a few minutes to get it under-control but once he did, he couldn't help but say, "All this time... a fake. It's funny, Nickles must have just used Bumblebee to go into hiding, to start a new life! The spider is a fly in another spider's web!"

He knows that he is babbling but he couldn't help it, all that time he felt guilty about 'killing' a married couple he didn't even know... He never killed them at all. "Well, I'm going to see what my analyzing ward says about this and then we can return it before the night is out." Kagome says as she pulls the bowl towards her and leaves the dinning hall.

"I think I'm going to turn in for the night." He tells them and they nod as they themselves get to their feet, likely off to join their fellows or go do their own projects.

He's confident that Kagome will, by morning, have a report of what that water does and plans to read it once he's got her permission. *I wonder what could happen if I write a letter to old Nickles to congratulate him on fooling the Bumblebee?* He wonders and decides to do so after reading Kagome's findings.

Farewell Feast

He couldn't help but notice the confident look on their potion teacher's face, although none of the others seem particularly worried while Dumbledore seems to be irritated about the fact that he didn't go and 'rescue' the stone. It seems that even before Quirrel managed to get out of the castle, the possessed man had been stopped by Flitwick and Sprout.

Sprout had a panic attack at the sight of Voldemort's spirit raising out of Quirrel's body but some spirit barrier that Botan had risen around the castle kept either of them from getting taken over by the Dark Lord's essence. The stone was then 'destroyed' to keep the spirit from getting his 'hands' on it.

Which was kind of sad since he would have given much to witness a Quirrel original statue with two faces on it. *Next year will likely be the easiest year to date.* He muses since its unlikely that Onyx will be obeying any orders a possessed student will give her, no matter if said student is a parselmouth.

There are now leather headbands that act as parseltongue translators so the uniqueness of finding humans who speak it. I also doubt that Onyx will like being bossed around by said pushy possessed student. He thinks as he recalls his own conversations with the serpent. It also helps that other then those special 'walks' through the forest, Onyx's eyes will have that spell to ensure that the killing effect isn't active.

He sighs at the sight of those at the staff table finally begin to transform. "Yoko?" He hears Akane asks Shampoo in disbelief once each member of the staff have been transformed into very large, multi-tailed foxes with varying coat colors being gold, silver, or a very vibrant red that seems to shimmer about in this light as if made out of fire.

"I stand by my choice." Shampoo says and he just sighs, still a bit surprise that Dumbledore hadn't ever bothered to try and get rid of the various silent wards about the Kirin table, which allows them to speak fairly freely among themselves.

The enchantment likely began with the House Elves and had only gotten reinforced by various members of the house at some point before the end of the year, even if its just to ensure that they have their privacy when they want it.

"Well, I for one am very touched by Shampoo's choice since I am the last Yoko to be attending the school... Well, unless the next group of first year Kirin students count a Yoko among their number." Shippo says from his position next to Shizune.

So Ends Kirin House

Naruto Reincarnated as Tails

I Don't Own Naruto or Sonic!

I didn't sign up for this. He thinks as he moves through the vents while an experimental cloaking device covers his being. He moves as carefully as he can since the device doesn't do anything to cover noise and smell.

He comes to the end and peers through the metal slits. He glances around the upper parts of the room for cameras. He finds at least two but he also noticed three other grids. He couldn't help but scowl as his tails lash softly back and forth against the metal walls of the ventilation system, a tight fit even for someone as young as him.

It's times like these that I wish I still retained my chakra. He thinks as he reaches into the pouch hanging from his belt around his waist. *I don't even see why they just don't raid this place since then they could destroy the research for this thing along with the weapon's factory next to this place.*

He takes out a small case that contains the laser that will destroy the proto-type that's resting in the center of the room. After all, he sure as hell isn't going to enter into that death trap, no matter how many lives it'll save if he succeeds in stealing it so that his benefactors can create a counter for it. *I don't care if they say they're with the Resistance, nobody would send a kid my 'age' on a mission like this.*

Taking the laser, he begins to aim the thin point through the slits of the grid, careful not to have the point's tip visible by any cameras set around the room. He's about to press the button when something causes the security system to proclaim warnings as red lights become activate and start flashing. He closes his eyes as bites down on his urge to curse under his breath.

Hurrying to put the laser away, he hears something banging against the vault door. A look into the room shows that the metal, security covering the device is indeed covering the delicate device and the metal pillar it is still resting on is slowly lowering itself into the ground. As he gets ready to go back the way he came, the door finally bursts open and something comes slamming down behind him.

He couldn't help but stare dumbly as gas begins to come drifting out of this newly open vent, which causes the cloaking device to shut off, leaving him very visible. He slams his way out of the air vents and somehow doesn't make it to the floor. "What was a kid like you doing in the vents?" Somebody asks and he glances up to find the face off of a wanted poster.

"You're Sonic..." He says and the blue hedgehog just gives him a smirk, a smirk he knew very well since he had once worn one oh so similar when he had once been somebody else, before saying, "Time to do it to it."

Before he could begin to wonder that the hell this guy is talking about, the world seems to blur around him and he suddenly feels as if his fur and skin were trying to come off. He vaguely hears a girl's voice scowling somebody and a much more laid back guy's voice making some catchy remark.

He didn't have long to recover before the world blurs and he finally blacked out before he felt the need to barf.

-) **V** (-

"It looks like he's coming too." He hears a voice say. He couldn't help but groan slightly as he feels just how achy his body feels, though his shoulder feels like somebody tried to rip it off. *I wonder what I did to piss Sakura off this time...* He couldn't help but wonder as he swallows.

"Here's some water." Another, more masculine voice says. As he finally opens his eyes as he sips some water through a straw, he blinks a few times to clear his vision, he even uses an index finger to get rid of the junk pooling by his nose.

Well... at least I managed to find somebody with pink hair? ... Or are those spines? Whatever they are. He thinks as pushes the cup away so he can sit up. "Thanks." He rasps out and he winces slightly at how scratch his voice sounds.

"Sonic..." Sonia says in a tone that clearly meant that the blue hedgehog had better say something, like apologize. *Do all females use that same tone with stubborn guys?* He wonders as he turns to look at Sonic, curious to hear what the speedster had to say.

"I'm sorry." Sonic says and a glances at Sonia shows that she now has her arms crossed over her chest and is tapping her foot. He flickers his ears as he slowly realizes that the van, he hopes its a van, is moving.

"What? I already apologized, what more do you want?" Sonic asks and he couldn't help but find this all so very amusing when he's not on the receiving end of it.

"He did indeed." He agrees on Sonic's defense, although it seems that Sonia just smiles slightly at him and pats him on the head like a little kid, which he is now, before glaring at her brother.

"Sonic shouldn't have gone as fast as he did considering he had you only by the hand." Sonia says and he blinks as he glances between the two.

"I only come in two speeds, slow'mo and speedy." Sonic says and even he knew better then to say that. "Ouch! What you do that for?" Sonic asks as he rubs his ear after Sonia gave it a quick pinch.

"Show some concern here! He's just a little kid, he's barely half your size and you treated him like some kind of rag doll!" Sonia tells Sonic

and he couldn't help but scowl, especially since she's right about his current youth and lack of height.

Sonic does seem to blink as he takes a look at him before realizing that Sonia is right. "I really didn't... I mean, blood was rushing through me and we were in a battle..." Sonic admits as he stares from the floor to him. "I should have found a safe place for you before returning to help my sibs."

"Stuff happens, it's not as if you dragged me to that place..." He admits. He never really been on the end of this kind of scene before and for some reason, it brought tears to his eyes, though he kept blinking rapidly in hopes of causing them to vanish. *Did anyone I know ever apologize like this to me back then when they were totally out of line?*

Sonia glances worriedly at him but after a short hug, she moves to the table to where that device is waiting. He couldn't help but find himself at a lose of just how to react to this whole thing. "So... what's your name kid?" Sonic asks after a few minutes of silence as the blue hedgehog takes a seat next to him.

"Nobody's told me." He says truthfully since pretty much everyone he's met during this last year has either called him boy, runt, fox, kit, and whelp. "You're an orphan?" Sonia asks as she glances up from her workstation, showing that she is indeed keeping an eye on him even though she's busy.

"Been one as far back as I can recall. Even if people knew who my parents were, they never talking about them with me or bothered to give any possessions they might have left when they died." He, once again, says in complete honesty. *Of course every adult preferred not to use their head and put two and two together when it came to how similar dad's and mine looks were. It's amazing at how bitter hatred could blind people from seeing what's in front of them all along.*

"Surely the orphanage wouldn't leave you nameless..." Sonia asks and it seems that she's not the only one who finds this to be

frustrating since Sonic has this frown on his face. "Don't recall ever being in one." He answers and he hears something break.

Sonia seems to be taking deep, calming breaths after destroying the handle for this small mirror. He feels his ears kind of rest on his skull after hearing the pink hedgehog mutter a bunch of death threats to those irresponsible adults. It's clear that she wasn't use to this since most of those threats weren't highly thought through.

Well, from what I've seen, such callous attitude that I'm describing likely would never have the chance to take place since these beings seem to have some universal parenting instinct when it comes to kids. He admits to himself, although it seems that he's more then just rousing it in these three Royal hedgehogs.

"So... what were you doing at the place, little dude?" Manic asks from the drivers seat. "Some guys were looking for a way to destroy that device but none of them were small enough to get through the vents. So, thinking they were part of the Resistance, I offered to do it for them." He explains, more then a little glad that the topic had left the 'rough' patch in their conversation.

"They gave me this laser and this proto-type cloaking devices for the job." He adds as he takes out the small carrying case for the laser and holds up his left hand with the 'watch' strapped to it. Sonic takes the laser case from him and he undoes the strap of the cloaking device to hand over to Sonic too.

"F.L.T." The blue hedgehog muses after reading the top of the case. "Flat Laser Trigger." He says and Sonic seems to roll his eyes before tossing the case over to Sonia.

As Sonic takes some time to examine the cloaking device, his stomach chose that time to growl. With a hand over his med-section, he couldn't help but feel sheepish about it. Sonic gets up and rummages through the fridge after leaving the cloaking device with Sonia.

After he ate the small meal, the rocking of the van somehow managed to lull him into sleep.

Sonic

"Well, that didn't take long." He muses as he holds onto the tuckered out fox kit. Slowly picks the kid up, being careful to curl both tails so they're touching the kid's belly.

Never seen a fox with twin tails before. He admits not for the first time as he heads to a more secure bed then the pull out couch they had the kid resting on when they retreated from the exploding building. He hadn't expected for the kid to be so light either.

"It never does all things considered." Sonia admits as he heads to sit at the passenger seat. "At least we can do something to make his life a bit better." Sonia says before growling, "By the sounds of it, we already treated him better in the short time he's been with us then he ever was in his short life."

"He's a trooper, that's for sure." Manic agrees. *I wonder if Tails is a good nickname for him? At least until we give him an actual name...*

Epilogue

Reeve 'Tails' Windfall

"Hey Tails!" He hears Vine shout and he groans more at his more commonly used nickname then at Vine herself. "Hello Vine." He says as he puts the gadget he's working with on the table.

"Have you heard the news?" Vine ask as she plants herself across the table from him. "Is it the news about Manic's newest orphanage having an opening ceremony on Royal Reunion Day?" He asks since he didn't see why she bothers doing this with him.

After all, he is adopted into the Royal house about a month after he met the three triplets. So he, of course, knows pretty much all the

news and announcements before they're released to the public. *It's hard not to when it's getting discussed at the breakfast table.*

"Prince Manic is?" The gray ground squirrel girl asks. "It was in the paper yesterday." He tells her and it takes a few seconds before Vine recovers.

"No, not that news. I mean the one where Sonic's girlfriend Sally finally got her AI project up and running." Vine says and sighs. *Well, it seems that she did managed to hear about something before I did.*

"N.I.C.O.L.E. is up and running?" He asks and Vine nods her head in a slightly rapid fashion. "I wonder..." He muses and he gets up from his seat to head off to visit Sally's lab.

"Where are you going? You forgot to put your gadget away!" Vine calls after him as he takes off at a jog down the halls of the university.

He manages to either weave around people or forced to channel a bit of Chaos energy into his shoes to leap over them before continuing on his way towards Sally's lab in hopes of not missing out on Sonic finally asking Sally to marry him. "Sorry, Rotor! Kind of trying to make it to an important event!" He says as he almost collides with the purple walrus.

"That's what you always say, Reeve." Rotor says as he lands behind Rotor. "Yea but if what Vine says, I'll be gaining a new relative to be soon!" He counters as he turns the corner.

As he watches how Sonic fumbles around with the ring while Sally seems to be busy placing plates about the hand held computer that likely stores the AI that Sally's been working on before she began dating Sonic. "Did we miss it?" He hears Sonia asks softly and he shakes his head without looking away from the scene.

"I would have thought Sonic wouldn't be so slow in asking her." Manic whispers after watching the scene for a few seconds.

"Consider how long it took before Sonic was willing to admit they were dating." He points out softly as the ring manages to slip out of Sonic's grasp and sails onto the desk where Sally's working.

Sally pauses before looking at the ring. Sally just blinks before setting her hand held computer down on the desk so she can pick up the ring. Sally examines it before asking in a slow manner, "Sonic... is there a reason why this ring landed on my desk?"

"Well... I was kind of hoping that... Well, will you, Sally Acorn, do me the honor of marrying me?" Sonic asks in a very in secure voice.

Sally seems at a lost before she stands and walks around her desk to stand in front of Sonic. Sally leans over and gives Sonic a kiss. "I accept." Sally says as she slides the ring onto her finger.

"Really?" Sonic asks in a slightly dumbfounded tone. "Really." Sally says and draws him in for a kiss.

"What are you three doing by that door?" Knuckles asks, which causes them to spill into the room. "Sonia? Manic?" Sonic wonders as he stops kissing Sally.

"Wait... what's Tails and Knuckles doing here too?" Sonic adds as he glances from him to Sonia's husband. "That's what I want to know." Knuckles says as he glances questioningly at Sonia, his wife.

"Well, we heard about Sally finally putting her AI through its paces and decided to come down to congratulate her." Manic says as they get untangled so they can all stand up. "That's right." He agrees as he straightens up his belt.

Sonic just seem to sigh while Sally looks bemused at the antics of her soon to be in-laws. "Well then, you must be here to take Sonic and I out for an expensive dinner to celebrate our engagement." Sally says and Knuckles seems to sigh.

"On us, of course." Sonia says and Sally nods with a slight smile. "Who's going to tell Grandma?" He asks.

"Who's to says I'm not already here?" Queen Aleena muses as she steps out from the side of the door. "So the whole university knew I was going to ask Sally to marry me today?" Sonic asks in an exasperated tone.

"Just us... Well, they do now." He says before glancing at the curious onlookers standing out in the hall.

I guess that just leaves Manic... He muses as he glances at the green hedgehog before he hears Vine and a few of his other friend call out to him, with a few calling him Tails and the rest Reeve. "Well, see you guys later!" He says as he takes it as his que to leave.

"See you." Aleena says, sentiments echoed by most of his family. *They really are my family.*

The End

Magical Rings: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter or The Monster's Ring

October 1988

He sighs as the light beyond his room vanishes, snapping him out of his musings about the latest book he managed to read. *At least Russell wasn't living with his enemies...* He thinks as he slips The Monster's Ring into the 'rafters' of his room.

He'll return it to the library as soon as he can, although he would have loved to own his own copy of said book. *Of course I won't make the mistakes that Russell did... Well, I would hope I won't.* He thinks as he lies down on the floor and covers what he can with his ratty blanket.

He thinks as he has his image of what that ring within the pages of the book had looked like. *Too bad magic isn't real cause if it were, I'd so make my own Monster's Ring.* He thinks as he puts his glasses down before a fitful sleep overcomes him.

Unknown to young Harry Potter, a minor flash of dark purple erupts at those wishful thoughts and a certain book is copied in an act of accidental magic from the lonely child resting below.

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July 1991

As he collects his things from his room under the stairs, a few metal somethings and a flat item fall from the rafters and he frowns at the sight of a certain book. After blowing a thin layer of dust off the cover,

he feels his mouth open and his eyes widen. *I know I returned this book! So how can it be here?*

But he snaps out of those thoughts to hurry up to his new room. Although his thoughts were whirling about this strange occurrence, it did bring back his musings of creating his own ring. *Maybe magic is real and that my 'loving' aunt and uncle knew all along, knew that I could be... That I am a...* He thinks and he couldn't squash that because it sounds like something his relatives would keep from him, especially when they strive to be so normal.

After all, that letter did mention Witchcraft and Wizardry, which sounds like there are people out there who practice it. I've always been blamed for things I couldn't have done, although I wish I had the guts to do. They must have known, why else punish me when it's clear I wouldn't have done those things? He adds with a frown as he closes the door behind him.

For some reason, a slight aching feeling erupts within him over this latest betrayal. He puts the little box he has his stuff in on the desk and drops himself on the bed that's within the room. It didn't take long for that ache to leave him, after all, it wasn't the first time he found himself hurt by his relative's actions, just the first time he actually gets the idea that he did indeed do those things he was accused of.

If magic is real... Then I can fulfill that wish. He finally thinks before his aunt bangs on his door and screeches at him to get to the kitchen to help with making dinner.

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August 1991

I'm so glad I asked that goblin about another way to get to Diagon Alley besides using muggle methods. He thinks as he walks down the alley, heading for meeting with an Artificer he managed to find listings of and had arranged to met in hopes of getting a professional

opinion on how to craft magical items. Particularly what kind of challenges you face in creating such an item.

I wonder just what kind of lasting enchantments you can place on ordinary things... After all, it would be better to have a few attitude modifiers around just encase my relatives get any bright ideas about me going to a magic school. He thinks, not that he has any plans to continue living with his relatives once he's found a place to live, be it an apartment or a house his family owns.

Should I enlist the aid of goblins for that task? He wonders as he finally arrives at the restaurant that's by one of the entrances into Knockturn alley. Ignoring the looks that more then a few people were giving him, he spots the Artificer Tobias Rupear wearing the beaded necklace he got a picture of.

Polyjuice might be disgusting to drink but at least nobody is stopping me to shake my hand because I out lived my parents and some psychopathic wizard with a god complex. He thinks as he takes another sip of that potion just in case he forgets during his discussions with Tobias. *Using seven of those hair from those random people was definitely a good idea as well.*

"Artificer Rupear?" He inquires as he takes off his charmed sunglasses and puts them in his shirt pocket. "Yes I am, Evan Coville Elives I take it?" Tobias asks and he nods.

"You can call me Evan." He says as he sits down across from the Artificer. Tobias smiles and counters, "Call me Tobias. It's my name after all."

"Thank you for meeting with me. I can't begin to describe how much this meeting means to me as I have been interested in your profession since I was accepted to Hogwarts. I've always wanted to know more about what it takes to become an Artificer, particularly what differences there are when it comes to enchanting non-crafted items." He says.

"Yes, not many understand the subtle different between my work and some spell placed on an item to bait muggles." Tobias says as a waitress appears with a menu for him. "Muggle baiting doesn't do more then cause a headache for the Auror department." He muses as he skims through the menu.

"And bring unnecessary attention of magic to the muggles." Tobias agrees with a slight sigh. "You wouldn't believe how many people come to me to enchant or craft items who's sole purpose is to bait muggles."

"You'd think they'd have better things to do then to devote so much time and magic into those sorry endeavors." He says with a slight shaking of his head. Tobias nods in agreement.

By the time the waitress comes to take his order, Tobias and him have begun discussing the principle differences between simple enchanting and crafting items that were designed to not just hold enchantments but to help empower them. He manages to remember to take a sip of his Polyjuice potion every hour for the six hours he was with Tobias.

He sighs as he watches as Tobias leaves with a crack, he had learnt a lot from the Artificer and he has high hopes of his success in fulfilling a wish he made not too long ago. He takes out the piece of paper that lists the books and items that an Artificer uses. *Might as well see if any places within Knockturn alley have any of these, particular pre-enchanted ward stone so I can set them up in my room so nobody can detect me using magic.* He muses as he heads into the deeper parts of the alley were you can buy anything for the right price.

Huh... what a profitable evening. He muses as he climbs up the stairs of the Knight bus after giving paying for his ticket and telling them where to drop him off. He feels the second wand resting in his jean's pocket and couldn't help the smile widen slightly. *A very profitable evening indeed considering that less then two weeks ago, I*

was only beginning to allow myself to believe that magic exists and that I could be a wizard.

The question now is, how much did Dumbledore knew was going on at the house after he dropped me off... He thinks after the heart thumping ride on the Knight bus as he walks towards the house where his relatives lived.

That thought kind of surprised him when it popped into his head as he slowly begins to recall what Hagrid had told him about *his* **story** that wizards and witches were told for about the last ten years. While he did feel loyalty to the giant of a man, he couldn't help wonder how this benevolent wizard could ignore how his family treated him during any check ups.

Unless... But what kind of idiot wouldn't check up on the Boy-Who-Lived? I mean, muggle governments regularly send people to check up on orphans, so he must have done a check up on me, right? He wonders as he moves to the side of the house before slipping out of the oversized cloths as the potion's effects fade, leaving him to return to looking like a scrawny child.

Not that he'll remain looking so since he is taking a cocktail of potions to help correct what little food he received during his childhood. He also had gone to a wizard eye healer who gave him an updated prescription for his glasses as well as enchanted frames that were enchanted to take a greater beating then his previous ones. It didn't hurt that they didn't look like they were taking over his face.

Of course he's had to be pretty secretive when it comes to not just his new glasses but other things like cloths and runners that actually fit his build and feet. While he didn't know what colors to get said items in, he sure as heck couldn't look any worst then wearing his cousin's castoffs. *Not that I've been wearing those cloths around either. I can't wait to watch those rags burn in a bonfire.*

Once he's changed into said rags and has stuffed his cloths into a plastic bag, he heads for the back door and then up to his room while his family sit before the tv. All three act as if he doesn't exist and he's more then a bit glad for that. It didn't take long before he's unshrunk his things and begins to set up those ward stones under a few boards he managed to pry loose during his search for any stashes his cousin might have made and had forgotten about.

He watches as the stones begin to glow and that glow spread out onto the floor then up the walls before engulfing the ceiling and the closed window. Hedwig ruffles her feathers and he turns to give her a reassuring look before glancing back at the warding stones which no longer glow. With a sigh, he takes his latest wand that he purchased from everything shop in Knockturn Alley and begins to cast a low level locking charm on not just the door but the hinges just encase the hinges give before the door does.

"Now then, where did I put that spell book..." He mutters as he begins to search through his new trunk for a certain advance spell book that has silencing charms in it.

I hope you guys are patient, although I bet more then a few of you have an idea of 'the power he knows not' is going to be.

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June 1992

Ok... That didn't answer anything. He thinks as he watches as the white haired elderly man walk away, leaving a small crowd on its way to visit him. *Well, at least he's not lecturing me on my marketing strategy. I mean, really, why shouldn't I get a profit when they're willing to buy anything with my* ***Name*** *attached to it? It's call Royalties after all.* He thinks as his view of the hospital doors gets blocked by one of the Weasley twins.

"Did you get the picture?" Terry asks and it takes him a few seconds to realize what his friend is talking about. "Well, I did get a picture, just not of Beast Boy." He says as points to the slightly broken camera.

"I don't get why any of you believe in those rumors. There isn't any proof that this boy even exists and don't get me started on the stories where he's suppose to be Hagrid's love child." Hermione says in a huff as Terry takes the camera and begins to rewind the film within it.

"Well, how would you explain how Draco and Snape ended so high up on the walls in only their underwear with a spot sticking charm around the top of their underwear?" Neville asks their fellow Gryffindor. "Oh I don't know, a levitation spell on their cloths and a quick sticking charm after vanishing their cloths?" Hermione says.

"Sounds like you got some experience with this, Hermione." Terry muses while Fred and George begin to dig into a box of jelly beans, the muggle types thankfully. "Perhaps you'd like to reconsider our offer to make you our apprentice?" Fred asks and Hermione just goes from blushing to just rolling her eyes.

"No thank you, I prefer to have a feasible defense that I didn't what you two are up to." Hermione finally manages to say after they all chuckle at her reaction. "Sounds like a weak defense to me." Neville muses and he nods in agreement while the sole Ravenclaw wonders, "I can't help but wonder why I'm even friends with any of you."

"Could it be because you're always trying to pick Hermione's brain? Or wanting to learn the origins of the local Beast Boy that's hounding everyone in the school?" He suggests and Terry hums in a thoughtful manner. "Well, I guess among those are among my reason." Terry admits with a charming smile sent at Hermione.

"Well, we should let Harry rest from his exhausting encounter with What's-His-Face." George says as he elbows his twin, likely spotting

the school nurse's approach as well. "Well, see you at the Farewell Feast!" Neville says and he just nods as the group slowly withdraws from his bed side.

As the curtains close around his bed, he turns to look at the still none final produce ring on his index finger of his right hand. The jade face stares back at him, the sapphire eyes flash a dark purple before the top of the ring slowly turns in a clockwise manner. He couldn't help but grin as a familiar feeling slowly engulfs him, the ring only turns twice and he's manage to grab his wand.

It didn't take long before he's altered his cloths and has set an illusion of a resting him in the bed. *Well, like Tobias said, all things are a work in progress as you draw closer to your ultimate finished product. Although I doubt Tobias would enjoy the idea of the ring making a few decisions on when it's time for it to be used.* He muses as the changes subside.

At least I don't have to worry about the Full Moon or three twists. He adds as he passes through the curtains, heading for the door to see what mayhem he can cause without anyone realizing that Harry Potter and Beast Boy being one and the same.

The End

Undercover Girl: Naruto

I don't own Naruto!

This could have gone better. He... she thinks as she rubs the back of her neck while her shadow clone apologizes. She waves the clone off as she reaches out for a mirror to see if her alterations remained.

The sight of straight brown hair, hazel green eyes, and lack of whisker marks causes her to smile in relief. *Now then, let's see if that seal will hold when I try to cancel this.* She thinks after admiring her new reflection.

Setting the mirror down, she then tries to cancel her Henge but she doesn't feel any different. To be sure, she once more checks in the mirror before patting herself down to make sure that no surprises popped out. The clone offers her a chakra limiter which should help hide her chakra signature during this month long 'training' exercise that kind of began as a bet on who's were the best at sniffing out undercover people and who's the best at remaining undercover from the hunters.

Just a few hours ago, her luck had run out and she picked an uncolored straw, meaning that she's to be one of those to do their best to remain undercover. She and the others who came up short have forty-eight hours to melt into the civil population in and around Hidden Leaf or at least find some hide-a-way to hold up in.

Luckily, Pervy-Sage left behind that book on seals and that chakra limiter. She muses as she finally finishes putting on cloths. "We've got the passport. All we need is a picture to put in the slot." Her shadow clone says.

"What name am I to go by?" She asks as she picks up a pack filled with girl cloths and feminine products. "Kasumi Hikari, recent

immigrant from Land of Waves." The clone reports.

"How many clones have passports now?" She asks as she practices her walking since her body feels pretty odd. "Twenty-six. In a few hours, we'll have a total of fifty." Her clone reports.

"Any signs of the others?" She asks as she tries to keep from slouching as she finally shoulder's her pack. "Lee has been seen heading northeast, likely going to try to 'run' for it instead of trying to do undercover. Neji's still looking at maps, Choji's heading off with Ino somewhere in a southern direction."

"So you and the rest will be heading northwest or southwest?" She asks and her clone answers, "Likely divide into two groups and seed as much of those two areas as we can. A few want to see if they can't create clones that look like forest animals."

"So, where do I pick up my passport?" She asks, more then ready to vanish back into Hidden Leaf with her new identity as Kasumi Hikari. The clone tells her and she hums.

Before they split apart, the clone asks, "Are you sure this is a good idea? I mean, that seal is suppose to help alter your behavior, not just help hide your gender. That limiter also keeps you from using most of your chakra."

She sighs before moving her bangs from one of her temples and channels some chakra, which is fairly hard with the bracelet like limiter gracing her slender wrist. "I got this mental stabilizer we put on before deciding on any particular look. The problem as I see it will likely come from me accidentally activating my chakra and causing those seals to flare up."

With that, she walks off to collect her passport. As soon as she can, she will use those scent removing soups and hope that her body begins to produce a more feminine scent so that Kiba and Akamaru can't sniff out her true gender.

- = **)-Week Later-(** = -

Sasuke

As he stalks towards the local hot springs, he couldn't help but grumble about the latest shadow clone they found in a village east of Hidden Leaf. So focus on his brooding thoughts that he didn't notice the girl until they collided. "Sorry, please forgive me, I'm running a bit behind." The girl says as she scrambles to collect a few leaflets.

He blinks and watches her with some disinterest as the girl finishes her task. It didn't take long before he finds himself staring into hazel green eyes. "Again, I'm sorry." The girl says and bows slightly at him.

As he walks pass, the girl then says, "You're one of those Leaf ninja who saved my village from Goto!" He pauses before turning to look at her, it didn't take him long to recall that mission. "Thanks, for getting rid of him. He was ruining what was left of our country." The girl says before realizing that she's still late.

"Oh my gosh! I got to go! Bye Uchiha-san!" The girl exclaims and he watches as the girl speed walks away, clearly trying to keep her dignity while at the same time trying to make her appointment.

From the Land of Waves, huh? I guess with the bridge it's easy for them to leave. He muses as he feels his spirits lift a tiny bit at the praise he received from the late girl.

- = **)-Last Week of the Bet-(** = -

Naruto

Five more days and I'll have won the bet. She tells herself. *Still, maybe I should have tried passing myself off as a six year old instead of a thirteen year old girl...*

"Oh, sorry, Kasumi! I didn't mean to... I think I'll just leave now." Genji stutters as he slams the door shut. "Maybe I shouldn't have taken

him up on his offer..." She muses as she shakes her head slightly.

Nice guy though. I wonder if I knew him from the ninja academe? She thinks not for the first time since she accepted Genji's offer to stay with him until she manages to find a place of her own.

During her stay with Genji, she had learnt that he was an orphan like her and has been living in his own apartment since age ten. She sighs as she privately adds as she washes the shampoo out of her hair, *He's also nervous around girls, has aspirations of being a doctor, is a talented cook, and is an all around nice guy.*

Funny how it feels like I've known him all of my life even though we've only known each other for less then three weeks. She muses before feeling a bit of guilt about deceiving the guy. *If it weren't for pretending to be a girl, I might have allowed myself to lose myself in this new life I've built for myself.*

"He's a really great guy..." She admits out loud with a sigh as she finally finishes rinsing out her shampoo and reaches for the conditioner. *If only he were a girl...* She admits in a sad sort of way.

Maybe I should leave a clone here instead of ending Kasumi Hikari's life... I mean, it would be a shame to 'kill' her after putting so much work into creating her... She thinks and for the first time, she wishes she had someone to confide into, someone who she trusts to give her decent advice.

Well, I know one thing for certain, I'm never going to tell anyone how I managed to evade them or else people will begin to get ideas in locking me in the form of a girl and try to use me as some kind of brood mare. She decides with steely resolve. *Especially if I have to erase this whole month from my mind.*

It's about then does she notice that something red is getting washed down the drain. Cocking her head to the side in puzzlement, she follows the trail up stream as it were and is shocked to discover that it's dripping down her legs. She reaches down and touches that

area, probing for any cuts she might have develop but finds no real point of injury to explain why she's bleeding from that area.

"Oh hell, so this is a period..." She murmurs softly to herself as she finally recalls something she might have learnt during a health class or maybe it was a textbook...

- = **)-Three Days After the Bet-(** = -

Iruka

"What do you want, Naruto?" He asks the young Genin who's resting on his couch. He's not sure how the blond found his address but Naruto looks highly uncertain about something.

"Why do girls bleed from... down there?" Naruto finally asks him and he suddenly feels as if he should have just stayed in bed.

The End

The Culling of Hogwarts

I don't own Harry Potter

November 13, 1994

"Are we sure that Harry would want us to do this in his name?" The one wearing smokey gray cloak with the deep hood up, covering their face. All of them were wearing cloaks with deep hoods, although not all of them were the same color and all of their hoods had been charmed to alter their voices while the cloaks hide their over all body shape, making if hard to tell what gender the wearer is.

"His second year." The one in blue replies and that pretty much sums it all up. "Point." The one in gray says and a fifth member appears within the room.

"Sorry, it took me a bit to get the charms right." The new comer says wearing a green cloak and sets down two tightly bounded stacks onto the table. "Excellent." The one in purple says as they examine the lot.

"How are the goods coming along?" The one in blue asks after turning to the one in brown. "They are already being packed up in their boxes. They'll be done by midnight tonight." The one in brown answers.

"Excellent, our plan will soon bare bitter fruit." The one in blue says as the one in purple rub their hands together. "I still say that Dumbledore won't fall for any of this." The one in gray says.

"You didn't mention Snape not falling for this. So you must have something planned for him. What is it?" The one in purple asks and gray sighs before saying, "I used some of my own resources to ensure that Snape and... Moody will be busy."

"In what way?" Green asks and beneath the hood, gray smiles. "Let's say I'm boring a simple idea that's been used since ancient times. Its so simple that nobody would ever believe it would work." Gray states calmly.

"Have you done your part?" Gray asks blue and purple. "Of course! The sites are just waiting for the collection boxes and, of course, the slips."

"Ah, well, here are the collection boxes." Gray says and within seconds, the boxes appear as if by magic. "You used Harry's cloak didn't you?" Purple asks and gray nods just enough for the hood's material to ruffle.

"Good, then if you don't mind, now that we've got the boxes and the slips, we'll go place them at their rightful places." Blue says and gray hands over magical cloak.

"Well, if we're done, I've got other business to attend too." Green says and so they leave the special room, all but brown, but then, brown had special ways of traveling about the castle.

Harry

November 19, 1994

"Harry... Harry... HARRY!" He bolts right up as somebody shouts in his left ear. "Wha? I didn't burn that bacon..." He says automatically as he backs away from whoever it is shaking him.

"... Bacon?" Neville asks and it takes him a few minutes to realize that he's at Hogwarts and that it seems to be more crowded then usual. "What smells?" He asks Neville while ignoring the usual nervous teen's question.

"Well, I'm not certain but I do believe that somebody managed to sneak a bunch of horses into our dorms... Although I haven't the

slightest clue as to where our room-mates are though..." Neville explains and with a sigh, he reaches for his glasses.

"Holy... I thought you were kidding about the horses!" He says after not just putting his glasses on but turning on the lights. "Looks likely they're not house broken either..." He mutters at the sight of dung on the floor.

"I'm more concerned by the fact they're stallions..." Neville admits nervously and he frowns. "How can you tell?" He asks, after all, he was never taken to petting zoos when his relatives took his cousin.

"Well... you see those bulges? The one longish one is their..." Neville seems to just get more red and he doesn't hear what Neville said but he gets the general idea.

"Ok, why is it bad that they're stallions?" He asks and Neville sighs. "It means they're temperamental, although, I guess that whoever brought them here must have fed them a calming potion since they're not fighting each other." Neville muses.

"I'll take your word for it since it sounds like you've got more experience in this then I do." He admits to Neville, which causes Neville to flush a bit at the praise.

As they sit there, each lost in their own thoughts, the door opens and there stand Hermione. "Only Neville and Harry in this one!" His bushy haired friend calls to somebody unseen.

"Hermione!" Both Neville and himself exclaim in relief as the witch levels her wand and blue energy travels to each of the stallions within the room, causing them to vanish. "Morning you two. You wouldn't believe how few Gryffindors are still here." Hermione says and it didn't take long before they both opted to follow after Hermione as she vanishes from the doorway without getting dressed.

"What's going on? Why were those horses in our dorms?" He asks as they pause before another door. "Well, we're not sure but some of us believe that this might be a Slytherin prank or some training exercise Moody came up with to remind us all to keep up our guard. Just remember, these are just theories. We haven't had time to investigate since we're still removing the horses from our dorms."

"Where are the horses going anyway?" Neville asks curiously and Hermione shrugs. "Dobby told us to use this spell to send them to the school stables. We'll sort out what to do after we've cleared out our dorms." Hermione says and she opens the door.

Well, isn't this an interesting way to wake up on a Saturday? He muses as Hermione teleports the various horses away. As they continue, he couldn't help but notice how more surly Hermione gets as they continue to encounter rooms filled with horses.

Well, whoever put them in there clearly should have thought it through some more since Hermione's likely going to be ranting about how unfair it was for the horses to be stuck in a small room without adequate bedding, food, or water. He decides as Neville and himself continue to trail after Hermione until they've cleared out all of the boy's side of the dorms.

By then, all of their stomachs were growling and instead of returning to their dorms to change their cloths, they just head out after putting on some conquered fuzzy slippers one of the few seventh years created.

Midnight

"Well, that went well." Gray states dryly and the others all kind of shrug. "You're just foul that the only living teachers left are Madam Hooch, Professor Vector, and Professor Trelawney." Purple says.

"Dumbledore never did try to make it clear how Harry's name got in the goblet in the first place." Brown points out. "Too true, too true." Blue says.

"Sorry, it's just that, well, I'm a little perturbed that Trelawney gave Hagrid her box is all." Gray admits and green pats gray on the shoulder. "Look on the bright side, nobody used the finishing spell on him so he'll return to normal when the New Moon arrives." Green says as best as they can.

"I know, I know. It's just that so many didn't care that Harry didn't put his name in it." Gray says before adding after a few minutes, "Although I can't help but be a bit satisfied getting that Rita though."

"There, see? We got somebody we weren't even aiming for." Green says.

"So... when do you think they'll discover the real Alaster Moody within that trunk?" Purple muses and blue remarks, "Oh, I don't know, after Frudge finally leaves with his special 'adviser', allowing Madam Bones to finally do her job."

Brown's hood flickers backwards, the illusion hanging about brown's form lets go and reveals Dobby and his small form. "I... err, Dobby wants to know what's to become of the fake friends and unbelievers now?" Dobby says, still finding it difficult to return to using house elf speech while wearing the enchanted cloak still hanging about his frame.

"Oh poo, I was hoping we could keep up the masquerade a bit longer." Luna says once the hood of her green cloak rests about her shoulders. It wasn't long before gray's hood reveals Hermione, blue's reveals George, and purple's reveals Fred.

"Well, it served its purpose. Although shame about little Ronnie though..." Fred muses and George nods. "Well, in the end, at least we ensured that he's not a jack-ass." George points out.

"You three don't seem too broken up over Ginny's fate." Hermione says with a frown. "The votes were tallied as fairly as possible. Besides, didn't we all vowed not to try and save anyone who ended up on the negative category?" George points out.

"Or to warn anyone. And let's not forget using the finishing spell on any 'horse' caught within the walls starting from midnight yesterday for a full twenty-four hours?" Fred points out and Hermione sighs.

"At least Hagrid never entered into the school, although how he managed to survive most of the day in the Forbidden Forest as a horse, I doubt is something that I would want to know." Hermione admits with a sigh. "Fang being full of Pesky Vultry meat might have something to do about that." Luna muses thoughtfully.

"Vultry?" Fred and Hermione echo. "Well, it's kind of hard to say their actual names while still wearing this cloak." Luna admits in an embarrassed way. "I... Dobby sympathizes." Dobby says as he pats Luna's arm.

"Well, to answer Dobby's question, it seems that according to Madam Pomfrey, all of the horses are all muggle Arabians and Arabians are a very popular horse breed so I was thinking that we create a breeding farm with them as our founding stock." Hermione admits.

"Just curious why don't we just sell the lot of them and wash our hands of it?" Fred asks after glancing at George. "Well, for one, do you really want to bring the ICW in to investigate why we're selling people transfigured into horses, be my guess, because that's what's more then likely to happen." Hermione says.

"We truly have followed in Circe's foot steps, haven't we?" Luna muses and none of them could really deny that. "Makes you wonder if she didn't already had the right view on how to deal with human nature..." Hermione admits with a sigh.

The End

Maximal Obsidian: Naruto

I don't own Naruto or Transformers: Beast Wars

"Obsidian! Hey, wait up!" Waterjet says and he slows as he turns his head to look over his shoulder to see the slender beast form of Waterjet come lopping towards him in his awkward gait that likely has to do with the fact that Waterjet only has two short, but powerful limbs.

"You have anything to report, Waterjet?" He asks his fellow Maximal and, oddly enough, subordinate. "Sir... Does sector nine really need you to check it out? Couldn't you send, say, Glidebot or Fourwinds?" Waterjet inquires and he smiles slightly.

"Who did you prank this time, Waterjet?" He asks with a slight smile and in a very amused tone. "Nobody yet... I mean, me, prank on a day like today?" Waterjet says and the reptilian face tries to look innocent.

Pretty amusing to see the puppy-dog look on a face that has three eyes... He muses as they stop walking. "Look, Waterjet. This day affects us all in different ways." He says to Waterjet as he sits down with his tail twitching every so often.

"Take Tusker, he usually heads off to tend to the flower patch that Fleetfoot and Petalstance planted." He says and Waterjet nods, flickering his muscular tail, likely getting impatient.

"I, myself, like to go off on my own for the solar cycle." He says and glances to the west where the horizon is slowly beginning to brighten up.

"Ah, but, who's going to be left in charge without you or Savage around? Remember last stellar cycle when Savage and you headed

to check on that energon field to see how that fallen star effected it." Waterjet says, slapping the tip of his tail on the ground. "Ramtron almost slagged Petalstance while Snare and Glidebot's game program triggered a level blue alert."

"We would have left Fleetfoot in charge but he was in the CR chamber because someone used that experimental glue on Fleetfoot's bed the night before." He points out and Waterjet looks slightly ashamed of that. "But Ramtron and Petalstance have been eyeing each other for a rematch!" Waterjet says.

"Savage and I trust that Fleetfoot's more then capable of managing the situation until one of us returns. Just don't aggravate Fourwinds and things will go smoothly." He tells Waterjet as he stands.

"But... but..." Waterjet says and sighs. "If things get heated between you two, just hide in the lake until Savage or I get back." He tells Waterjet.

It didn't really surprise him that instead of returning to base, Waterjet heads for the lake. *Was I acted like that when I was...* He wonders but couldn't bring himself to finish that thought. *Dwelling on that past will only drive me insane. After all, it's not like I can turn back the hands of time to undo that fight...*

As he arrives at the boundary line of the sector nine, his sensors begins to notice some kind of energy occurrence that seems to be trying to engulf him. :Sir! There's some kind of energy perk around you!: Ramtron says and it seems that as Tusker begins to radio him, the signal is already beginning to break apart.

His internal sensors suddenly go offline and just before he blacks out, he watches as his surroundings break apart.

- = Sasuke = -

He couldn't help but scowl as nothing happens to the ash covered body at the center of the summoning diagram. None of them move

and then, after at least two minutes, something seems to grab ahold of some internal part of him and he soon finds it difficult to breath as he falls to his knees.

He hears the others begin to have the same problem as his vision swims and he begins to shiver as a chill hits him. What feels like an eternity, the chill seems to retreat and the drain on his energy lets up, although he is having trouble from blacking out since the energy hadn't returned. "What the fuck is that?!" He hears one of his subordinates say from the door leading into the room.

He manages to sit up and finally glances at the center of the summoning diagram to find some kind of black large feline with dark purple mane, more like a horse's mane then a lion's, growing from the forehead and thins just before the butt. As the large feline begins to stir, the tail begins to flicker frequently.

He tries to stand but his legs keep giving out and from a quick look around, the rest of the group have the same problem. With a grunt, the feline raises its head and yawns, displaying a wicked set of fangs, before opening its eyes, revealing dark blue eyes. The pointed ears flicker about as the feline shifts its position.

"Ah slag it." A male voice growls as the feline's head turns to stare at him. The feline gets up and begins to test the seal diagram which seems to flash whenever the feline tries to get out of the circle.

A very beastly snarl echos through the room and winces at the sound. The feline stops pacing and before his eyes, everything about the feline moves, shifting until what's standing within the center of the seal diagram is some kind of being made of metal. In the thing's hand is a glowing sword since the edge of the strange sword were the source of the glowing.

"Aarg!" He cries out as he hurries to cover his eyes as the sword makes contact with the chakra that's forcing the thing to remain in the center of the diagram. "It's going to blow!" Somebody shouts

from the doorway but he still couldn't find it within him to move out of the way.

Finally, something flings him backwards with a thunderous sound that echos through the room. Within seconds, he finds himself lifted in the air and finds the metal face of the thing they summoned holding with ease. "What am I doing here?" The thing demands.

"... Trying to bring a dead person back." He finally says as he gets slammed into the wall a few times. "Who?" The being demands, he couldn't help but wonder if what they summoned is male since it's got that kind of voice.

"The dobe... *slam* Naruto Uzumaki, the container of the Kyuubi!" He answers and he hears a few metallic thuds. "Crap, now what do we do? It's make of metal, not flesh!" The swordsman of his team declares.

The metal being growls and he can't help but feel a bit relieved as he's not staring into its face. "Keep that up and I'll step on you after I'm done with this one." The metal being states with a hint of a growl.

"What are you?" The female member of his team asks and the being replied, "Maximal."

"Now then, how do I return from where you teleported me?" The self proclaimed Maximal demands as soon as the being once more focuses on him. "I don't know! Ask Madara!" He exclaims and he can't help but loath himself for his fear of this metallic thing that they summoned. A being who's suppose to be a servant, a chained and obedient to their wishes.

"And which one is Madara?" The Maximal snaps but before he could say anything, something hits him between the eyes. As his vision goes, the stranger has dropped him to deal with the assembling minions.

- = Obsidian = -

He mentally sighs as he drops the dying teen to deal with the assembling ninja. He swats the flat of his sword carefully, although it doesn't prevent the group from getting cut from the glowing edge. A few manage to switch out with something else but most try to use a jutsu on him.

Kunai click as they hit his metal body and since his body is made out of better metal, all of them drop to the floor. He tries to be gentle but it seems as if his just too powerful or they were too weak as they try their best to 'kill' him. *To be fair... I wouldn't know how to take me down if I confronted myself as Naruto.*

But in the end, they either retreated or they died. He ignores the wooden puppet and begins to visit the rest. "Madara?" He asks this girly guy, or masculine woman, he found a bit beyond the wooden puppet.

"Over there." The person says and as he turns, the person moves to cling to him. He turns his head to find some teeth coming out of the palm of the hand biting down on his lower foot. He shakes his head and moves off, dragging the guy along until he finds another Uchiha, he could tell because of the red eyes with those three dots positioned around the irises.

With a little shake of his foot, the blond person with teeth on the palm of their hand is sent flying. He puts the tip of his sword by the elder's head before asking, "How do I return to the place you teleported me out of?"

"... It'll wear off in a month's time." The elder Uchiha says weakly. His scanners show him that the elder's body is failing. "I hope you are right, but then, by then, you'll no longer be among the living." He says as he takes the point of his sword out of the ground.

As he turns away, he returns to his beast mode so he can at leave the room since the doorway wouldn't fit his robot form. *Huh... I thought I would have at least felt something with his death...*

+ { [**Three Weeks Later**] } +

Why can't they just leave me a lone? Its not as if their nets can hold me nor their ropes. He thinks as his scanners pick up another party coming to try their luck in capturing him to sell for a handsome price to some rich merchant or circus.

They come with ninja as scouts... He muses as his scanners pick up energy signatures among the humans. *I wonder from which village they hired them from...*

"Just one more week and then, hopefully, I'll return to my company." He mutters softly to himself as he remains sitting on the cliff. The mountain he's living on gives him a very good view of any incoming parties coming to try their luck in capturing him.

- = Sakura = -

"I don't see why we're here... If this is really a demon, why hasn't it attacked the local villages?" Ino mutters as they keep to their own fire, separate from their clients.

"Doesn't really matter, does it? It's not as if I have anything to look forward too." She says as she stares at the kettle resting on the grill of the fire.

"Oh lighten up, Sakura! You're just sulking because Sasuke is dead and it wasn't by your hand." Ino says and she sends a glare in the blond's direction.

"Naruto's been dead for little over three years, Sakura. Let his rest in peace." Choji says unexpectedly and she glances at the teen before returning to gazing into the fire as an image of Naruto's smile face flares up from her memory.

How can I let him rest? It's my fault for not being strong enough to stop Sasuke or to fight by Naruto's side to bring Sasuke back... She thinks as she recalls the state of Naruto's body.

Some villagers had tried to have a holiday declared and that marked the beginning of Lady Tsunade's true reign as a Hokage as she not only killed those council member who passed that announcement but stripped the council of the powers that the Third had granted it during his second reign.

Within three months, Tsunade not only updated the hospital but also installed a medical program plan to be taught at the ninja academe. At age ten, academe students can choice to attend medical training, which is a much surer way of becoming a ninja then the normal program. It's an aggressive and demanding program but it will grantee that there will be future medic ninja for out going teams sent beyond the village walls.

I would have thought Lady Tsunade would have left the village if it weren't for that day being declared a holiday. She thinks as the kettle boils and she takes the handle of the kettle and pours its contains into the tea pot.

- = Obsidian = -

He watches as a group of riders come thundering up the mountain path, a path he made sure to leave paw prints upon as he hides within a shallow cave that's got bushes before it. He sets his chin onto his paws, waiting for their screams to sound out as they trigger the simple log trap that will drive them back down the trail.

Horses scream and the yells of men ring out through the air but somebody surges up the path. "Choji!" He hears a young woman's voice calls out as something large and registers an energy signature charges pass. "On it!" A young man's voice says.

Choji? He wonders as he raises his head from his paws to try and get a look of who's on the path. He feels his jaws part slightly at the sight of familiar and yet unfamiliar women racing pass. *Sakura? Ino?*

He began to reconsider his decision to remain on this mountain side now that he's going to be facing off against people he knew while he

was Naruto Uzumaki. Particularly if one of those had been somebody he had been crushing on. As he lies there, more and more people pass by his hiding spot.

He waits a good mega-cycle before leaving his hiding spot. He leaps over the trail and lands on the rocks on the other side. He then begins to climb down the side of the rocky slop, carefully trying not to disturb too many rocks. He pauses as a few rocks fall down the side.

A quick glance behind him reveals that those three ninja were trying to follow him. He snorts before continuing to leap and climb down the rocky face. A few kunai hit his side and bounce off his body. He hears Ino curse and then a few kunai hit him on the thigh of his leg once he's landed on the rock.

A bit of a shake later and the kunai dislodge themselves from his thigh. He finds that Sakura and the others were closing in quickly but then, they were likely using chakra to stick to the rock faces as well as to power their leaps. Choji calls out a war cry as he leaps high into the air.

Seconds later Choji is now rolling down hill in his direction. He waits for the last second before ducking as flat as he can on the stone's surface since he guesses, correctly, that they all expect him to try and leap over Choji once he's too close for comfort. As Choji comes out of the ball, the large built teen has difficulties trying to stop his descent.

"That just blows..." Ino growls as he turns to continue his descent before the pink haired teen and blond teen continue to pursue him. "I'll check on Choji." Ino says.

Sakura continues to try and slow him down using kunai but they just continue to bounce harmlessly off of his metal skin under his artificial black coat. He doesn't glance backwards since Sakura is close enough for his sensors and scanners to pick up her location. He manages to dodge out of the way of Sakura's attempts to land on his back.

"Damn it!" Sakura curses and he snorts as he slides down the last few miles of rock face. "What the hell are you?!" Sakura snarls as she tries to mimic his success with the rock face.

He leaps gracefully onto the grass and turns to watch Sakura land on her butt as she trips on a large stone. "Not what you think I am." He answers and she seems to freeze as she gives him a very startled look.

"You're tactics would have done well if I were what I appear to be, a primal beast. Now then, since I seem to worn out my welcome around this area, I think I'll try for a new area in which to wait out the remainder of this week." He informs Sakura as she sits there, gasping at him.

"If the one called Madara spoke truly then I shall return back from whence I was teleported from, leaving this world behind." He says before adding, "So, please, stop chasing me, I might find myself forced to truly defend myself, and I highly doubt you and your comrades will live through that experience."

Leaving her there, he heads in a western direction away from the mountain. He'll wait a solar cycle before heading south as well as continuing to travel in a western direction.

- = Sakura = -

She couldn't find her voice nor really control her thoughts as the beast they had been chasing not only proved to be intelligent but kind of peaceful. *We should have realized it... he wasn't a demon from the moment we sighted him. After all, demons always radiate killing intent and he wasn't.*

Must be a type of summon. She finally decides as Ino and Choji arrive. "Sakura? You alright?" Choji asks, shaking her out of her thoughts.

"That wasn't a demon..." She finally says as she finds her voice. "... Looked like a demon..." Ino admits.

"It... he spoke. Told me he'll be gone by the end of the week. I think he's actually a type of summon." She explains as she accepts Choji's help to stand.

"And you believe that?" Ino asks with her arms crossed. "Well... yea. After all, our spy did mention that something went wrong when the Akatsuki tried to resurrect Naruto. That they summoned some kind of metal being that first appeared in the form of a large lion like beast." She admits now that she's made a few mental connections.

"You mean that thing is actually made of metal?" Choji asks her and she blinks before frowning as she tries to figure out if the beast was or wasn't. "We could always go retrieve those kunai to see... After all, they kept bouncing off of him." She suggests.

- = Obsidian = -

"You're back, you're really back!" Waterjet cries out as soon as he arrives within the clearing of the base entrance. "Glad to see you're still online, sir." Savage says as most of the Maximals rash pass to come welcome him back.

He notices that pretty much all of the Maximals are here, which include those that prefer to range far from base. In total, forty some Maximals were ranged around him, all chattering excitedly about the fact that's he's back. *Home sweet home.*

The End

Sonic Roboticized

I don't own Sonic the Hedgehog

Silver

Pain was his first, if fleeting, memory.

Ironic since I'm a robot, not a living thing. Silver muses as the machine's body automatically not only sorts the broken scraps and gadgets but adds them to his inventory list.

"Silver, do we have a base board number seven-one-four-x?" Ben asks him from the doorway leading into the front of the store. Silver turns to regard the horse style Mobian as he answers in a soft tone metallic voice, "Four repaired ones in slot sixty-three and twenty fired/broken ones in slot six."

Ben nods and moves to the appropriate shelf to fetch one of the fixed ones. Silver makes a note to spend the rest of the month focusing on repairing broken computer boards since this is the fifteenth time that somebody has come looking to buy one as Silver turns his head to continue on sorting through the scraps that they had bought, traded, or he found during his time in the local scrapyard that's at least two week journey by walking from Quarterz.

The very same scrapyard I woke in as well... Silver mentally muses before checking the date since it appears he won't let up on recalling his beginnings. *Another year has come and gone. Hard to believe that I have been active for six years now.*

Silver tries to keep himself from replaying his earliest memories or to dwelling on his 'feelings'. *Make me wish I were just a simple drone. Damn Robotnik for programing me to have an AI.* Silver mentally growls, cursing his creator and programmer.

Silver pauses to stare at his slightly clawed hands, opening and closing them before moving his optic sensors down his right arm, studying the armor he managed to create to help him control his strength and to obscure his base line body, that of a metallic hedgehog. The armor also helps to take damage or to enhance any of his laser attacks in case he's forced to protect himself.

I'm a battle bot. Silver states mentally to himself as Silver the robot stares directly ahead, not really paying any real heed to the images his optic sensors were sending to him. *I'm a weapon made to fight against the rebels, in both actual battle and to psyche them out by appearing to be a metal Sonic the hedgehog.* Silver adds and finally, Silver mentally shakes himself and focuses on finish sorting the bin of scrap next to him on the lift he created for this very purpose.

Same Day

Tails

Six years... The twin tailed fox thinks sadly as he stares down at the tombstone. "And still, I can't believe you're gone..." Tails says out loud in a whisper tone.

Though he's spilled tears many times in the past, he still finds it within himself to cry over his friend and somebody who he considered a brother. Tails wipes some of his tears away before placing a small flower before the stone which reads, '"Sonic" Maurice Hedgehog, Champion of Mobius, Birth and Death: 3220/162-3235/xx'

"I wish you hadn't agreed to plan Trojan, Sonic... There had to have been other, better ways then to allow yourself to be captured while wearing the chip..." Tails says softly as he stands before the grave, repeating his old rant that he usually gets into since the third anniversary of Sonic's death.

Nobody really knows for sure what happened after Robotnik 'escorted' Sonic deeper into his main city, not even Robotnik himself

and Snively, though they were there. Project Trojan had been a very big success as it not only erased all of the data within Robotnik's computer network but apparently caused the explosion that brought down the factory building.

It had taken weeks to clear out a path leading to the ruined underground lab and the two barely surviving Overlanders. Although the two only survived by rolling into a space when one of the large computers fall over, acting as a buffer from the falling rubble. *I'm just surprised we manage to keep hold of them for two whole years before they finally escaped.*

Although they searched, they never did find Sonic's body and thus, Tails and most of Sonic's close, personal friends never really got closure since they still believe, despite evidence to the contrary, that Sonic is still alive somewhere on Mobius. *After all, Eggman shows that there are other universes out there, for all we know, that explosion send Sonic into one of those worlds.*

A beeping causes Tails to snap out of his thoughts and sighs as he finds an alarm blaring about an attack on one of the new settlements that sprung up when those Roboticized got their free will back. It had taken some time but they had managed to de-Roboticize the populous simple because they lacked the de-Roboticize programs that Robotnik had installed to keep them from freeing his 'robot' slaves.

"I'll see you later Sonic, it seems that I'm needed in Quarterz." Tails says after reading the short but important message that came along with the alarm. Tails sprints to the Tornado and climbs into the pilot seat, seconds later, he's flying through the air, heading in the direction of the settlement.

Field Outside Quarterz

Silver

"You're coming with me, whether you like it or not." Dr Eggman informs Silver as he continues to fight off the swarms of various SWATbots and more advance machines. Silver doesn't reply as he rams his left hand and arm through a bee bot's head.

Flinging his arm, Silver sends the robot into the chest of one of the SWATbot, forcing that bot to fall over. Silver blasts a line of SWATbots to his right using his laser, causing them to explode.

:Signal found.: His internal computer informs him and Silver orders, *:Engage self-destruct protocols.:*

:Engaging.: The computer tells him and within a second, all of the surrounding bots explode, leaving him alone in a field with the 'good' doctor. "I suggest you leave the same way you arrived." Silver says in a firm, cold voice as Silver's armor weapons retract.

His power supply is down to sixty percent, which means he'll have to turn in earlier to recharge. Silver turns to face the robotic doctor. "You are not welcome here." Silver adds and Eggman looks ready to explode without any help from him.

"I am your creator, you should be obeying me!" Doc Eggman says and Silver counters, "You are not my creator, you are just his double from another universe, therefore, I do not have to obey you."

"I will truly enjoy it when you bow before me." Doctor Eggman growls before fleeing, leaving him alone in the middle of the battlefield. *At least nobody was injured.* Silver thinks before his computer detects an approaching aircraft.

Within a few seconds, the computer tunes in to the radio signal that's coming from the craft. Finally his optic sensors pick out the approaching airplane. Before Silver could open a channel with the aircraft, something sends him flying through the air.

"Why don't you deactivate so I can deliver you to Doc Eggman? It seems as though the good doctor will be happy to have you." The

voice belongs to Richard the leopard, a Mobian he's had deals with in the past.

Silver struggles to get up despite the fact that the cables were draining him of his energy. He manages to cut into the plastic covering of the two wires and crosses them, the energy released gives his reserves a boost and he charges towards Richard.

Ripping the energy pack off of Richard's back, Silver quickly reprograms the pack to return his energy. Richard howls from his attempt to nab him from behind, the metal spike managed to keep the Mobian off of him. Silver didn't get all of his power back but enough to be over fifty percent.

As Silver yanks the two prongs out of his armor, bullets hit him in the back. His optic sensors flicker for a few seconds as Silver wonders where the bullets were coming from as Richard screams about him being a berserker or a highly dysfunctional robot. Silver finally turns his head to find that the aircraft is circling overhead and on spotting the guns, realizes where the bullets had come from.

Silver couldn't think of anything positive course of action in which to stop the attacking plane and decides just to stand there, ignoring the logical conclusion to follow after Richard to make sure the Mobian doesn't get armed with a new weapon. While he's sure he'll regret not following through with that course of action, Silver feels that at this point, his best course of action was to take no action at all.

The airplane circles a good eight times but other then dropping the energy pack, Silver hasn't done anything other then watching the aircraft circle overhead. Silver groans as a missile hits him in the side but he doesn't do more then grip the side of his armor while turning to stare at the newly armed Richard.

A series of bullets hit the ground before the leopard while the pilot declares over the speakers, "Cease your actions! The robot doesn't appear hostile."

"Don't tell me what to do!" Richard points the missile launcher up at the aircraft and before he knew what's what, Silver's rocket come online and he takes the missile meant for the aircraft. Silver lands hard in the ground, leaving a slight trench in the dirt as his computer begins to give him a damage report.

Tails

While totally confused why the strange robot would take a missile meant for him, Tails launches a metal net in the Mobian's direction. The net works and the missile launcher lands onto the leopard's chest. Tails lands not far from the site and finds that the Mobian had managed to get out of the net.

As the leopard Mobian flees, Tails moves to check on the robot. "What happened here?" Tails asks the fallen robot. "Doctor Eggman captured a couple of kids... Demanded that I come for them... He let them go and ordered his minions to circle around me demanding that I turn myself over to him for reprogramming..." The robot says in a broken, metallic voice that's got a distant quality to it.

Tails blinks as the green light in the eyes grow dim. "Managed to find network signal of the bots... Engaged self-destructive protocols... Eggman fled... Richard..." Finally the optic sensors black out and so does the robot's mainframe it seems.

Tails believes he has a very good idea of what happened after Eggman fled and feels a bit ashamed for firing into the robot, adding to its damages. A small party of Mobians from the local settlement appear. "Silver? Silver!" One of the lead Mobians shouts and many of the others follow after.

"Silver?" Tails asks and the horse Mobian nods. "It's what he told us to call him when he arrived about four... Coming to be five years now." The older Mobian says.

"What happened to him?" One of the other Mobians ask him and Tails tells them what Silver to him, although when he got to the part

about Richard, the whole group apparently know who Richard was.

"I'm going to have to disengage his armor..." The horse Mobian mutters and Tails turns to watch. Seconds alter, the Mobian peels away some sections of metal. He moves to help and by the time they have Silver out of the armor, Tails couldn't help this odd lump within him at the sight of the robot's base form.

A hedgehog... Looks like a Robian... Tails thinks though feeling glad that Silver wasn't blue or he wouldn't know what to think. "That's what he looks like? Why, he looks like a Robian..." One of the group says and he's kind of glad that he's not the only one to notice the similarities.

"Are we sure he's not a Robian?" Another wonders and the horse Mobian sighs. "He seemed pretty sure that he wasn't."

"Let's get him loaded up and take him to that CR chamber he created for repairing himself." One of the Mobians says and they all seem to be in agreement. Tails helps but stays behind for a few seconds to send a brief report before taking after the group, more then a little curious to see what this CR chamber is.

Two Hours Later

Tails couldn't help but feel a headache as he tried to hack into Silver's computer. The keyword is tried since the computer wouldn't response to his attempts and had continuously caused his handle computer to restart as well as lose any and all date concerning Silver's mainframe.

Finally, Tails decides to head off to get a bite to eat as well as to radio in with Rotor about Silver. It had taken about fifteen minutes for the repairs to be finished to Silver's systems but it seems as if it'll take a few hours before Silver's batter is filled. Apparently, Silver is capable of running a week on a single recharge.

By the time he returns, Tails groans at the fact that somebody had indeed stolen Silver during his twenty minute absence.

Six Hours Later

Doctor Eggman

"Now let's see what secrets you hold." Eggman says once the Mobian Richard left with his money. His robotic servants had, during his conversation with Richard, hooked wires into Silver's outlets before putting the strange metallic being into a tube and then fill it causing Silver's seemingly incomplete form to float.

Within a few keystrokes, Eggman begins the process of hacking into Silver's systems so he can find out just what makes this robot so special. Within twenty minutes, something goes horribly wrong.

Sally

"Project Trojan is active!" Rotor says as her friend enters into her office. "Trojan? But we deleted all of that data!" Sally says as she stands up to hurry out of the room.

"Where is it?" Sally asks and Rotor answers, "It's attacking Eggman's systems. They're system's defenses are responding but it'll be over, we think, in less then fifteen minutes, thirty if the defenses manage to fully activate."

"I would have thought it would be sooner..." Sally muses and Rotor points out, "Eggman's systems are different then Robotnik's but the virus seems to be adapting fairly well to the different system."

"Do you think that... I mean, the chip was the only thing we never found to destroy..." Sally says as they entered into the massive computer room.

"That might be a possibility." Rotor says, knowing what she's referring too. For which Sally is glad, although at the sight of seeing

Shadow standing before the large screen, he asks, "Project Trojan... What is it exactly?"

"A computer virus designed to infect Robotnik's systems. Sadly, we couldn't infect his systems through our connections into his system without jeopardizing our systems." She explains as Rotor moves to the computer console to bring up the status of Project Trojan.

"We created a device that can be worn on the wrist, that's designed to upload the virus directly and wirelessly into Robotnik's mainframe. The process of uploading the virus should have taken about two hours, three and a half tops." Rotor picks up as she watches the virus' progress in Eggman's systems.

"It was Sonic's last mission. The one that he didn't return from or found a body from." Sally finishes and Shadow's eyes narrow slightly as the black hedgehog frowns.

"Which means that Doctor Eggman might have recovered Sonic's body?" Shadow asks slowly after a few seconds. "It's would contain the last traces of Project Trojan in the form of the device." Sally tells him.

"I've messaged Tails about this development." Rotor says and Sally could only imagine what's going on within the twin tailed fox's mind.

Tails

Growling softly, Tails just continues through the vents until he discovers the lab that holds Silver and pauses as Eggman lets loose a string of curses. It seems that Eggman is trying to shut down his system but its not responding to his attempts.

Tails watches in a type of fascination as Eggman picks up one of the bots and tries to break through the glass. Shaking his head, Tails frowns as suspicions begin to bloom within his mind. *Silver's no robot, he's a Robian. And I can only think of one hedgehog who's connected to Project Trojan...*

"Looks like the Brain-Burn-Thru software shorted out by Trojan... But not before clearing away Sonic's personality and memories... Leaving him to be a blank slate." Tails muses softly to himself, oddly enough feeling comforted by the sound of his own voice.

The lights begin to flicker as Tails takes out his computer to report his findings. Silver's eyes seem to flicker to life and that causes explosions to begin and the lights flicker, but he had managed to spot Eggman freezing up in his attempts to get Silver out of the tank. He felt more comfortable thinking of his Roboticized friend by the name he choice while as a Robian then by his true name.

Finally, the smoke clears and after waiting a few minutes to finish his message, he kicks the grid and enters into the room. He uses his flashlight to light up what he can of the Roboticized Overlander, it seems as though, once again, Project Trojan was an overwhelming success.

"Silver?" Tails asks as he stands before the tube. Silver moves his head slightly to gaze at him. "Can you get out of there?" He asks and Silver's optical sensors blink before the Robian slowly and jerkily moves to rip the wires from his body.

Once the wires were disconnected, Silver seems to straighten before punching the tube. Cracks begin to appear as Silver continues to pound on the tube until it finally gives. Tails moves to the side before the tube finally gives, allowing Silver to drop to the floor of the tube's floor.

"Where... am... I?" Silver asks and he answers, "In one of the many labs of Doctor Eggman. Although I'm pretty sure we might not have to worry about him any more."

Tails offers his hand as Silver, shakily, stands up and after a few kicks, Silver gets out of the tube. "Was anyone harmed when they came for me?" Silver asks, which means that Silver came through it with a set of memories intact.

"Richard returned a few hours after you took that missile for me and dragged you out of the shop." Tails informs and Silver says, "Good to know."

"Reinforcements should soon arrive and then we'll try reversing your Roboticization." He informs Silver and Silver seems to stiffen. "But..." Silver trials off.

"You're Sonic the hedgehog. We never did find your body and all of the data tracks in Robotnik's computers were erase using a classified project called Trojan. So we didn't know what happened and the two survives seem to have short term brain damage in regards to what happened that day. But considering how you are now, I'd say that he got you into a Roboticizer and that during the process, Project Trojan managed to finish downloading into his system." He explains after blasting the door so they can enter into the hallway.

"I was affected by Project Trojan then?" Silver asks and he hums in agreement. "Seems so, it likely didn't help that you were in ground zero when the project was released. I believe the virus got installed during the process of your Roboticization and remained, which is why when I or Eggman tried to connect with your mainframe, my computer was forced to restart and this happened here." Tails informs Silver.

"How are your reserves?" Tails asks and Silver answers, "I'll likely shut down as soon as we stop. I don't have much time to recharge."

Tails smiles slightly, he could only guess why Silver's active at all but is at least glad for the chance to get to know Silver as he is now. "So... what have you been up to since you woke?" Tails asks as they enter into a stair case.

The End

Paintings: Digimon

I don't own Digimon.

Takato

"Mom? Dad? Mom? Hello! Anyone here?" He calls out as he wanders in this really spooky dark place. He shivers and wraps his arms around him as he tries his hardest to suppress his feelings of loneliness and hopelessness.

"Please, can anybody hear me? I... I don't know where I am..." He says sobbing as his voice breaks and he stops walking to sit on the floor. Holding his knees to his chest, he cries as the situation finally overwhelms him.

He didn't know how long he sat there crying, but slowly he became aware of something glowing before him. The sound of wind chimes finally causes him to rub his eyes with the back of his hands as to get a better look at the source of the light. Blinking, he tries to rub his eyes with his palms but sure enough, the image before him hadn't changed.

"Are you fireflies?" He asks, his despair forgotten for the moment as he studies the golden glowing creatures before him. The group of five simply chime and giggle, which for some reason makes him feel a bit better.

"Can you guys help me find my parents? I think they're lost." He tells the very interesting creatures. The five giggle and chime among themselves before they somehow float off the ground to surround him.

"You know where they are?" He asks the glowing creatures hopefully as he gets up off the ground. He makes sure to brush his pants

before allowing himself to be escorted anywhere.

The glowing creatures just chime at him as three lead and two fly on his either side. Along the way, he couldn't help but wonder how he arrived here, in this cave since he had, last he checked, been playing in the basement. It kind of bothered him since his parents had reassured him that there wasn't any secret passage way leading into the sewers or into the shadow world where nightmare monsters live and rule, like Kazu had told him during recess a few weeks ago while they were practicing a fire drill.

What seems like forever, they finally arrived at some stone room. He couldn't help but frown as he glances around, looking for the familiar bags of flour that are usually kept in the basement of their house, a house that also serves as the family bakery. "I don't think this is my parents' basement, you guys." He informs the five glowing creatures who were circling overhead.

He sits down on the ground after he decided that he's tired of walking around. "I wonder if this means I don't have to worry about kindergarten?" He wonders, after all, he had been attending to a whole four months now.

He tries to imagine a life without going to school and after a while, that lead him to think about the fact that he may never see his new friends, cousin, and parents ever again cause he did the impossible and found that hidden passage that his parents told him didn't exist but obviously does or he wouldn't be in this cave with those strange firefly like creatures that have grown in number...

He frowns as he glances up and tries to count but it's really hard cause he can't remember what comes pass seven so he just decides to round their number up to at least a hundred, however many that's suppose to mean... He scowls at himself as he gives his head a shake since he couldn't help but feel as if there's something that he should be worried about...

Well... They haven't swarmed me so they can't eat little kids... Or maybe they're just waiting to fatten me up before eating me? I think that's going to take a long time cause I'm pretty small and scrawny. He thinks as he extends his arm to study it for a few seconds.

Scratching his head, he couldn't help but glance around at the stone walls. "Hey! There's pictures on those walls!" He says with a grin. It wasn't long before he moves to look at the pictures on the walls, he tries really, really hard to resist the urge to touch them cause he's sure he'll get into trouble touching them since they remind him of those flat stones with worn pictures on them.

Ignoring the chiming sounds and giggles coming from those firefly creatures, he tries to figure out what kind of story the pictures were displaying since that's what his parents told him about such things when he asked them. *That one looks like an angel... If that one is an angel then I guess the black one is a type of devil.*

Moving to the right, he finds another image and it displays a huge image that seems to dominate the picture. The symbol contains an upside down triangle in a circle with three triangles touching the points of the upside down triangle within the circle. Around the edges of the picture show odd looking people and monsters that look like they're attacking the symbol.

I wonder if that means that the symbol is a crest or a coat of arms belonging to some enemy... He wonders as he stares up at the symbol, wondering what kind of person could cause monsters to gang up to attack him. *Must be a knight.* He decides with a grin, feeling as if he solved a mystery of the ages, he then moves to the left to see the other picture on the other side shows.

Kuzuhamon

She pauses to glance at the swarm of Digi-Gnomes flying about the ceiling of the room, her irritation at her mediation somewhat forgotten at the sight of so many in this one place. A few part from the overhead swarm to hover before her, chiming at her. It takes a few

seconds before she looks pass the group of three to see what appears to be a human child gazing at the mural displaying historical accounts.

Must be a Bakamon... She thinks with a hint of irritation coming through. Walking over to the 'child', she asks in a mildly angry tone, "What are you doing here? This place is under my protection."

The little one whirls after jumping slightly to stare at her and as the child stares at her with widen eyes, she manages to keep her thoughts and feelings from altering her face as she realizes that this is indeed a human child.

"My parents told me that there wasn't a secret passage in the basement so it was safe for me to play down there, only I managed to find the passage and found myself in this cave. I got tired of walking and I called out for my mom and dad, but they didn't answer so I finally stopped walking to sit down, cause my feet were starting to ache cause of all the walking." She blinks as the child continues in a way that makes her wonder if he ever pauses to breath, "Then these glowing fireflies showed up and then I followed them through the tunnels since I thought they'd take me to where my parents are but they brought me to this room and then they stared to fly up around the ceiling, leaving me to sit down on the ground. Next thing I know, there's like a hundred of them flying up there!"

As the boy is about to continue, she holds up her hand as she sighs while trying to make sense of everything the child before her has told her. "How old are you?" She asks and the boy blinks before answering, "I'm six! I've been in kindergarten for four months already too!"

She shakes her head slightly as she smiles slightly at how proud the boy sounds. "Do you know where my mom and dad are?" The boy asks after biting his lower lip and looking up at her with his hazel red eyes that are alight with hope.

"I've got a general idea of where they are." She replies, its not a lie since it's clear that his parents were in the human world, she just hasn't a clue where in that world they are though. *I'm just glad that I look 'human' at this moment since I doubt the boy would be so bold otherwise.* She muses.

"I'm Takato by the way, what's your name?" Takato asks and she answers, "Just call me Kuzu."

"Ok Kuzu!" Takato says after giggling slightly at her 'name'. *Damned if I'm going to be the one explaining to him about the Digital world and what a Digimon is. After all, it's not as if he's going to remember this. Human kids this young do tend to forget about things, so no harm done.*

"Hey, Kuzu? What does that triangle symbol mean?" Takato asks after he takes her hand and kind of directs her attention to the right most portion of the wall.

Blinking, she glances at the image but freezes at the sight of the symbol of the Digital Hazard. "What do you think it is?" She manages to ask after a few minutes of silence between them.

"Is it a coat of arms belonging to a knight?" Takato asks her once she turns to look at him, his head cocked to the side and she couldn't help but laugh at the suggestion. "What makes you think it's a knight?" She asks the innocent, human child before her.

"Cause all of those monsters and people are attacking the symbol! Only reason why monsters would gang up on anyone would be cause they were a great hero! Though I guess the knight lost or else his image would be at the center of this picture instead of his crest..." Takato says with a frown as the boy glances from her face to the picture.

She couldn't help but close her eyes as she shakes her head for a few seconds as she weights the idea of telling him the truth or leaving the whole thing alone. *Out of all of the historic accounts, why*

would this chamber choose now to display it? She wonders before frowning slightly as she turns to stare at the symbol. *Particularly why with a human child within it?*

She turns to regard the boy, a child young enough to so very impressionable and trusting? Full of dreams that he was drawn into the Digital world from the basement of his very home. Then suddenly her vision seems to vanish the surroundings around the boy and before her eyes, the child before her morphed into a much older version of himself, a version who's wearing a pair of yellow goggles upon his head.

This version of Takato turns to look at her and she finds herself grazing into a slightly more mature set of hazel red eyes. She still found within them hope and dreams, but she also found hints of sorrow, anger, despair, and mule headed stubbornness as well. The image of the young preteen retreats and then, before her, she finds a knight displaying the symbol of the Digital Hazard.

The armor of the knight continues to shift between blue and silver to white and red. *Gallantmon...* She muses, though she hadn't realized that there were any other versions of Gallantmon that were blue and silver...

Finally the vision fell away, leaving her with only the impression that the only sure thing to come was that the boy before her will one day become partnered with a Digimon, a Digimon who's mega form will be Gallantmon or a type of Gallantmon. *I'm sill not going to inform him of where he is or what I am.* She thinks as she glances away from Takato.

"All I can say is that this symbol is a very powerful one among my people. It's hard for me to explain what it represents since its really complicated and long story, one that I doubt you'll be around to hear since I have an idea of how to get you home." She says and Takato looks at her with wide eyes filled with relief and joy.

"Really?" The boy asks and she nods with a soft smile, "Really."

Before she can place a sleeping spell on him, a Digi-Gnome appears between them and suddenly, the swarm seems to engulf the boy, pushing the boy towards the only wall that has never displayed any historic accounts. With a frown, she follows after, wondering what they want of the young boy.

Takato

"Hey look! There's paint here!" He says as the fireflies let up on pushing him to this wall. "Hey! This wall is blank..." He adds as he sizes up the wall.

"Hey Kuzu, do you think it'd be alright if we draw on it?" He asks the beautiful lady wearing purple and black cloths as he picks up a brush that's on a latter. "If I were to guess, I'd say that we've been invited to just that." Kuzu informs him in a dry tone.

He glances over at Kuzu before glancing up at the fireflies that have once more resumed circling overhead. "Maybe we can paint one of those fireflies and other stuff, like a knight and a dragon!" He says as he grins as he tries to imagine what kind of dragon he'd like to paint on the wall. "Well, I've got no objections to the firefly idea..." Kuzu admits.

Eight Years Later

"Bright idea, goggle-head. 'Maybe it's in that cave over there.'" Rika says and he just sighs as they follow Guilmon as the red Digimon sniffs the ground.

"Well, how was I to know that we'd be experiencing an earth quake? I didn't even know the Digital world gets earthquakes..." He replies and the fourteen year old red head just huffs slightly and seems to quicken her pace to get pass him. He just sighs and wishes this Chamber of History was easier to find.

"Takato?" Guilmon asks him and he replies, "Yes Guilmon?" The virus rookie turns to look at him with a slightly puzzled look on his

face as his partner asks, "I think I smell you."

They all stop and he feels his face heat up while Rika looks bemused while Renamon moves to stand next to Guilmon. "Oh come on... You were there when I bathed in that river, Guimon, I can't possible smell that bad right now..." He says but Guilmon shakes his head.

"I smell a very old you by this shoe print." Guilmon explains and he perks. "Shoe print?" He asks and Renamon kneels down to examine the print as he gets closer to where his partner is standing.

"It looks like a child's sandal print." Renamon confirms and he bends down to get a look. He frowns before he freezes to glance around the tunnel that they're in. He tries to recall something but it just slips away.

"The prints seem to be heading off in that direction." Renamon says as the fox Digimon points off down a side tunnel. "This feels kind of familiar... All that's missing are fireflies..." He muses softly to himself as he stares down the tunnel as that feeling of familiarity returns.

"Fireflies?" He hears Rika and Guilmon wonder but he doesn't reply as he begins to wall down in that direction. He hears the others follow him but his thoughts weren't really on his current surroundings.

This is getting kind of freaky... He thinks to himself as a memory of him feeling lost, alone, and hopeless arouses from within his mind. At the sight of stone walls, he pauses as he feels himself getting cold.

"But I was six!" He mutters as his memory suddenly clears to crystal, as if just returning to the site has helped him recall those memories. "Takato? Are you ok?" Guilmon asks him and he blinks as he turns to look at his partner.

"I'm not sure, but I've been here before... The fireflies brought me here... I met Kuzu here... We painted on one of the walls..." He says and he finally remembers what those fireflies looked like. "They were Digi-Gnomes!"

"Let's get this straight, you were six when you visited this place? That the Digi-Gnomes brought you here?" Rika asks him and he nods. "I got lost in our basement," Rika snorts softly, "and after a while, I got tired and sat down. A while later five glowing creatures, Digi-Gnomes, appeared. I asked them to take me back to my parents and they lead me here, to this chamber."

As he touches the stone walls by the entrance he continues, "I sat down and after a while, more Digi-Gnomes appeared and they circled up at the ceiling. I finally got bored and decided to check out the wall pictures to the right... The first one had an image of an angel facing a devil. The picture to the right of that one had... it had... Oh!" His eyes lit up as he turns to look at Guilmon as if something finally made some weird sense.

"Saw what?" Rika asks and he points to Guilmon. "The symbol on Guilmon's chest at the center of the picture with a bunch of monsters and people attacking it."

He doesn't feel like telling them what he thought the symbol was of. *Might explain why it was added to Guilmon... After all, I had thought it a knight's coat of arms...* He thinks as they enter into the stone chamber.

"Huh, the images are different then what I remember..." He muses as he heads to the right once they were in the chamber to study the wall he recalls seeing the image of the Digital Hazard. "This is what we were looking for." Renamon says as she touches the wall.

"What does it say?" He asks Renamon as she studies the symbols about the picture. "It just details the first coming of the D-Reaper to the Digital world." The yellow rookie informs him.

"Hey, Takato! Is this the wall you painted on?" Rika calls out and glances behind him, he finds that both Guilmon and Rika were standing before the wall he recalls painting on. "Yes it is." He admits as he jogs over to where they're standing.

"Is that suppose to be us?" Guilmon asks him as Guilmon touches the image of a red knight with white wings coming out of the knight's back. "I was only six." He admits as he gazes at the image.

"Who did you say helped with this?" Rika asks as she stands by the area where he wrote his name. "Kuzu, why?" He asks curiously and Rika moves to reveal the name Kuzuhamon under his name.

"But she looked human! Sure, she was wearing purple and black, but there wasn't a mask on her face..." He says as he just stares.

"You did a good job, Takatomon! I'm surprised you don't have your own art show!" Guilmon says and he sighs as he shakes head. "I was only six..." He says as he glances at the various figures painted onto the wall, particularly a group of kids sitting under a rainbow, a group that numbers the total of Tamers which also includes Impmon's two Tamers as well.

"I can't believe you painted your goggles..." Rika says with a sigh and he blinks as he turns to see what Rika's talking about. "I didn't paint that, Kuzu did." He admits, although he did wonder how she knew...

The End

The List Part 4: Digimon

I don't own Digimon.

"Five new rules... Huh, look at that, I guess that poll finally ended." Takato muses while Calumon and Guilmon munch on some day old bread items and pastries.

#11) When about to do battle with any Digimon trying to take over the Digital world, you may not use the following war cries: ~ Kari

- "For the Horde!"

- "Let's get dangerous!"

- "Bring it ON!"

- "Stop poking ME!"

- "Let's rock this joint!"

- "In the name of the Moon, we shall punish you!"

- "Five points if you get them in the chest! Fifteen for head shoots!"

- "Thunder! Thunder! THUNDERCATS HO!"

- "Slag those data scumbags!"

"I just know Terriermon's going to be using one of those next time a Digimon Bio-Emerges..." Takato murmurs while wondering if he shouldn't add something informing the green rookie that goes for their group too.

#12) No trying to start a cult centered around Digimon, our crests, the Digital world, yourself, and fellow Digidestine. ~ Kari

"Well, duh, but then, it's kind of too late since Ryo already has a cult following..." Takato admits with a sigh.

#13) Stop informing people that we are a super secret sub-division of some government agency, we have enough trouble as things stand now. ~ Kari

#14) Stop trying to tell people that Mimi, Yolei, Ken, and myself are Royalty and as such you along with us have diplomatic immunity because you are our 'bodyguard'. ~ Kari

Takato chuckles as he shakes his head, wondering what kind of ideas will start floating about in Terriermon's head. "Rika's not going to enjoy this idea one bit."

#15) While I can't stop you from having your partner and/or yourself from taking up offers to sell products, you are to re-frame from acting as another Digidestine/Digimon's agent. ~ Kari

"What you readin' Takatomon?" Guilmon asks as he chuckles softly. "Just non-sense that will likely give Terriermon ideas." Takato informs his partner.

"If you say so, Takato, if you say so..." Guilmon says, clearly not understanding it. Takato hums thoughtfully as he notices that a certain function is still active.

"What the... Huh... I wonder if Kari gave him permission to add those rules..." Sora wonders as she re-reads the rules that Kari and that kid Takato had posted.

#11) When about to do battle with any Digimon trying to take over the Digital world, you may not use the following war cries: ~ Kari

- "For the Horde!"

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- "Thunder! Thunder! THUNDERCATS HO!"

- "Slag those data scumbags!"

a) I would like to inform that I support the banning of these war cries in our group, too, alright Terriermon? ~ Takato

b) I don't suppose I could add, "Resistance if futile, be prepared to be assimilated" to the list? Or any Star Trek references? ~ Yolei

c) Might want to include Star Wars too. ~ Joe

Sora just sighs and wonders if they shouldn't just ban using current slang altogether before moving onto the next rule.

#12) No trying to start a cult centered around Digimon, our crests, the Digital world, yourself, and fellow Digidestine. ~ Kari

a) Kind of too late for our group... ~ Takato

b) Really? Who/What is getting worshiped? ~ Yolei

c) I'd rather not say but sadly, my two friends of mine are the high priests. The sad part is, they have a massive following, much to Rika and his dismay. ~ Takato

d) How well is this guy taking it? ~ Joe

e) Kind of well, but then, he doesn't live in our district. Although, I'm starting to wonder if he hasn't slipped off to spend a month or two in the Digital world... ~ Takato

f) I wonder if his school work has suffered... ~ Yolei

#13) Stop informing people that we are a super secret sub-division of some government agency, we have enough trouble as things stand now. ~ Kari

a) This one is really iffy, considering we have been known to work with a 'supposed' secret agency. Not so secret now a days but it was when we started our group. ~ Takato

b) Hey, is that the Hypnos that Terriermon pranked? ~ Yolei

c) Yea. ~ Takato

d) Justice got served, didn't it? ~ Yolei

e) I rather not talk about it. ~ Takato

#14) Stop trying to tell people that Mimi, Yolei, Ken, and myself are Royalty and as such you along with us have diplomatic immunity because you are our 'bodyguard'. ~ Kari

a) Terriermon and anybody else, this goes for our group too. ~ Takato

b) Which members of your group are entitled? ~ Yolei

c) Odd question cause I thought you'd guys know which two I'm talking about... ~ Takato

d) Really? I'm pretty sure I haven't heard of anyone in America getting some kind of royal digital title... ~ Joe

e) I'm with Joe. ~ Yolei

f) Who says Terriermon and I live in America? ~ Takato

g) Well, where do you live then? ~ Yolei

h) In Japan. ~ Takato

i) Really...? ~ Joe

j) I'm pretty sure, I am a Digimon Tamer after all. ~ Takato

k) Tamer? ~ Yolei

l) Well, there was this one time an Omnimon called us Chosen... ~ Takato

m) Might have been a prank from Matt and Tai... ~ Joe

n) It would have been pretty impossible prank to pull off since we did fight Gulfmon... ~ Takato

o) Gulfmon? Never heard of him... ~ Yolei

p) Well, his role behind the V-Pets never got revealed. ~ Takato

q) I think I'm going to wait for reinforcements before touching that one. ~ Yolei

"This is kind of disturbing..." Sora muses as she tries to recall anything about V-Pets. "Just who are you Takato?" The Digidestine of Love wonders after a few minutes before she continues onto the next rule.

#15) While I can't stop you from having your partner and/or yourself from taking up offers to sell products, you are to re-frame from acting as another Digidestine/Digimon's agent. ~ Kari

a) Don't have a comment for this one, Takato? ~ Yolei

b) Not really, after all, there are tons of Digimon products out on the market. Heck, I hear they were about to release a new Digimon manga before the D-Reaper show up. ~ Takato

c) I don't know how to reply to that. ~ Joe

d) I'm starting to worry about that since the D-Reaper was a global incident, it was impossible to miss since it lasted a few months. It had caused a lots of people to immigrate from those cities it occupied and was 'digesting'. ~ Takato

Sora couldn't help but shiver for some unknown reason every time she looked at the word D-Reaper. 'I already don't like that word and this is, like, the first time I've heard of it.'

#16) Tamers: Do Not Ever Give Calumon Sake or any other type of alcoholic drink! If you do, then not only are you on your own in explaining to Jeri about it but you get the job of cleaning up after him! I know you were joking about it Impmon but I'm standing firm on this. ~ Takato

a) I think this is a very good rule for us to have too. All though I'm not sure Digimon can get drunk... going to have to talk with Izzy about that one. ~ Joe

#17) Tamers: I'm totally forbidding people from showing/taking Calumon and Guilmon to any horror movies. That includes watching horror shows and reading horror manga/novels to them. My parents' weren't happy to have Guilmon and Calumon waking up screaming from nightmares after **somebody** showed them Aliens. ~ Takato

a) I thought Jeri's Calumon's partner... ~ Yolei

b) Jeri's just somebody he hangs out with the most, I doubt he'll ever partner up with a human. ~ Takato

c) That would mean that Guilmon is your partner? What is does a Guilmon look like anyway? ~ Yolei

d) ... Well... he's red big goof-ball of rookie. ~ Takato

e) A picture would be nice. ~ Joe

f) Can we even post picture on this site cause I keep getting an error message trying to send an image to that E-Mail address that's causing your name to be highlighted. ~ Takato

g) I'm running into the same problem. :(~ Yolei

'That just seems to bring up more questions.' Sora muses as she does get an error message trying to E-Mail Takato but don't when trying for Joe and Yolei.

#18) Tamers: It would be a big boost in public relations if Impmon would stop parading around the tunnel as a vampire kid to scare tourists. It would be even better if Terriermon would stop charging those same tourists fake wards before they enter into the tunnel. ~ Takato

a) Is there something special about this tunnel? ~ Yolei

b) Well, we did face off against some strange Digimon vanishing thing within it and we did use it for a few other things. I should point out that this is the same tunnel Terriermon took refuge in. ~ Takato

c) Must be a very useful tunnel then. ~ Joe

d) It works when our partners have trouble returning to their rookie forms, though that's becoming rarer now a days. ~ Takato

e) You're partners have trouble becoming rookies again? Huh, we are usually having troubles getting them to become champions... ~ Joe

f) Well, Calumon had been the catalyst of Digivolution. We think he gave that up to be a normal Digimon, though he doesn't act normal by any stretch of the imagination... Guess that's part of his charm. ~ Takato

g) ... If you say so... ~ Joe

h) Agreed. ~ Yolei

Sora couldn't help but stare at the screen as she re-reads that particular bit of information. "Definitely something to ask Gennai about." Sora decides in a firm tone.

#19) Tamers: As far as we're aware, the Digital world doesn't have any holidays, so, you guys know who you are, stop trying to get out of tests or get an extension on your homework by claiming such things. ~ Takato

a) I get the feeling that Kari's going to agree with this particular rule. ~ Yolei

b) I think I've seen Davis try this once... Or was it Tai? ~ Joe

c) It was Davis. ~ Yolei

"I'm surprise Joe hasn't mentioned that the Bakemon having that one holiday..." Sora muses as she recalls that eventful ceremony.

#20) Tamers: Impmon, please obey the speed limits while driving around the city on Behemoth. (Just how did that bike follow you to the real world any way?)

a) Do I dare asked what Behemoth is? ~ Joe

b) It's just a digital motorcycle that seems to possess anyone other then Impmon. Usually appears when Impmon is Beelzemon. ~ Takato

Sora glances up as her cell phone rings a familiar tone. With a smile, the Digidestine of Love picks up the phone, the computer forgotten as she begins to chat with her boyfriend about their up coming date.

To Be Continued . . .

Kind of a Song Fic: Naruto

I don't own Naruto .

To Readers: The lyrics are my own, so I hope I saved you from trying to find said song off of the internet.

'I hold my hand out

My heart beats rapidly

As my being aches

With loneliness

My offer of friendship

Hangs there

Between us

With hope lighting up my eyes

Waiting for you to accept it

To help me

To heal the wounds of my soul

For unlike the wounds of my body

Time does nothing

Nothing to the bleeding of my soul

So with hope aflame within me

I offer you my hand

Waiting for a friend

To save me

To help me

To heal me

The look in your eyes

Will haunt me

As you slap my hand

My hand that's waiting there

Then you turn away from me

Leaving me

Watching you

As you walk away

Ignoring my cries

Ignoring my being

Why can't you see

How much you mean to me

As tears trail down my face

As a new cut upon my soul

Begins bleed a new

Around me

Nobody sees me

As I stand there

Crying away

With loneliness

Pressing in from all around me

Why can't you all

Hear me

As I cry my heart out

Why must loneliness be all that I know?

What have I done to deserve this?

To deserve this aching in my soul?

I'm becoming hollow

As emotions bleed

Bleed right out of me

Leaving me feeling loneliness

And knowing despair

These wound upon my soul

Weigh down on me

As life passes me by

As you did

As you all did

Leaving me to drown

In loneliness

As you drift in and out of my life

Never stopping

To see me

To be with me

To stand by me

Leaving me to cry

Leaving me to die

On my own

Always on my own

Never seen

Always grieving

For what I never had'

He glances over his work and he couldn't hep but feel a bit lighter now that he's captured his feelings on paper. With a sigh, he blinks a few times before he puts his signature to it.

'Naruto Uzumaki'

With that, he picks up the sheet and puts it into a familiar shoe box before putting the shoe box back into the space between the floor boards.

He does look through the various other sheets, a few pictures he drew using a 'stolen' box of crayons. Of course he had found them in the trash but some guys found him before he put them under his shirt and tried to take them from him as well as give him a beating. Luckily, the guy had died by the time he jumped the fence, it seems that somebody paid for said guy to be hit.

On some colored paper were diagrams of a labyrinth he plans to build when he became Hokage to fend off the 'dreaded' paperwork. He snorts softly as he recalls how he once believed that paperwork was the ultimate evil, now he knows that evil comes from the source not the paperwork itself.

Still... that labyrinth might not be such a bad idea because it would keep unwanted distractions from entering into my office when I'm busy. He admits as he comes to his earliest works in writing, inspired by bits and pieces of stories he manage to overhear before being driven away.

Finally he gets to his early attempts at song crafting. He's also been able to get some music lessons using Henge jutsu. It had taken time but he even manage to collect some broken music instruments and repaired them. Although he doesn't keep them in his apartment but at this underground fusion that might have been created during the last war.

Though, now that he's got shadow clones, he's been able to practice with those instruments everyday while he's with his 'team'. He's also been slowly expanding into other fields that were denied to him.

I didn't so much as choice to be a ninja as been guided into it. The old man is a very skilled Shepard, too bad he's forgotten that threats don't always come from beyond the 'flock' but from within. He thinks

with a sigh before he raises an eyebrow at some actual sheets of music within the box.

It takes him a second before he recalls how they came to be within the box. *And I've only known the jutsu for about two weeks... I wonder what kind of edits will come about with this one?*

Finally, he adds the as yet named song to the sheets before putting it all back into the shoe box. Once the floor panel is back in place, he makes a bee line to boil some water so he can have a few cups of Ramen. *I wonder if I shouldn't create a few female clones to take some cooking class so I can actually eat something that isn't a pack of dry noodles.*

Territory: InuYasha

I don't own InuYasha.

The mist curls about the meadow as he enters it. He brushes his braid off his left shoulder as he stalks through the thick mist, his pointed ears keen for any noise as he tries to look more relaxed then what he feels. His eyes focused on a spot before him as he tries not to react to the slight rustling coming from the tree tops.

"Senji of the house of Yousai." A dull orange Oni standing eleven feet in height says before appearing out of the mist. Resting just behind the Oni's neck is a large broad sword that's slightly caked with dry blood. The opposing demon has a tiger pelt about his waist with a thick golden collar with gems in it rests about the Oni's neck.

"Senji of the house of Sofu actually. Lord Gin decided it was time for me to become head of my own house." He states calmly as a few more of the Oni appear, all of them shorter then the brute standing casually across from him.

The Oni smirks before addressing him. "So then, without Yousai Gin's protection you came with tribute to keep me satisfied?" The demon asks him and he snorts.

"I'm here to clear you from my lands, oaf. If anything, you should be paying me tribute, dim wit." He says in a manner that adults reserve for young children.

The orange Oni grips the hilt of his sword as the demon glares at him. "Like a mutt like you can't best me! I, Yasei of the Oni clan, pure of breeding can't be bested by a demonic mutt like yourself." Yasei boasts, slashing the air with his mighty sword.

It always comes back to that, does it? He muses with a mental sigh, after all, it's not like he has any human blood in him.

"Oh yes, I'm such a weak demon that I'm restricted to only my beast form. Oh dear me, what ever shall I do?" He states in a sarcastic tone which cause the Oni demons to growl at him for the mocking their leader.

"Blood freak!" A dark blue Oni snaps to his left while another to his right rumbles, "Weak human wanna be!"

He really had to resist rolling his eyes at their non-original insults. "Enough talk, you die now, mutt!" The leader of the lot growls and within seconds the large sword is into the ground where he had been just seconds ago.

His hand had slipped through Yasei's neck with little effort, killing the demon before the oaf knew what happened. He yanks his arms from the corpse and turns to face the rest of the clan that's circling about him.

He shakes his right hand slightly and the some of the blood covering it flies off, leaving the rest to drip off his hand. It wasn't long before another of the foolish Oni charges at him, he didn't bother to move until the last moment.

He left hand enters into the Oni's shoulder and with ease, with his right hand he grips the injured Oni, using it as a shield from arrows fired off from the tree line. As he allows the meat shield to fall to the ground, he makes sure to shatter the Oni's skull before he races after the archers.

As he leaps over the front line defenders of the archers, he crosses his arms over his chest and then uncrosses them calling out, "Blood Blades!" The blood sent flying from this motion of his hands suddenly glow before taking the form of thin lines that are sharp enough to cut through tree trunks.

A few of the tiny blades miss their targets and land on the ground, causing dust to get blasted into the air while those that hit their targets merely wounding the archers. He lands on the ground between two of the archers and swiftly slashes their throats before evading an axe blade, allowing the owner to become off balanced before shattering the demon's skull.

Blood mixed with grey matter get sprayed about. Fear fills the air as he dispatches three charging Oni demons without much trouble. The scene seems to freeze, none of the Oni moved and he takes a stance with his blood drenched arms and hands are held out in readiness.

After what feels like an eternity, one of the horned demons begins to whimper and drops its club as it turns to flee. With that, the stillness is broken and they begin to flee before him, no longer wanting to face him.

"Cowards." He states softly as he relaxes his stance. With a sigh, he leaps into the air. Within seconds a pair of brown feathered wings sprout from his back, his usually honey brown hair darkens as a deeper shade of brown with a few flakes of black appearing about his back.

From his butt a tail erupts and within seconds is covered with fur of the same shade as the rest of his body. A few feather fan out about the base of the tail. His ears move and broaden until they're on the top of his head. His forearms alter until they resemble the legs of a crow or a raven complete with wick ebony black talons while his legs bend twice as his feet become like the paws of a canine.

In the end, he resembles a large brown wolf with the wings, forelimbs, and tail of a bird of prey.

It's nice to be part hawk demon. He thinks with a decisively wolf like howl before taking off like an arrow after the fleeing Oni, hunting them like the rabbits they're intimidating.

After The Last Oni Is Dead. . .

"Good job, my lord!" A young demon calls out while trying to clean the golden collar that had been about the leader's neck.

He gives Tako, a young odd breed like himself, a look. "Tako, I don't suppose you tried to kill one, did you?" He asks after transforming back to his more humanoid form.

"I got the one that was trying to plunder this collar." The young tiger/tanuki demon says.

He nods before sighing as he begins to inspect his cloths. "At least I'm not wearing a silken Kimono or else I would had to get rid of it." He muses as he tries to wipe the back of his hand on his blood stained pants.

"True. Anyway, the others have had success in killing those that remained at the lair and are already packing up the treasure the Oni clan collected over the years they've wandered this stretch of land." Tako states while wrapping the collar in the cloth sheet before putting it into one of his pouches.

"I see." He says as he studies the quickly decaying body of the Oni he killed just moments ago. "Then let's head to the lair so that we can check on their progress of emptying their lair." He says as he glances at the young mixbreed.

"Right Lord Senji." The young demon says and takes the lead.

One more passing glance at the skeleton of the horned demon before they leave the clearing, entering into the trees, leaving the dead to lay where they had fallen.

The Black Gryphon of Hogwarts

I Don't Own Harry Potter!

October 26th

H arry raises his eyebrow as he studies the box with his name on it. He could only guess that this was the Halloween costume that he asked Fred & George for.

It's his third year at Hogwarts and somehow, the twins managed to get Professor McGonagall to sign costume permission forms that will allow members of her house to wear costume instead of their Hogwart robes.

Although Professor McGonagall had stated that the costumes had to be full body types since she didn't want any skin to be exposed. It seems that before she approved of the idea, she did a bit of research and happen across muggle ideas of costumes.

It didn't surprise him much when he noted a similar package resting on Ron's bed. He opens the package to find ebony black head that resembles a hawk or eagle's head, complete with feathers. The beak part of the costume is made out of a hard grey material.

He pulls the feathery costume out of the box and finds that it's actually a gryphon costume since the back part of the costume has that distinctive feline look about it. He raises an eyebrow at the bottom of the box.

As he sets the gryphon costume aside and picks up the veil of potion as well as the note that goes with it. The note told him to drink the potion before putting on the costume, it also suggested that he didn't wear any clothing underneath the costume either, which made his

face heat up at the thought of what could happen if the costume somehow ripped or something.

But in the end, he'll likely follow their advice if nothing else then to hope they knew what they were doing making such a request. After all, they wouldn't prank him, not when their sister had a crush on him...

Halloween Morning

H arry wakes earlier then usual and once he puts on his glasses one, he remembers what day it is. He glances around to make sure none of the others were up before heading to his trunk to take his costume out as well as that veil of potion.

Takes off his boxers before drinking from the potion. Once that's done, he begins to up on the costume. As he's about to put on the head, his body begins to tingle and without him doing anything, the head part of the costume seems to wrap itself about his head without much trouble.

Suddenly his head begins to throb and his sense of balance is through for a loop as he then blacks out.

When he wakes he groans slightly and as he moves, he feels as if something isn't right but in the end, he gets to his feet as he uses his wings to help him regain his balance while his tail twitches uncontrollably.

In the end, he heads out of his dorms and down into the common room. "Hey Harry! I see you got it on alright, huh?" One of the eight others in their costumes asks, likely one of the twins since there two foxes, a typical red one and then a black one.

"Itsss alrrightt." He slurs his words. He blinks in surprise but the other fox, the one that's black sighs. "It's likely the beak that's causing that effect." And the first fox nods in agreement.

He ducks his head in slight embarrassment but he finds a spot to sit down. Once he's sitting down, he takes his time to examine the others around him, they now total nine with him here.

The twins were likely the two foxes, he wonders which fox is which but decides that he couldn't be bothered and turns his attention to the stag that's seated on the couch. He cocks his head in a questioning manner and the stag seems to grin slightly. "Lee Jordan." The stag declares proudly.

He gives the lounging tigress the same look but she just shook her head. "She's been having us try and guess her name. It doesn't help that neither Fred or George here are helping us guess her name too." The white coloured rabbit says. The other rabbit which beyond being, a girl, is a brown in coloured.

He sighs and gives the last three passing glances. Starting from the right there was a pinto mare, then an African hunting dog, and finally a berobed figure that carries a scythe. "Deatthhh, rriighttt?" His beak slurs his words once more and figure nods.

"That I am." A faint voice says, one that sends chillies down his spine.

He turns his attention else where, specifically to one of the foxes. "Arre ttherre to be oothherr grryphhonss?" He asks and both foxes shake their heads. "Nope, you get to be our mascot." The red fox says.

"I see." He says, slightly proud that he didn't slur his words with that, although he had to focus on how to say it without slurring his words.

In time, the rest of the house woke and slowly the common room filled up as more canines, otters, badgers, squirrels, bats, monkeys, various felines, and other types of beasts including mythical beasts file into the common room, making him feel like he's at some kind of zoo.

In the end, once everyone was down and ready to go, they all marched as one through the exit. Then most turned to look at him and with a sigh, he takes the lead of the marry band of beasts, moving through the halls, many paintings seem stunned to see the parade of Gryffindors in full costume.

True, they would likely all have to race back up to their dorms to get their book bags and wands, but at this point, they likely more impressive without those items then with. Though he did privately wonder how Fred and George managed to distract Peeves, but decided to push it out of his mind until later.

About the corner leading into the Great Hall, he slows and then stops to turn around to make sure that everyone gets caught up.

"We're ready." The single boar of the group declares bravely and he nods his feathery head. "Right." He says and with that, he turns around and after taking a calming breath to help smooth his nerves, he presses on.

He keeps his pace slow as to make sure that everyone is following at his heels as he finally enters into the Great Hall. As he proudly leads his house through the doors, it wasn't long before the whole hall becomes silent and staring at them.

He continues to move towards more into the room and then moves towards their house table. He watches as the group splits apart into two groups, one moving to the opposite side of the table. They stand by the bench and then once everyone was in position, they all sit down on the bench while everybody outside of their house watches.

He catches sight of their head of house and could tell she looks pretty smug by their performance of house unity. It wasn't long before food arrives on their table and the other tables return to eating their breakfast.

They did have minor difficulties eating their food, him especially since he didn't have any teeth to chew any of his food. Although

anything beyond meat didn't look as appetizing as it usually did. He did notice that all those that were masquerading as meat-eaters stuck to meat while those dressed up as plant-eaters stuck to eating the fruit. Those that were generalists ate anything within reach.

Most were light eaters and in the end, not long after they arrived, many began to head back to the common room to get their stuff. In the end, those that stayed the longest were likely those that could stomach the various foods being served.

"I almost wish there had been more types of food then what there was." He hears Neville say. The usually timid boy is currently wearing one of the two costumes of a lion with the wings of a bird. "I wouldn't minded a carrot or three right now." Says a girl dressed up as a doe.

"Jusst be glad that thiss iss only temporary. We sshould be able to change out by dinner." He says in his best reassuring way. Neville nods in agreement while the girl becomes shy all of a sudden.

"So... what do you think of Hermione's costume?" Neville asks and he gives Neville his best puzzled look. "Huh?"

"She's the one dressed in that tigress suit." The doe explains. "Oh!" He says in a surprised fashion.

The conversation turns to the reaction from the other houses, the three of them pretty much agreed that they did leave a lasting impression on the rest of the school. It was a slight rush to pack up their school stuff and, of course, their wands.

"So you're the Black Gryphon, Harry!" Ron dressed up as a Minotaur. "The twinss gave me the cosstume, Ron. I didn't pick it." He says, he decided to keep his sentences short since it makes it easier for him to keep them from slurring.

"Let's get a move on it, Ron. We might be late for our first class!" One of their dorm-mates dressed as a bat hisses.

"Let'ss get going." He agrees as he slings his book bag over his right shoulder.

During Potions

H arry had a very bad feeling about what's going to happen during their potions class. After all, Snape had been eyeing their table all throughout lunch.

As they seat themselves among the tables. He watches as Mafloy glares at the pair seated at his usual potion table. He would grin broadly if it could at the blond's identification, although it wouldn't surprise him if Snape would narrow down who he is within seconds of taking a look about the room.

It wasn't long before Snape arrives through the doors, his robes blowing out about him like wings. "I expect that you who are wearing those ridiculous costumes to take off your head pieces before we begin." The bitter man declares.

"But, sir, we have permission to wear them throughout the day." One of the wolves say. The man glares at them.

"Take. Them. Off." The man snarls.

In the end, they all tried but to him, it was like trying to pull out their own hair, root and all.

"Sir, the head pieces won't come off!" Ron cries out and Snape stills.

The man raises his wand and mutters a spell that's aimed at one of those seated at his usual table. He's not the only one to wince as that student screams out in pain, the fur about their head is ripped out, leaving to bare the pink skin below.

That could have easily have been me! He gulps and he hears others gulp along side of him.

"Dean, are you alright mate?" Asks his dorm-mate who's dressed up as a bat once he's kneeling by the bear's side. Dean only whimpers in pain as his head begins to bleed.

He's not the only one to get out of his chair to gather about Dean's fallen form. Many of his house mates were glaring at the man who ripped out Dean's fur. "Let's get him to the hospital wing." Hermione says as she moves to help steady Dean while Ron moves to take Dean's other side.

Nobody moved to stop them as they all packed up their things and followed Dean to the hospital wing. While they're all worry for Dean, he could only imagine if they felt the same as he did at the thought that they have somehow become one with their costumes.

In The Hospital Wing

"Dear Merlin, what happened to him?" The school nurse cries out as she rushes forward to check Dean over.

"Professor Snape tried a spell to take off the head of Dean's costume. Instead it ripped all of his fur off his head." Hermione declares.

Madam Pomfrey pauses and turns to look at them all. "Why would Professor Snape cast this spell?" The nurse asks.

"Well, you see ma'am, none of us could take our costume heads off." Ron begins after they all looked at each other.

"I see." Madam Pomfrey says and then directs all of them to take a bed each before heading to her potions cabinet to get something to help Dean.

After about an hour, Dumbledore enters into the hospital wing with their house head. "Why aren't these students at their classes?" Professor McGonagall asks.

"They have informed me that during their potion class, Professor Snape ordered them all to take off their costume heads. When they weren't able to, Professor Snape casted a spell on Mr Thomas here to removed said piece of head gear." Madam Pomfrey says.

"Instead of causing the head piece to come off, it caused all the hair on Mr Thomas' head to be ripped out. They all came with him here and I've already examined most of them, headmaster. These are not costumes, they have somehow been transformed into what they appear to be! If this has happened to them, then it's happened to their whole house." Madam Pomfrey finishes.

"I see." Dumbledore says and Harry notices how Professor McGonagall seems to pick herself up. "Do you need any of my expertise, Pomfrey?" Their head of house asks and the nurse's expression softens.

"I think a chat with the Weasley twins is in order at the moment since according to those I've spoken too, they drank a potion that the twins handed out when they gave out the costumes." Madam Pomfrey says.

"I'll get on it right away." Professor McGonagall says and with that, she walks out of the hospital wing, leaving Dumbledore alone.

Madam Pomfrey and the headmaster made some small chat before the elderly man walks out of the room, leaving them once more alone with Madam Pomfrey.

He just sighs from his position on the bed. In the end, he felt a bit sleepy since he's so bore. He takes a pillow from the head of the bed and then lies on his belly with his head on the pillow. He curls up slightly and moves his free wing to help block the light from about the room.

Once he was comfortable, he begins to drift off into a light slumber.

End of the Year

"I wonder how my relatives will be explaining thisss." **H** arry muses as he steps off the train with his friends.

"I still can't believe that George is now an avatar of Death." Ron states as they step onto the platform, getting off the train.

"True, that iss weird." He says as he moves to the side to help Hermione step down from the train.

"My parents will be hounding me to change schools." Hermione states in amusement.

"Thiss didn't happen because of ourr classes, it happened because we trusstted two pranksters." He reminds her and the tigress that was his good friend nods in agreement.

"Though I do kind of wish I got a costume with wings. I won't mind flying free in the sky." Ron says wistfully.

He sighs as he remembers his first true flight using his own wings. He truly will miss flying to his classes and he wasn't the only one since most of those dressed up as bats did the same.

True it took them three months to build up their muscles and their confidence to take that first shaky flight without a broom.

It wasn't long before they have their trunks on a cart. "Hey Hedwig, how's it going?" He asks softly as he reaches into his owl's cage to stroke her breast feathers. The Snowy Owl clicks her beak slightly before settling back on her perch with her eyes closed.

He pulls out his taloned finger and then puts the cage on top of his trunk. After making sure the straps were holding his stuff on the cart, he then follows his friends. Mrs Weasley didn't notice them as she torn into her twin sons while Percy, who it seemed had been that black fox in the common rooms, it still surprised him that the twins had somehow gotten the usually stiff neck Percy to go along with

their prank to make the house think that the two twins had dressed up as a pair of foxes.

"See you Ron." Hermione says as she then moves to head to where her parents were. "See you two later." The minotaur says with a wave as they pull away from him.

He waves bye to Hermione once she hooks up with her parents and he continues on through the barrier, heading to the muggle part of the station.

"Where is that blasted boy?" He hears his uncle growl out and he would have smirked if he had the right set of mouth parts.

"Rrrightt here." He says as once he approaches the man and he watches as Vernon pales and then flushes purple.

"Get out of that costume, boy! You're enough of a freak as you were before!" The man snaps and he gives the man an unimpressed look.

"You're looking at the new and improved Harry Potter, also known as the Black Gryphon of Hogwartsss." He states. "And my talonss are quiet sharp. Also, my god-father will be checking up on usss in a weekss time. He'ss currently finishing getting a check up." He adds and Vernon Dursley pales at the thought of a wizard checking up on his home life.

"You'rre sso going to Hell in a hand bassket." He says smugly.

Helping Hands: Naruto

I don't own Naruto!

"Sad isn't it? Watching the last two of their respective kind engage in a fight to the death." A visiting entity says to his mate as a slowly transforming red head of some kind of shape-shifting species begins to focus on this blond that was likely from an opposing species of shape-shifters.

"The poor dear can't even do it properly, see, he's restoring to using sand to make the correct adjustments. Sadly, the golden one doesn't have that earth element so he's unable to match the red head." The female entity says with sadness emanating from her as the blond makes some energy clones to battle the earth user.

"Perhaps we should pull the pair here and see if we can restore their shape-shifting abilities? After all, they might be fighting because their respective races believed that the other were responsible for their genetic degradation." The male of the pair suggests hastily, not wanting to have his wife overly stressed over this extinction of what might be two noble races.

As his wife nods, the male gives her shoulder a gentle squeeze before removing his hand from her left shoulder. **"Computer, retrieve the sand using red head and the energy clone using blond."** The male says as he turns from the larger screen to address a smaller screen to the side of them.

"Processing request." A mechanical voice of the computer states as a series of dotes and dashes begin to alter designs until the same voice says, *"Request underway."*

The male smiles slightly as the time of the world they're passing by pauses and within seconds the two selected fighters are teleported

onto their ship.

"Where are we?" Naruto asks Gaara who's the only other one with him. The blond can't help but notice that the red head's gourd of sand doesn't seems to be anywhere in sight. Gaara doesn't respond and within seconds the other demon vessel walks over to what might be a door.

Naruto winces as Gaara punches the door with a fist. **-SNAP-** Naruto watches as Gaara slowly pulls the fist from the metal door. "Huh, Gaara? Is it... broken?" Naruto asks the seemly violent red head, temporary forgetting that they were in a fight just seconds before.

"Yes, I think it might be." Gaara states with clinched teeth as the red head begins to cradle the arm ever so slightly. "Ok then." Naruto says, edging away from the red head, not sure what to make of the guy.

As Naruto's about to ask Gaara something else, a wave of unease enter into his mind, causing him to lose his balance. "I think I'm going to hurl." Naruto announces on his knees as the pressure in his head causes his vision to swim. As the blond blacks out, Naruto swears he heard an eerier laugh erupt from Gaara who's also on his knees. . .

"That was unexpected." The male entity says with a slight frown on his face as he studies the red head shape-shifter. **"He's likely a trained berserker."** The female entity muses softly. **"Considering how fast it occurred, I guess I'll have to agree."** The male muses as the female walks towards the golden haired lower life form, leaving him to walk towards the red haired one.

"I'm sure we can break that training before we can start on repairing their genetic code." The male adds thoughtfully as he focuses on making the red head levitate in the air while his wife does the same with the blond. The female nods before flashing him with a warm smile that dispelled his doubts about what they're about to do.

The male bows as he motions for his wife to go through the door first. The female laughs, a sound that could only remind one of wind chimes as the female and her cargo do so. The male's facial expression softens before following, the doors close behind his cargo as they enter into the hall.

As the female heads to one lab, the male heads to the second lab that lies in the opposite direction. ***I'll deal with the programing first.*** The male entity thinks to himself.

With the female, she places the blond into the tube. According to their scans, the blond was capable of transforming into a canine type life form, a branch of that family that the natives call a fox. As the tube fills with liquid, the computer scans the being and within seconds alerts her to the likely reason for genetic degradation.

So, there's more to it this world then the last. They must seal this energy in their own from a young age in hopes of increasing their genetic degradation, not knowing that by doing so they only increase the process. I wonder if those other six lower life forms that were detected to also be shape-shifters have the same energy beings stored within them. The female muses before dismissing those thoughts, it was enough that they're doing something about two of the eight, the female was sure that if she pushed for them to help the other six that her husband would put his foot down.

As the computer comes up with ways to take the energy beings out of the pair, the female also begins to get readings of how poorly the young life form had been fed. It was easy to rectify that as they're reconstructing the genetic codes. Though it would make the process take longer then they originally anticipated.

It's not long before the scans were completed and robotic arms move to remove the cloths the golden life form is wearing. It doesn't really surprise the female that there were weapons concealed in the being's cloths.

Gaara can't help but feel as if something were missing as the red head vessel lazily opens his left eye to stare at his surroundings. It takes a few minutes before Gaara found the energy to sit up.

After a large yawn, Gaara cocks his head to the side before cocking it the other way. His ears twitch as the Sand ninja looks up at the ceiling. Gaara blinks and then reaches up to feel his head. Gaara's tail twitches as his fingers located and touch his new ears.

Within seconds, Gaara's tongue moves around inside of his mouth, touching each tooth as Gaara looks down at his arms and finds them covered in black fur covering his arms. It takes a few minutes but Gaara finally focuses in on his shoulders and finds that yellow cream colored fur dips slightly towards his chest and if he looks what he think he looks then, a quick glance causes him to nod as the yellow cream fur dips towards his chest from under his arms.

The lower parts of his body have more gray mixed with brown fur though his lower legs have black fur once more. Gaara can only imagine what his face looks like as the usual red haired ninja stands up.

Gaara takes his time getting use to his new sense of balance before he walks around. In time, Gaara begins to experiment with his chakra after running a bit around the room. Gaara finally stops moving around and sits down on the floor as exhaustion hits.

As Gaara begins to lie back down on the floor, the Sand ninja can't help but noticed how clear his mind was and how within his mind, it's so silent...

"He seemed to stunned with his new appearance." The male muses. The female counters by saying, **"Of course he was! It's amazing that either are still alive after how hard it was to extract those energy beings. They seemed more parasitic then symbolic."**

The male hums his agreement, it had been touch and go for most of the year as they waited for the natural healing abilities of the pair to finally kick in to repair the energy damage caused to their bodies as they extracted the two energy beings.

"I guess we'll just have to wait and see how the other one does. The golden colored one did end up being the hardest hit out of the pair." The male says in a tired tone. The female hums in agreement as she pulls the male closer to her so she can put her head on his shoulder while the arm circles around her shoulders.

Neither moved for a long time as one seeks comfort from the other and the other giving the seeker the comfort she needed.

Naruto feels his ears twitch and his tail curl up more tightly around his legs. It takes the Leaf ninja a few minutes to realize something. *Since when did I have a tail?* The golden furred humanoid fox wonders before snapping fully awake.

Within sighting the opposing appendage, Naruto panics and within seconds, Naruto finds the room to be much larger and him moving about on all fours. His shouts come out as barks and yowls instead of swear words.

It's not long before exhaustion kicks in and the adrenaline rush fades. Naruto lies on his furry side for a few seconds before rolling onto his back. Within seconds of wishing to return to looking human does the room seem to become slightly smaller and his skin begins to scream how chilly the floor was.

As Naruto drifts off to sleep, he wishes he had a fur coat to keep him warm while he sleeps. . .

"Looks like he's made up for lost time." The male says in amusement, it's been a month since the red head has recovered

from the extraction of the energy entity and finally, the blond has woken up.

"He was definitely 'racing' to catch up." The female agrees, stifling a chuckle. The tension caused unknowingly by Naruto seems to lift as relief sets in.

"Well then, we'll give him a week before we put them in the same room to see how they react with one another. Hopefully, they won't attack each other on sight." The male says and the female nods in agreement as she gives the male's hand a squeeze which he returns.

"I really got to stop waking up on this cold, hard floor." Naruto murmurs as he rolls onto his side, he really didn't know how he ended up on his stomach but, really, was it so much to ask if they gave him a mattress or even a straw bed?

Naruto's ear twitches and it takes him a few seconds to realize that he's not alone. So, Naruto sits up as best as he could considering the fact that he sported a bushy golden yellow tail with the tip being black, much like from his elbows of his arms and lower parts of his legs starting from the knees down.

As Naruto surveys his surroundings, he snorts as he notices another furry lump at the other end of the room. The blond Leaf ninja can't help but notice that this room is much larger then the one he's use to. A sniff reveals that there wasn't any food in the room yet either, so Naruto gets to his feet and walks over to where the puffy furred being is resting.

"Huh, a tanuki." Naruto says and the other's ears twitch but the other doesn't stir. So after a few seconds of boredom, Naruto rests his head on the palm of his left hand while using his right to poke the humanoid tanuki.

Finally the lump of puffy fur stirs and Naruto stands straight up before backing away as the human like raccoon dog sits up right. ". . ." The tanuki kind of stares at him for a few seconds before yawning, showing off sharp, healthy looking teeth.

"Gaara?" Naruto shoots and a nod from the tanuki causes him to sigh. "So... You see who's done this to us?" Naruto inquiries but doubts that those responsible had shown themselves to the Sand ninja.

"I've been alone until just now." Gaara says in a matter of fact way. Naruto sighs before crossing his arms behind his head as he looks around lazily. "I wonder why they did this to us. I mean... Err... You had a demon sealed in you, right?" Naruto asks after a few minutes, bring his arms over his crest as he looks at some part of the floor not far from Gaara's furry feet.

"Yea, I do. I take it you did too?" Gaara asks softly and Naruto nods, not particular happy to admit it but doesn't see any reason to deny it.

"I guess we might be here because of that." Naruto admits while Gaara climbs to his feet. "And explain why we look the way we do. After all, Shukaku is suppose to be a tanuki. I take it you have the Kyuubi? After all, that is the only demon to attack Leaf and would explain your appearance." Gaara says and Naruto sighs as he nods, looking at some far wall.

"Talk about being welcome to the brotherhood of demon vessels, huh?" Naruto muses softly. "I wonder what happens now?" Gaara wonders as he looks around, sniffing the air.

Naruto shrugs.

"They seem to be getting along quite well, love. I think it's time to return them and to start time back up on that world. The male says gently to his lovely wife. **"Yes, love, I know. Though I'm going to miss having them around even though we had so little**

contact with them. I'm sure they'll be able to bring back their respective species and hopefully the genetic enhancements will keep their genes from degrading in the future." The female says, she wonders what kind of children they'll find when they come this way again after their honeymoon.

"Computer, begin process." The male says and the computer beeps before a slight hum erupts from the counsel. The pair of shape-shifting life forms teleport from the ship to the ground. Another flash and the planet's time unfreezes, those other life forms begin to move and interact with the two shape-shifters.

"Where to next, my love?" The male asks after a few minutes. **"Anywhere as long as you're with me, love, anywhere."** The female says as the image of the lower life forms vanish.

Epilogue

"We're back, we're home! Sasuke, you're a sight for sore eyes!" Naruto declares and within seconds the blond is embracing the other Leaf ninja with odd tattoo designs on his skin.

"Let's go." Gaara calls out to his siblings after watching Naruto move from the Uchiha to embrace the pink haired girl. A slight smile on his face as the red head turns away from his fellow vessel to head home, to a future waiting for him that doesn't have him killing every other living human besides himself.

"Idiot! You're letting them get away!" Sasuke snarls on seeing the Sand ninja continuing heading away from Leaf. "Let them! Gaara and I don't want to fight each other and I doubt that his siblings are in any condition to either." Naruto states as Naruto picks Sakura up bridal style since he wants to get her to the hospital as quickly as possible since he's concerned that she might have suffered some kind of injury to her ribs.

". . . What happened to your cloths?" Sasuke finally asks as they head towards Leaf at a slower pace since Sasuke's pretty exhausted. "I'll tell you later." Naruto states as his head band bounces slightly around his neck as he leaps from one tree branch to another, rejoicing that he's not in any metal room any more.

Twisted Breeds: Digimon

Twisted Breeds

I don't own Digimon.

"Talking"

' *Thoughts'*

' **Talking within Mega Form'**

-!- Scene change

/-/ Different point of view

N-N Flash back

Chapter 1

He pushes his way through the crowd until he finds the source of the crowd's attention. He schools his expression as he tears his eyes from the working TV set, his left hand goes to the pouch where he keeps those discarded Digimon TCG cards that he finds and keeps. He longs to see if he's up to sniff on playing the game, but he doesn't have the guts to try and approach the card players since he and those like him were considered 'tainted' and a 'non-human.'

He makes his way through the crowd of other tainted non-humans; though they preferred to call themselves Kuruth even though in different ethic nationalities they most likely have other names and terms for what they were, though the most common ones were often refer to them as devils and demons. He glances down at his scaly looking fingers that were tipped by talon like nails and then feels his pointed right ear as he runs his tongue behind his slightly more

pointed then average teeth. Around his temples where there are more scaly looking marks and his bright red eyes didn't really help matters, only adding to his inhuman appearance. If one over looked such features, he could pass himself off as a twelve year old kid but it's highly doubtful that the 'norms' could or would look pass such features...

His stomach rumbles as he heads off to scavenge food from a dumpster that's most likely outside of the usual boundaries where Kuruth make their home. He pulls the rugged jacket around him; he shivers as he begins to feel the chill once more. He's just glad that it wasn't snowing just yet since winter time is a very lean time of the year for all Kuruths since they leave tracks in the fresh snow, pretty much telling those that come across the prints that they had visited.

' *I wonder if I'll make it back before it snows…'* He muses as he glances up into the sky, noting the storm clouds over head. His stomach growls and he knows that if he wants a meal tonight, he'll have to chance it, regardless of what the weather is and soon to be.

As he trudges through the streets, he ponders what his guardian, Yamaki, was up to since his adopted father hadn't shown up in the ghetto for over a month now. He knows that something must have come up since it wasn't like his guardian to be away for this long. He knows that if Yamaki was around, he wouldn't have to worry about scavenging around for food since people often barter food for services that only Yamaki can provide, which were fixing broken radios, TVs, and other electronic equipment.

His instincts kicked in and he hides out in an alley just before some odd mist begins to rolls out of a man hole. As the mist begins to become thin, he notices a beast made up of flames, some kind of cat if he's to guess. He breathes in sharply as he recalls where he's seen something like that before. *'It's a Lynxmon… but it's just a card game, isn't it?'* He wonders to himself as he notices a girl about his age in a trench coat appears out of the mist, most likely entering it just minutes ago.

"Lynxmon verse Renamon." The carrot top says, he watches as a golden humanoid fox appears by the girl's side. As the girl steps away, the flaming cat charges the golden kitsune with purple gloves. He watches as the two Digimon battle it out, though he can tell that the rookie Digimon was having trouble with the armour Digimon.

The girl must have realised this as well and he watches as he takes out a Digimon card and slashes it through what could only be her Digivice. The girl says something too soft for him to hear, but he could see the effect it had on the fox Digimon as the kitsune vanishes from under the Lynxmon and reappears in the air. "Diamond Storm!" The graceful golden fox says and he winches as the attack hits the fire cat head on. The Lynxmon breaks apart and the particles are absorbed by the girl's Digimon.

The mist fades and the fox follows the girl for a few seconds before the fox vanishes. He couldn't move, he's in shock over what just happened and what it could mean. *'If that girl could partner up with a real live Digimon, doesn't that mean I could have a Digimon as a friend as well?'* He wonders to himself as he sits there in the alley, his mind a whirl with thousands and thousands of thoughts and ideas, even a few day dreams to boot.

His stomach growls, snapping him out of his daze and he begins to glance at what's around him. He spots a dumpster and heads to it, hoping to find something to eat.

He groans as the light is turned on, he curls up more into himself. "Get packing, Chibi. We're moving." He hears Yamaki say. He perks up on hearing Yamaki's voice; it takes a few minutes before his brain begins to work out what his guardian just said.

He sits up and stares at the open door, he can hear Yamaki talk with someone in low tones. He blinks before he gets off the bed. He heads out of his room and watches as two fuzzy Kuruths follow his uncle's instructions. Yamaki's fiddling with his lighter, which told him volumes of what kind of mood his guardian is in. He heads back to

his room to begin packing up his few personal effects and his old and worn cloths.

It's not until he's done packing, he glances around the room that's been his home since he was four years old. His eyes linger on the drawings that he made on the wall when he was younger. A smile appears on his face as he remembers Yamaki's reactions to said drawings.

"Chibi?" Yamaki asks softly, he rolls his eyes on hearing his age old nick name. "Stop calling me that already, I'm not a little kid any more." He says as he turns to face his guardian. Yamaki chuckles softly as the elder Kuruth ruffles his spiky hair, he hadn't had a chance to style it since he woke up.

"You know how it goes, until I find a more appropriate nick name, I get to keep calling you by the old one." The blond Kuruth says, he sighs and as Yamaki turns around, he attempts not to sound like he's whining, "But I've had this one since I was a little kid!" He follows after his guardian out of the almost bare apartment.

/-/Ryo

He groans, the last thing he remembered was some chaotic Digimon that he can't remember the name of had been using some really odd attack before Cyberdramon deleted him. Not that it stopped the attack that the Digimon unleashed. He realises that his eyes were open but there isn't a source of light to illuminate where he is.

"Cyberdramon?" He asks as he sits up. He hears a grunt from his partner, he turns his head into the direction he heard the grunt. "Where are we?" He wonders out loud as he slowly stands up. He's careful about where he's stepping, he's not sure if the others were here or not.

He places his hand on the wall, soon he's walking around by the wall. He can't help but feel that this place was familiar in some way. Soon he comes to the door; he manages to open the metal door and

discovers that he's in Guilmon's shed… And he then looks around and can't find the huge hole that Guilmon had dug long before he ever met the red rookie and his Tamer.

He doesn't see any sign of the others in the shed. It's just Cyberdramon lying on the floor of the shed. He sighs as he examines his cloths; he finds them dirty with dirt and something that looked like mud.

He runs his hand through his hair only to find his ears were pointed and as he touches his forehead, he finds mini horns growing out of his eye brows. He looks at his hands and finds his nails looking more like talons then they should. His tongue goes over his teeth and he finds that not only are his canines were larger, but his teeth were more pointed as well.

He closes his eyes. *'Ok, take a deep breath. For all you know, this is just some kind of illusion and it'll wear off soon.'* He tells himself as he opens his eyes and looks out of the shed. He glances back to Cyberdramon before he leaves the shed, hoping to locate something to eat for the both of them.

He frowns as he considers the beating he just received from a group of teens that didn't like 'uppity' beasts. He's guessing that that's what the norm considers those with the kind of traits he now posses. He leans more heavily on the wall behind him as he looks up into the sky. He's currently in an alley, the group had thrown him at the large metal dumpster before the proceeded on beating him senseless.

He found it funny though, he's already healing at an accelerated rate for he knew he had a few either broken or bruised ribs and he literally watched the bruises on the back of his hands heal in the last fifteen minutes. Open cuts took a little long, going from being open wounds to the skin healing and then the bruising vanishing. His once swimming head went through many steps until it vanished.

He sighs and picks himself up off the ground. He walks to the entrance of the alley and looks around to see if there are any large crowds on the streets. He notices the crowd give a pair of fuzzy looking people a wide berth as they head towards the park.

In the end, he follows the pair to the park. Though he's still hungry, he figures he'll wait until night before trying to get into a restaurant or to use a pay phone to order something, have it delivered at a spot where he'd leave a note and some money there, instruct the delivery person onto leaving the food at the spot and just take the money. He just hopes that the currency is still the same here as it is where he comes from.

/-/Takato

He's aware of the van stopping and Yamaki opening the driver's side door. He yawns before he sits up, he turns away from the side door as his guardian opens it and sunlight filters through. He climbs out once his eyes adjust to the light.

He blinks in surprise as he studies his new surroundings. "Wow." He says as he stares at the building that looks high tech. "Our new living space is a few feet underground and you'll finally receive a full time education." Yamaki informs him. He snorts lightly at the mention of an education.

He moves to the side as a group of Kuruth begin to swarm onto the van. "So you've been here, doing whatever when you're not at the city then?" He asks his adopted father. Yamaki motions for him to head into the building, clearly not intending to answer that question. He doesn't press it, but makes a mental note to bring it up at a later date as he wants up to the open door and takes his first step into the place that's his new home.

/-/Ryo

After searching around for a suitable place to live, they just remained at the shed, though Cyberdramon decided to expand their new home

by taking his frustrations out on the back wall, making a large hole then what Guilmon had previously created, but his partner didn't do any tunnelling like what Guilmon had done. It's been a whole month since they arrived in this altered world and they had yet to actively look for any of the other Tamers, though he had located the burnt out bakery that's located in the Kuruth grotto. He had attempted to located Takato, who survived the fire that killed Takato's parents.

Turns out, Takato's living with Yamaki, but the thing was, he missed them by a few days. He still finds it surprising that Takato was adopted by Yamaki since from what he heard; Yamaki and Takato hadn't known each other before Takato was partners with Guilmon. He also wondered if this Yamaki was working for an agency similar to Hypno.

He blinks as he notices a familiar face of Henry Wong. On a whim, he heads off to speak with the very human looking Tamer. "Henry?" He says, placing a hand on the Tamer's shoulder, he's vaguely aware that Henry looks younger then he remembers.

Henry turns and freezes on seeing him. "So, how's life been treating you?" He asks the Tamer. Henry's eyes roll into the back of his head and the Tamer collapses to the ground, despite his attempts at catching the other Tamer. He sighs and pulls Henry off the path, towards some cover.

It takes about an hour before Henry stirs. "Ok, that was a weird dream…" Henry says until the partner of Terriermon looks at him. "… Is that you, Ryo?" He gives the Tamer a grin as he replies, "Pretty much, though I did get an upgrade in the looks department." Henry nods, clearly staring at his eye brows, he's glad that he doesn't have a set of horns, fur covering any real part of him or scales like he has seen on a few Kuruth.

"So it wasn't a dream then? That it all actually happened?" Henry says, clearly more for his own benefit then asking him to verify it. Henry's eyes were unfocused; clearly Henry's trying to sort out what just happened. "I don't think I know Takato, he doesn't go to my

school, though I have seen Kenta and Kazu on occasion as well as Jeri." Henry admits and he nods in agreement. "I found out that Takato's parents died in a fire, he was only four at the time and he was adopted by Yamaki. Turns out, Takato's what the 'norm' call Tainted, which means you wouldn't have met him in this world." He confesses to Henry, Henry sighs.

"So, do you have any idea where they are?" Henry asks after a few minutes. He shakes his head as he says, "No, I missed them by a few days. They've moved out of their apartment, not that anyone knows where they're headed other then they had a van at their disposal." Henry sighs and looks away. "So, now what?" Henry asks and he says, "I guess confront those we can find. I'm sure Takato will show up sooner or later." Henry nods in agreement.

"So, where have Cyberdramon and you been staying?" Henry asks with curiosity. "At what should be Guilmon's shed, though Cyberdramon did vent on the back wall, but he's not much on tunnelling though." He mentions in amusement. "I think I can get you something to put your stuff in, a trunk probably as well as some worn out cloths." Henry says as the Tamer studies the condition of his cloths. He's lucky it hasn't snowed, so he doesn't have to worry about wet cloths, though he doubts it'll last as he notices storm cloud on the horizon.

"So which do we chat with first Jeri or should we confront Rika or to use Terriermon's nick name for the duo, Twiddle and Twiddle-dumb?" Henry asks him. "I think we might want to go for Wild Cat, seeing how she's the only one with a partner right now." He recommends. Henry grins slightly as he using one of his names for Rika.

/-/Takato

He studies the drawing he did, he doesn't really know what to named the Digimon he drew, but he's got quiet a bit of time to think of one since he's pretty much the only kid around, not that it's new for him, seeing as he never really connected with Kuruth that are his own age. They treated him different since not only did he lack parents,

but also the fact that Yamaki's semi resented by their parents as their parents resented Yamaki's techno skills and resources.

Karma Good or Bad Part 1: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2 or Naruto!

Blasts firing from behind, the teal colored serpent dragon rolls to the left side and growls as the dragon's eyes glow for a few seconds before returning to their normal state of gold. The antler like horns glow white before the teal dragon opens his mouth, a small sphere of white energy forms before a thin stream out of the fist sized ball of energy.

The nine tailed stag leaps over the beam of energy and the teal colored serpent dragon follows the leaping demonic deer while the white beam of energy continues to come out of the fanged mouth of the dragon. The terrain below alters as the white beam of energy moves around, trying to hit the ruby furred stag with ebony black antlers crowning said head. *"Stand still, damn it!"* The dragons growls mentally at the demonic stag that's leaping about the terrain below.

"Like hell I will!" The ruby stag replies as a ball of black energy begins to make an appearance in the center space between the antlers. The stag does a quick turn in the air and lands while staring at the teal dragon flying above as the white beam of energy vanishes as the dragon clamps his mouth shut.

The serpent dragon twists about in the air to evade the black beam of energy that's now lashing out in the air. The teal dragon growls in a beastly fashion as the dragon's antlers slowly begins to grow white. *"This isn't going to change the fact that you now turn into a stag, you stupid hairball!"* The teal dragon that is Naruto Uzumaki thinks to the current nine tailed stag as the black ball of energy finally vanishes.

"Who says this is all about you cursing me to be a leaf eater? I'm going to kill you so I don't return to that stupid prison in your gut!" Snaps the nine tailed fox turned stag.

The teal dragon just growls before heading straight up into the air, leaving the elephant size stag alone among the ruined forest that's some kilometers away from the city called Tokoyo. *"Get your scaly butt back here you runty human!"* The nine tailed demonic being declares but the teal dragon just lets his breath go through his mouth, creating a soft hiss.

"Fool." The dragon grumbles softly before heading off in his original direction.

"Blasted brat." The stag growls before the ruby coated demon heads off to enjoy his time out of his cage from within the teal dragon's stomach.

Three Months Ago

o 0 O - Ranma **- O 0 o**

"Are we there yet?" Whines a certain bright haired blond who's got his arms crossed behind his head. With a growl, Sakura steps up her pace just so she can punch said blond in the cheek, sending the twelve year old flying off of the path.

"Damn it, Naruto! Does it look like we're there yet?" The pink haired thirteen year old snaps at her younger team-mate. "God, you are annoying! Right Sasuke?" Sakura says as the girl turns to coo at the brooding thirteen year old.

"Hn." Sasuke grunts without glancing at the girl and he kind of feels bad for the girl, although he's long since learnt not to voice it after witnessing how well it works for the annoying blond known as Naruto.

You'd think she'd get a clue that he doesn't care if she's mooning on him or not. He thinks from the rear of the group. "So cruel..." He hears Naruto mutters before the supposed ninja rejoins his team-mates.

He glances up pass the three to stare at the back of their teacher's head but the silver haired man doesn't seem to have noticed the latest antics between his students. *Just what kind of book is that guy reading anyway? I mean, Pops went all red just after reading a page of said book.* He muses privately to himself, although he hasn't had a chance to nab the book from said man to take a gander at the contents.

"This is so boring." Naruto whines after some time as he, once more, tries to imagine what the book within Kakashi's hands could be about. "Isn't there something we could be doing as we walk, like learning a new jutsu or playing some kind of game?" The blond asks and continues on that vein for a few minutes.

"Naruto..." Sakura growls in a threatening manner as Sasuke speeds up. The young teen shakes a fist in Naruto's direction and the bright blond holds up his hands in surrender while moving a few steps to the side.

Sakura speeds up after giving her hair a flick, he could only imagine what kind of look is now gracing the girl's face at this particular moment. "You really have your work cut out for you, don't you, kiddo?" He muses and Naruto just sighs.

o 0 O - Naruto **- O 0 o**

I'm not sure if I should be relieved or not that none of them suspects that I switched with a Shadow Clone. But then, nobody really asked if I'm still capable of making clones, only asking if I could create a functional one at that pierce moment in time. He muses as he glances off in the direction the group is traveling in.

"Ok men, you all have your assignments, make me proud!" He says to the minor army of clones that number at least a hundred. "Right!" The army chimes and with that, the clones create small groups before picking up one of the many books he's manage to buy during the last stop in a farming village.

I can't believe nobody thought it a good idea to learn the local language, tsk, and they call me an idiot. He thinks as he puts the ear phones over his ears before pressing play on the walkman. *Hopefully I'll at least know what to expect at this valley Genma wants to train at.*

Two Weeks Later

Jusenkyo

Ok... Let's see if what I've read is true. He thinks as he watches the group through a telescope a Shadow Clone had been sent off to buy it from a distant town, one the group hadn't visited. He also had the clone visit while under a Henge.

From his vantage point, he watches as Ranma and his father leap up onto the various bamboo poles that dot the area. He watches as the guide comes towards the group, likely to try and warn them about the magical curses that are carried in the water of the spring. He doesn't focus on the small man as he's a bit busy watching as father and son leap about the bamboo poles, likely showing off for Kakashi and his team-mates' benefit since it's rare that the duo get to spar now a days since Ranma and Sasuke were always testing each other.

Finally Ranma manages to land a blow on Genma, a blow that causes the overweight man to fall into a spring. He holds his breath as he waits for something to come out of the spring and within a few seconds, out comes a very large pig trying to stand upright, but fails and lands once more back in said spring with a thrill of distress.

He could only imagine what Ranma is muttering in stun shock of what has happened. He could hear Sakura's voice from here, calling Ranma to come back toward the group. Finally, Sasuke leaps up onto the poles and jumps over to where Ranma is to likely snap the teen out of it, only Ranma acts instinctively and sends Sasuke away.

It does snap Ranma out of it and the teen begins to leap towards the group, only to be intercepted by Sasuke, who managed to hang onto a bamboo pole. He snorts softly as Sakura screams at the two to stop before finally asking their teacher to talk sense into the pair.

To his surprise, Kakashi does put his book away and leap up onto the bamboo poles, heading for the fighting teens. *Now we just need Sakura to leap up to join them and they'll all get cursed.* He muses before pausing to consider something. *Not that she really needs to be leaping around on those poles to receive a curse...* He adds thoughtfully as the two teens attack Kakashi as a team while also taking pot shots at each other.

Kakashi manages to send Ranma flying towards the starting point of this, a spring not that far from Sakura. With a roar, a petite red head leaps out of the spring and onto a bamboo pole to rejoin the fight. A fight that has paused to see what has become of Ranma.

The look of astonishment causes him to chuckle since it's so comical a look on their faces. Sadly, they didn't recover fast enough to evade Ranma's attacks, causing at least Kakashi to fall into a spring while Sasuke manages to use wires to keep from ending up in a spring. It's about then does Ranma realize that he hadn't come out of the spring unchanged.

"Ahhh!" Ranma screams, doing nothing for the moment, he turns to see what's become of his teacher. He snickers at the sight of a silver furred monkey swimming to shore.

After watching the monkey that is his teacher, he moves to see what Sasuke is up. He finds Sasuke standing on a patch of earth that

snakes between three different springs. The Uchiha seems to be staring at Kakashi while wrapping the wire back up.

Finally, Sasuke is done and leaps up onto the bamboo, ignoring Sakura's cries for him to come her way. The typically brooding teen surprises Ranma but before Ranma falls, the fifteen year old clings to Sasuke with a wild look in her eyes.

The pair fall into a spring below while Sakura screams out Sasuke's name. A glance shows that the pink haired genin wasn't thinking right as Sakura charges forth, only to trip and fall into the spring before her. He snickers softly at the mare that's now wearing Sakura's ruined cloths, the headband now resting on the horse's back.

Quickly searching out the spring where Ranma and Sasuke fell, he finds a dog and a dog girl within the spring. He snickers at the sight, especially seeing as the black dog begins to bark at the girl with more then a few canine features. Said features were floppy ears on the top of the head, a tail covered in red fur, he couldn't make out the face very well but Ranma's profile shows that Ranma now seems to sport a short muzzle, and finally, it seems as though Ranma's hands have thickened slightly and now have thick looking black nails on each finger and thumb.

"I'm so glad I wasn't part of that." He states out loud, although he is curious as to what other kinds of things have fallen within each of the spring. "Maybe that guide has a map or something that shows which spring contains which curse..." He adds thoughtfully.

It would be nice to actually choice which curse I get... Might as well scope out the hut now and make it seem like that I was driven by hunger to leave that early in the morning too. He decides.

Four Days Later

Joketsuzoku

o 0 O - Ranma **- O 0 o**

I can't believe he managed to miss getting a curse... She thinks while glaring at the bright blond boy just a few feet away from where she's walking. *It's not fair that he's the only one to be spared...*

Naruto seems to feel her hateful gaze and glances behind him, first at her before looking pass her, likely at Kakashi and Sakura, since Kakashi is riding on Sakura's back along with the bags belonging to pretty much all of the group except for Naruto, since Naruto's more then capable of carrying his own bag.

"We almost there, good sirs." The guide says in heavily accented Japanese and Naruto sighs in relief. "Finally..." Naruto murmurs softly under his breath, although that doesn't prevent any of them from not hearing it since they all have very good hearing.

Although the sight of the gate did fill him with excitement, although that could be from the scent of cooked food waffering down wind, towards them. She feels her mouth water but manages to control herself enough to keep from whining at the thought of food. The ruffling of her pants reveals that, yes, her tail is wagging and fairly quickly from the way her pants move against her legs.

Her father oinks and then squeals as the fat pig charges through the gates. "Wait up, you porker!" She calls out as she speeds up her walk.

As soon as she's pass the gates, she finds her pig of a father digging into a bowl of steamed vegetables. It didn't take long before she joins her pops in eating what's sitting on the table, just waiting for somebody to come along and make a meal of it. She does pause to set a bowl down for Sasuke to eat from.

Within seconds, Kakashi's silver form joins them by starting on some fruit. *Now this is the good stuff.* She admits with a sigh while pausing a second before grabbing the next bowl.

"Sirs? Sirs! She asking why you eat her prize!" The guide informs them and she blinks before turning to regard the teenage girl

standing on the log while holding a pair of what appears to be maces at her and then at the rest of the group.

"So if I beat her in a fight, I become the rightful owner of this prize?" She asks the guide and waits as the guide translates her question.

Month Later

Tendo Dojo

"Well, coming here was a waste of time." Naruto muses softly as Sasuke and himself spar within the dojo. "Hn." Sasuke grunts as they break apart from their spar as Sakura arrives with Kakashi in tow.

"Supper is almost ready." Sakura says as the girl with pink hair stares admiringly at Sasuke. The look causes goose bumps to erupt on his arms but he ignores it as he walks out of the dojo, not doing more then giving the middle Tendo sister a passing look from the bushes surrounding the dojo.

Pops can't possibly think that this engagement is a good idea... I mean, for crying out loud, he turns into a pig and I transform into some kind of dog girl. We should be looking for a cure, not getting me hitched to some girl! Heck, Sakura is a better fighter then that Akane girl and pinky doesn't even train all that much! He thinks with a slight frown on his face as he pointly ignores the youngest Tendo sister as she glares hatefully at him.

It wasn't long before Kakashi and Sasuke sit down on either of his side while Sakura sits next to Sasuke. Which leaves Naruto to sit next to Akane and Nabiki as the oldest Tendo sister, Kasumi, begins to bring out a tea pot and tea cups. He notices that Kasumi seems to glance at Mr Tendo and Pop with a look of disappointment, though it vanishes a second later as if it was never there.

Before Kasumi even finishes serving the tea, Pops has started on a new bottle of sake and pours Mr Tendo and himself a cup each. With

Kasumi now sitting down, it seems to signal that dinner can begin and so began the task of feeding his inner beast.

o 0 O - Naruto **- O 0 o**

He couldn't help but reflect on a few recent events, particularly how stupid his fellow team-mates had acted while in the Amazon village. *Are they suffering from some sort of brain trauma?* He wonders as he sits on the roof of the house.

True, we don't have the slightest clue how to return home or if we'll ever return home, but that's really no excuse for their common sense to take a holiday. Heck, it seems as if I'm the only sensible one of the lot at this point in time and that's really kind of sad. He admits with a sigh.

"Worthless runt, what are you worrying about now?" The nine tailed demon that's usually slumbering within him asks in a very irritated tone.

"Just reflecting how stupid my team is acting. I mean, Sakura practically ran right into that spring! And let's not forget how they dug into that food prize while at that Chinese Amazon village too. It's like they're catching some kind of stupid sickness from hanging around the two Saotomes!" He informs the fox demon, resisting the urge to point out that the demon had vowed to not help him since he's responsible for dropping the fox into that spring.

"The fat one is enacting a karma passing spell so he's not the one receiving the blunt of his bad karma by passing it onto his son. Of course now that you lot are traveling with them, the spell is now dividing the bad karma between you lot, although because of me, you're the only one not affected by the spell. After all, you aren't totally human." The demon informs him but he doesn't feel like responding to that little taunt.

He had kind of come to figure that hosting a demon had likely left some kind of mark on him. *"Well, nice to see that confirmed, even if I*

don't like to think about it." He muses to the demon within.

"Although, I can't help but wonder if that dip in that spring hasn't affected me as I am now... I mean, I actually manage to cast a spell on that cheap charm to ensure that unless I'm in a large body of water, I won't transform and you won't 'escape' from your cage." He admits after a few minutes of silence. *But then, I've been acting oddly since we arrive here. I mean, I was trying to learn a different language, written and spoken, just because it's there!*

"Tsk. Of course you're being affected by your 'curse'. If you haven't noticed, your dragon form has five toes, not four or three! You're an Imperial dragon, brat." The demon within him states and he sighs as he feels the demon close their connection.

"Just another thing that's changed, but then, it's a given that the relationship would change..." He mutters as he regards his new relationship with the nine tailed demon, he doesn't really consider the demon a fox anymore since he dropped the horse sized nine tail fox demon in that spring when the demon attacked him after he admired his new looks in the spring below him.

Yawning, he begins to stretch before standing up. With ease, he leaps from the roof down to the ground. He heads for the dojo since the guest room is pretty crowded, although Sakura is bunking with the youngest Tendo daughter.

I'll transform come the New Moon phase arrives. He decides as he slips into the sleeping bag for sleep.

Present

Arriving at an alley within the city, the teal dragon begins to morphs into a human form, a twenty something year old with long, glossy black hair and hazel green eyes dressed in a simple black shirt and jeans combo. With a grin, the newly transformed dragon heads out onto the street. The dragon in human form couldn't help but smile

brightly at the new sights this city more then a few hours away from Tokoyo has to offer.

I wonder if there are any movies playing tonight? The dragon that is Naruto wonders, not at all worried about the fact that the dragon doesn't have any money on him while in this form.

Might be continued. . .

Karma Good or Bad Part 2: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2 or Naruto!

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o 0 O - Naruto **- O 0 o**

"Here's our rent." He says as he casually tosses a roll of bills onto the breakfast table before sitting down. *Heh, she's quick.* He muses as Nabiki manages to snatch the wad of bills before he even managed to pick up his chopsticks.

Genma gives him a calculating look but the older man quickly returns to stuffing his face. Kasumi smiles at him as she comes in with his requested order of ramen. "Thank you, Kasumi." He says to the eldest daughter and the elder teen just smiles with a hint of thanks shining in her eyes.

He finishes the large bowl before Kakashi and his two team-mates arrive in the room. He takes his bowl and heads for the kitchen to refill it, freeing Kasumi up to bring in the rest of the food since Genma and Ranma have headed back into the yard for some more sparring. He spots Akane feeding her 'P-Chan' some rice before heading into the dinning room.

"I think I'm going to remain here to eat my ramen if it's alright with you, Kasumi." He says and Kasumi seems to sigh before nodding. "I'll make sure to leave enough for you, Kasumi." He adds and Kasumi smiles.

"I would appreciate it." Kasumi informs him and he nods. He could only guess that it's been years since Kasumi has ever really sat down and eaten something that she did have to warm up. *You know, I think I can spare a few more bills so Kasumi can get something that's not groceries... She desires to spoil herself ever now and again.* He thinks.

A loud commotion occurs, likely something going on between 'P-Chan' and Ranma since those two get along about as well as water and oil. Then Akane shouts about Ranma 'picking' on P-Chan before racing off to school once the youngest Tendo uses some mallet to send Ranma flying into the air and likely sending the pig-tailed teen off in the direction across the street or into a neighbor's backyard. He puts the lid on the pot and then lowers the temperature like Kasumi showed him before heading upstairs to get his books.

Sakura, Sasuke, and him weren't expected to go to a local school. Kakashi only has them reading out of library books that Kasumi picks up for them from the library. Although soon, the man will have to give them some standardized test to prove that they were being home schooled, it wouldn't surprise him that neither of his team-mates will likely pass said tests when the jonin is forced to test their knowledge of local history, math, and whatever other classes they teach kids here, in this world.

As he uses the stone path to get to his sleeping quarters, he couldn't help but raise a slight eyebrow at the state of his books, but then, chalks it up to Genma likely snooping about looking for some cash to spend on sake. With a shrug, he begins to clean up his sleeping bag before moving onto the next item of business.

Like I'd stash any cash here. I really don't know what kind of habits any of my team have picked up since they've been cursed. He thinks as he gathers up the library books and his notebooks, one of which has a list of things he'll have to purchase. One of the top things he's looking to purchase is a house so his team can get away from whatever spell Genma is using to pass his bad karma onto his son and, recently, to the rest of his team as well.

Once the books are packed up in his bag, he heads down the stairs, pausing long enough to stare at the growling dog that is Sasuke Uchiha, a black furred canine glaring at a certain little pig. Finally the tension grew too much and Ryoga turns to flee just as Sasuke pounces forward, jaws snapping just a few center meters behind

Ryoga's tail. "P-Chan! Stop taunting Sasuke!" Sakura shouts as she picks up Sasuke's discarded cloths.

Talk about ironic turn of events. He muses as he heads to the front entrance to put on his outdoor sandals before heading off to the local clinic to answer phones for Doc Tofu, a job that gives him seed money. It doesn't hurt that Tofu also gives him a hand with his studies, often times giving him a list of books to help advance his understanding of this world at large.

"I'm heading off to the clinic!" He cries as he shoulder's the single strap of the book bag. He holds the door open as 'P-Chan' and Sasuke reenter the house with Sasuke still growling at the little porker. *You'd think Sasuke or anybody with a working brain would have figured out who the little oinker is from the bandanna alone.* Naruto muses as he closes the door behind him before leaping up onto the wall of the property and then leaps down onto the street after getting towards the end of the wall.

Last night was certainly productive. Maybe I should see just how fast I can travel as a dragon, to see if I can't visit this Las Vegas that I've heard tell about in a single night. It sounds like there's a lot of casinos to visit at that city, a lot of money to be earned. He thinks with a sly grin on his face as he races down the street. Making a simple hand sign, his appearance alters slightly, instead of a twelve year old, a blond haired nineteen year old can be seen racing down the street.

After all, it wouldn't do for Doc Tofu to get into trouble because the man hired somebody underage.

o 0 O - Ranma **- O 0 o**

I can't believe she expects to learn Martial Arts Rhythmic Gymnastics in under a week! She's not exactly graceful after all. He muses as he watches as Sakura tries to correct Akane's stance.

"Hey, Ranma? Do you know how long they'll be at this? I mean, I sleep in there." Naruto says with a book bag and sleeping bag resting on the preteen's back.

"I think you're better off trying to sleep in the attic then trying to out those two." He informs the blond ninja. "Do they even have an attic?" The preteen wonders and he glances up at the house. "It should... It's got enough levels for it." He muses and the blond just shakes his head.

"That doesn't mean that it's there you know." Grumbles Naruto before the blond shakes his head before heading for the house. "Maybe Kasumi will let me sleep in Akane's room if I promise not to touch anything of her's..." He hears Naruto mutter as the kid heads for the house.

He shakes his head as he watches the younger boy head out and a certain almost puppy looking black Akita Inu type dog with a blue headband tied about the neck. He watches as Sasuke sniffs about the ground before growling softly as the boy turned dog surges forward into the bushes. Second later, a familiar tiny pig squeals while bolting out of the bushes with Sasuke hot on Ryoga's heels.

At least Sasuke isn't barking while chasing 'P-Chan' around... He thinks while quickly glancing into the dojo to see if Akane has noticed her pet's return. *Though how Sasuke gets away with chasing Ryoga about in either form is something I'll never understand...* He thinks as he moves to pick up the various boxes that Ryoga had been dragging about, likely gifts of food for P-Chan's owner.

"Well, at least I won't have to worry about Sasuke challenging me tonight..." He muses softly as the two 'animals' vanish from his sight. With a shake of his head, he moves to sit down in a corner of the dojo so he has a better view of Sakura trying to teach Akane in a manner that shows that the pink haired teenager is slowly losing her cool as frustration at Akane's lack of grace is finally trying the young ninja's patience since Akane clearly isn't really listening to Sakura's advice by taking it slow.

While he did want to get a few comments in, he has a very healthy respect of Sakura since unlike Akane, the younger girl has proven to be a talented ninja, even though the pink haired girl hasn't taken her training very seriously unless Sasuke is making comments about how better Naruto's gotten, even though the pair of boys have rarely spar anymore. *Come to think of it, the last time those two sparred was just after we landed on land after that boat ride home. And that was little over a month ago...*

He snaps out of his thoughts when Akane kicks a ball, causing the ball to hit the wall and then it rolls a few feet before Akane while said teenage girl is visibly upset. Akane stomps forward to pick up the ribbon but her left foot drops down onto the ball that Akane had kicked just seconds ago. "Akane!" He cries just as the Tendo daughter gets off balance and falls to the floor.

"Are you alright?" Sakura asks as the thirteen year old hurries to Akane's side, there doesn't seem to be any of the younger girl's previous growing frustration with Akane. Only concern with a hint of guilty relief flash across Sakura's face as he moves to help Akane get up off the wooden floor.

"We better get you to a doctor." Sakura says as they head towards the entrance of the dojo to take the Tendo daughter into the house.

Gymnastics Tournament

o 0 O - Naruto **- O 0 o**

Why do I have to be here? He wonders as he watches as Sakura manages to weld a ribbon about as a shield against the water that's coming out of the hose. He gives those operating said hose a minor dirty look but is very glad he chose a seat in the far back since he spots a silver monkey hugging a novel in plastic bag and a wet black furred dog who's likely growling as said boy turn dog is trying to get out of a shirt.

He really needs to change his style of cloths. I know Sakura can't really do so because her cursed form is too large and will destroy all of the cloths either way. He muses as he as he returns to watching Sakura now that Akane finally cut off the flow of water that finally allows Sakura to go on the offensive before Kodachi can recover her balance from the sudden disappearance of the water pressure within the hose.

The teen falls through the metal frame of the arena and lands on the ground. "Winner! Sakura Haruno!" The announcer says and the Furinkan High School section gets up to cheer. Sakura seems to blink before becoming shy about all of this sudden attention.

Within minutes, Sakura is hoisted into the air as most of the high school students surge forward to congratulate the fact that Sakura defeated the St. Bacchus School for Girls' record winning streak. A soft growl causes him to glance down at the steps and he sighs at the sight of Sasuke standing there with his cloths next to Sasuke's side. He raise a slight eyebrow at the young black canine standing there.

Sasuke snorts softly before his team-mate heads off in the direction of the restrooms. With a sigh, he collects the discarded cloths and heads for the men's room, making sure to hold the door open for Sasuke to enter too. Once he's sure that everything is fine, he walks into one of the stalls to put the cloths down before walking towards one of the sinks.

The only sign that he inherited a clone's memory is a minor blink as he waits for the water to warm up. He frowns as he sorts through the clone's last moments but just shakes his head slightly as he cups some of the warm water in his hand. With a whistle, Sasuke stops pacing to stand just half a foot away.

Within a second the water hits Sasuke's head the dog transforms into a naked young teen. Without a nod of thanks, his male team-mate heads into the stall and he just sighs as he turns about to turn

off the water flow, he pauses. About ten minutes later, Ranma shows up with Kakashi and his instructor's cloths.

Ranma makes a bee line to sink and within seconds, Ranma dumps water over Kakashi's head and then over Ranma's down, causing Ranma's canine features to vanish along with the red hair and small breasts. Kakashi takes the cloths Ranma brought from the older teen before heading into a stall. A few guys enter just seconds before Kakashi enters into the stall, they did seem to freeze at the sight of a naked guy but recovered a few seconds after Kakashi locked the stall door.

He leaves the restroom, heading out to check out the drop off point that his clone had set up to store what little cash the clone earned in the last two days. He hadn't expected for a clone to survive for four days but one had and he could only guess how long the other clones will last as well. As he finishes using Henge jutsu, he couldn't help but blink rapidly as another clone's memories appear in the forefront of his mind.

"I believe I might want to wait before sending clones out of this ward without doing some research first." He mutters as he tries to shake off the hold that said clone's memories have over him. *Might also want to research demons and demon hunters too. If those things begin to appear around here, I could always become a part-time demon hunter.*

"I don't see why you're worried about that bug. If that's the kind of demons crawling about these unwashed masses then you won't need to worry too much about your safety. You are a demi-dragon, runt, a few things will tangle with a being with the blood of a dragon running through their veins." The demon within him remarks and he just rolls his eyes as he walks down the street in his henge.

"Who says I'm worried about fighting one of those things? I'm more concerned with getting away from Genma Saotome then fighting against some energy vampire." He informs the nine-tail demon within him.

"Whatever, brat. Just remember to watch your back." The demon states before withdrawing the connection.

Considering the bad karma surrounding that house hold, it's kind of hard not too. God I hope this experiment with the clones work out, I really don't want to be too reliant on casinos for income. Never known when your good luck decides to deserts you. He tells himself with a slight frown on his face.

It takes him some time to get to the spot to retrieve the money. Glancing about, he heads for a restroom to create another clone to replace this clone, one who's going by the name Taiyou Asita. He waits a few minutes before leaving the restroom once he's created said clone and said clone Henged into said disguise the previous clone had created.

"I really need to take computer lessons..." He murmurs softly as he reflects on the two sets of memories. *I get the feeling computers will become something important in the coming times.* He adds mentally as he begins to review ideas on how to get those lessons too.

New Moon

"Shampoo getting really tired. Shampoo never though hunting city deer be this hard..." A certain purple haired Chinese Amazon mutters as the ruby stag with nine-tails hangs about on a roof top a mile away.

The demonic stag grins as best as a deer can while the nine tails flicker back and forth while the black antlers continue to grace the demonic stag's head. The stag mentally chuckles as Shampoo lapses into Mandarin. The demonic entity turns his slightly to gaze down the run down sector of Tokyo, a place crawling with drug dealers, druggies, and 'homeless' people.

Shampoo mentally tries to recall what little she knew of demonology. *Never heard of any demonic deer before, let alone one with black antlers.* The Chinese Amazon muses as the teen slowly glances

about the street the demonic stag had lead her to. *Might be a good idea to retreat before I trigger this demon's trap...*

Just before Shampoo does just that, something blasts at a roof top not that far from where the Chinese Amazon is leaning. A slight red blur causes Shampoo to narrow her eyes before darting about the roof tops instead of the street. The purple haired teen spots a team of three people standing on top of another building.

The demon stag had spotted the team of three before the one with the bow fired at him. With a chuckle, the nine-tailed stag leaps off of the roof as the team of demon hunters land on a high roof top. The demonic stag doesn't pause to stand around to give this group a standing target, the ruby furred stag had already given them one free shoot.

Let's see if this group will 'play' with me. The nine tail demon muses mentally as the demon finally slows down and sure enough, a few minutes later, the demon hunters spot the stag. With a whoop, the stag heads deeper into the city, going slow enough for the three to take pot shoots at him.

It wouldn't be until four am before the nine-tailed demonic entity in the form of a stag finally vanishes before the expert demon hunters' sights, causing a great deal of confusion for both the team and a certain Chinese Amazon.

Might be continued. . .

Bonds of Friendship, Ties of Family

Bonds of Friendship, Ties of Family

I don't own Digimon.

"Talking"

' *Thoughts'*

x-x Scene change

-(V)- Massive time and scene change

-+-Different point of view

--) Flash back

He asks, "Where are we going, Dad? Is Mom going to be there?" His father, who's shoulders his currently riding on answers, "She might be there, kiddo, she might be." He sighs and rests his head once more on his folded arms that are on his father's head. He hopes his mom is safe and that he'll be able to give her a huge hug. He closes his eyes as he's lolled to sleep as his dad treks through the dark tunnel.

-+-TK-+-

He sighs as he makes it to the hided entrance; he gently straightens up, waking up his six year old son, Tenyu. "Dad?" His son asks in a questioning tone. "I just need you to wait here, 'k? I got to scout ahead." He says to the young boy that had his eyes. The silvery/white haired boy nods, punting slightly, clearly not liking the thought of his father out of his sight.

He kneels down and looks his only son in the eyes as he says gently, "I know you don't want me out of your sight, but I need to make sure it's safe before we can rest. I won't be long, 'k kiddo?" His son sighs and nods, he smiles sadly as he puts his right hand on Tenyu's head. He gets up and then gently messes up Tenyu's short hair.

He waits until he's out of his son's sight before taking out a dagger. He holds it in his right hand, ready to use it if it turns out of be an ambush. With his left hand, he adjusts his shades so that he can see body heat, he glances around then switches the settings back to the usual. He finds the hidden key pad and punches in the code. The door opens slowly, showing it's age.

He's relieved to find that nobody else lies within, he sighs and opens the door wider and calls out to his son, "Tenyu, its safe." He hears the gently footsteps of his only son. He smiles reassuringly at the six year old; Tenyu brightens up and rushes into the room, most likely hoping to find his mother.

His heart wrenches, knowing that Tenyu's mother was dead, had been for the last year. He just didn't have the heart to tell Tenyu the truth though. *'You would be proud of how he taking this, Kasumi. I just wish you were here.'* He thinks to himself as he closes the door and then turns on the computer so he can activate the lock down for this hide out.

Soon both doors were locked and unless he deactivates the lock down, nobody can get in, even if they know the code for the doors. He leans back in the chair, and then blinks as something begins to blink. He glances over to where Tenyu is before opening whatever message or program that Izzy installed.

It takes the computer a while to bring up the whole thing, leaving him time to make Tenyu and himself something to eat. He had turned on the lights on low and set his shades on the desk where the computer is. He notices a picture on the wall, it shows the group of Digidestine

when he had been sixteen. He smiles sadly at the image of Patamon and then at Kari's.

Tenyu puts down the book he had found to get some of the oat meal he had micro waved. His son sits to his right, trying to comfort him as memories of his teens come flooding back. His gaze rests on Gatomon, who had learnt the old trick of transforming into a human in order of escaping ChaosPiedmon's henchmen.

Gatomon's human appearance stood around 5'25", with light brown hair, and emerald eyes. Gatomon had decided on being called Alexandra Hikari, or Alex for short. It was through Alex did he meet Tenyu's mother, Kasumi Jouta. He sighs as he wonders just happened to Alex, AKA Gatomon, for he hasn't hear anything from her for about the time Tenyu was born.

He looks at each of the other Digidestine, he could list when and how they had been killed, for ChaosPiedmon never saw it fit not to broad cast the news about. Izzy and he had been the only ones out of the humans to last the longest, now it's just him remaining. He closes his eyes in hopes of holding back the tears that threaten to overcome him. He couldn't break down in front of his son; he needed to be strong for his son's sake if nothing else.

"Uhm, something's beeping." Tenyu says; bring him out of his thoughts. "Huh?" He asks unintelligently. He puts his bowl down on the counter; he gets up off the rocketry stool. He blinks as he stares at the window that appeared on the computer screen. He sits down on the chair and tries to look for some kind of log or journal entry, since he really doesn't know what to make of what this program is about.

He blinks as the program asks for his id and personal password. He sighs and puts in his full name and for his password, he types in Digidestine Of Hope, without any spaces and with the caps. He blinks as a window opens up before the screen. Once it finishes loading, it starts up.

Izzy's image faces him and begins, "Hey TK, I guess if you're watching this you found my last attempt to save our world. As you know, ChaosPiedmon had first caused a minor dispute which was designed to distract us from his true intentions." Izzy pauses before continuing. "It worked, with Kari's death weighing heavily on us; we left the newer Digidestine to face the first assault of ChaoPiedmon's armies. Then we lost Mimi during an assassination about four months after ChaoPiedmon's army's by then conquered Africa and major parts of the Digital World. We lost Palmon when she helped defend New York State." Once more, the image of the Digidestined of Knowledge paused.

"I could go on and on, but that's beside the point. Since ChaosPiedmon finally finished conquering our world and parts of the Digital World, I had been pondering ways in which to counteract ChaoPiedmon and came to the conclusion that without either our partner Digimon or without the other Digidestine that we couldn't hope to stand up and defeat the mega. So I explored around the region that had been where Gennai's house. I found many interesting things and over time, began to think up a way to send someone from this time back in time, maybe all the way back to before Kari's murder. I had spoken with Alex about the possibility and learnt about this Digimon Millenniummon who is this god type Digimon known for his abilities to cross time and space. According to some of the files I gathered from what remains of Gennai's journal, this Digimon had made an appearance in our reality, only to be defeated by a pair of Digidestine. Gennai hadn't listed their names, but in a later entry, one of the boys is called to face this Digimon once more and Gennai came up with a device to allow the child to move about through time and space in order to combat this evil Digimon. Luckily for us, Gennai wrote the plans in his journal and I was able to come up with this program that you see before you."

Once more the recording pauses before Izzy continues on once more. "I was going to test it out once I informed Alex what I intend to do, I am leaving tomorrow to meet with her. I do plan on using it right after I get back, but I guess I never made it back. I hope this works

and if you do attempt to use this TK, I want you to bring this simple pouch with you to hand over to my past self." Izzy smiles sadly before saying, "I wish I could have seen you one last time, my friend. It's been decades since we contacted each other, I hear from Alex that you're currently dating someone. I was glad to hear that you had found someone to be with. I really do hope that it works… or had worked out between you two. Bye TK and I truly hoped things had turned out better then this. January 17th, year 2055."

That window goes black, he stared numbly at the computer, surprise that at the date. He had been 68 when Izzy recorded this; Tenyu was born in 2058, three years after he first met Kasumi and after a year of marriage. He sighs and shakes his head, considering how youthful he looked, he was in his seventies and it would appear that Izzy too hadn't looked his proper age either. *'I bet Davis would have enjoyed this, he'd most likely joke about how handsome he looks for a seventy year old.'* He thinks to himself.

"Dad? Did you know that guy?" Tenyu asks. He looks down at his son, he sighs mentally. "We were belonged to the same group, once upon a time." He says to his son. "Really? Did ya have any adventures?" Tenyu asks brightly, his bright blue eyes shining with curiosity. "Lets go over to the bed and I'll tell you about what happened when I was two years older then you, ok?" His son grins and nods, grabbing his hand and pulling him towards the bed. He smiles and lets his son pull him to the bed.

Once he's sitting with his back against the wall, Tenyu crawls into his lap and he puts an arm around his son's shoulders. "It all started at summer camp…" He begins once he finishes gathering his thoughts, Tenyu already hanging on his every word, edger to hear about when he was around Tenyu's age.

-+-Tenyu-+-

He yawns and smuggles more with his pillow. His stomach growls, meaning that it's breakfast time, so he sits up and look around the room. The lights weren't that bright so they didn't hurt his eyes. He

finds his dad looking through the cupboards. He glances at the computer, he kind of remembers some of the stuff that the man on the screen was saying, but most of it went over his head.

"Dad, is there stuff for breakfast?" He asks. His father smiles as he glances his way. "We got some more oat meal, but I'll have to head up to get some juice and other stuff. But that can wait until later." His dad says. He glances at the computer again before asking, "Are you going away through the computer?" His father looks slightly surprised at that question, then his dad gets what he's asking. "If I'm going to use it, you'll be coming with, kiddo. We're family." His dad says. He smiles, relieved that what's going to happen he'll be with his dad.

He bites his lips as his thoughts turn towards his mom. He looks down at his lap, he knows that something happened to his mom, but he really wishes that he was wrong. He knows that his dad's not telling him what really happened with his mom and he didn't want it confirmed though. He blinks in hopes of keeping the tears from falling.

"Foods ready." His dad says, he looks up and grins as he climbs down off the bed. He climbs onto the stool and begins to dig into his food. He notices that his dad's eating slowly again. He sighs mentally, wondering what's on his dad's mind at the moment. He doesn't like it when his dad's like this; he tries to think of a way to snap his dad out of this.

"Are you going to pick up some more cloths for us?" He asks finally. It works, his dad blinks and looks over at him. "I should, shouldn't I? So, what colours do you want?" His dad asks and he thinks about it for a few seconds before answering, "How about blue? Or purple! Yea, purples cool! Right?" His dad chuckles and ruffles his hair. "I'll see what I can do." His dad promises. He beams as well as congratulates himself for a job well done.

-+-TK-+-

He walks through the tunnel once more, this time with some bags. He left Tenyu busy playing a game on the computer. He hadn't wanted to leave his son, but he didn't dare take him with him out onto the street either. So he chose the lesser evil and distracted his son and left without his son knowing he had.

It hadn't taken long though, it did give him time to think about whether or not he's going to use that program that Izzy left though. He has decided that he might as well use it, though he'll be taking Tenyu with him. He just needed to go as far as to when he was nineteen years old. He could then go through the process of 'adopting' Tenyu.

They'll be leaving as soon as they have cleaned up. He'll have Tenyu take that pouch as well as anything else he decide to take with them. He soon makes it to the door and puts down the bags from his right hand. He punches in his code and then closes the key pad. He then pushes through the door once he picks up the remainder of the bags. He smiles slightly at the sight of his son totally absorbed in the computer game.

He shakes his head in amusement. He makes sure to shut the door and manually jams the lock mechanism which means that even if someone comes along and tries to open it, it would take who ever it is hours to get it to open up. By then, they'll be long gone.

He stirs and as he opens his eyes, he knows that something wasn't what it should be. He blinks as he finds a ceiling above his head. He smells chemicals which mean that he's in a place with nurses. He sits upright and finds that he is in a nurse office. He looks around for something that might tell him what date it is. He pushes the covers back and stands up, he glances at his cloths and flinches at what he's wearing.

"Guess it's before …" He couldn't say it, even if he's alone. He pulls back the curtains and finds Tenyu on the next bed, with the pack by the end of the bed. He sighs in relief, glad that he didn't have to look

far in order to find his son. He looks at the clock and notices that it's about two in the afternoon. He finally notices the calendar and blinks at the date. "I'm eighteen? I was hoping for either nineteen or maybe twenty-one. This is definitely going to a bit tougher then I thought." He muses out loud.

He looks thoughtful, until the door opens and he comes face to face with someone he hasn't seen since he was twenty nine years old. "Kari…" He says, not sure if he can believe that it's really her. "Dad?" A more familiar voice asks. He turns to look at his son, he smiles slightly and Tenyu drifts off into slumber once more. "He was found about the same time you fainted." Kari says.

He nods and sighs as he runs a hand through his short hair. Taking note kind of how pale Tenyu is in this light. He moves and checks to see if his son might be developing a fever or something. Other then being a little warm, Tenyu is fine. He relaxes, looks over to find Kari looking at him with a searching look. He shifts slightly, uncomfortable under a supposable dead woman's gaze.

"He looks kind of pale, just wondering if he might be…" He says, trying to fill the silence between them. He just knows that if it had been anyone other then her, he might have been able to pull off some reasonable act to get rid of suspension. He really had to wonder what's going through Kari's head at the moment.

-+-Kari-+-

' *Is it me or did that fainting spell knock something loose in TK's head?'* She thinks for herself as she muses as TK gets even more uncomfortable under her gaze. She glances at the kid in bed, TK wasn't the only one concerned about how pale the kid is.

They also couldn't find anything on the kid, plus they didn't bother to go through the pack that the kid has, which might mean the kid is a run away. She didn't think for a minute that the kid was out and about on his own, he seems to be between the ages five and seven. They were already looking around for his older brother or guardian.

"You think anyone would mind if I take the kid home with me?" TK asks as her best friend from childhood stares at the kid. She blinks; kind of surprise at TK's question. "I think they're going to try and call his parents." She answers. TK snorts slightly, "I'm his father, Kari. Met Tenyu Yamato Takaishi and we're from about fifty years in the future." TK looks into her eyes as he says that last part. Any thoughts of her friend pulling her leg as she notices the serious look in his eyes, for she doesn't know what to say to that so she just continues to stare at her blond friend and fellow Digidestine, trying to come to grips about what she's currently feeling about this for she knows that she couldn't be Tenyu's mother.

"You murdered two months before the take over of our world began. It took me decades to get over you, Kari, just to let you know. It was through Gatomon did I find Tenyu's mother. She was killed a year ago, when Tenyu was five. I still don't have the heart to tell him that he'll…" TK trails off and for some reason, that admittance made her blush and feel sorry for both TK and for Tenyu. "You have proof." She asks softly. "I had Tenyu carry this pouch that Izzy wants me to give to his… current self. It should contain everything." TK says softly. She glances at the pack on the floor, then something clicks and she asks, "If you're from about fifty years in the future, wouldn't you be too old to be fathering children?" TK blinks and then begins to chuckle and then laughs out right, this causes Tenyu to wake up. "Um, what's going on?" The son of her best friend and crush asks as his father laughs controllably, she couldn't blame Tenyu about being confused by not just his surroundings, but also at his father's behaviour.

-+-Tenyu-+-

He glances around the street, finding it odd to be walking around in daylight. He did notice some major differences to the last time he was out and about with his dad, for one thing, there weren't any Digimon patrolling around as well as none of the buildings look like gloomy either. He glances over at Kari, one of the people his dad told him about yesterday.

He then looks over to where he heard laughter. He grins as he watches some other kids' race off on odd shoes with wheels on the bottom. He looks forward as the bus stops and the doors open. They climb onto the bus; he sticks close to his dad as they walk to some seats. He sits by the window and looks straight out of the window once he sits down. The bus jerks and soon they're moving forward.

Neither his dad or Kari were talking, he looks at his dad and then at Kari who's sitting on the seat behind them. He notices that both seem to be thinking deeply about something, he guesses it might have something to do with him. He turns to glance at his dad's cloths and didn't know what to think of his dad wearing such bright colours, but then, according to what dad told him, they didn't have to worry about Digimon hunting them down, which was a good thing.

He watches the world go by as he stares out of the window. He can't wait to meet his uncle Matt. He knows that his middle name was in honouring his uncle whose full name is Yamato. His dad places a hand on his shoulder and he gets up off the seat. He follows his dad off the bus; they were at some kind of mall from the looks of things. He wants to ask where they're going, but he gets the feeling that this was kind of really important to his dad so he doesn't say a word.

They stop before this shop that sells musical instruments, he waits for his dad to go inside, but as he looks up into his dad's face, he sighs mentally at the look in his dad's eyes. He glances at Kari and finds that she's not helping either. He glances between the two of them for about two minutes, then moves forward into the shop. He looks around with wide eyes, stunned at just how many things were in the shop.

He walks up to the front desk, his gaze snapping randomly around at the many items that fascinates him. He stops before the desk and stares at the man before the desk. He notices the blond hair and the blue eyes. He asks bluntly, "Are you Matt?" The man blinks in surprise and looks down. "I am. You're looking for your parents, kid?" Matt asks. "Dad's outside the shop, kind of out of it. Kari's not really helping either. I'm Tenyu, so you're my uncle?" He asks. Matt coughs

and looks stunned and very uncomfortable. "I only have a little brother kid. His only eighteen and your how old?" Matt asks. He cocks his head to his side and then answers, "I think dad's name is TK, I think. Well, my mom called him TK…"

-+-TK-+-

He blinks and looks around for Tenyu, he then looks into the shop to find his son talking with his brother. He groans, but walks inside with Kari following behind. He got to hear the last part that his son said to Matt. "Err, I guess you'd like me to explain, huh?" He says as he comes up behind his son. Matt rises an eyebrow and waits for him to continue. "You see, I married Tenyu's mother about fifty years down the road and I just couldn't leave him so I brought him with me as I used this program that Izzy was able to modify to send people into the past." He can tell that Matt didn't have much faith in what he's saying and he sighs.

He looks down at Tenyu and asks, "Mind if I get something out of the pack?" Tenyu shakes his head and he opens up a compartment where his shades are. He takes them out and hands them over to Matt. "They're high tech, so try not to break them. There are some nubs on left side." He tells Matt. Matt puts them on and then toys with the nubs and soon Matt gasps in surprise and quickly plays with the nubs once more, he guesses that Matt activated the infrared.

After a few minutes, Matt sighs and takes them off. Matt looks at the left side and then shakes his head. "Ok, there really something." Matt says and then hands the shades back to him. "Though, why come back to the past if you have a family?" Matt asks. He sighs as he finishes putting the shades back into the pack. "Because expect for me and maybe Gatomon, everyone else is died." He answers simply. Matt looks stunned and he couldn't really blame him, he just hopes that he'll be able to avert what had happen, what might happen, or is destined to be.

He watches as Tenyu attempts to tackle Tai, his son's partner leaps forward to help tackle Tai onto the ground. He sighs as his nine year old son gets caught in a headlock and Agumon kind of holds Leormon's tail so that the lion cub couldn't help Tenyu out of the headlock. "Let me go! Let me go!" Tenyu cries out and Tai says, "Not until you say the magic words, kiddo." He shakes his head as Tenyu continues to struggle to get free of the headlock.

"Oh stop it Tai! I doubt anyone would want to stroke your ego anymore then it is." Kari says as she enters the living room from the kitchen. Tai sighs drastically, but lets the feisty nine year old go as Leormon and Agumon stop wrestling around. "I think Ranma ½ is on!" Leormon says and the pair races upstairs, leaving Tai, Agumon, Kari, and him alone. Patamon and Gatomon were busy completing a mission in the Digital world, so they wouldn't be able to make it for the shower taking place tonight.

"I kind of wish I have that kind of energy." Tai muses, breaking the silence. "And here I thought you were just growing up." His wife says jokingly. He smiles as Tai and Kari argue as they enter into the kitchen, leaving Agumon and him to follow behind.

Kari and he have been married for about a year and a half and he's happy to know that Tenyu doesn't mind that he remarried. He had been kind of surprise when he decided to tell Tenyu that his mother's been died for quite sometime, only to find out that Tenyu kind of already guessed that he'll never get to see his real mother again.

He sits down at the table, for Tai's already moving about the kitchen, helping his wife finish dinner. He smiles as he watches Kari move about. Mesmerized by Kari's body, for Kari's about four months pregnant with their first born, they were already picking out names for either gender, though he knows that Kari is hoping for a daughter. Tenyu doesn't seem to mind that he's about to become an older brother in about five more months, but then Tenyu seems happy that they weren't on the run anymore.

Tenyu and him are still pretty close to each other, for the first month Tenyu ended up sleeping in his bed, for his son found sleeping with him helped him feel secure enough to fall asleep in the unfamiliar surroundings. Patamon had been kind of sulky about it, but by the second month Tenyu was fine with sleeping on his own in his own room.

About six months later, Gennai presented Tenyu with a Digivice and a Digi Egg. Three days later the Digi Egg hatched and by the second week, Tenyu's partner Digivolved into Leormon for the first time. Gennai had to attempt that he hadn't known what kind of Digimon would have hatched out of the Digi Egg, and over time they had seen Leormon Digivolve into his champion form of Raiamon and, for a short amount of time, into the ultimate GrapLeomon.

He sighs as he thinks about why Raiamon had needed to Digivolve to ultimate, he's just glad that Tenyu was fine when that whole ordeal finished. He also

To be continued …

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 1

I don't own Buffy!

"Ok, this is different." He muses before glancing around him only to find mini genetic rejects racing around with some of the older crowds have dazed looks on their faces, ones that likely mirror on his face just minutes ago. Scratching the side of his head at the scene before him, he just sighs and begins to study what he has on his person, hoping for some cash or something just in case he needs to use a taxi.

"What the...?" It didn't him long to find a very odd assortment of knives with two daggers, a short sword that seems to have silver fused to the edge, a bejeweled staff with glowing gems, and at least three strange looking guns that didn't seem to need bullets, one of them hanging from his belt, another strapped to his left hip, and the third strapped to the boot of his right leg. What really helped was that within seconds of touching each weapon, he received a rush of information about not only how to use them but what kind of enchantments were laid on them.

The smaller knives seem to have a spell of True Flight on them, making it so that they'll always hit their targets although one of the two daggers had a spell of Life Steal on it, allowing him to increase his life span by adding the years of his victim had to live until they died of old age to him. The other dagger was enchanted to cut through anything but living flesh, which seemed odd but likely real handy by passing locked doors.

The sword did indeed have silver infused in the cutting edge of it and the spells on it were shielding spells, going so far as to give him some immunity to instant death spells. The staff would not only allow him to use air, earth, fire, and water spells but allow him to summon elemental spirits of the four elements. Finally, the guns were particle

accelerators, most commonly known as laser guns and were enspelled not to go very far from their owner.

As some of those little monsters come to swarm him, he just used his staff to knock them out before deciding to see his reflection in hopes that if he does so, he might remember who he is since just touching each of his assortment of weapons gave him knowledge, it stands to reason getting a clear reflection of himself should do the same, right?

It wasn't hard to break into a house and after turning on the lights, he finally gets a good look of his face. First off, he finds that his hair is blue, obviously dyed, but the front part is spiked while the rest of it is done in a low ponytail that goes about midway down his back. His eyes were gold in color and finds a stylish silver E looking tattoo on his forehead, on the left side.

Turning his head slightly, he finds his ears were slightly pointed and a look into his mouth revealed that while his canines were larger and pointed, his other front teeth were also slightly pointed as well. Opening his mouth so that he can get a good look at his molars reveal they're normal enough.

He's wearing a white long sleeve shirt, blue jeans, black army boots, and a simple denim vest. In the end, it didn't help with his memory and so, when some more of those little genetic rejects appear at the door, he didn't have a problem knocking them out once more, only this time with his fist.

And so, he wanders the town, knocking out pretty much anyone who decided to assault him. After about an hour, a red headed ghost appears just after he's finish buying something to eat from a cafe while reading a small pamphlet about this town called Sunnydale. "Xander! I've been looking everywhere for you!" Says the ghost.

"Xander? You sure that's my name?" He asks, suddenly very interested in what this girl had to say, more then ready to hear her out simply because he's pretty much grasping at straws. "Well, yea,

you did go a bit berserk on buying that stuff from the discount bin. I mean, who's tacky enough to mix fangs and elf ears?"

He winces as he replies, "Me apparently." The girls eyes widen and she tries to say, "Oh, right, err... sorry, at least you're you, right?" He shakes his head as he states, "Well, considering I bought a bunch of random junk, does it really surprise you that I don't have an overwhelming identity as a costume?"

"Wait! How do you know that you're turned into your costume? I hadn't gotten around to telling your that yet, have I?" Ghost girls asks, frowning very cutely as she tries to puzzle it out. "Not really, but I did kind of connect the dotes since it is Halloween and the mini monsters seem to be something kids would wear during this holiday." He admits.

"Oh? Oh, that's a relief, although have you... you know, killed anyone yet?" Ghost girl asks and he shakes his head. "I've just been knocking them out when they come to bug me." He tells the red headed ghost. "Well, that's good." She says, clearly relieved to hear that.

"By the way, what's your name?" He asks and the girl's eyes widen. "Willow." The newly dubbed Willow the Ghost says and he nods.

"Anyway, we need to find Buffy. She dressed up as some noble woman and she freaked when she saw Angel go vamp when he defended her while Cordelia didn't do much other then scream. It didn't help that I was out trying to locate you." Willow says and he nods as he gets up, within a single gulp, he finishes his pop and says, "Ok, lead on, Willow."

Morning

"Err, guys? Why do I still have blue hair, yellow eyes, fangs, and elven ears? Not to mention still active gear?" Xander asks as he

takes a good hard look at the gems in his staff that still got glowing gems in it.

The others glance at each other while Xander frowns as he recalls what kind of damage the items were capable of causing, especially a certain dagger capable of increasing his life so that it could number in the hundreds instead of decades. "Well, I don't know about the knifes, daggers, and guns, but I think the staff absorbed some of the magic." Willow muses and his eyes widen at the very thought.

"Oh my god." Xander says as it hits him that if he's still got the hair and what not, then that means he might not be... "Hey, Angel, here's a simple question for ya, am I human?" Xander asks and the resident en-souled vampire blink before frowning as he answers, "You smell... I've never smelled anything like you before."

"Wait, how can that be? I mean, he's Xander, he can't be the mystery guy here!" Cordelia says and Xander winces slightly at her tone. "I guess we could always research it." Willow says, trying to cheer them up.

"Ok, but I believe I'll need a damn good illusion spell to even look like my old self." Xander says as he adds, "After all, I believe people will start to wonder about why the blue hair dye isn't fading or why my ears are pointed when they're suppose to be rounder and less narrow looking."

Years Later

"What the hell are you?!" The First screams as Alexander LaVelle "Xander" Harris gets shielded from its attempt to freeze the blue haired man's heart. "Beat's me but I know what you're going to be soon." Xander states commonly, not the least bit disturbed by the fact that the First Evil can't place his species.

"Oh? What what will that be?" The being asks with a sneer. "Dead." Xander answers simply and throws the dagger that doesn't cut living

tissue at the being. Since he got the dagger, Xander had discovered just how effective it was against the undead, golems, and energy entities.

And so what was once considered invincible died and the second dagger siphoned off the remaining years that the First still had before him, it seemed that the enchantment on the life stealing dagger had strengthen over the years that it doesn't even have to be the thing to strike the killing blow or it just might be that Xander's own magic was growing and creating some kind of link with the life stealing dagger and whatever thing Xander uses to kill his enemies with.

And so as Xander walks over to pick up the dagger, he could only sigh since he had so hoped that one of the oldest beings would be able to ID what kind of being he is or if he's a mix, but at last, it seemed that he's something so unique, it hasn't been seen before.

"I wonder if I should visit London to see if any of the Watcher Council libraries remained intact." Xander muses as he sheaths the dagger. Not knowing that he's just added hundreds of thousands of years to his own life span by killing the First Evil, though it'll likely be a very long time before he would figure it out.

Light shimmers about Xander and the blue hair, pointed ears, yellow eyes, and the tattoo on the forehead seem to vanish, to be replaced by brown hair, hazel eyes, and clean face. Even the structure of the man's face seem to have altered, making him appear in his twenties instead of his teens.

And so the blind spot that is Alexander LaVelle "Xander" Harris departs the church, trying to think of other ways to discover just what he is and if he can even breed with the races around him, he even had some plans to visit this branch of lawyers that reside in LA in the near future to see if the rumors were true, that with the right price, he can speak to the very Powers That Be that see all and know all.

After all, he's been able to find all kinds of loot in demon dens and vampire lairs, especially when there isn't anyone left alive to use

those bank accounts or pawn that loot at the local flee market.

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 2

I don't own Buffy the Vampire Slayer or Disgaea!

Xander notices a simple outfit that's under the game section of the costume store composing of a red scarf, a pair of shorts, a blue wig, plastic arm bracers, pointed elf like ears, and sword. A small note hangs from it and what's written on it is:

Name: Prince Laharl

Occupation: The supreme Overlord of a Netherworld

Game: Disgaea: Hour of Darkness

Recommendation, trying getting a pair of girls to dress up as Etna and Flonne as they are the main vassals serving under Laharl. Prinny costumes are optional.

Xander moves that costume aside and finds that there was indeed a Etna costume behind it and a bit behind those two, a Flonne costume with a few blue penguin costumes in between the Etna costume with a plastic spear and the Flonne costume with a plastic bow.

With a smirk, Xander picks up the three costumes and makes his way to where Buffy and Willow were. "Check it out, I found us a costume theme." Xander says as he holds up the two girl costumes.

"I don't know Xander, I was kind of thinking dressing up like..." The Slayers glance over at the fancy, lace dress that hails from a different time period. Xander frowns slightly but reinforcements in the form of the owner of the shop helped talk the two girls into going with his idea.

And so, Willow took the Flonne costume as Buffy takes the Etna one. They got a pretty decent discount for buying them as a theme.

Oct 31st

"Where in the Netherworld am I?" Prince Laharl demands as he finds himself in a street that seems to be overrun by hordes of tiny terrors. Within seconds, his scarf snakes through the air and wraps around the neck of one of the mini things running ramped through the street.

"Well? Answer your Overlord!" Prince Laharl demands as the little being it held up in the air by his scarf, it's feet very much off of the ground. "Don't know, sir! Just woke here!" The little monster exclaims as it tries to shrink away from him.

"Well then, in my name I hereby lay claim to this town! And as such, I order you to get your siblings under control!" Prince Laharl declares and his scarf loosens so that his newest vassal drops down onto the ground. "Will do sir!" The little monster declares and within seconds, races to carry out his order as fast as its little legs can move.

"Now to find Etna and that Love Freak." Prince Laharl murmurs as he plants a fist on his hip. And so, the young looking Overlord picks a random direction and walks off in it in hopes of finding his two primary vassals.

Etna can't help the fact that her tail almost ended up in knots at the sight of all of this candy that were on the ground in pillow cases and other kinds of containers. With a toothy grin, the demoness casually picks up one of the bags of loot and within seconds, pops one of the little chocolate bars into her mouth.

"Hey, you little brat! Drop that bag!" Etna orders as one of the little monsters pick up one of the bags of candy. When the little beastie doesn't make a move to drop the loot, a spear appears in Etna's hand and the point just under the little demon's chin.

"Now, drop the loot before Ms Etna drops you." Etna says in a very sweet tone. Within seconds, the bag falls to the ground and the little demon turns to run away in terror.

"Well, now, where am I? And, more importantly, where are my Prinnies?" Etna wonders once she's gotten her hands on at least ten bags of candy loot. *I wonder if the Prince is here as well?* The Slayer turned Demoness wonders before deciding to whistle for her squad of Prinnies.

As minutes tick away, so Etna's ire grew. Finally, Etna snaps and pulls one of the little monster towards her before holding the tiny demon off the ground, pretty much at face level with a single arm. "Ok shorty, have you seen a squad of blue, peg legged penguins around with a big bag on their stomachs?"

"No see penguins! No see penguins at all!" The little being says as its eyes widen in terror. "Damn it all, where the hell are my Prinnies?!" Etna wonders, dropping the little demon as she places that hand onto her hip.

And so, Etna, loyal vassal of Laharl begins to stalk down the street, deciding that if she can't find her Prinnies that she'll make do with rounding up every demon, ghost, and what not that she can find to order around in absence of her squad of explosive servants.

"I don't think the owner of that vehicle would like it tipped on its side." Ex-Angel Trainee Flonne says as a swarm of smallish demons try to over turn the metal contraption commonly known as a car.

The horde pause and then they slowly turned to regard the fallen Angel. Flonne just sighs as the mini horde begins to advance towards her. Then as the pack of short demons finally begin to get ready to pounce, Laharl appears.

"Laharl!" Flonne calls out on spotting the blue hair Overlord with a big smile on her face. "Oh, it's only you, Flonne. I was hoping to find Etna." Laharl says and Flonne sighs.

He can be so cruel at times. Oh well, at least he didn't call me Love Freak so that's progress. The blond ex-Angel Trainee muses as Laharl adds, "Finish disciplining your minions later, we've got other things to do like finding a suitable manor to inhabit."

"But they're not my minions..." Flonne says but the Overlord either didn't hear it or didn't care. "Let's go." Prince Laharl says and with a sigh, she falls in step behind the young Overlord, leaving the horde of smallish demons alone to do as they please.

Spike stares at the blue haired kid wearing a large red scarf before vamping out to show the brat what's what, ignoring Dru's whimpering about the 'challenger of angels.' "Listen here, brat, and listen good, I'm the big bad in town. So I'm the boss and what I say goes, if you got a problem with that, well, I could always use a punching bag."

Within seconds, there's nothing left of Spike but ashes and Flonne just sighs as she shakes her head while Etna says, "Good job, Prince, although I'm kind of disappointed that he wasn't strong enough to endure a simple fire spell."

"Any of you guys got a problem with taking orders from me? Overlord Laharl?" The antenna blue hair style wearing Demon demands and once the other vampires shake their head in a negative way, Laharl laughs his signature laugh while Etna begins to direct her newly recruited minions to stare making some changes.

I wonder how we got to a human world though... I mean, I don't remember passing through a portal to come here. Flonne wonders but decides to go pick out a room for her to live at before deciding to take a tour of the town in order to get a feel of it.

"Err, sir?" A nervous mummy pipes in once Prince Laharl finishes laughing. "What?" The Overlord snaps, causing the mummy to cringe slightly.

"Well, it seems that this town already has a Mayor..." The mummy says as it hands over a poster with a picture of Mayor Richard

Wilkins on it and an election notice. "Well, we'll just have to correct this then." Prince Laharl declares before laughing once more.

Morning

"Oh... Where are we and why do I have this journal labeled 'Etna's Private Thoughts' in this loot bag?" Buffy asks while the little kids begin to cry for their moms. "I'm trying to think of why we're at the Mayor's office and why Xander's currently sitting in the Mayor's chair.

"I don't have a clue but for some odd reason, I feel very fulfilled." Xander admits from his position behind the desk, not really caring that his bare chest is revealed to all.

"We should get these kids back to their parents." Willow says as she glances at the little kids that were slightly busy crying. "Right, I'll read this diary later then." Buffy says, closing the book with a sigh.

"So let me get this straight, we all had the same dream last night?" Flonne asks as they're gathered around the breakfast table while Etna begins to curse about something.

"That sounds about right, dood." One of the Prinnies says while another one adds, "Dood, you three just fell down at the same time, dood! There were reports coming in from the Dark Assembly about some zombies also doing the samething, dood!"

"Is that so? Then perhaps it wasn't a dream." Prince Laharl muses with a thoughtful pose. "I'm going to get the route to that world! I've got unfinished business there!" Etna declares and stomps off to visit the Dark Assembly in order to open a portal to that human town of Sunnydale to get a version of her private journal back before somebody reads it.

"Dood..." The Prinnies sigh before scrambling to follow after Boss Etna, leaving Prince Laharl and Flonne alone with a large feast for breakfast.

"Well, more for me then." Prince Laharl declares and then digs in. "But shouldn't we, I don't know, go and help her?" Flonne asks.

"Feh, if she wants to take a vacation in a human dimension, then let her, just as long as she's back to do her duties as my vassal in a week or two." Prince Laharl states calmly while Flonne felt like letting her face met the floor.

"That's so generous of you." She declare in a slightly sarcastic tone, not that anyone would have realized her attempt at sarcasm. "I know." Prince Laharl says, causing a sweet drop to appear at Flonne's temple.

Buffy vs Dracula

As Dracula moves to bite onto the Slayer's neck, a small flame flares up, causing the vampire to turn to ashes and allowing Buffy to break free of the hypnotic effects.

"Give me my journal, blondie! I know you have it since that's what those lawyers seers have told me." Buffy blinks before turning to stare at a seemingly human girl dressed in a very familiar way. "Don't I know you from somewhere?" Buffy Summers wonders, not the bit bothered by the spear pointing at her or by the strange penguins with pegged legs standing not that far behind the leather dressed teen.

"I'm Etna, as in the Etna who's journal you had in your possession since that Halloween night!" Etna the Demoness growls and Buffy's eyes widen, now knowing just who she's dealing with.

"Well... I gave it to Giles, who sent it to the Watcher's Council. I don't know what they did with it, we had a falling out." Buffy says and the demoness growls while the blue pegged leg penguins just sigh, "Dood..."

With that, Etna stomps off after destroying a few trees, while tempted to throw a Prinny, she knew she could ill afford to lose the little

buggers until she finds a way to summon more of them. Buffy can't help sweet dropping as she realized that she's fairly lucky that Etna never asked if she read it.

With a shake of her head, Buffy decides to return home since she rather not hook up with the demoness later tonight. After all, Buffy might be good but she knew that Etna was better.

Karma Good or Bad Part 3: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2 or Naruto!

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o 0 O - Sakura **- O 0 o**

"Why doesn't Naruto have to go to school?" She asks Kakashi after their Jonin instructor first asked them to meet the man in the guest room and then telling them that they failed their tests so they have to attend school. It had been shocking to say the less that the idiot of the team is the only one who doesn't need additional schooling.

"I mean, he's got that job at Doc Tofu's office in either the morning or afternoon! He lives out in that Dojo!" She adds but Kakashi just sighs.

"That doesn't change the fact that neither of you two managed to pass these tests. I have talked with both Kasumi and Doc Tofu and they have admitted to helping Naruto with his studies, even giving him minor reviews on what he's read." Their team leader tells them and she couldn't help but blink as she tries to come up with an argument only to realize that it will only be Sasuke and her going to and from school.

She glances over to Sasuke and smiles at the idea of spending a lot more personal time with the last Uchiha. *We can stay up late studying together. After all, he's been spending way too much time with that Ranma.* She thinks to herself with a frown while an inner image of herself pretty much laughing at an image of Ranma under that inner Sakura's foot saying, 'Take that, dog-girl!'

"Feh, it's not like we'll be using anything these classes teach back in our world." Sasuke states in a dismissive tone and Kakashi seems to sigh.

"Be that as it may, we need to keep the local government off our backs or they will investigate us to find that we don't show up in any records, in this world." The silver haired Jonin states. "For now, you both will be attending school while I begin to figure out how to create records with the right information so that we don't have to worry about such things for as long as we remain in this dimension."

"It's not as if we'll be able to hide our curses..." She couldn't help but point out. *Though I get the feeling that for the right fee, Nabiki would be happy to create such information. Although then we'd be paying her off to keep her from telling anyone about the forgery so we don't get arrested.* She muses with a frown as her hand moves to the pouch where a few bills Naruto had given her as spending money.

Just when has that idiot blond had time to study while he is busy working? I mean, the rent Nabiki is charging us it pretty steep as it is. Then she frowns slightly as she considers that and for the first time, it struck her as funny that Naruto Uzumaki is the 'bread' winner of their team.

But then, nobody seems interested in hiring Kakashi or us to do anything. Not even as babysitters. She admits.

"I'm sure word has gotten around about them." Their Jonin instructor says. "Just remember to take a few change of cloths in case of losing them or ruining them." Kakashi adds and she flinched slightly at the reminder of what usually happens when she is hit with cold water.

I really should have thought that out a bit better... It's not fair that Naruto's the only one not to be cursed. She thinks to herself as she begins to rub her left arm.

"For how long do we have to attend this school until we can go back to doing homeschooling?" She asks after glancing over to Sasuke, wondering if her love is thinking the same thing as her.

"Well... I'm not sure but I do know that you start the day after tomorrow. Kasumi will be going out to buy your uniforms." Kakashi answers.

"She doesn't need us to go along to get fitted?" She asks, not sure what to feel at the idea of the eldest Tendo daughter knowing her measurements.

"You could always head down an ask her." Kakashi muses as her teacher takes out one of his new books that the man has bought since Naruto started his job. She is rather reluctant to investigate the title of the book for fear of learning it's yet another porno.

With a sigh, she heads down stairs to do just that, only pausing at the door to glance at Sasuke for a few seconds, wondering what he has planned for today since she wouldn't mind going on a date with him today or tomorrow. *I mean, what has he been using his spending money on anyway?* She wonders as she exits out of the guest room and towards the stairs.

"Bye Kasumi! See you later this afternoon!" Naruto calls out from the door.

"See you, Naruto." Kasumi says before Naruto leaves, allowing the door to close on its own. She watches as Kasumi then heads away from the front door to return to doing her usual tasks.

As she makes off the steps, she calls out to the eldest daughter of their host's house hold. "Hey, Kasumi? Kakashi mentioned that you are heading out later to buy our uniforms. I'm just wondering if you need us to come along to be fitted." She says to the often surreal daughter of Soun Tendo.

"Oh, you don't need to, Sakura. I've got a rough idea of your sizes from doing your laundry. I wouldn't want you get embarrassed by transforming in the mall by accident." Kasumi informs her and she fights off the need to pale at the idea of her curse activating in front of so many people.

"Oh, ah, if you say so, Kasumi." She says and Kasumi smiles softly at her before returning to do her set tasks. She watches the young woman with a pang of envy since she isn't nearly haft as talented with it comes to doing housework.

With a sigh, she glances over to the clock on the wall and then heads out into the backyard, heading for the dojo for practice since she had to stay in good form for when a certain Kuno decides to try for another round. *That woman is more then capable of putting the fear of women in anyone.* She decides privately.

Dinner

She couldn't help but glance warily at the very familiar, purple haired teen girl clinging to her teacher's side. Earlier, Naruto had shown up but took one look at the scene where Shampoo is clinging to Kakashi's side and left before said Chinese Amazon noticed his arrival. She did silently curse the fact that she hadn't managed to do the same right seeing Shampoo lower the face mask and give the Jonin a deep, passionate kiss.

Of course seeing what's finally under said mask clearly shocked me enough to keep me from remembering to sneak away before the Amazon noticed me... She thinks to herself as she glancing at her glass of water before glancing over at a very nervous Ranma and Genma.

After all, Ranma might have tossed the girl around but it was Genma who broke that pot over Shampoo's head... I wonder if that makes her Ranma's step-mother if Shampoo ever learns that Genma was that panda that knocked her out... She muses before trying to force herself to eat something since she had long since lost her appetite.

o 0 O - Naruto **- O 0 o**

"This is so not going well..." He murmurs to himself as he watches a group of people begin to make a large scene at a table a few meters

away from where he's sitting. *And here I thought people from Nerima were prone to causing a fight scene...*

"Excuse me, but what is their argument about?" He asks a passing waiter, he couldn't help but notice how... nervous and fearful the man is. The waiter glances from him to the group where weapons were finding their way into the fighters' hands.

"Something about a demonic stag that's been seen around Tokyo. Now if you excuse me, I have to find a spot in which to hide in." The waiter then flees.

He blinks before glancing around to find that a lot of people were ducking under tables. He sighs and wonders if it's too late to ask for the bill before what the waiter said finally sets in. *Why am I not surprise that it only took two nights for the nine-tail demon to attract attention in this city?* He muses with a mental sigh.

Just what kind of fighters are they anyway? I mean, why would they want to take on a demon? He wonders as he begins to study them with a slight frown.

After observing the group, he decides that no, they haven't realized he's in the restaurant. *Guess that answer that.* He thinks with a slight smile of relief, though in the end, he's even more relieved when the group finally breaks apart and storm out of the restaurant with their weapons in hand.

It takes a few minutes before people began to come out of hiding. Though at the slightest noise the crowd would flinch and look warily around, half expecting something to happen. *Hopefully my dinner won't be ruined because of this episode.* He thinks as he glances off towards the kitchen.

In time he did forget about the earlier commotion with the group of Demon hunters to begin shifting through the memories of his clones. A few interesting bits of information did occupy him until a waitress arrives to, finally, take his order. He hands the menu over afterward

with a smile which the young brunet returned before hurrying away, leaving him alone at his table once more.

After sorting through said memories, he begins to muse about the fact that Sakura and Sasuke will be attending school beginning tomorrow morning. It truly amuses him that the number one rookie of their year is being forced to attend a school while he, the class clown and last of their class didn't. *I wonder if I shouldn't get him a collar with tags as a gift? I mean, just to let people know he belongs to someone.*

Soon enough his meal arrives and with a soft 'thank you', he unrolls the napkin and set it on his lap before picking up the chopsticks to begin to eat his dinner.

Morning

o 0 O - Ranma **- O 0 o**

On entering into the kitchen, he couldn't help but stare at the red and black haired kid helping Kasumi and Shampoo out in the kitchen. When the stranger turns, he finds band-aids on both of the kid's cheeks and very familiar eyes. "Yo, Ranma." The disguised Naruto Uzumaki says giving him a two finger salute.

"Ah... hi." He says and Shampoo nods in his direction before saying, "Hi Ranma! Is Airen up yet? Shampoo helping to make too, too delicious food with Cherry-boy and Nice-girl!" Shampoo beams as the Amazon gets to Kasumi and Naruto's nicknames.

Naruto rolls his eyes and says, "Name's Ataru, Shampoo, Ataru." He blinks as he realizes that Naruto was saying this more for his benefit then Shampoo's.

Guess that explains why Naruto wasn't around much last night. Must be one expensive dye job too. He muses as he slowly shakes his head as he turns to head for the dinning room.

"Morning Ranma." Sakura says as she yawns and stretches. He glances at the kitchen once he's sitting down at the table.

"Ataru?" He says and Sakura blinks with a puzzled look on her face. "Fishcake is going by Ataru now? Have you seen his hair?" He whispers to the pink haired girl, it seems that Sakura did get a touch up job with her own dye job.

"Fishcake... Oh? Oh!" Sakura seems to fully wake up, looking very startled at the idea that Naruto's here.

"I got tea!" Naruto says in a sing-song voice and Sakura just gawks at the former blond ninja. While Sakura tries to find her voice, Sasuke and Nabiki arrive.

Sasuke studies Naruto, likely taking in the dual color dye job, for a few seconds before grunting and moving to take a place at the table. Nabiki is her usual morning self waiting for a couple of cups of tea before fully waking up. Naruto did stick around to fill pour them some tea and just before the ex-blond heads into the kitchen, Naruto says, "Sakura? Sasuke? Just remember to head back upstairs to put on your guys' uniforms, wouldn't want you to get into trouble over that little detail."

Sasuke just ignores the ex-blond while Sakura looks alarmed, it seems that she had forgotten all about the fact that she's expected to begin attending school. Not that he blames her since a lot has happened in the two days, none the least of which is having their old 'buddy' Shampoo finally caught up with them.

Naruto's lucky, all he had to do was dye his hair, cover his whisker marks with band-aids, and change his name for Shampoo not to recognize him. It's not going to be easy for us, not with our curses being some kind of water magnet. He thinks as he sips his tea, his mind whirling around the last few meetings with the Chinese Amazon that's in the kitchen.

He's more then a little relieved at the fact that during their original meeting with Shampoo that Naruto managed to keep him from leaping up onto that challenge log to fight the purple haired teenager since he's fairly confident that he would have won that fight, which means it could be himself who's married to Shampoo. *Though, Sasuke did manage to force her to drop her weapons when she began threatening to kill and eat Pops...*

By the time the rest of the rest of the house hold arrives, Naruto has come in to refill the tea pot as well as adding more cups. More then a few of the adults couldn't help but stare at Naruto's new style for a few seconds before dismissing it. So Kasumi and Shampoo begin to bring in plates filled with various food.

"Nihao Airen!" Shampoo chirps on entering into the room. "We go on date later, yes?" The teen asks and then pecks Kakashi on the cheek before heading back into the kitchen to continue to help Kasumi bring out more plates filled with food stuffs for breakfast.

Seems like somebody is going to have a long day ahead of them. He muses as Shampoo practically sits in Kakashi's lap as breakfast begins with Naruto taking his seat.

Karma Good or Bad Part 4: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2 or Naruto!

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o 0 O - Naruto **- O 0 o**

Breakfast went fairly well. He muses as he sits at the desk in Doc Tofu's clinic with a text book and a note book open as well as the doctor's appointment book. He flickers the pen between his fingers as he glances out the window of the clinic, waiting for something to happen.

His clones were doing fairly well even though most of the jobs they're able to find were manual labor. After all, none of his clones' identities have any references or higher schooling. He's just happy that his clones have been able to rent mail boxes since none of them have any real place of residents or need for such a place since many of his clones have managed to get where they're needed within a two hour trip on the subway to the various wards.

Up to making twenty-six clones a morning with four in the afternoon and fourteen in the evening. He muse to himself as he considers just how many other jobs he's working besides this one at Doc Tofu's clinic. *Only reason I'm not creating clones to go to the library for reading is I don't want to overload my brain.*

Finally, he just sighs and glances back at the open text book while beginning to tap the end of the pen on his open note book while his chin rests on the palm of his other hand. The text book is a math book and he's still trying to work through these word problems while resisting the urge to flip to the back of the book to find the answer. He frowns as he stares down at his note book and muses, "Maybe I should use a pencil..."

The open page features various formulas that also been scratched out. "Need a hint?" Doc Tofu asks from behind his chair. He just sighs, he's grown use to the good doctor's ability to sneak up on people. Heck, by now, he's more then a little concern when Doc Tofu doesn't do it.

"Would you mind?" He in relief as he holds the pen for his employer to write down the formula. He's not disappointed as Doc Tofu moves to his right while also beginning to explain how to puzzle out the words which point out which formula he needs to use for it.

It's times like these that cause him to remember a certain academe teacher. Guilt flares up at the fact that he never paid Iruka half as much attention as he does to Kasumi and Doctor Tofu before he reminds himself that unlike his time in the academe, he's not in a classroom setting, giving leave for more one-on-one teaching then one-on-class fill with hyper active ninja-wanna-bees.

"You alright?" Doc Tofu asks while he recalls those private moments when it was just Iruka and himself. He flushes slightly, but isn't willing to say what really bothers him.

"Not sure, actually. Do you know anything about Chinese Amazons?" He asks the good doctor who's got a pretty big crush on the eldest Tendo sister. *Might as well see if I can't get more info about them, after all, it's been almost three months since I've read any of those books about them.*

"Chinese Amazons?" The good doctor repeats, clearly thrown slightly by the subject. He nods as he waits for the man to say something that wasn't an echoing of his question.

"I know they've got some rare herbal lore and have dabbled in magic." Doc Tofu says slowly with his arms crossed over his chest. He blinks at the mention of magic.

"Well, the magic isn't that big of a surprise since they do live next to a valley filled with cursed springs." He admits in a bemused sort of

way.

"Ah yes, Jusenkyo." Tofu muses with a thoughtful look. He could only imagine that the doctor is thinking about Ranma's curse at this particular moment.

"Any idea if they know of a cure to said curse?" He asks in a curious fashion, after all, he's fairly happy with his dragon curse and wouldn't want to encounter something that causes it to be cured. *I'm sure the others would be thrilled with the idea of a cure though.*

"I would assume they're familiar with those curses but knowing a cure beyond using the right spring? I wouldn't know. They do prefer to isolate themselves from the rest of the world." Tofu explains and he frowns slightly.

"Guess that explains Shampoo's lack of familiarity with the Japanese language..." He muses thoughtfully. Not really caring that he pretty much gave out said information for free since the teen will likely be hanging around Nerima for undetermined amount of time. Likely trying to get Kakashi to return to China with her.

"You know an Amazon?" Tofu asks and he nods. Tofu seems to sigh. "Any idea why this... Shampoo is here for?" Tofu adds.

"Well, she did come here chasing a demonic dog-girl and troop of trained animals and her blond, fiendish assistant." He says in a dry tone. He could see that within seconds the good doctor made the connection.

"I did manage to keep Ranma from accepting Shampoo's challenge and then the girl comes down off the log to begin threatening something concerning the 'animals' of the group. I had my hands full trying to keep Ranma from attacking Shampoo while she begins to threaten to eat Mr Saotome." He says, he had known about he little marriage rule the Amazons had going and had hoped to keep the girl from following them in order to kill Ranma.

"Things happened before I had a thought to demand for somebody who spoke Japanese better then the Guide. One moment Shampoo is waving these mace like things around and a second later, Sasuke bites down on her wrist, causing Shampoo to drop one of her weapons." He continues, in his mind eye he can see the events as they unfold.

"Shampoo strikes Sasuke in the head, Sakura see this and kicks Shampoo into Genma. This sends them onto one of the benches, the village laughs and Shampoo stands up to begin beating the pig within an inch of his life but Genma wasn't going to take that." He muses while shaking his head.

"Genma dodges Shampoo's attacks, which furthers embarrasses the girl as this causes the crowd to laugh harder, which cause Shampoo to grow more enraged leaving room for a lot of error." He says, pausing for a few seconds to recall what happens next.

"Shampoo gets thrown onto Kakashi and as Kakashi scratches her to get to his book, she opens it and takes a look at what's in it." He states, even now he shivers at how swiftly Shampoo's face goes from confusion, then to embarrassment, and then into pervert destroyer.

"Kakashi did manage to save the book before Shampoo would shred it by biting her hand. Once our instructor had his book, he then leaps onto Genma and digs in his heels. I'm not sure how but Ranma manages to get Sasuke before hauling me onto Sakura's back and then we ride off on Sakura with Kakashi riding Genma." He finishes, he can almost still hear the laughter of the rest of the village as they rode out of the village, leaving the Guide behind.

"And she's been chasing you ever since?" Tofu asks and he nods. He hears Tofu just sigh. He knew that the tale sounded pretty unbelievable but that's how he remembered it happening. "And you wonder why she's after you?" Tofu mutters and he just sighs.

"I'm fairly sure we knew why she's after us. After all, she did suffer a huge embarrassment because of our various actions. It's just that we really didn't want to find out what her reaction would be if she learns that those 'animals' were really people." He says, which in a round about way explains why he's got red and black hair.

"Although the only reason she's 'living' at the Tendos is because her 'husband' is there." He explains. "It seems that if you knock her out and you are an outsider male, she becomes your wife."

"And who is her 'husband'?" Tofu asks and before he can reply a familiar shout of 'Shampoo kill!' sounds out, causing the both of them to stare out onto the street as Shampoo chases after a silver furred monkey. A monkey who's doing a very commendable job dodging Shampoo's strikes.

"Kakashi knocked her out." He says once the chase is gone from their view. "It seems they have more then a few issues to deal with though before they think of having kids though." He adds, wondering how long it'll take before they spot a reversal with Shampoo arriving with an exhausted Kakashi in human form.

o 0 O - Sakura **- O 0 o**

I do believe I can see myself hating school. She thinks as she walks down the street while carrying her book bag in her mouth. *I am not going to allow myself to be ridden by any of those kids, no matter how many carrots and sugar cubes they're offering me.* ***I Am Not a Horse, Damn It!***

I'm just cursed to transform into one, that's all. She adds as she finally enters into the Tendo's property. She moves to go around back since the back part is usual open.

"Oh my. I'll go get the kettle." Kasumi says as the nineteen year old gets up off the floor to fetch said item. Neither of the fathers did more then grunt a greet since they seem to be very engaged in their game.

Setting her book bag down, she begins to stretch and shake her head while only snorting softly and tossing her tail around. She sighs as Kasumi arrives with a blanket and the kettle. The blanket gets tossed about her shoulders before Kasumi pours some of the slightly warmer then she would like water on her head.

"Thanks." She says as she hugs the blanket about her body. Kasumi smiles in reply as she steps up onto the porch and moves behind Soun so she can head upsides to shower and then get dress.

Dinner

"So... where's Kakashi and Shampoo?" Ranma asks as Naruto comes into the room with the final bowls containing the remainder of the food they're going to eat. She didn't know why Ranma's asking, after all, it gives them a chance to relax and not worry about her reaction to seeing them transform before said Amazon's very eyes.

"On a date perhaps? After all, they are husband and wife." She says in a waspish tone as she takes what she can from a plate before passing it on.

"Last I saw of the two, Shampoo was trying to kill our monkey of an instructor." Naruto informs them. She just sighs and hopes that Kakashi hasn't spilled the beans about their curses.

"I do hope Kakashi will find something suitable to wear on their date." Kasumi says and that kind of ended that conversation, for now at least.

"Did you guys know that Chinese Amazons are said to have valuable herbal lore? At least that's what Doc Tofu told me when the subject about Shampoo came up." Naruto says and she found herself not capable of caring about this.

"Fat load that does us." She murmurs darkly while Sasuke just grunts softly in a dismissive manner. *Its not like anything they know will help us cure our curses...* She tells herself.

"I did not know that." Kasumi says in a manner that seems to say that the eldest daughter hadn't heard her remark at all. *Or she's ignoring it... I would bet on the latter.* She muses sourly as she eats her meal in a mechanical fashion.

"So... how was your first day of school Sakura?" Naruto inquires after a few minutes of silence. She gives the former blond her best Death Glare before returning to her meal.

There wasn't much in the way of small talk until she finally managed to excuse herself from the table to head upstairs to the room she shares with Akane to change into some old cloths to practice out in the dojo. It wasn't long before Ranma joins her and after a few minutes, the pig-tail teen begins his own katas.

Most of the taijutsu she knows are things the academe taught. She hadn't bothered to practice her taijutsu after team seven formed but ever since arriving in this strange world, she practiced because it helped take her mind off of the surrealism of everything around her. It hadn't taken long for her to also bug the Jonin enough once a week to get him to at least watch on practice session so he can help correct her form.

It wasn't long before she's repeated her katas at least four times. With that done, she moves off to the side to make room for the usual sparring match between Sasuke and Ranma. Watching the two spar always makes her realize that she's got a long way to go before she's as capable fighter as they were.

She would love to spar with either of them but knew that they wouldn't gain anything from sparring with her. *Should I ask Akane for a spar?* She wonders not for the first time since she arrived at the dojo but kept discarding the idea since she rather not see how the youngest Tendo would react to losing to somebody younger then her.

Well, there's always Naruto. She muses as she considers the idea of sparring with her other team-mate. It helped that Naruto is the only one that didn't have to attend school and he would go easy on her

because of the crush he has on her. *I mean, I have gotten better, haven't I? But Sasuke keeps saying how much better Naruto is... Why not spar with him?*

'And when we trash that blond's ass, Sasuke will have to admit that I'm better then Naruto!' Her innerself points out and with a slight smile, she gets up to head to the house to ask Naruto for a spar.

"Naruto?" She calls out as she enters the kitchen to find only Kasumi finishing a few things. "Have you seen Naruto, Kasumi? I wanted to ask him something." She says to the eldest Tendo daughter.

"I believe he went up stairs for a soak." Kasumi tells her and she smiles as she says, "Thanks, Kasumi!"

It didn't take long before she's knocking on the bathroom door. "Naruto? You in there?" She asks while standing in the hallway.

"Eh? Sakura? You want something?" Naruto asks, likely shouting pretty loudly in the bathroom.

"I'm just wondering if you'd want to spar sometime." She explains as she continues to stand before the door.

"Really? I would have thought you'd ask Sasuke to spar with you." Naruto remarks and she sighs.

"I rather spar with somebody closer to my skill level." She decides to say in a diplomatic way. "So, how does tomorrow after supper sound?" She adds.

"Sounds great, Sakura!" Naruto chirps back and with that, she says, "See you later then."

"Bye Sakura." Naruto returns before she leaves the door of the bathroom. *That was surprisingly simple.* She muses with a slight smile on her face.

Morning

o 0 O - Ranma **- O 0 o**

Huh, must have come in really late last night since I don't recall hearing him arrive. He muses as he stares at Kakashi's sleeping form after waking the the siren call of nature. Shaking his head, he slips out of his blankets and heads to go use the washroom.

As he returns to the guest room, he encounters Sasuke as the moody preteen heads for the washroom. He watches as the door of the washroom closes before heading for his pack to get a change of cloths. His father's snorts continue to fill the silence of the room and once he has his clean cloths on, he heads down stairs and finds Sakura yawning tiredly at the table.

"Mornin' Sakura." He says and Sakura just nods. As he takes his usual seat at the table, Sasuke comes down followed by Nabiki and Mr Tendo. By the time Kasumi arrives with a tea tray, his pops and Akane have made it to the table, which causes him to glance around for the familiar ex-blond. *I wonder if Shampoo is here to help out with breakfast...*

"Is Shampoo helping with breakfast again?" Sakura asks, likely waiting for Naruto arrive. He shrugs, after all, if Kakashi is in the house why not Shampoo as well?

"I wonder if Kakashi and Shampoo spent the night at a motel? I mean, they are newly weds..." Nabiki muses and he catches sight of Akane digesting this before growling out 'Perverts'.

Both of Kakashi's students look a bit stunned at the idea before Sasuke just snorts before saying, "Before I came down, I saw our teacher in the room. No sign of Shampoo though."

He's kind of surprised that Sasuke even volunteered that bit of information since the Uchiha usually doesn't feel the need to join in the conversation. *Will other then grunting here and there...* He muses as Naruto finally arrives with the beginnings of breakfast.

I wonder what other surprises are waiting today.

Karma Good or Bad Part 5: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2 or Naruto!

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o 0 O - Ranma **- O 0 o**

I'm so glad I hadn't been hit by any water yet... He muses as some 'polite' guy gives Shampoo a kiss while Akane struggles to keep 'P-Chan' out of the guy's partner's possession. The teen pulls away while Shampoo just stands there with a blank look on her face from his angle at least.

He doesn't know why but he backs up a few steps as Shampoo's right hand moves to touch her lips. Within seconds, the lunch Shampoo was delivering is forcefully given to Akane as outrage flares up within the Amazon's eyes. He jumps as a pair of familiar weapons seemingly appears in Shampoo's hands.

"Shampoo already have Airen! Lips for only Airen to kiss Shampoo! Shampoo kill!" The Chinese Amazon commonly known as Shampoo growls while slightly uttering the longest speech he's hear yet from her.

The guy, Mikado Sanzenin, manages to dodge Shampoo's strikes. "I don't know why you're so upset. It was only a little kiss..." Mikado says while dancing(literally!) out of Shampoo's attacks.

"Shampoo is married! Airen is husband!" Shampoo shouts as the head of one of the mace like weapons causes cracks to appear on the street.

He notices a sliver of fear flicker in Mikado's eyes at the sight of the cracks on the sidewalk. *Looks like somebody's bitten off more then they could chew. He's a bit stunned at Shampoo's display, it's going to cost him.* He muses and his prediction is made true as the next

few dodges Mikado were slow, showing how shaken the teenager really is.

"Give me back my PIG!" Akane shouts and he glances in that direction to find that this teenage girl, Asuza Shiratori, holding Ryoga in his curse form. *Maybe I should just continue walking on my own... This doesn't really involve me, after all.* He muses to himself, after all, he still doesn't want to get hit by some unexpected water and distract Shampoo from her... avenging.

"Ranma! Where do you think you're going? Help me get P-Chan from her!" Akane shouts and he blinks while looking slightly confused.

"But Akane, this is your fight. Don't you want to handle it yourself?" He asks, after all, the last time he interfered was when those horde of guys were trying to date her by defeating her. "I mean, you're always telling me you can handle yourself, why not do so now?" He adds, after all, he would be happy to see 'P-Chan' out of Akane's bed.

Akane's mouth hangs open slightly for a few seconds before a fiery aura erupts around Akane's body. Within seconds, a mallet appear and he's sent flying. *You really can't win with her, can you?* He muses to himself as he lands across the street.

Once he picks himself up out of the center of spider cracks. He did notice Shampoo giving him a raised eyebrow before glancing at Akane. Without another word, he heads off to school, leaving the two teenage girls to deal with the so call Golden Pair.

Lunch

"You mean you decided to challenge them to a skating match over Shampoo's honor and P-Chan?" He asks Akane while eating his lunch in a tree. He actually felt that Shampoo had a better reason to hold a grudge against the male half of the Golden Pair.

I'm almost glad that my curse form isn't a simple teenage girl or else it could have been me that Mikado kissed... He muses, still a bit miffed at Sasuke dragging him into the dog spring. *I wonder how long it'll be before I can finally head back there to search for a cure...*

"So... You two have any ideas on how to co-ordinate your routine? Or what your routine is?" He asks his intended as he pops another bit of chocolate into his mouth, after all, it wasn't his lunch Shampoo was delivering in the first place.

"What's there to know? It's just skating to music." Akane says in a dismissive manner and he suppresses the urge to roll his eyes. *I'm so glad I don't have a stake in any of this...* He muses while Akane's friends begin to arrive to share some of their lunch with the youngest Tendo.

He doesn't really pay their conversation much mind until Kuno arrived to declare himself Akane's skating partner. He didn't really react to that announcement since his doubts about how suitable Akane is as a wife have reared their heads once more. *She really needs to make up her mind about whether or not she wants me to interfere with her personal battles...*

He does flinch slightly as Kuno is sent flying through the air since it reminds him of his own flight before they arrived at school. *I do believe I'm going to remain uninvolved in Akane's skating match.* He tells himself as he hurries to finish his lunch so he can go find a spot to practice some katas before school begins once more.

o 0 O - Sakura **- O 0 o**

"Ready Naruto?" She asks her ex-blond team-mate as they face each other from opposite ends of the dojo. Naruto nods and they both take up stances, it's clear that Naruto's a bit concerned about attacking her, but then, she is his crush.

After a few seconds of kind of circling Naruto, she decides to make the first move. Naruto blocks the punch and tries to flip her but she

manages to keep her balance. It soon set the pace of their spar, her attacking and Naruto mostly defending and, almost hesitantly, countering.

While she mentally growls, wishing for Naruto to take her seriously, a small part of her is glad that Naruto's not since it means that she's not taking a beating. Sure, she'll be sore from this, but she likely won't have any bruises marring her skin either. Their spar ends after a few minutes of Shampoo arriving with Kakashi.

"Airen and Shampoo need dojo to practice." Shampoo says and a glance in Kakashi's direction just causes the Jonin to shrug. She did wonder if she shouldn't push the matter but a glance out into the yard reminded her of why she tries to spend as little time around the Amazon as possible.

Glance back to her Jonin instructor and Shampoo, she decides to bow out and leave the dojo. *You never know when the curse will activate...* She mentally muses as she puts at least four feet between herself and the pond in the backyard.

"Hey Ranma. Shampoo's out in the dojo with Kakashi." She says to the current dog-girl. Ranma sighs softly while relaxing a tiff. Ranma nods in her direction as she sits down at the table as the usual teenage boy waits for some warm water.

"So Shampoo's going to have Kakashi as her partner? I would have thought since Akane and her accepted the challenge that they'd at least be partners for it." Ranma muses after dumping the kettle contains on his head, causing the teen to transform back into a totally human guy.

"Challenge? What challenge? I thought they were just going to spar..." She admits while trying to think of a reason why Akane would be involved in any kind of challenge. *I mean, she's never bothered to pick up any kind of challenge before we arrived... Well, that's what Nabiki says at any rate.*

"Shampoo got kissed by the male half of the Golden Pair while P-Chan is the prize between Akane and the female half of the Golden Pair." Ranma explains. *Figures...* She muses softly to herself.

"When is the match?" She asks as she pauses by the door. She is heading upstairs to take a shower now that her spar with Naruto has ended.

Haunted Apartment Building: Naruto

I don't own Naruto

Naruto

Age 8

"Ok, why are we doing this again?" Yakumo Kurama asks him as he scratches the side of his head while staring at what appears to be a house made of bones. As the older of them huffs softly, the bones unravel to reveal just a ratty looking place made out of card board boxes.

"Cause it'll be fun, that's why! You did say you want people to notice you for your skills, right? Well, I'm helping you with that! Just like I promised!" He chirps at Yakumo as he turns to look at the already taller ninja-wanna-be.

"Well... I guess using them would help get people to notice my talent..." Yakumo admits and he beams at the brunet while nodding his head. "Anyway, I think we should find some place a bit more solid for this... exhibition of my superior talents." Yakumo adds as the wind manages to knock one of the boxes off the stack.

He laughs nervously while rubbing the back of his head. "I guess we could find some place better. Some place that's already got the right mood so that all you'd need to do is focus on what's going on in the rooms!" He says and Yakumo just shrugs as she turns a shoulder to the pile of card board boxes and begins to walk down the street.

He hurries and follows her, asking, "They can't see us, right?" He glances around as they begin to walk through the market. He really felt like picking up his pace just walking through the street. *I really*

don't want to have another mob start up again... He muses as nobody seems to really notice them.

"Of course they can't, after all, I don't want it known that I'm associating with a common street-rat." Yakumo informs him in a hagged way which causes him to give her a sour look before shrugging it off. He had been called worse, though it irked him that the girl keeps ignoring him when he corrects that assumption.

"I'm going to be a great ninja one day. You're just supplying me with fresh ideas on how to make that happen." Yakumo says softly, though he's not sure if she's talking to him or not. He just shakes his head as they finally get away from the market and into a more urban place with various apartment buildings with the odd house.

"You hungry?" He asks the clan heiress as the sun finally begins to set. They had been searching throughout the village looking for the right place. The closest place that would work seem to be an abandon, run down district with tons of old style homes that were on the small size.

"No." Yakumo says before something growls like a dog causing the heiress to stop to place a hand over her mid-section. "Ok, fine, I am." Yakumo snaps as she gives him a dirty look that seems to blame him for the state.

"I got ramen back at my apartment! It's not far from here too!" He informs his older companion with a foxy grin. "We can head there and rest for a bit before trying to find the right place!" He adds while Yakumo gives him a dubious look but in the end, he takes her by the hand while taking the lead.

Within a few minutes, they arrive at his apartment building and somehow, Yakumo's hand slips out of his hand while he tries to drag her into the building. "You know... This place might be what we were looking for all along." Yakumo muses and he couldn't help but frown before trying his best to mimic her stance while looking at the building.

"Really? I just don't see it though..." He admits and Yakumo just smiles in a smug fashion.

"Trust me, I'm a girl, I know these things." The heiress informs him with a smirk and a look daring him to challenge her statement. He just sighs, he may not know much but he has heard guys mutter about how you just can't win with the 'fairer' sex.

"I guess... It's not like anybody really lives here besides me." He admits and Yakumo just flicker her hair before proceeding to walk into the building.

He watches her enter for a few seconds before following after. *I hope that not all girls are as strange as she is...* He thinks as he moves to take the lead so he can show Yakumo his apartment, thus forcing Yakumo that he wasn't a street-rat.

Naruto

Three Weeks Later

"I didn't know you could paint so well." He admits as he studies the mural before him, pausing in his efforts to set up a fake wooden skull he had carved and then dipped in white paint. He could feel the hairs on the back of his neck raise up as the image of an Oni seems to stare down at him.

"And I didn't know you could carve decent things out of wood." Yakumo says in a waspy kind of way. "Now stop gawking and give me a hand with this!" Yakumo says and he just bobs his head as he finally turns away from the painted image to help move a stuffed Oni onto a rock that's in the center of the room.

It takes a few nudges and the use of so rope but they manage to get the stuff doll onto the rock that's been splattered with red paint to make it appear as if blood had been spilled upon it. Fake wooden skeletons litter the floor, some had been snapped to aid the effect

they're going for in making the apartment seem to be a lair where Oni dwell. Bits of yellow coins and fake jewelry litter one side of the room, Yakumo will be using genjutsu to make everything within the room appear more realistic but it helps to have items to help give visual aid to support the genjutsu. Giving the genjutsu a reference in a way.

Which is why it's taking so dang long to pull off this prank. He mutters privately to himself. *It doesn't help that she kicked me out of my own bed either...* A part of him points out sourly. *It's like she moved in. You would think her clan would notice when she's not spending the night in her room...*

"Are we done with this room?" He asks as he glances at the various Oni dolls and stuffed body parts that have been dipped in red paint. The floor itself had been painted gray and black before they brought in straw, old animal skins, wooden bones, and, of course, fake treasure. Though before the fake bones and treasure were added, Yakumo had used a paint brush and red paint to add dry blood splatters to add to the effect.

It had only been recently that Yakumo had revealed her mural. From the looks of things, Yakumo had used her natural talent in genjutsu to fool him into not seeing her workmanship until she finished. They were almost done with the second floor, only three more rooms and they'd be done, which means that it might be another week before they'll get the chance to pull this prank off.

Never know, this could be worth all of our effort... He muses as the final touches, namely weapons, were brought in. As they finish with the room, Yakumo closes the door and then takes out a folded sheet of paper. He watches as she focuses a bit of chakra into the sheet with a very complex seal brushed on it before placing the sheet of paper onto the door, sealing the room from intrusion as well as causing a minor cause of forgetfulness to those who don't know what's within said room.

"You really got to teach me how to do that... My birthday is coming up you know." He says and Yakumo just sighs before taking the lead back to his room, after all, they both could use a minor break.

As Yakumo enters his bathroom before him, he just huffs and crosses his arms over his chest while pouting slightly at the door. Seconds later, he feels somebody behind him and when he turns to look, he suddenly found himself unable to...

He wakes to find himself on the floor. "Funny, I don't remember falling asleep..." He mutters and as he tries to recall what he's been up since morning, he couldn't help but draw a blank. He did find that he smelt of paint and sweat, which likely means he had be preparing for a prank or had already pulled on off.

"I need to have a shower..." He muses to himself once he stares off out of the window. As he begins to take off his shirt, he couldn't help but feel a bit more lonely...

Yakumo

Five Years Later

Why do I feel as if I should know this blond? She wonders to herself as she sits a few seats away from one of the ninja who helped her out just a few weeks ago. She's currently using her genjutsu skills to keep people from noticing that she's sitting there, studying the loud blond ninja who seems to familiar and yet sure she's never met before a few weeks ago.

As Naruto pays his bill, she gets up and follows after the blond as the younger teen heads off away from the ramen stand. She walks a few feet behind the blond and a surreal feeling overtakes her as the buildings give way to houses and apartment buildings until she's standing before an apartment building. *I've been here before... Haven't I?* She wonders to herself before realizing that the blond had already entered into the building.

As soon as she enters she feels a pull at her chakra. She follows the closest feeling and finds herself standing before a door that is sealed with a family seal. "I did this...?" She muses while tries to recall when she ever visited this part of the village.

Touching the yellow sheet of paper, she then takes a hold of the doorknob and takes off the sheet before turning the doorknob. The door creaks open and it takes her a few seconds to find a light switch, though when she flips it on, she almost wishes she hadn't since it seems as if she's entered into a graveyard.

It takes a few seconds before she realizes that she's empowering an illusion and within moments, the realism of the room seems to fade, although that doesn't cause the scene to totally vanish. What grabs her attention is the murals on the walls that cause her to recall her earlier work, which seems to fit. "I must have done this years ago... But why would I seal this room?" She wonders out loud while staring around the room, looking for hints as to the reason.

In the end, she exits out of the room and after a moment's haste, reseals the room before continuing on. It takes some time but she finally has visited all of the rooms on the main floor of the building and each one had that seal upon it while having spooky insides. It bothered her that she couldn't recall anything about this particular building or reasons why she could help transform empty apartments into such spooky and slightly creepy settings.

"Naruto lives here..." She says as she finds herself before a door on the top floor of the building. She couldn't help but safe standing before the door. She moves to grab the doorknob but stops herself and then pulls her hand back. She then tries to knock but once more, the gesture seems... wrong for some reason.

I must be nuts. Maybe I should just go... But she didn't and finally the door opens, causing her to come face to face with Naruto. Something finally gave and she finally recalls the time she spent in this building and in the company of this particular blond.

"What did I do now, Sakura?" Naruto asks while rubbing his head, it seems she's not the only one who had their memories block. "Err... I guess you might as well come in." Naruto says after the blond shakes himself like a wet dog.

She smiles slightly before doing just that while ignoring her pounding head. She couldn't help but find that not much had changed within the apartment other then the walls looking worst with sections having peeling paint and minor holes. "Almost five years since..." She muses as she moves to sit on the couch.

"Yea, it has, hasn't it?" Naruto echos while the blond moves to sit next to her. "Crazy... I mean, why would they... Dumb question." Naruto says the last part while glancing away.

"Yea, pretty dumb question. I was a clan heiress back then, a fairly young one too boot..." She admits.

"You're always going to rub that in, aren't you?" Naruto asks in a bemused way with a soft smile lighting up his face. She just smirks in reply which causes Naruto to chuckle softly.

"So... What do we do now?" Naruto wonders as they sit there in silence for a good twenty minutes. She hums softly as she considers a few things.

"I say we finish what we started. After all, the other rooms are still set up and it wouldn't take long to finish the rest of that floor. I believe I might be able to research a few seals to help boost my abilities over all of the rooms." She says and Naruto chuckles.

"Sounds good to me. I never did like leaving anything unfinished. I'd say five years is a long time to wait to put off a prank of this magnitude." Naruto says with a smirk of his own.

Naruto

Two Days Later

This is so going to freak people out... He muses to himself as he watches his clones each pick up a stack of fliers to put up around the village. The fliers had dates starting from this coming Sunday and all of next week for people to come and visit this 'haunted' apartment complex with the one who manages to visit each of the 'haunted' rooms to receive a small bit of cash and a shirt that reads 'I beat the Haunted Apartment Building' while the rest got a shirt saying 'I visited the Haunted Apartment Building and chickened out in the middle of it.'

"Did you send out your clones yet?" Yakumo asks once he moves to enter the rooms they're working on. He had a bunch of clones touching up the older rooms and carving whatever other props they need for the last few rooms as well as replacing a few from the other rooms.

"They're on their way." He answers as pauses to study the mural the heiress is currently working on. "I'm guessing alien world." He muses after a few minutes of studying the two moons hanging in the sky.

"Now we just need to wait for this to dry before I add any more. Now then, help me move all of these pains to that wall." Yakumo says as she motions towards the wall they made using panels of flat wood that Yakumo sealed together like she had so many years earlier.

With a sigh, he begins to take the metal handles of the paint cans while Yakumo takes the can that's filled with water and the paint brushes. He's careful about the cans since he doesn't want to worry about going off to buy replacement paint. Yakumo hums while studying the blank wall they created while he finishes bringing over the other four cans of pain and the paint roller.

"You going to add stars or other planets?" He asks Yakumo as he rubs his forehead with the back of his hand. He's not wearing his usual cloths nor his headband since he didn't want to get them dirty. He's current set of cloths consist of faded black pants and brown

long sleeve shirt. He's also doesn't have any of his usual pouches on him or anything to keep his bangs from draping over his forehead.

He already has some small patches of paint on his cloths with a few dots of brown and black paint on the back of his hands. "Where are those clean sponges that I packed? I know I didn't use all of them." Yakumo says and he just gives her a blank look for a few seconds before he recalls the pack Yakumo had brought down this morning.

"I'll go get it now." He says to his friend and the older teen just nods. It didn't take him long to find the bag and instead of leaving it where he found it while just taking said items from it, he picks it up and brings it into the room, leaving it by the wooden door once he's got the sponges out of it.

"Thank you." Yakumo says before asking after a few minutes as she prepares a paint tray. "Don't you have any missions to complete? I mean, you are a ninja..."

He scratches the back of his head while he's kneeling down to stir one of the paint cans. "Well, you see, the old lady pretty much decided to force me to take a few weeks off. It seems that I bugged her a bit too much the other day..." *Which was what I was going for...*

"You'd think she'd be use to that by now." Yakumo says in a bemused tone while flashing him a smile. "Well, just goes to show you'll be around to witness our project through." The heiress of the Kurama clan says before focusing back on the task at hand, which seems to be painting the blank wall they created before the window of this particular apartment.

"Think anyone will be able to visit each of the rooms?" He asks Yakumo as he taps the stir stick on the side of the can a few times before setting it on the rim of a paint tray filled with the same black paint. He then moves a roller through the paint before handing it to Yakumo, who takes it from him.

"If anybody does, it'll be a Jonin." Yakumo muses and he just nods thoughtfully. Then he frowns as he recalls something that Yakumo had bragged about.

"Hey, didn't you say that your clan illusions can't be penetrated by either the Sharingan or the Byakugan? I mean, your genjutsu is a bloodline limit, right?" He asks Yakumo.

"I believe I might have said something along those lines a few years back. Why?" The heiress inquires with a slightly raised eyebrow.

"It's just that... well, some people might recall that I live in this building and might figure out that I'm involved. It might be a good idea to, you know, keep that information a secret until the final day?" He says and Yakumo studies him for a few seconds before she nods before returning to using the roller to blacken the wall.

"Anyway, I need you to create a few alien beasts. I got a few sketches of ideas for said critters. They're on the blue scroll in my bag." Yakumo says and with a shrug, he stands up and carefully walks towards the door to pull out said scroll.

He blinks as a neon green arrow points at said scroll and he scowls as he glances over at Yakumo. "Not funny, Yakumo... I'm not an idiot you know." He remarks to the teenage girl.

"I thought it was." Yakumo says with a superior smirk flashing his way for a few seconds. He just huffs slightly and returns to the pack to still find said hovering arrow. With a shake of his head, he grabs the scroll and unrolls it to see what kind of alien beasts she wants his clone and him to make.

He whistles at an image of a four legged beastie with a thin whip like tail and two sets of dragonfly wings. *Not sure how to pull off those wings...* He muses before continuing down the scroll. "What kind of scale do you want with some of these?" He asks Yakumo after viewing all eleven sketches.

"Let's see, seven and ten could be four feet in height while two, five, and eight would be at least five and half feet in length with maybe four feet in the shoulder. The rest would be fine at a foot or two." Yakumo informs him and he couldn't hep but stare at the heiress at the idea of trying to set up such large attractions.

Well, I could assemble them in the room... He muses thoughtfully. "Those are just guidelines, you can add or subtract from them." Yakumo adds and he hums as he rolls the scroll up.

"I'll go and get started on some of these. I'll be sure to send a clone or two up to help with the painting." He informs Yakumo, who just nods as she continues to move the paint roller over the wall.

Yakumo

Opening Day

We should have charged admission. She muses at the sight of twenty-odd people waiting for them to open the doors. The groups will be divided into five to seven individuals plus the guide. They also decided to wait fifteen minutes before sending the next group after the previous group. Naruto and his clones will be acting as the guides while she follows their progress through the two floors so she can enact the genjutsus on the right rooms.

They had run into a bit of a situation concerning chakra empowering the genjutsus since she lacks the reserves to fuel them for more then eight hours. *Still can't believe Naruto has such large reserves... I doubt even the Hokage could match his chakra reserves.* She muses while standing by the door, waiting for the clock to show eleven before opening the doors.

"You sure you're up for this?" The real Naruto says as he adjusts his eye patch. The differences between the real Naruto and his shadow clones was the fact that the clones would be wearing face masks as well as having nail polish. She's not sure how Naruto manages to

create such changes in the creation process but it does eliminate a step in disguising said clones.

She hums while studying Naruto's costume. "I thought you were dressing up as an undertaker." She muses and Naruto laughs softly.

"Well, I thought one-eyed vampire was easier to pull off." The usual blond ninja muses, not only is Naruto's hair currently black with purple highlights but Naruto's looks a few years old, skin looking paler, cheeks lacking the whisker marks, the only visible eye is emerald green in color, and when Naruto flashes her a toothy grin, she saw over sized canines.

For some odd reason, she couldn't help but feel her cheeks heat up as she realizes that Naruto looks fairly handsome. Shaking her head, she dismisses those thoughts to glance at the clock. "You ready? I'm opening the doors." She informs Naruto and the usual blond ninja just nods.

"Ready as I'll ever be." Naruto informs her with a sober look. She nods and as Naruto moves to stand where the tour starts while the shadow clones grow alert and straighten up.

"Welcome. Will the first seven please head over there?" She says once she opens the doors, waving towards Naruto as soon as the crowd begins to enter into the main entrance. She spots a Hyuuga moving towards said group, she's pretty sure that said woman likely had her Byakugan active for a few minutes, likely checking on her surroundings.

Oh I'm so going to enjoy scaring you, you smug... She's shaken out of her thoughts while a young kid asks, "What are you dressed as?"

"Why, I'm a fortune teller." She says once she's put the door stoppers by the doors. The kid's eyes lit up before the kid scuffs at her. "There's no such thing as a fortune teller." The kid says and she says, "Well then, I doubt you'd want to know about the disappointment you're about to suffer in a few minutes."

"How'd you know that?" The kid demands and a few seconds later the kid's mother arrived. "Takuya! I told you that you're forbidden from visiting this faux!" A graying brunet says, causing the kid to jump.

As the pair leave, she heads to her booth and prepares for the first group to enter into one of the rooms. *Let's see what you're afraid of Miss White-Eyes...* She muses as she brings the image of said Hyuuga into her crystal ball. The image is just a genjutsu but that doesn't mean it doesn't show what's really happening to the group.

Naruto

Fourth Room

Huh... I would have thought we'd at least make it to the sixth room before somebody vomits... He muses as he watches as a twenty-something guy empties his stomach in one of the pails they had stored in certain rooms, those that featured particularly gruesome scenes. *Might need to clean them every hour instead of every two hours if the next group gets one at this point too.*

He did glance at the Hyuuga, wondering how closely related the older woman was to Neji and Hinata. Not that he's incline to ask her since he's not suppose to know them. He didn't particularly like the fact that they're already getting visited by a village ninja but couldn't really do anything about it other then hope that nobody will uncover the deception until at least Friday.

I wonder if any of my friends will show up? He wonders as he finally opens the door to usher the group out of the room. He makes sure to leave the pail by the door before he shuts the door.

"So many bugs... Creeping out of those hives... Their jaws snapping..." The man who vomited mutters while the man's wife or girlfriend gives said man a hug in hopes of soothing the man's nerves.

"Did you wish to wait in the hall while we enter into the next portal?" He asks the couple and the couple exchange looks before the two of them standing a bit straighter while the slightly palish man shakes his head. "Alright then, onward into another dimension we shall go." He says as motions for the group to approach the next door.

The Hyuuga woman takes point after a few seconds of nobody really moving to take said position. He had to admit, he's kind of curious to see what would cause a member of the said noble clan to faint in fright or to finally act as an actual, normal person. *It's getting old putting up with arrogant people...*

Three rooms later and two members of his group have fainted. By the time they make it to the first floor of the apartment building, he's only got the Hyuuga woman who finally cracks at in the Oni room, just three rooms short of completing the challenge Yakumo and himself had laid out. He makes sure that each member of the group got the right shirt before dragging the Hyuuga clan member to the make shift medical office.

As the day progresses, they mostly received victims from won't from the ninja population, making the Hyuuga clan member the only ninja to try and pass through their haunted apartment. They also decided to impose an age limit to keep kids from younger then ten from going through it since they don't want to traumatizes those from nine and down. *Wouldn't want angry parents complaining to the Hokage or the Council about this.*

It's close to midnight when the last group is sent home, leaving Yakumo and him alone once more in the big, empty apartment building. *Well, we're not alone if you count the clones...* He muses at the sight of a clone lounging by the crystal ball while he begins to sweep the main entrance.

"We should have charge admission..." Yakumo be-mourns and he blinks before turning to look at the heiress. He raises an eyebrow at her but she seems to be too busy mourning that little detail.

"Anyway, did you want me to send a clone off to pick up some coffee or something? Or do you just want to turn in for the night? It is rather late..." He says and Yakumo yawns before shaking herself.

"I think we both need our wits about us for tomorrow. Get the clones to finish up so you can come with me back to the apartment." Yakumo says and after a few seconds, he just nods and within half a second, he's got an army of fresh clones and hands the broom over to one of them before following Yakumo up to his apartment.

"We might want to close down a few hours before midnight too." He muses.

Hinata

Friday Afternoon

I wonder why we're here... We were suppose to go check out that Haunted Apartment today for kicks... She thinks as she frets about why the Hokage would call most of the Rookie Nine and team Gai.

While she might not want to go, not after the fact that a Hyuuga had already 'chickened' out in the middle of it, she couldn't help but be a tab curious about what could spook one of the more experienced members of the Hyuuga clan when it comes to dealing with genjutsu. It's one of the reason why the challenge has grown in popularity since a member of the Hyuuga clan had failed to follow the challenge through.

I'm sure Naruto has been loads of times... She thinks before getting shaken out of her thoughts as the Fifth Hokage finally finishes doing a small pile of paper work. Lady Tsunade finally turns her attention on them with a calculating look.

"I take it you have heard of the Haunted Apartment challenge?" Lady Tsunade asks and there's a murmur of agreement. "Well, we received a mission from numerous individuals who are willing to pay

for a C ranked mission so they can get the rewards for completing the challenge."

She couldn't help but feel that's pretty unfair. "Will Naruto be joining us, Lady Tsunade?" Sakura asks and she did have to admit she wouldn't mind having the blond join them.

"He's on currently taking a vacation." Lady Tsunade says after a minor tick twitched for a few seconds before the Fifth Hokage calms down. *Oh...*

"Since we have three clients paying for the same mission and from what our resources tell us, the groups that go through the haunted floors range from groups of five to seven. There are ten of you total so I'll leave it up to you to form groups of three." Lady Tsunade informs them as she holds out three file folders.

Shikamaru mutters troublesome softly while Neji takes the file folders. It was later did they find out why Lady Tsunade hadn't turned the three down, after all, they were young then ten so they're unable to go through the many rooms of this Haunted House.

"I can't believe their parents are willing to pay for a C ranked mission!" Kiba shouts after the files of the three kids have been passed around the table once they're settled down. "This is so bothersome." Shikamaru mutters as they begin to discussion their course of action.

I wonder if we should search for Naruto and see if he's willing to come with us anyway... She wonders as they put in their drink and food orders.

Naruto

Two Hours Later

Huh... I wondering when they're going to show. Though... Why do they look so serious? He wonders as he notices the remaining members of the Rookie Nine and the three belonging to team Gai entering into the main room.

As he watches the group of ten, he couldn't help but notice certain signs that he kind of recalls from his mission with said ninja. *Are they on a mission? But why would the old lady accept any missions in regard to a simple challenge? I mean, the clients could easily come in person...* He muses as he watches as his friends divide into three groups and move to mingle with the rest of the members of the village, some of whom were Chunin and Jonin.

Anko's been in eight times already. He muses as he recalls the first time said kunoichi graced the main area of the apartment building the second day of them being open. *If anyone manages to complete this challenge, it's her.*

"You going to take one of those groups in personally?" He hears Yakumo asks him and out of the corner of his eye, he finds a ghostly image of Yakumo floating a foot away from him. He hums in a thoughtful manner while he makes sure to stack the latest shirt onto the table, a table located by the entrance of the make shift medical office they set up with three clones running it.

He sighs and scratches the side of his head while a clone arrives with the six member group the clone had taken to tour the haunted floors of the apartment building. The clone is shouldering a passed out woman while a group of three teens were leaning on each other, each looking a little green. It didn't take long before he hands out the six shirts before those capable to leaving under their power did so while the rest headed into the quiet medical office.

"I'll do the last group." He decides softly while the ghostly image of Yakumo hangs in the air. With a grin, Yakumo vanishes, clearly satisfied with that answer.

Half an hour later and the first group containing some of his friends finally began their tour. He did wonder how Shino will react to the various rooms, especially considering Shino is a walking bug hive. Neji and Shikamaru seem to be partnered with Shino, which is surprising since he would have thought for sure that Shikamaru would remain partnered with Choji.

Kiba, Lee, and Choji seem to be a group onto themselves, leaving the four kunoichi as the last group. He wonders which of the two groups will be the next to take the tour. While he does respect Lee, he really didn't want to be there in person to witness Lee's fear. *My clones don't get included in the genjutsu they experience, just get their ques from Yakumo.*

On the other hand... He glances over to the group of girls and begins to imagine their fears, particularly his crush's, Sakura's fears. *I'm not sure I'd be able to stay in character when she faints...* He admits to himself with a sigh.

And so, for the next fifteen minutes he debates with himself while the next group begins to assemble. He sighs softly as the rest of the guys join that one, leaving him to guide the four kunoichi. He switches out with a clone and proceeds to where Yakumo is to ask her if she had any ideas of how to keep him from shedding his disguise when Sakura reacts to the horrors within the various apartments they had set up years ago and the three more recent additions.

Yakumo raises an eyebrow and he then glances over to where Ino and Sakura were arguing about something. "Err... My crush is going to be part of the next group and well..." He say to the heiress and Yakumo gives the four a look with very narrow eyes.

"Don't worry about it, I'll help make sure they don't notice any of your flinching." Yakumo says before focusing once more on what's going on with those groups still going through the challenge. He sighs in relief and feels a bit of the tension in his shoulders fade slightly

before he stands a bit straighter and does a few final duties before heading for the entrance of the challenge.

Yakumo

Fifteen Minutes Later

You know, years ago I wouldn't believe I'd fall for the blond but now... She couldn't help but blush slightly as she recalls just how much Naruto has grown. *He's not that hard on the eyes and he did try to help me a few years ago...*

She sighs softly, after all, the blond's apartment had become like a true home for her back when they were kids. *He was the only one not to be afraid of my abilities... He even suggested a creative way to display them.* She muses with a slight smile before noticing that another group requires her personal attention, something that would only require like three seconds.

Now to learn which of these kunoichi Naruto has a crush on. She muses, more then a bit curious as to what type of girl Naruto's attracted too. *Now then, how do I go about doing that?*

While she ponders how to go about doing so in a very low key fashion, after all, the last thing she wants is to have Naruto pick up on what she's doing. She's pretty sure that the boy would be highly uncomfortable knowing that she finds him kind of ruggedly handsome. *I wonder if I can't somehow replace his cloths with something more... suitable.*

Naruto

Tour's End

Huh... Who knew Tenten has a fear of horses? I'm not all that surprised to find that both Ino and Sakura share many of the same

fears... They had been friends long before they were rivals. He muses as he carries a certain Hyuuga piggy back style down the stairs while Tenten manages to get Ino and Sakura to walk with a little help from the other three members of the group.

None had opted to continue on, not even the fact that all four of the girls were here on a mission seems to give the four the determination to finish what they started. Though, to be fair, none of the other Genin plus the solo Chunin managed to complete it either, although the group with Lee had entered the last room but from the memories of that particular clone, Lee had muttered something about not being able to breath and fainted. *Well, the scene in that room was an underwater theme...*

He plans to ask Yakumo about that particular incident once he's done escorting this particular group to the medical office. *Though you do have to give Lee credit, he's the first to even step foot in that room.* He muses to himself, which kind of elevates some of his guilt concerning the fact that unlike the rest of them, Lee's unable to use jutsus which means that he couldn't counter genjutsu even though Yakumo's illusions were fairly impossible to cancel.

I mean, on one level during that mission a few weeks back she likely wanted her appointed task to fail on some level. He muses, after all, with so many clones about, a lot of them have had time to ponder various things and that one stood out, just as the thought that he had kind of wanted Sasuke to leave the village in the likely mistaken belief that without the Uchiha around, Kakashi would focus on training him . *This self-analyzing thing is so over rated...*

Hinata finally begins to stir and within seconds a soft eep comes from the weirdish member of the Rookie Nine. "I'll let you off at the bottom of the stairs." He informs the girl with white eyes and he feels Hinata grip his shirt but otherwise doesn't move.

"Has anyone made it pass that cave with the Oni?" Tenten asks as they finally make it to the bottom of the stairs. He allows Hinata to slide off his back before he replies.

"A kunoichi with purple hair and fishnet shirt's managed to get pass, though she's never visited the final room." He says, leaving off the bit about the rest of the ninja since he's not suppose to know that information since he had been in the middle of guiding them through the rooms and they didn't met up with another party either.

"I wouldn't be surprise if she comes later tonight to give it another go. There's a bet saying that she'll get complete it before we close tomorrow while others say she won't." He says as he directs the group of seven to the table with their shirts. *It's not that I'm lying per say about the bet... My clones do seem to have created a betting pool concerning Anko's attempts. Though how they plan to pay up without money is something I'd like to see.*

"I'll take a medium." Tenten says to the clone behind the table. They had been force to order more shirts the other day, he's privately glad that the merchant had misunderstood their original order or else they'd be in a bind. It didn't take long before the others give what size shirt they would like.

Who knew people enjoyed returning again and again to scare themselves silly in this haunted apartment building? Maybe we should just keep quiet about who we are and just seal the rooms to use next year... And charge them for admission... He muses while helping Tenten in directing Ino and Sakura into the medical office.

He had conflicted feelings when it came to Sakura but in the end, decided to push the matter out of his mind as best as he can so he can focus on his other duties. It's not as if he won't think about what happened, particularly if his clones get bored enough they might think such thoughts for him.

I wonder if there's any more of those sandwiches left... He wonders after his stomach rumbles, causing a hand of his to move to cover his midsection. His tongue moves behind his fanged teeth, lingering on his respective canines as he heads for the snack table some merchant had set up just outside of the building.

Naruto

Last Day

"You sure you want to follow through with this? I mean, you did have some good points about just sealing the rooms and doing this again next year." He says but Yakumo just sighs.

"We originally planned to reveal the set up back then and well, we might as well finish it. Besides, if we want to do this again next year, I'll just hire you for a month and create something similar in a town or city in Fire Country. I mean, I am from a wealthy family, it shouldn't be that hard to hire you." Yakumo says and he snorts softly, but that's it, he's gotten use to the mightier then thou from his early friendship with the girl and from putting up with a certain team-mate that doesn't have pink hair...

"The last group is out of the building." He informs her, after all, Yakumo's not at her usual spot in the lobby of the apartment building, so she couldn't see if anyone is still within the main level or the first floor. The heiress of the Kurama clan just nods while sipping soup from a spoon.

As Yakumo finishes, he picks up the dishes as the teen heads for the bathroom to change out of her costume. He glances out of the window, studying the faces of previous Hokages, wondering when he'll see it again since he's pretty sure that after Sakura and Ino are done with him, the guys will likely beat on what's left before dropping him off at the hospital.

Still, we finished what we started so that makes it worth it. He reasons to himself, although he did wonder what Yakumo and his life would have been like if they had been left alone to complete it five years ago. *Likely won't have been this organized since I didn't know how to make shadow clones back then.* He muses.

About twenty minutes later, Yakumo steps out of the bathroom wearing a kimono. He had to admit, the color did bring out Yakumo's

eyes. "Did something with your bangs, didn't you?" He asks and Yakumo smiles winningly at him, which seems to answer that.

"You sure you don't need to change?" Yakumo asks while eyeing him. He hadn't dropped his one-eye vampire disguise since morning, so it's not like Yakumo knows what kind of cloths he's actually wearing.

"Don't worry about it, after all, if it's not something you like, I'm sure you'll wrap me in an illusion with better cloths on." He says in a half joking manner, after all, he wouldn't put it pass her to do just take. Yakumo just nods, which likely means she had been thinking of doing just that.

He opens the door and then offers the heiress his arm. Once Yakumo takes they step out into the hallway while the door closes behind them. While he's unsure if Yakumo has her illusion in place since he sees her in her kimono, he figures he'll find out as soon as they approach the crowd waiting out on the street. His clones had finished the platform just before they arrived on the main floor of the apartment building.

The clones guarding the doorway stood straighter as they approached and then they opened the door, allowing Yakumo and himself out of the building. He couldn't help but notice more then a few familiar faces among the crowd gathered before the apartment building and the platform. The murmuring dim of the crowd slowly subsides as Yakumo and himself ascend onto the platform.

He did swallow slightly at the sight of old lady Tsunade standing at the front of the crowd with Shizune who's holding Tonton. The pig seems content in Shizune's arms although the same can't be said for the small group of Hyuuga standing on Tsunade's other side. He couldn't help but note that three of them look really, really old.

I wonder if they're here to lodge a complain or something... He thinks as the crowd quiets down as Yakumo drifts from his side to stand a foot before him. He watches as some among the crowd stare at him

for a few seconds while Yakumo holds up her hand which finally causes the crowd to become silent.

"For the last week we have held a challenge here at this apartment building. A challenge that seems to simple and yet not at the same time." Yakumo says to those that have assemble before the site of the challenge they laid out last week that started Sunday.

"May have braved the rooms though only a small handful ever managed to come so close. One even managed to view the last room only to faint." Yakumo says and a soft murmur erupts for a few seconds before quieting down. "His name is Rock Lee and we have decided to award him with this small trophy." Yakumo says and Lee whoops loudly before suddenly appearing on the small platform to accept the wooden trophy he had carved and painted last night.

"Yosh! Truly my youthful flame have been rekindled!" Lee shouts while fire seems to flare up around Lee's body. "This is for you, Gai!" Lee adds and Yakumo sends him a questioning glance, it's clear that his partner didn't know what to make of this display of Lee's.

He just shrugs and moves to tap Lee on the shoulder. "If you would?" He says softly and Lee blinks before nodding, the flames vanishing before his friend gets off of the platform. Yakumo relaxes a tiff as he hands her the plaque he created after Anko's fifth visit.

"Another award we would like to hand out is for to one Anko Mitarashi for the most attempts at completing the challenge. Today we witnessed Ms Mitarashi's nineteenth visit this week." Yakumo says as the purple haired kunoichi moves through the crowd to receive her award.

A few members of the crowd clap politely as Yakumo hands the plaque over to said kunoichi. Anko just smirks before heading back down into the crowd with her award. He did wonder what Anko had planned for said plaque but doubts he'll have the guts to ask later.

After all, the moment of unmasking is coming up soon. He felt familiar fluttering in his midsection with his mouth being kind of dry. He does mask his unsettled nerves while Yakumo begins to speak once more.

"I'm sure many of you are wonder just who we are since we've never given out our names." Yakumo says, pausing to glance around the crowd for a second or two. "I believe it's time for our unmasking." Yakumo says and with that, he releases his Henge while Yakumo releases her genjutsu.

The crowd pretty much grumbles at the sight of him while most seem to be a bit confused as to who Yakumo is. He notices the alarmed looks certain members of his circle of friends had on their faces. Most of the crowd wondered how he talked such an 'innocent' girl to help him with this prank.

Sakura and Ino looked ready to skin him alive while Yakumo seems to frown at the reactions the crowd had concerning him. Finally a loud noise seems to echo through the street, he's pretty sure Yakumo's responsible for said 'sound'. "If I might continue." Yakumo says in an icy tone, he couldn't help but wince as he's been subjected to very similar tones plenty of times.

"It seems that you all know my partner and good friend Naruto Uzumaki." Yakumo says while some of the crowd murmur in agreement. "I doubt many of you know who I am." Yakumo says and a few people shift, clearly not liking Yakumo's tone.

"I am Yakumo Kurama, head of the Kurama clan." Yakumo informs the crowd and more then a few look a tad surprised while the old Hyuuga elders seem to be stunned by this revelation, likely finally getting why none of their clan could see through the illusions set up in the apartment building.

"Now then, I believe it's time for you all to see what's within those rooms without Naruto or I empowering the genjutsus placed on them." Yakumo says and with that Yakumo moves to walk off of the

platform. He's about two to three steps behind her, not sure what to make of the sudden icy demeanor.

Hinata

Sometime Later

Why would Yakumo help Naruto with this? They only just met a few weeks ago... She wonders as she finds herself sweep along with the some of the crowd as they follow Yakumo and Naruto into the building.

Most of the crowd had decided to disperse, no longer interested in how the challenge had been set up. "You alright Hinata?" Kiba asks her while Akamaru whines softly.

"Just... surprised." She says and Kiba nods in agreement. "Yea, who knew Naruto would be up to his old tricks, eh?" Kiba muses and she mentally sighs, after all, that's not why she's upset about.

"Well, the brat did top himself this time." Anko muses and a quick glance over at the special Jonin, she found Anko grinning in amusement as they followed a few feet behind Lady Tsunade, the Hokage's aid, her father, and clan elders.

"How long have you been planning this prank? Since you made Genin?" Tsunade asks Naruto and her crush glances backwards.

"Oh well, I was eight when Yakumo and I started this. We had like three rooms to go before it was complete but we got interrupted and kind of forgot we had these rooms waiting to be used." Naruto explains and that seems to cause a bit of a stir.

"I had placed special seals on the rooms before we moved to decorate the next room. Couldn't have people finding out until we were ready." Yakumo adds as they finally come to the first room.

Her stomach turns slightly at the sight as she recalls vividly what lies behind. As the door opens, Naruto moves into the room and turns on the light to reveal a not so scary place, well, not as scary as she remembers it. Her gazes turns to the walls and found familiar scenes painted upon their surfaces.

"Who created these dummies?" Tenten inquires while the teen pokes a finger at the Samurai's seemingly metal armor. She did have to admit that they must have hired an expert carver to create them since they captured a lot of detail.

"Naruto's very talented with a knife." Yakumo says with a grin while Naruto just looks a tad embarrassed. "He did carve that trophy and plaque among other things." Yakumo adds and she turns to look at the plaque that's being carried by Anko.

"It's not as if I always turned to pranking to relieve my boredom when I was younger." Naruto states, revealing something she's sure few ever found out. "Besides, I had to remove the original two because of fungus. Guess I didn't put the varnish on the pair." Naruto says while picking up what seems to be a metal sword.

"Where did you get this paint? It gives them a fairly decent metallic look." Shizune says and Naruto replies, "Got it from some merchant five years back. Got a really good deal on it too. Still got about fifty un-opened cans in the basement, didn't need to make many weapons as props later on."

They soon moved onto the next room and like the first, without the genjutsu active the room lacked its previous scariness. Though it still gave her goosebumps. And so the tour continued, each room seemed familiar and yet wasn't really with little facts coming from the creators of the project about how they did what and why.

She still couldn't believe that the two had been that talented when they were younger. It also gave her a slightly better understanding of how far Naruto's willing to go on a project he clearly enjoys. She's pretty sure her teacher is also getting a new glimpse of her old

student too, after all, Yakumo had a hand in all of this, it's hard not to notice the murals each room displays along with the wooden props.

The last few rooms did give them a better look at how much their talents had grown over the last five years. "How did you manage to make it so... scaly?" Ino asks as they arrive at the first of the three rooms as the much paler blond strokes the navy blue monster that seems to be the center piece of the alien room.

"Made a plaster mold and then poured homemade plastic into the mold, then glued the sections onto the pieces before assembling it all in the room. It took time but well worth it for the feel of it." Naruto says.

They would finally arrive at the most impressive room of the lot and she couldn't help but see why Lee would faint upon entering the room. "It's like being underwater..." Tenten muses as they move carefully around the fake coral reefs Naruto and Yakumo had set up on the floor.

Thin wires hold a brightly colored sea snake with frills upon it hangs in the air while a head of a long necked creature hangs on a part of the wall that features its painted body. Pebbles and sand cover the floor that didn't feature parts of the fake coral reef. A few brightly colored fake plastic and wooden fish were laying around the reef, a few perched in segments of coral.

"So... How do you plan to get all of this out of here?" Kiba wonders which causes Yakumo and Naruto to blink before glancing at each other. "We never thought about it, after all, I'm the only one living in the building..." Naruto admits, she had already known that but it seems that none of the others had known.

"You mean this whole building has only you for a renter?" Tenten asks slowly and Naruto nods. "Not even the apartment manager lives here?" Tenten inquires and Naruto shakes his head once more.

"Never met the manager or the owner. The old man Third had arranged for me to live here and had taken care of most of the bills too." Naruto admits.

She noticed that the 'adults' of the group glance at each other while Yakumo begins to explain where she got the idea for the hanging head.

Yakumo

Later That Night

"I wonder what the old lady wants to talk about tomorrow morning..." Naruto muses from his position at the table. She had decided to give cooking a try, so she's making eggs and rice, although she did have to bully Naruto into sending a clone out to buy said food stuffs.

"Might be about how you tricked her into getting vacation leave." She muses with a slight grin as she stands by the frying pan, waiting to the yolks to harden. She's not sure how to tell when the rice would be done.

"I didn't twist her arm to get it! I just was really, really earnest about getting a high ranked mission is all." Naruto says in his defense and she chuckles softly.

"So, you have any idea of how to clean those rooms?" She asks the blond with really bright yellow hair. Naruto just sighs and replies, "I'm working on it, although if you have an idea, I'd love to hear it."

"I might have an idea, though how well it'll work..." She just shakes her head and Naruto nods in understanding. A comfortable silence descends upon them, she doubts she's the only one replaying the events of the day.

"You think Tenten's going to try moving into the building? She seemed pretty interested in the fact that I've got a whole building to

myself." Naruto says as she manages to turn off the stove after getting the eggs to drop onto a plate.

"Well, you do have to admit that the village does have some housing problems after the invasion." She points out and Naruto nods. "Though I think our next project should be fixing this apartment up. I mean, I think it would be warmer in here if that hole is patched up." She says as she gestures to the growing hole that's beginning to give them a glimpse of over hung pipes.

"I didn't know it's gotten so bad..." Naruto admits as she walks over to the table with the plate filled with eggs. "I'll remember to get you a book on how to fix it." She promises and Naruto chuckles in a sheepish fashion, it seems that idea of learning how to fix that hole from a book never crossed the blond's mind.

I wonder how long until that girl finally tells Naruto her feelings... She wonders as she moves to check on the rice. It hadn't escaped her noticed the way that particular Hyuuga had been looking at Naruto and she's not sure how to deal with a rival for Naruto's affections but she's got this feeling that she is on the right track to winning Naruto's heart.

I highly doubt that Pinkie will return his feels any time soon. She muses with a slight smile. *None of the girls he knows seem to feel any attraction to him with the exception of the Hyuuga girl. So I've got plenty of time to lay the ground work of Naruto and mine relationship.*

The End...?

The Rising of the Moon Part 1: Digimon

I don't own Digimon .

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Takato

Even without the moon shining down on him, he can feel it raise. Pain begins to rack his frame as his muscles begin to alter shape, a crack sounds after a few seconds signaling that his bones were beginning to be reshaped. A sense of power begins to overwhelm the pain as he lays on the ground just as fur begins to sprout out from his skin.

Finally the transformation is done and he sighs in relief. It takes him a few seconds for him to grow accustom to his new senses. *It's always a shock.* He admits thoughtfully as he gets to his feet.

He glances at the pile of cloths and at the strange device that he received after his mauling from a ShadowWereGarurumon, long before Digimon began to become news. He sighs as a bunch of what ifs and could have beens creep up to the forefront of his mind, at least until he gives himself a shake as he moves to work on the tunnel, a task that keeps his mind off of such wishful thoughts.

Now let's see if I can't expand my 'lair'. He muses to himself, just happy to have a task where he uses his massive strength, even if it's on a useless task.

= -) T (- =

He spots a familiar green Digimon hiding in a tree and moves to avoid Terriermon as he tries to complete his homework as he races to get into the building. He hears something fall a few inches to his right but doesn't pay it much heed, especially as muffled cursing

reaches his ears. "I'll get him one day. . ." The partner Digimon reassures himself.

Not if I can help it, dog. He muses in a distracted manner, too busy trying to scribble down his formula for his last math problem.

He notices a red head girl, commonly known as the Ice Queen, arguing with a brunette, also known as the Digimon King, about something. "Excuseme,pardonme." He says as he swiftly moves to tip toe by the two to his left.

"Watch where you're going, you goggle-head!" Rika shouts as he manages to get through the door. a shout he didn't pay much mind too since he's busy with his homework to care.

He gets to the library to sit at one of the tables. Once his math homework is on the table top, he slings his book bag onto the chair before heading to pick out a book for his English book report. *Hopefully I won't be call on to read it today. . .* He thinks hopefully.

Rika

She sighs as some teen vanishes into the school building, totally ignoring her shout. "Just who is that guy anyway?" Ryo asks her and she shrugs, her argument with forgotten with the intrusion.

"No clue, though he has good reflects." She admits and only pauses as she hears Jeri calls out.

"Hey Jeri." She says with a slight smile at the sight of her friend and fellow Tamer.

"Terriermon seems to be in a slightly foul mood. It seems he missed his target again." Jeri tells her as they begin to continue towards the doors of the school.

"And just who is his target?" Ryo asks and Jeri giggles before answering, "The same person since Christmas, Takato Matsuki."

"Who?" Ryo and her ask at the same time. Though she privately, she's slightly impressed that this Takato character managed to evade the rabbit's tricks.

"An old friend from elementary. He changed after spending three weeks in the hospital, he got badly mauled by something one night. We never found out what attacked him either." Jeri admits with a sigh.

"He hasn't told anyone about it? I mean, he must have seen whoever mauled him." Ryo muses and Jeri just shakes her head.

"It seems that he doesn't want to talk about it and nobody really blamed him. Even now he carries the scars from it." Jeri tells them.

After a few minutes of silence, they part ways, each heading off to their respective locker.

Terriermon

He glances down into the classroom below, eyeing his very elusive prey. *Takato Matsuki. . . your time is has come! You have been a willy opponent but there is no escaping from my tricks now!* He thinks, mentally chuckling evilly.

As he brings the straw to his lips, he pauses in his chewing of a small bit of paper, taking a moment to savor this very special moment. A moment that does cause him to feel slightly sad that months of pursue of this one teen has finally come to an end.

As he points the straw end through the grid, he intakes and . . .

His eyes widen as the teen he set his sights on reaches down to pick up his neighbor's pen, the spit ball passes the seat and hits . . .

He gulps and quickly moves to the side of the air ducted. "Maybe she didn't notice it." He murmur and then he cringes as he hears Rika snarl his name.

"On second thought, perhaps now is the perfect time to do an in depth study in the life and times of Takato Matsuki, the prank evader." He murmurs before he flees through the air duct, making a note to find a tight spot where Renamon can't get at him.

Rika

She felt something hit her in the lower back and has she reaches down to pull down her shirt, she finds something wet and white there. As she looks around, she spots a straw wedged in an air duct grid and put two and two together.

"Terriermon!" She snarls and finds the kid behind her blinking owlishly before turning to follow her gaze.

A sigh causes her to glance at the guy behind her and it seems as if it's the first time she's seen him. Red hazel eyes with slightly tanned skin that has spiky bangs of brown hair that seems to be shoulder length. Her first thought is, *Cute.*

Then a minor a-hem causes her to glance at the front once more. She feels her cheeks heat up but fights it down as she struggles to keep a blank look on her face. The teacher studies her for a few seconds before the instructor continues on with the lecture.

Not that her mind remained on the lecture that's happening, no, her thoughts began to consider her reaction to the teenage boy sitting behind her. It kind of startled her for some odd reason and she spent the rest of the class trying to figure out what it was about him to cause her to think that he's cute.

Takato

He suppresses a yawn as he moves to find a spot to have lunch. He could only imagine where Terriermon is hiding but he's fairly certain that Rika would be dealing with the digital dog during lunch, giving him some breathing space.

He perks as he feels something move in the hallway, a flash of yellow seems to shimmer for a few seconds before it vanishes. It takes him a few seconds to realize that he just glimpsed the elusive Renamon, partner to Rika, also commonly known as the Ice Queen and the Digimon Queen.

For a few minutes, he stands there, imagining what it would have been like to be partnered to a Digimon. Two have helped save two worlds but with a sigh, he shakes his head, dismissing those thoughts because he can't afford to get close to anyone. He rather not end up as a lab specimen thank you very much.

Doesn't mean I can't dream, now does it? He admits as he finds an unlocked classroom to eat his lunch in. It didn't take long before he takes out his stretch book and begins to sketch the image of a crimson dino with a hazard sign on its chest.

= -) T (- =

"I'm home!" He calls out as he enters through the back door. Once his shoes were off and he has slippers on, he heads up to his room after grabbing a cheese bun out of the day old pile of bakery items.

"Welcome home, son." His father calls out from the front of the store.

Once in his room, he glances at the clock before dumping the contains on his desk. He sorts through his homework for his notes for his book report that's due today. Picking up the book, he begins to skim through it from where he left off.

It takes him about forty minutes to complete his book report for his English class before picking through his homework pile until he hears his mom call out that someone's on the phone for him. He couldn't help but be a bit puzzled about that since it's been a couple of years since he had anyone he would call a close friend.

Curious but also wary, he heads down the stairs to see who's calling him.

As he picks up the phone and says, "Hello?"

"Takato?" He hears a familiar voice say over the line, it takes him a moment to place the name.

"Jeri?" He asks and she hums in confirmation. "It's been a while, huh?" He muses, very much puzzled as to why she's calling him.

"Well, I guess it has, I don't suppose you want to hang out to catch up? Like go to a movie or something." Jeri suggests and he could swear he heard something coming over from the end of the line, like someone is moving the phone with something muffling the sound.

He glances at his Digivice to check the time. "Maybe at a different time, I've got something to do tonight. I guess I'm free tomorrow." He admits into the phone, not sure why she's calling him out of the blue but deciding to at least find out what's going on.

After exchanging a words, the line dies on Jeri's end and with a sigh, he glances at his Digivice before moving to get a few more bun to eat before heading out for the tunnel to spend the night.

Girls, I get the feeling I'll never understand what goes through their mind. He thinks as he tries to eat about a dozen buns before he heads upstairs to start one of his homework assignments.

Rika

"I can't believe you did that!" She hisses at Jeri, more then a little glad to have cut the conversation between the two short.

"But this is the first time you've shown interest in a boy! So of course I'm going to help you connect with him." Her friend and fellow Tamer says while they watch Leomon and Renamon spar in the garden of her house.

She can't help but huff slightly with a frown marring her face. *I should have expected something like this to happen after our conversation*

at lunch.

"So does that mean you won't come?" Jeri asks her, snaping her out of her thoughts.

"Fine, I'll come, if only to get a feel of the guy, just don't expect it to be love at first sight or whatever." She tells Jeri with her arms crossing over her chest.

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The Rising of the Moon Part 2: Digimon

I don't own Digimon .

Terriermon

"Geeze, he doesn't look like much, does he?" Impmon muses as they watch an exhausted Takato jog through the park. He's not sure why Impmon decided to tag along but he decided he could use the company.

"If he's so tired, why is he out jogging?" He wonders as he watches the teen stumble out of sight, likely heading home.

"Ah humans, who knows what drives them to do half of what they do?" Impmon muses from his position of leaning on the tree trunk. He huffs slightly but had to admit that the imp's musings had some credit to it.

"Well, let's follow him. I'm here to study his habits after all." He tells the virus before leaping off the branch and gliding down to the ground.

Once his feet hit the ground, he takes off running, confident that Impmon will follow since the Digimon had invited himself along for this trip.

Takato

With a yawn, he unlocks the door and enters before shutting the door and locking it. Sliding the key back into his pocket, he takes off his shoes before heading up stairs while carrying them. He usually leaves one pair out and locks his bedroom door before sneaking out through his window to head to the tunnel to spend the night.

Using another key, he unlocks his bedroom door and before doing anything else, moves to shut his window to the balcony. Once that's done, he puts the shoes he came in with in their usual spot before heading to have a shower to help him fully wake up.

Once that's done, he takes a few minutes of just laying on his bed before moving to get dressed. A glance at the mirror reminds him that he'll need to make a hair appointment to get it trimmed once more, something that he usually needs done after the three nights of transformation into that hybrid form between a Digital werewolf and being human.

Once dressed he begins to run his fingers through his shaggy head of hair while standing before a mirror. After a few seconds, he manages to get it close to how he wants it before beginning to pack up his homework into his book bag.

He glances at the clock on his Digivice before leaving the room. He doesn't lock it since that would cause suspicion with his parents. He manages to grab a pear and his pre-made lunch, once he finishes off a small glass of milk, he heads off to school at a dead run once he's sure that his book bag isn't about to fall off his shoulder.

Like yesterday, he makes it into the building and heads straight to the library to work on some of his newer assignments. He's just glad that the last night signaled the end of his three night stay at the tunnels and his 'den'.

Rika

She looks up and watches as a teen walks into the library. It takes her a few seconds to realize that this teenager was the same one that had been sitting behind him as well as that one that almost ran into Ryo and her yesterday morning. *So that's Takato Matsuki huh?*

She watches as Takato pulls out geology homework. It takes her a few minutes to give herself a shake and returns to doing her Biology

homework, trying to ignore the boy who seems to be very good at causing her gaze and thoughts to drift towards him.

About fifteen minutes after Takato arrives, everyone begins to pack up their stuff so they can go to class. As she's about to head out of the library, she bumps into Takato. As she turns to regard him with a carefully controlled expression on her face, she notices how Takato's eyes widen as he realize who she is.

"Sorry." Takato murmurs as he pulls away to allow her to pass. She turns to hide a frown, she couldn't put her finger on it but something seems different about Takato today, something that seemed to have changed overnight.

Just before she moves out of the way, she turns to look at the teenage boy and says, "You're Takato Matsuki, right? Jeri said something about wanting to hang out today."

She watches as the hazel red eyed boy stiffens slightly with his eyes widen, the looks reminds her of a deer caught in the headlights.

"Err... yea, I think so. Why?" Takato asks in confusion.

"Just wanted to make sure." She says before she frowns. "Is your hair usually that shaggy?" She asks as an after thought.

"I plan to get it cut on Thursday." Takato tells her and with a nod, she turns away from him to head off to her class.

She couldn't help but be glad that none of the others had been around to watch that little conversation between Takato and herself. *Ryo and his 'fangirls' would be teasing the heck out of me while Jeri goes googoo about my 'crush' on that goggle-head.*

Henry

"Have any of you guys seen Terriermon?" He asks his fellow Tamers. "It's not like him to stay out of trouble this long at school."

"Maybe he's after Takato? I mean, that's who's he's been after since Christmas, right?" Jeri muses and he frowns as he considers this.

"Which one is he again?" Ryo asks and he had to agree with Ryo on that one, he doesn't seem to recall anyone by that name.

"He use to be good friend of ours before he got mauled. After that he just kind of distanced himself from everyone. Then when Digimon started showing up on the news, he started looking sickly, which is kind of a bummer since he used to be totally into Digimon." Kazu explains and he blinks, but didn't see how that reaction is out of place since plenty of people had been panicking about it and it only picked up with the arrival of the D-Reaper.

"Well, it sounds like it was a common reaction back then." Ryo muses and he nods in agreement.

"I guess, but that doesn't explain why he became so distant all of a sudden and especially before anyone even began reporting on Digimon appearing in the real world." Kazu says and he sighs.

"You know, he could have been mauled by a Digimon." He muses and everyone looks at him in surprise and puzzlement.

"That would have had to before Juggernaut was activated, opening up a way for the Devas to come through." Rika muses from her seat next to him. Kazu, Kenta, and Jeri all look thoughtful as they thought on this.

"That's kind of a disturbing thought." Kenta admits and his partner nods in agreement from his position on Kenta's left shoulder.

"And it would explain why he refused to talk about what mauled him." Kazu says with a frown.

"Maybe we should change the subject. I doubt Takato would want us trying to bug him about it after all this time." Jeri suggests and he could tell that the suggestion got adopted fairly quickly.

And so the conversation moves onto other, safer topics.

Takato

Well, this is a new one, that dog hasn't tried to prank me all day. He muses as he walks home to take a nap before he meets with Jeri and Rika around seven. He couldn't help the ill feelings about the whole hanging out thing.

As he's about to walk through the gates leading into the street, Terriermon's human partner, Henry Wong, stops him. "I don't suppose you've seen Terriermon today?"

He blinks in surprise before answering, "I was wondering where he was since he hasn't tried anything today."

Henry begins to frown and he couldn't help but feel a sense of impending doom. "He's been gone the whole day." Henry muses, likely more to himself then for his benefit.

"Well, I guess he'll show up soon. He kind of strikes me as the type who can't help but be center of attention." He admits and Henry blinks before nodding in agreement.

With a nod, he turns away from the Tamer and heads home, wondering just what kind of trouble he's about to face soon.

= -) T (- =

"Takato, what have we told you about bringing home pets?" His mom says as he's switching out of his runners and putting on a pair of slippers. He pauses and gives his parental unit a puzzling look.

"Huh? I didn't bring home anything, why?" He asks and his mom blinks before explaining, "Well, there's been all sorts of sounds coming from your room today."

"I don't know why but I think I might know who it might be." He muses with a sigh. As he walks over to the phone, he asks, "The

school phone book is by the phone, right?" His mom nods and moves to take some stuff out of the oven.

After a quick phone call, he walks up the stairs, he makes sure to do so slowly and with as much stealth he could muster. As he approaches his room, he pauses to listens as best as he can. Soft snoozes greet him and with a frown, he walks to his door frame and opens it.

Well, you don't see that everyday. He muses as he finds his room looking like a mini disaster occurred; various cloths, cards, drawings, and books are scattered about the floor, his desk, chair, and bed. He leans on the door frame with a soft smile gracing his face at the sight of three Digimon passed out on his bed.

The green rookie is the one he expected, the white one was an iffy one but he's a bit confused about why the purple would be in his room. *Terriermon, Calumon, and Impmon.* He names them with a sigh before scratching the side of his head.

Well, hopefully Henry will be here soon to pick up his partner and perhaps take the other two away as well. He admits, although a part of him couldn't help but wonder if they're on to him and that Terriermon's been tailing him for more then just pulling pranks on him.

I'm getting paranoid aren't I? They can't have put it together, I haven't allowed myself to appear out in public since I found that tunnel and the room off to the side. He tells himself as he remains leaning on the door frame, trying to think of reasons why Jeri would call him and that Terriermon's only after him because he managed to evade the various pranks the green Digimon has tried to use on him.

He only came out of it as he hears his dad call his name.

The Rising of the Moon Part 3: Digimon

I don't own Digimon .

Henry

"I can't believe you broke into Takato's room! I think it's time that you leave the poor guy alone, Terriermon." He tells his partner while carrying the green rookie in his arms before him. As he shakes his head in disbelief of the lengths his partner is willing to go to just to prank one teen.

"Momentai, Henry, momentai! It's not as if I stole anything or ruined anything in the kitchen." The long eared digital dog says.

"Terriermon, that's not the point! You been bothering him at school since Christmas! It's not the end of the world if you don't get to prank one Takato Matsuki, Terriermon. It's time you leave the poor guy alone." He tells the rookie.

Then with a sigh he adds, "I can't believe you brought Impmon in to help you too. You do remember what his idea of 'fun' was before the D-Reaper, right? You shouldn't tempt him to return to his old habits."

"Oh come on, Henry! I almost had him yesterday! I'm sure I'll get him if you give me one last shot!" Terriermon whines but he's already decided to stand firm on this.

"Just no, Terriermon, no. From now on you're to leave Takato Matsuki alone. You had your chance and now it's time to turn your sights onto something different. You're becoming obsessed with this guy, Terriermon. So not another word about pranking Takato Matsuki, got it?" He says and glances down at the top of Terriermon's head.

"Ah, Henry..." Terriermon whines but he just sighs.

"Just let it go, Terriermon. Enough is enough." He says softly.

Rika

"So Henry and Terriermon aren't going to make it?" Ryo asks and she nods.

"It seems Henry's decided to put his foot down on Terriermon's obsession with pranking Takato." She tells Ryo in a dry manner as she watches Jeri in a match with Kenta.

"Boy is Henry going to regret that." Kazu muses from his position next to his partner, Guardromon.

The other Digimon are hanging around in a bored fashion, MarineAngemon resting on one of Guardromon's shoulder plates, Renamon resting on a branch of a tree, Leomon and Cyberdramon are busy staying alert for intruders like news reporters.

"I'm sure he's up for the challenge or he wouldn't have forbidden his partner from pranking Takato." Kenta says in support of Henry.

Before the conversation could continue, Cyberdramon growls deeply and within an instant, everyone reach for their D-Arc. Seconds later, they only find a single teen coming towards them and within seconds, everyone relaxes once they got a better look at him. Although Cyberdramon seems to tense as Takato continues to get closer.

"Hey Takato! Glad to see that you made it!" Jeri calls out as Kenta and her pick up their discarded hands.

"Hi." The new comer says as a greeting, Takato's hazel red eyes glance over the group until they land on a very tense Cyberdramon.

"Don't mind him, he's usually like that." Ryo says as the Digimon King moves to shake hands with Takato. Takato gives the helmet

Digimon a nervous glance while a slightly frown graces the guy's face.

"Are you sure? I mean if he really doesn't like me I'll go." Takato offers but Ryo waves it away.

"Trust me, it's fine. He's just the loner type is all, doesn't do too well in a group." Ryo assures the group's visitor.

Giving Cyberdramon a passing glance, Takato allows Ryo to bring him towards the center of the group. Jeri flashes Takato a grin before focusing once more on the game going on while Ryo plays host by formally introducing Takato to their partners.

She watches as hints of awe flicker across Takato's face with each introduction. *Well, that's better then most people's reactions.* She admits privately to herself.

"And then there's us, although I believe that Henry and Terriermon won't be making it today because of what happened at your house." Ryo says and Takato nods as he moves to get a better view of the card game going on.

"I never thought... Huh." Takato muses with a thoughtful look before it gives way to an embarrassing one.

"Didn't think we still played, huh?" Kazu says and Takato nods as he moves to sit down a bit apart from them.

"I guess this means you didn't bring your deck either, huh?" Kazu asks and Takato sighs.

"I haven't touched them since I stored them in one of my desk drawers." Takato admits looking kind of uneasy about it.

"How long since you actually played?" Kazu asks with a touch of disbelief, it seems as if the visor wearing teen couldn't believe what Takato's told them.

Kenta and Jeri both seem to be surprised by this as they were both starting in stun surprise at Takato. Takato stares intently at the ground and she traded looks with Ryo. *It's as if he just told them that the sky is pink and the clouds are made out of whip cream.* She muses with a frown but getting the feeling that Takato must have been a very avid player once upon a time.

Maybe that theory about getting mauled by a Digimon isn't as far fetched as I thought. She thinks as she watches Kazu, Kenta, and Jeri slowly recover from this shocking revelation about their former friend.

Takato

Well, that was a bust. He muses as he walks home about an hour after he arrived at the park. *Hopefully, I won't be asked to hang out again, not after this evening's disaster.* He thinks as he kicks a rock out of the way as he travels through the street without a destination in mind.

The way they looked at me, as if I suddenly grown two heads... I guess whatever connection I had with them really can't be repaired. He admits with a sigh.

He blinks as he finds himself stopped before a very familiar entrance way. With a glance around, he climbs over the gate and walks into the entrance way of the tunnel. He leans on the railing as he stares down the tunnel.

The familiarity of the tunnel helps to relax him from his encounter with three former friends and their team-mates. After a few minutes, he straightens and heads out of the tunnel to head home to get some sleep. He'll worry about his homework later, for now, he just wants to rest in preparation for tomorrow.

As he exits out of the door, he pauses as he feels a sudden breeze kicks up for a few seconds but with a shake, he puts his hands into

his jacket pocket and towards the gate that he needs to climb over so he can head home.

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He couldn't help but feel the tension of the last few weeks lighten now that he's in a secure location. As he undresses, he tries to really pin point who out of the Tamers bugged him the most since that little hang out the day after his last transformation night.

Well, at least Henry's been too busy to do much other then keep track of his partner then to join them in trying to press for details of my mauling. He thinks and with a frown he couldn't help but add, *And why are they trying to bring that up? It's not as if they seem to care until after that disastrous meeting.*

As he finishes undressing, he pauses for a few seconds to stare down at his assortment of cloths. *I wonder if I can't talk mom and dad into allowing me to finish high school with Kai. If they're on to me, it might be wise to leave the city for a while. I'm sure I can find a 'haunted' cave or something to transform in.* He muses as a sudden thought of finally getting out of this tunnel and away from the 'lair' that he's building.

He is forced to snap out of his thoughts as a familiar sensation occurs within his body. As he falls onto the floor, his bones crack and shift into new position. Seconds later, he's fully transformed and with a sigh, he gets to his feet.

He pauses as a new scent reaches his nose and causes him to frown. Dropping down to the ground to see if he can location more of it. He finds that it's a fairly old scent one that's about a week old, one that hangs around the door, which causes him to frown as he considers what this could mean.

After a few minutes, he glances at the pile of cloths and within seconds, he picks them up and places them a few feet into his 'den' just in case somebody decides to visit this room tonight.

I believe I should start looking for a new place to use. He decides as he continues to move more into his 'lair'.

Henry

"Where are we going?" He asks Terriermon who's following Impmon.

"Well, it seems we got a Digimon that's been carving up the tunnel." Terriermon says and Impmon nods.

"We think this guy only uses the tunnel for one week out of a month. Likely migrates between hide outs so's not to attract attention. We think he'll be here tonight or here in a day or two." Impmon says and he couldn't help but raise an eyebrow at this reasoning.

"How'd you find this place anyway?" He asks and the two Digimon glance at each other.

"Well, I followed that Takato kid check it out after hanging out with yous guys. He spent a few minutes in the tunnel before leaving. It wasn't until I hear yous guys talk about him getting mauled did I figure that it might have happened there, in the tunnel. So I checked around until I found this room and on entering it,guess what I saw?" Impmon says.

"What did you see?" He asks as they arrive at the locked gate.

"The back wall totally destroyed and it looks like something pretty big and strong digging some kind of cave. I didn't got far into it but it's been worked on recently from some of the dirt that's littering the floor. I even saw some claw marks on the solid wall." Impmon tells him.

He glances over at Terriermon and the green rookie nods in agreement. "Impmon told me and a few days later, I visited the place and what ever kind of Digimon dug it, it was a canine. Although I did catch Takato's scent in the room too. So either Takato's got himself a

partner or this Digimon has been threatening him do keep silent about it being around the city." Terriermon says.

"I guess it wouldn't hurt to check it out." He admits and Terriermon flashes him an approving grin.

And so, he climbs over the locked chain fence and falls to the ground. Catching the pair before they head to the door. "Hey! Takato's visited about an hour or two ago!" Terriermon declares before he's even openned the door to the tunnel.

"You sure?" He asks and Terriermon says as he taps his nose, "The nose knows."

Maybe I should have left a message with the others about this. He thinks as they walk down the stairs.

Once more the two Digimon take the lead and after about twenty minutes of walking they arrive at a door. As he opens the door, Terriermon says, "Ah oh."

Impmon creates a ball of fire and walks into the room. "He's here and Takato's here too." Terriermon says and as he reaches for his D-Arc, the sound of scratching stops.

A soft snarl seems to echo out of the large hole before a pair of glowing eyes stare out of the hole. Before he could say anything, Impmon fires the fire ball at the edge of the cave and as it explodes they all get a good look at the Digimon.

Oh sh- He thinks as the wolfman type Digimon howls as it leaps out of the hole.

The Rising of the Moon Part 4: Digimon

I don't own Digimon .

Takato

On hearing voices out in the tunnel, he begins to move towards the opening while running his left set of claws along the wall of the den. His nails snag on something and he begins to scratch at the area to try and correct it.

As the door opens, he hears a very familiar voice say some his name and glances out into the room once his hand is free. With a soft growl he walks move towards the opening of his den.

Before he knew it, a ball of fire hits the ground not far from him and he howls out in surprise as he leaps into the room and glares at the two Digimon and the human.

He feels his ears flatten against his skull as he shows off his pointed teeth, hoping to scare the group out of this room. Impmon moves quickly and rapidly fires off a few fireballs at him. Two of the fireballs hit his right hand and he back hands the purple Digimon into the wall as he sucks on his right hand while trying to fend off Terriermon.

Suddenly suddenly he's in pain and glances to the wall to find Beelzemon standing there with a gun pointed at him. Once his right hand is out of his mouth, he howls in pain as his left hand moves to cover the gun shot wound as he drops. He slowly reaches for his Digivice and pockets it in the rugged jeans that usual appear after he transforms.

"That's enough! We might need him to find out where Takato is." Henry declares as the teen moves to stand between Beelzemon and him.

He everything seems to be crashing down and he panics. As fast as he can he bolts to move out of the room. Henry tries to stop him and he scratches Henry while still holding his side, pushing the Tamer into Beelzemon.

"Henry!" Terriermon cries out while Beelzemon shouts out, "Get your hairy ass back here, you mangy wolf!"

He keeps running down the tunnel, even as he trips, he runs away while still clutching his side. *I will not become a lab specimen!* He thinks as he races down the tunnel, fleeing from a life behind steel doors and one way glasses.

Henry

"He got you good." Terriermon muses as he uses ripped stripes to bind the scratches he received from the black wolfman Digimon.

"I don't think he tried to do it, he just wanted me out of the way." He says as he tries to tie a knot on the make shift bandages.

"Yea well, other then some dirty cloths there isn't anything else in that cave he dug out. I even found a hole where he's been dumping the dirt." Terriermon tells him and he glances at the assortment of cloths resting behind the rookie.

"They've got Takato's scent all over them; well there's wolfy's scent on them too." His partner admits and he sighs.

"I wonder if Beelzemon caught up with him..." He wonders as he takes out his D-Arc and begins to push some of the buttons until an image of the black Digimon appears.

"No data? How can that be? It's not like this Digimon is a Deva or something!" Terriermon shouts and he gives his partner a wary look as the hologram vanishes. He couldn't help but frown at the screen of his D-Arc before he takes out his cell.

"I just hope nothing's wrong with Takato." He admits with a sigh as he listens to the phone ring. *Although, I highly doubt we'd want to find a naked Takato Matsuki.*

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"Go away, Terriermon. I don't feel too good at the moment." He says from his position of laying face down on the bed.

"Ok ok, shhs, I'm going!" The green Digimon says and just as the door finish closing, he let's out a sharp cry of pain as something within him seems to... to... *shift* . Unbearable pain follows this sudden feeling.

Soon the room is filled with beeping as his D-Arc begins to act up as he tries to get to his feet but his balance seems off. Suddenly something cracks and he finds himself once more on the bed as his body rebels against him.

His cloths suddenly seem to dig right into his body. He screams out in pain and the computer he has in the room begin to act out. His vision swims as his cloths finally rip apart at the steams.

"Henry? Henry!" He hears Terriermon cry out and he glances at the door before he arcs his back as he gets a look at himself in the computer monitors that rest on the desk.

At the sight that greets him, he suddenly regrets looking at them as the sight that greets him. Then as something begins to replace the pain, his D-Arc finally glows and a beam of light hits him.

Everything seems to explode and as he feels the ground under him, he shakes his head as his senses try to overload him. As he glances down at himself, he finds white fur covering him as well as a pair of rugged pair of green jeans on him. He whimpers softly at the sight of his partner and as he nudges the rookie Digimon, he hears someone scream.

He snarls at the sound as he puts his hands over his ears and as he looks up, he finds Suzie standing there. He stops snarling as Suzie's screaming increases in volume. He cringes and begins to walks backwards, he trips over the bed and finally, he flings himself at the window.

He amazingly manages to land on the street below without any injury. As cars try and swerve around him, people are beginning to recover from their shock and after glancing around, he leaps over a car and lands on all fours.

Well, now I know why we didn't find Takato in that 'lair'. He admits as he tries to keep to the alleyways. *But for now, I believe I'm going to try and survive the night.* He adds as he pauses to take a breather by a large trash can.

Rika

"What did this Digimon look like?" Ryo asks Suzie while she examines the destroyed window and a bit of the wall. The green rabbit is resting on the bed with Lopmon attending him.

"Fairly tall, white furred wolf Digimon had been crouching by Terriermon when I came to stand by the door." The kid says before she frowns. "I began to scream and it then snarls at me, then on seeing me, began to back away until it throws itself at the window. Once it was gone, I ran to check on Terriermon before I phoned daddy's work."

She sighs and turns away from the opening and begins to glance around the room, she bends down to each a ruined stripe of shirt. *Didn't Henry wear something like this at school today?* She thinks as she picks it up.

"No blood." She muses softly before straightening and looking about to make sure that none of the other pieces contain any traces of blood.

"I think he's coming too!" Lopmon says and they gather around the green rookie.

"Henry... I can't believe it... Then the light..." Terriermon says and she couldn't help but frown while Ryo asks, "What about Henry? Did you see the Digimon do something to him?"

"Poor Henry... It must have hurt..." Terriermon trails off as he once more slips from consciousness to unconsciousness.

"That... didn't explain anything." She states and Ryo just sighs.

"Well, hopefully Cyberdramon and Renamon will be able to take it down." Ryo says and she sighs.

"There's something that we're missing. First there's a black furred wolf type and now a white one. I mean, why would Henry's shirt in tatters but there isn't a trace of blood? Why didn't it attack Suzie? If it had just finished off Henry with Terriermon in the room, why not do the same to Suzie?" She wonders and then after a few minutes of silence, both of their D-Arcs beep.

Once the pair of Digivices are before them, two different holograms appear with two similar looking Digimon appearing in the picture. In her screen is a white wolfman Digimon and a quick glance at Ryo's shows a black wolfman Digimon.

"That's the one that Henry and them must have encountered." Ryo says which causes her to nod in agreement as the black furred one snarls at Cyberdramon and she notices the color of this one's eyes.

"That's the one I saw!" Suzie says, causing her to look back at her own viewing hologram.

"Honey yellow eyes." She muses softly as the white furred one seems to be looking for an escape route. "He's not looking for a fight." She states.

"He's fearful, not an attitude you expect from a killer." Renamon murmurs and she nods in agreement.

"Try talking to him first, see if he won't come in without a fight." She suggests before shooting Suzie a minor look to keep her from saying otherwise.

"What could be on that ship that would interest him?" Ryo wonders and she turns to stare at Ryo's imagine just long enough to watch as the black wolfman gets hit by one of Cyberdramon's attacks, right in the lower back.

A splash is heard and the black furred wolf Digimon doesn't break surface. "Circle around, Cyberdramon. And if he breaks surface, don't kill him, we need to see if there are others." Ryo orders through his D-Arc but she doubts that the ultimate will comply, not when Ryo's not there to stay the dragon's hand.

The Rising of the Moon Part 5: Digimon

I don't own Digimon .

Henry

He couldn't help but pace about in the room he's been ushered into once he followed Renamon to Hypnos.

After Renamon left and those guards stand before the door, he tried to relax but he couldn't suppress the urge to do something. *Which explains why Takato dug into that wall.* He muses as he paces around the room, glancing at the camera up in the corner every so often.

He growls softly as his fingers twitch whenever he glanced at the table or at the clock. He's just so bored! He also wonders why they've haven't come in to try and interrogate him, but then, they might be after Takato.

Thinking about that teen, he could only hope that nothing has happened to him. *He's gone through enough. True, he did infect me but he had just gotten shot by Beelzemon...* Then he pauses in his pacing to frown as a new thought begins to bloom within his mind.

I wonder just who infected him with this... virus? And why did my fur suddenly change color? Did my Digivice alter the virus when that light hit me? If it did, then why couldn't it eliminate the virus? He wonders for a while before he just sighs heavily before noticing that it's almost six am.

As he's about to get up, he felt a bit dizzy. He shakes his head but the only seems to cause the dizziness to increase. Suddenly the air gets knocked out of him, causing him to fall onto the floor as a large crack echo.

He then rolls on his back as he tries to draw breath but it doesn't work and he feels as if he's strength is being drained. His vision swims as pain fills his mind and then, he finds himself breathing quick, swallow breathes.

As he moves to rub his temples, he finds that his arm has returned to normal. He just stares at them for a while as he finally gets his breathing under control.

Rika

She feels her face redden as she realizes that she's staring at a naked fellow Tamer. "I think someone had better send him something to wear or something to cover himself with." She muses as she turns to look at some place but the monitor depicting her team-mate.

"Do you realize what this mean?" Kenta says and she frowns as she turns to look at the glass wearing teen.

"That Beelzemon shot *Takato* in that room. That *Takato* is the one to have drowned in that river front." Kenta stresses and she suddenly felt cold at the thought.

"Which leaves us to try and explain to his parents about how their son died." She whispers.

It didn't take long before she schools her expression but within her, she feels a lot of guilt at her part in causing Takato's 'condition' to be exposed.

"I'm going to go inform Henry's dad that we've found Henry." She says after shaking off her guilt for the time being.

Kenta just nods and she leaves the room to give the news in person.

Takato

He continues to cling to the side of the ship's haul for as long as he's able. He's not sure whether to be glad that he's still beastly looking in

daylight hours.

But then, I've been like this since I ran out of the tunnel. I haven't transformed back to human that first dawn and I still haven't. He admits as he glances at the dawn.

He shakes his head as he tries to consider if he should climb up onto the deck or just remain where he is, with his head about a foot above the water's surface.

I hope this is the right ship... He thinks as he decides to take a short nap, after all, clinging to the haul is slightly tiring but he's confident that his grip on the metal haul will remain doing so.

Just hope that nobody notices me hanging here. He muses to himself from his position at the back of the ship.

Henry

The door opens about twenty some minutes after he reverted back to his human self. He couldn't help but think the whole experience was surreal, although it doesn't explain how his hair seems to have grown longer then it should.

Though why would it would affect my hair... He muses and snaps out of his thoughts as the door opens.

"Dad?" He says and his father nods.

"Rika suggested that when I come down that I bring something so that you can cover yourself in." Janyu says as his father tosses him a sheet.

He catches it as he realizes that he is indeed naked, that his cloths had fallen away from him during his transformation. Hastily he wraps the sheet about his waist while his face burns with his gaze fixating at a point by his father's shoes.

"We're going to have to run a battery of tests. Hopefully we'll discover a cure." Janyu says and he glances at his father.

"Any word about Takato?" He asks as he looks up into his father's face.

"We believed he drowned." His father tells him and he felt as if someone sucker punched him.

Confidential Report

Subject : Digital Lycanthropy

'Various test have confirmed that Henry Wong is a Digital Lycanthrope. During testing it has been revealed that through the saliva the hybrid virus is passed from one human being to another human being. On another note, it seems that injecting samples into a Digimon doesn't effect them.'

'The body of Takato Matsuki has never been recovered so no study can be made of the originator of this virus. It is theorized that unless Matsuki's body is founded that there can be no complete cure for this Digital Lycanthropy even though Henry Wong's Digivice did seem to install a few lines of vaccine codes before Wong fully transformed. Because of this, it is decided that a study of the original codes that Matsuki would have possessed that we would likely yield a cure.'

'Studies on the virus have proven that a Digimon of the Garurumon line is likely the one to have mauled Matsuki. This would explain the coloration of Matsuki and Wong's coats. The coat coloration is reminiscent of the differences between Garurumon of the vaccine and virus types. Without being able to study Matsuki, we are unable to confirm if Wong is of a lower Generation or on equal standing with Matsuki.'

'During physical tests it has been discovered that when transformed, Wong possess a Digimon's inability to be harmed by weaponry of a

non-Digital source. It is unknown if this would be pass down if Wong's saliva is used to create more Digital Lycanthropes.'

'Military has decided to close this study until which time Takato Matsuki's body could be recovered.'

Takato

He frowns after reading the soaked file that had washed ashore in a cheap tin box. He feels guilt at what he transferred to Henry but he felt very vindicated that he had been right to flee that night.

"What you reading, Takatomon?" Guilmon asks and he turns to smile softly at his created partner, one that he created after his Digivice touched a blue card about three months ago. He's still not too sure what to make of the red Digimon, especially since the Digimon seems to believe that this isn't what the world is suppose to be like.

"Just an old file, boy. One that's truly out of date." He tells the inquisitive rookie as he closes the file, the rest of the information's ink has run so he couldn't read much of the file, causing him to puzzle out bits on his own.

Guilmon hums thoughtfully before looking out at the ocean. He glances at the tin box and notices a few more files within it. He takes out the paper and then tries to dump the water out of the tin before putting them back in.

"Well, we should head back, Kai's likely has dinner ready." He says and Guilmon nods.

"Oie dokie." The red rookie says in his child-like tone.

With the box and documents likely dating back about six to seven years, they headed away from the beach as the sun begins to get lower in the sky.

"Do you think we'll ever hook up with the Tamers again, Takato?" Guilmon asks him after a time.

He shrugs as he replies, "Maybe, but don't expect me to leave this island. I rather not end up in a lab so they can figure out how to 'improve' their Super Soldiers so they don't degrade into blood thirsty machines of destruction."

"Sounds fair." Guilmon chirps and he couldn't help but shake his head at his partner.

Same Destiny, Different Worlds: Digimon

Don't Own Digimon!

Tai Kamiya

The world has gone crazy. He thinks to himself as he slowly walks through a park as he follows his sister, although to be honest, he doesn't recall Kari being that... pale last time he saw her. Then with a sigh, he thinks with a slight frown, *Maybe this is all a dream? I mean, I was laying on that bench waiting for Matt and Sora to show so we can catch that film... I mean, how else could I wake to find myself in a park with Kari standing over me?*

Nodding his head, he decides that this all is just some kind of dream as he finally catches up with Kari, who's standing just outside a group of kids who seem to be using some kind of devices to do battle with each other. He couldn't make out what shape the toys were since there were quiet a bit of kids blocking his view, even though he's a fifteen year old. He hears Kari sigh softly and glances towards his younger sibling, he couldn't help but raise a questioning eyebrow at the young preteen, not that Kari seems to notice that he's studying her since it seems as though her focus is more inward then outward. He glances away after a few seconds to see if he can't spot a familiar face among the players and the crowd, after all, he wouldn't mind seeing TK or one of the other younger Digidestine.

"You want to get some ice cream or something?" He asks Kari after moving closer to her side. The question seems to startle his sister out of her thoughts so she can turn to stare at him with a hint of surprise.

Kari doesn't seem to trust her voice so she just nods and with a slight grin, he guides her towards a vendor. He fishes around for his

wallet he manages to pull out his Digivice from one of his pockets until he finally finds some loose change. He pockets the white device before counting out the amount needed to pay for the two cones. It's about then did he realizes that he doesn't have his jacket, which contains his wallet, but as he's about to say something, he pauses to consider a few things before just shrugging it off, after all, this is just a dream, right? He'll likely wake up to find himself on that bench with either Matt or Sora standing over him, waking him so they can finally see that movie.

"Thanks Taichi." Kari says and he just grins at his sister. "No problem, it's what big brothers are for, right?" He says and Kari smiles slyly at him before they walk away from the vendor with their ice cream cones.

"So, how's school?" He asks as they walk down the paved paths, one of which seems to be taking them to a fountain. *This dream is turning out to be fairly ok.*

"It's been going ok, I guess. I got a English project due at the end of the month." Kari says after glancing his way, almost a bit surprised that he'd be interested.

"Anything exciting happen recently?" He inquires and it continues on like this as they ate the ice cream and cones while walking throughout the park. He's kind of surprised at some of Kari's answers, particularly as he subtlety inquires about her 'boyfriends', AKA the almost one sided rivalry between Davis and TK. He didn't press those kinds of issues, deciding that it's just some part of him that's indecisive about which of the two he would prefer Kari to date.

This is a pretty good dream. He decides as they sit down next to a tree trunk after a quick stop to the drinking fountain to wash their hands using said water.

Hikari Yagami

Something is different about Taichi... She couldn't help but think as they sit under a tree. *He didn't even try to get into the center of that match to get a better view of those battles. He showed a lot of interest in my life, tried to tease me about having a pair of boyfriends...* She mentally lists, glancing sideways at her elder brother, wondering if she liked the change or not and how it came about within a short nap on the grass.

With a soft sigh, she glances away from Taichi to look about, almost half expecting to spot one of the Saiba to show up, causing Taichi to revert to his usual self to go chat with them and forget that she's with him. Not that she didn't like her either of the two, it's just that, at times it felt like the two were her brother's stalkers considering how often they bump into the pair of siblings while trying to have sibling bonding time. There were times when she believes that Rei and Taichi were a real couple based on how they behave together, not that she ever screwed up the courage to ask Taichi if they were going out in the girlfriend/boyfriend fashion.

Although, that could be why Neo always show up within minutes of Rei and Taichi meeting... She muses as she leans back onto the trunk of the tree to stare up at the leaves growing on the tree. Her imagination kind of running wild about the 'romantic' moments that could occur between the two. It got really creative at the thought of Neo getting added to the equation...

"You ok? You look like you're burning up." Taichi says, causing her to snap out of her thoughts to realize that her brother is giving her a worried look. She couldn't help but feel her face burn deeper as she realizes where her thoughts had been just moments ago.

"I'm... fine." She manages to stutter out and Taichi just kind of frowns, but finally sighs. "Really, I am." She says a bit firmer as she tries to control her embarrassment.

"Well... If you're sure." Taichi finally relents after searching her face for a few seconds, which causes her to be a bit startled that he let it go and very relieved that he let it go. *Well, that was close, at least he*

didn't try and take my temperature thinking that I'm coming down with something... She muses.

"It's getting late. Maybe we should head home." She says after a half an hour.

"Wonder what we'll be having for supper. Hopefully not liver sticks." Taichi muses as he helps her get up off the grass, she giggles at the thought as they walk away from the spot, it didn't take long before she takes the lead. *This was a great afternoon, wish we could have another like it.* She thinks to herself.

Taichi Yagami

"Why am I in a mall?" He couldn't help but wonder out loud to himself after being forced to vacate the bench because of a mall guard. He also didn't recall wearing a jacket to the park but he's wearing one now and it feels as though his wallet is within one of the pockets too, not that he's going to pull it out just to check it out.

After walking around, he finds a spot on the railing and leans on it to look down at the main level. He blinks as a familiar looking preteen weaves between the various crowds below while in the company of a white hat wearing preteen. As the familiar preteen turns to give him a better look at her face, he suddenly growls as he realizes that his baby sister is currently in the company of some boy. With protective instincts kicking in, he glances around as he comes up with a route in which to get to the pair and to, hopefully, scare off the punk who's acting way too familiar with his kid sister.

I might not spent a whole lot of time with Hikari but that doesn't mean I'm going to let some punk manhandle her! He thinks while another part of him couldn't help but wonder when his sister got a wardrobe upgrade since it's fairly rare to see Hikari in such brightly colored cloths since she always seemed to prefer earth tones. For a moment a thought of all this being a dream crosses his mind but he decides to reflect on that later, like after scaring the preteen punk away.

"Hey Tai, how's it going?" The hat wearing punk says, seeing him as the two preteens were about to enter into a shop. "Did you get Matt's E-Mail?" Hikari asks him and he glances at his kid sister, finally noticing a few changes that pretty much confuses him since he's never seen Hikari look so... so healthy.

"Ah... No." He says, kind of bewildered at how... out going his sister seems, which kind of contrasts his image of Hikari. "You're not on a date, are you?" He asks, glancing between the two, noticing that the kid with the hat has blue eyes and apparently dirty blond hair from the few strands that escape the white hat.

"Tai..." Hikari groans, clearly embarrassed while the guy blinks, clearly looking surprised that he would ask and embarrassed that he did indeed ask that. "I've told you this a hundred times already, I'm not ready to date and I don't need you to help me pick who to date either." Hikari says and he notices that the hat wearing preteen looks a bit bemused at the way the conversation is going while he's a bit bewildered at how Hikari's acting since he could never recall them ever having a conversation like this before he woke up in this mall.

Never mind the fact that she's out with somebody her age... A minor part of him remarks. "Ok... No need to bite my head off." He says taking a step back.

"Anyway, have you hear from Izzy today? He seems upset about this freak phenomenon that's suppose to have occurred around noon and again around midnight." The preteen guy says, changing the subject which was more then fine by him since he's at a lost at how to deal with Hikari at this particular time.

Izzy? Must be a friend of his. He decides as he asks, "What kind of phenomenon are we talking about?" As he follows the two into the store, it's not as if he has any real plans for today, although he is suppose to hang out with Hikari today at the park... *Might as well do so here in this mall. And just maybe this whole thing will slowly make sense.*

"Nothing dangerous according to Gennai, just some kind of dimensional phenomenon that should correct itself when midnight rolls around. Not that Gennai really said anything about what kind of things this phenomenon affects or if they're dangerous or not." The guy says, he couldn't help but wonder why the guy seems to be so comfortable around him since he is Hikari's protective older brother.

"What do you two think of this?" Hikari asks after looking at herself in the mirror while holding up a dress. "TK? Tai?" Hikari asks, finally giving him a name to go with the blond.

"Kind of perky, isn't it?" He asks as he recalls a minor scene Hikari had made when their mother brought something similar a year or two ago.

"What's wrong with perky?" Hikari asks him with a minor raised eyebrow and he couldn't stop himself by saying, "Didn't mom get you something like that a while ago? I seem to recall you complaining about how perky the colors were."

The two stare at him for a few seconds, which causes him to wonder if what he said was out of line. "Tai... Are you feeling ok?" Hikari asks and he frowns since that's usually his line to Hikari.

"I'm pretty sure I'm good." He says and Hikari studies him with a serious look on her face. As Hikari is about to say something, a beeping occurs and his sister puts the dress onto the rack while TK takes out what appears to be a hand held computer.

"Who's it from?" Hikari asks and TK glances to look up at him while answering, "It's from Izzy, he says that Tai's Digivice signal can't be located in Japan."

Taichi Yagami

Ok... I'm pretty sure I'd remember having class with Izzy's double... He admits to himself as he watches as the short teen red head think

about something while leaning against a tree trunk. Although he's a bit annoyed at this particular kid, Davis, is currently bugging Hika... his sister's double, Kari. He did glance over to TK, wondering if the blond is going to set Davis straight but so far, it's a no go, although he's a bit impressed with how Hik... Kari's not caving in to the dating offers(though he privately would love to take the kid aside to have a minor 'chat').

How could my double give that guy his goggles? He wonders, sure, Davis had the energy but he's not too sure about Davis' other qualities. *I'm fairly sure I wasn't that bad at that age when it came to asking for a date. I'm pretty sure I accepted no as an answer...* The fact that none of the others seem to see Davis' behavior as abnormal he couldn't help but find very telling.

He glances over to one of the new kids, a young boy named Cody. Studying the kid and more importantly, in his mind, his partner Upamon, who's currently napping in Cody's lap. True, Upamon isn't the only Digimon at the meeting, but Cody, and Izzy, had been among the first to arrive after Kari, TK, and him have arrived.

Davis and Ken, with their respective partners, had arrived in the company of Ken's girlfriend, Yolei and Hawkmon. According to TK, Matt still couldn't make it because of Matt's sudden band meeting, although Sora is on her way over, though she's stopping to pick up her own partner, Biyomon, and that Gabumon is arriving with Sora. Joe had arrived to examined him if only to make sure he's fine and then hung around, although the older teen took out a book to read while waiting.

He did feel a bit of a pang as he realizes he'll unlikely meet the doubles of Neo, Rei, and the others. He almost feels like pulling Kari over and never letting her go if only because she's familiar. And anchor to help ground him in a very violent storm raging about him, more then willing to drive him beyond his comfort level.

"Sorry I'm late!" A new voice pipes in and he snaps out of his thoughts to turn to regard the newcomer. "Hi Sora. Thanks for

coming." Kari says in a warm tone.

He blinks before looking away from Sora to size up the two rookies, he couldn't help but smile slightly at the sight of the Gabumon since Gabo had become a very good friend of Zero and his. He couldn't help but compare how calm this particular rookie is. He couldn't help but suddenly miss Gabo, suddenly very much aware of the fact that he'll likely never hook up with any of his friends who live in the Digital world.

He comes out as a slightly concern voice asks, "Homesick?" It takes him a few seconds to realize that Kari has somehow approached him while he was busy feeling depressed.

"He just reminds me of Gabo..." He admits in a soft voice, his gaze already drifting towards the fur wearing rookie, one who's talking with DemiVeemon, Hawkmon, and Wormmon since Upamon is napping on Cody's lap. He feels a slight comforting squeeze on his shoulder and he swallows while blinking rapidly, trying to fight the tears that were welling up in his eyes.

"Gabo... He was a Gabumon?" Kari asks, likely following his gaze and he nods. "Yea, he was Zero and mine guide during most of our adventures."

"Wouldn't Zero know his way around? I mean, Zero is your Digimon partner, right?" Kari asks him and he nods.

"Yea but, I raised Zero, short for Zeromaru, on a V-Pet. You know, one of these?" He takes out a latest V-Pet, one which contains one of the latest Digimon that has been released, a Renamon. It had been a gift from Rei for his fifteen birthday, after all, when they had returned to the real world, he had decided against buying a new one, so he had been without one since he was eleven, not that it didn't stop him from doing some tutoring in the way of the V-Pet.

"That... looks disturbingly like the original Digivices." Kari says as she frowns while studying the moving bit image of a humanoid fox.

"Is that your Digivice?" TK asks with a few of the others coming to circle him to get a look at his V-Pet.

"It's a V-Pet." He says and explains, "It's a virtual pet that's popular back home, it starts out as an egg once you pull out the tab, and then depending on how you raise the fresh Digimon, the little guy Digivolves into various Digimon types. Your win ratio in Battling also determines what kind of advance form the Digimon takes."

"Interesting... Is that really a Digimon in there then?" Joe asks and he blinks before nodding slowly. "It likely is. One of the reason why I didn't want to own another one of these. I didn't want to replace Zero, I guess. But, well, Rei did get me this one as a birthday gift, so..." He shrugs weakly, not sure why he suddenly feels guilty since he hasn't done anything wrong.

I would have given it to Hikari but she's very uninterested in these things. He thinks, he suspects it's because he pays such things more attention then her. Which causes him to glance over toward Kari, wondering, suddenly, what kind of relationship his double has with Kari.

"Do you mind?" Izzy asks and he shakes his head. He hands the V-Pet over to Izzy and watches as the red head walks over to his pack to take out a lab top computer. Most if not all of the group follows to see what Izzy has in mind.

"Does your sister have one?" Kari asks and he shakes his head.

"She's never been into them, though that could be my fault." He admits finally after much consideration about whether or not he should keep it to himself, but then, it's likely only natural for Kari to wonder about Hikari.

"How so?" Kari asks him, curious about how something like that could be his fault.

"Well, I've always been into it. Ok, maybe obsessed would be a better description." He admits, scratching the side of his head, flushing slightly under Kari's piecing gaze. *She's definitely a lot more confident then Hikari. Must be because she's gone on her own adventures.*

"You've ignored her, haven't you?" Kari asks and he felt very guilty as he nods. "I was only eleven at the time of the adventure, then around twelve, I was kind of all geared up hoping to see if we'd return, thirteen I began to mop, fourteen I started to accept that I likely won't, and now... Well, I find myself not only with a new V-Pet but in a different dimension where Digimon seem to be able to travel to the real world." He says.

"You mean you don't have a Digivice to open up Digi-Ports into the Digital world?" Kari asks and he blinks as he answers, "Our Digivices vanished as we journeyed back to the real world and we also didn't receive our original V-Pets devices either."

Silence fell between them, he couldn't help but feel a tad envious about their ability to open these gates to the Digital world. But mostly, he felt his usual feels of frustration at himself for not being there for Hikari, that maybe, just maybe, if he had paid Hikari more mind that perhaps his sister could grow into someone like Kari. He's not blind, after all, he could tell that Kari's got a fairly large group of friends, even if those friends only encircle those who are also partnered with Digimon. He can't recall the last time Kari's ever had a friend over or been invited out that wasn't about finishing a school project or something.

"Ah... Tai-Taichi? I think someone wants to talk with you." Davis calls out, causing him to jerk slightly, he had forgotten that Kari and him weren't alone. He gets up and, a quick glance over to Kari, walks over to where the others were group about the computer. Joe moves out of the way as does Gabumon and Biyomon and at the sight of a yellow furred fox with white bell wearing purple gloves, he couldn't help but feel his jaw drop at the sight.

"Hello Taichi." The humanoid fox says.

Kari Kamiya

"Hello Taichi." The Digimon on the screen says to her brother's double.

She blinks as Taichi seems to have blacked out, which does concern not just the strange Digimon on Izzy's lap top but almost everyone. "That could have gone better." Yolei muses and she sighs, but then, unlike her, none of them knew that Taichi hasn't had any interaction with Digimon since he was eleven.

"Hello, I'm Kari. Who might you be?" She asks, the fox Digimon sounds... feminine and she found it hard to think of a... girlish Digimon being partnered with her brother... or his double.

"I'm Renamon, although he has called me Sora since I was a Fresh Digimon." Renamon says, although she swears she saw a flicker of amusement in Renamon's golden eyes. "I must say that you do look remarkably like Hikari." Renamon adds.

"So Kari's double goes only by Hikari?" Davis wonders and the yellow furred Digimon on the computer screen nods.

"And he goes by his full name too..." Sora muses.

"Wonder what they got about nicknames?" Joe wonders and she sighs.

"How... I mean, you're just... there!" Taichi manages to say, clearly not aware that his mouth seems to have a direct line to his brain.

"Well, it was pretty tricky but doable. You were right, the code within the V-Pet reflected that of a Digimon, only a bit watered down since the gadget couldn't store all of the data bulk. It is just a child's toy. I think that when these Digimon within the gadgets 'die' they're

actually getting downloaded into your Digital world, allowing for a new Digimon to take their place as an egg." Izzy says, clearly excited about this discovery.

"Well, that sounds a heck of a lot better then what I've been envisioning happening." Taichi admits, clearly relieved at the picture Izzy is painting them. "It kind of explains why MetalGreymon... I wonder how many other Digimon use to belong to Neo..." Taichi muses softly with a distant look.

"Anyway, I think with the right parts and with some help from Gennai, we might be able to turn this into one of our Digivices, complete with gate program to operate Digi-Ports. I should have it done before midnight." Izzy says.

"I don't suppose you could install an instruction book? I know somebody who's fairly handy with computers." Taichi says and Izzy nods.

"Now if you excuse me, I'll go get started. I'll leave the computer with you since Renamon will remain on it until I've made the necessary upgrades and installed the right programs." Izzy says as Izzy stands up once the little gadget is taken out of the holster, leaving the computer in Taichi's arms.

"So... What kind of adventures have you had in the Digital world?" Davis asks as Taichi sits down, the computer moving onto his lap.

"Well... It all pretty much started..."

Tai Kamiya

He couldn't help but pause before the various picture that featured him with a group of strange kids, one of which seems to be confined to a wheelchair. He just shakes his head and continues to undress so he can take a shower. It seems that their parents had to leave

since a grandaunt ended up in the hospital, leaving him along with Kari for who knows how long.

"You want to rent a movie off of the TV later?" He asks Kari after he exits out of the room with only a robe around him. Kari glances his way before nodding.

"You can pick too, how does that sound?" He adds and Kari nods, as she turns away from him, he couldn't help but wonder why she looked so startled and surprised.

I'm not that much of a TV hog, am I? He wonders as he enters into the bathroom. As he stands before the mirror before the sink with the robe still wrapped around him, he couldn't help but notice that the bathroom seems to be decorated in a different manner, much like the rest of the apartment. He starts into the mirror, though he does think this is all just a dream, there were minor things that were slowly causing him to doubt that this is all a dream.

But what could it be if not a dream? He wonders to himself but nothing answers him. With a sigh, he just shakes his head and begins to derobe after turning on the water, waiting a few seconds for the show to kick in.

If this is still going on tomorrow, then I'll start worrying about it. Until then, I'll just leave it be. He decides, hoping that everything will go back to the way it was come tomorrow.

Hikari Yagami

As she slowly stirs from slumber, she could seem that somebody is currently awake since she could hear the sounds of something scrapping against something else. Slowly memories of the previous evening come to her, causing her to realize that that someone had to be her brother, Taichi since their parents had left to go visit a grandaunt. The sounds finally causes her to get out of bed and once

she's at the door, she does indeed catch sight of Taichi standing in the kitchen, cursing softly while trying to salvage a pancake.

"Taichi?" She asks, a bit confused as to why her brother didn't just go out for breakfast, which has long since become a habit of his over the years. "What you doing?"

Taichi pauses in his efforts to look at her, she's a bit startled by the emotion that seems to radiate from her brother's hazel brown gaze. "Making breakfast since there isn't any sign of our parents." Taichi says.

But you were there when they... She halts that train of thought, after all, that would only confirm her private theory that aliens had abducted her brother, leaving her with some kind of double for a time.

"I wasn't myself yesterday, was I?" Taichi asks her and she just nods, biting her lower lip since by the time bedtime had arrived, she had kind of wished that the double of her brother would remain since the alien double had been friendly and clearly willing to actually act like a sibling.

"Well... I had a unique experience yesterday myself. And somebody during that time seem to believe quiet strongly that I should have told you about what happened when I was eleven, even though you might not believe me about it." Taichi admits and she just kind of stares at her brother, oh she knew that something had happened back then but Taichi had been very tight lip about it. She walks over to the counter and sits on one of the chairs, more then a bit interested in the story that her brother seems to be finally willing to relate.

"Well, it all started when I entered into that D-1 Grand Prix." Taichi begins and she mentally ate bit of her brother's story as he continues to make pancakes. While some bits were harder to believe then most, like the idea that there's a parallel world that consists of Digimon and that while in that world Rei had walked about on her

own two legs, other bits actually made a heck of a lot of sense since she never did know how Taichi met up with the so called Alias III.

As they finally got around to eating the pancakes, Taichi finally got to the end of his story. Finally, after a few minutes of silence, she asks, "So... Did you revisit the Digital world yesterday?"

"No, I didn't, although if Izzy did manage to pull it off..." Taichi trails off before shaking his head. "No, yesterday I visited a different version of our world. One that not only had Digimon but allowed for those chosen to open up gateways that take them to their Digital world."

"So... The you I was with yesterday afternoon was your dimensional double?" She asks and Taichi nods.

"Let's just call him Tai, since he does go by that nickname and it's less of a hassle." Taichi says and she nods. "And while you spent the rest of the day with him, I spent it with your double, she goes by Kari by the way, and their friends. One of whom managed to take my V-Pet apart to upgrade it while Sora was on his lap top." Taichi pauses and she couldn't help but wonder a bit more about Kari.

"What was Kari like?" She asks and Taichi smiles slightly.

"Well, healthy for one. It seems that she got better after her first set of adventures in the Digital world, which occurred when she was eight. She wasn't the only eight year old of that group either. A young blond named Takeru, or TK, was there too." Taichi informs her and she couldn't help but feel a bit envious of the healthy bit.

"I'm hoping taking you to the Digital world will have the same effect on you, even if you are a bit older." Taichi muses and it takes it a few seconds to realize just what her brother had said. "Can you create a...?" She asks and Taichi smiles.

"Let's finish eating and get a few things, then we'll try it out." Taichi promises her.

"But what about your friends?" She finally asks after a few minutes of silence.

"Well, considering a lot of things, I believe I owe you this. Just a trip between the two of us since if Izzy did install those instructions on the device, the others will be more then capable of visiting the Digital world without needing me to open the gate." Taichi explains and she nods as excitement flows through her at the idea of going somewhere that only a select few have gone before.

"You'll tell me about their adventures? Our doubles' I mean." She says after putting her dishes into the sink.

"Don't see why not." Taichi admits and she hugs her brother before heading off to her room to get dress as well as to pack a few different sets of cloths just in case something happens.

Taichi Yagami

"Digi-Port Open!" He says while standing behind Hikari once he manages to find the program that Izzy and the others had not just shown him, but drilled him into locating, which had taken only about five minutes to find it within their world's network.

A bright light engulfs Hikari and him, he feels more then sees Sora joining them, he hopes that Sora and Hikari partner up but even if they don't, he's sure that given time, his sister will find a Digimon, it need not be a Gatomon though, after all, Tai is partnered with an Agumon and himself with a Veedramon. As they fall onto the grass in a dog pile way, he could only wonder what kind of adventures await them.

Tai Kamiya

"So that's what happened..." He says, more then a little relieved that what happened to him hadn't been some kind of enemy plot.

"So... What do you want to do today?" He asks Kari after finishing up his bowl of oatmeal, their parents in this world had left this morning to go visit that grandaunt instead of last night. "I'm sure you'd like to try and finish your shopping venture." He adds.

"I was thinking we could maybe go to the movies or just spend the day together." Kari admits and he blinks before raising an eyebrow over at his kid sister.

"Sure, why not. How does a picnic in the Digital world sound to you?" He asks Kari and she just smiles.

The End

The Amazing Adventures of PantherBoy:HP

I Don't Own Harry Potter

Well, what now? Void of the Realm, Realm for short asks within his mind as he stands before the body of the latest villain he's faced since last summer's 'vacation'. He just sighs and with a swing, the deep red blood flies from Realm's blade before sheathing the sword.

He feels the sword length once Realm is back in position on his back. He couldn't help but stare at the giant horned and spine covered jaguar. He moves forward and with a sharp yank, he removes the gold and jade amulet from the corpse and within seconds, the body begins to dissolve until only a human skeleton remains. He stares at the bones for a few seconds before glancing at the amulet in his black fur covered hand, his claws extended slightly.

With a shake, his body reforms into that of his human self once he's pocketed the amulet into his belt pouch, he's gotten into the habit of wearing one since he acquired Realm, which happened when he was in China at age six. Him becoming a Leopard-man occurred at age five when his 'dear' uncle arranged for him to visit Africa.

He smiles as he recalled his first magical summer adventure and how he defeated the supposed immortal African Sorceress known as Queen La, ruler of the city of Opar, a city inhabited by magically curse group of men who have been transformed into human/leopard hybrids. A curse that was created after Queen La spent a few decades studying the curse of the Werewolf. The Queen had managed to recreate some of the elements of the curse when she developed the Leopard-Man curse but the big difference as that she could freeze those affected in that hybrid state as well as rob them of their ability to talk human languages, which pretty much forces them

to only have animalistic vocalization of the animal they almost resemble.

"I figure we do what we usually do once the villain has been killed." He says out loud in English as he glances around the large, open chamber.

Find the treasury and kick it back until the last week of August before returning to your 'loving' relatives? Realm muses within his head and he just hums in agreement.

"So, any idea where this guy would keep the vault?" He asks his partner of four years, he did turn ten just two days ago after all. "After all, you're fairly decent when it comes to locating treasure, Realm."

I can't believe that Qilin even left me with you... Realm sighs and he just rolls his eyes but waits for Realm to finally say something in relations about the previous subject. *There's a secret passage behind that relief concerning the feathered serpent.*

"Thanks Realm." He says and it didn't take long for them to arrive within the chamber filled with not just gold, silver, jade, and other precious things but also with wads of bills and crates that were likely filled with illegal things like guns, bombs, and drugs.

"I think the paper money is likely all we need for the rest of this trip. Ready to teleport the rest out of here? Might as well leave the Black Market stuff though, like usual." He says and within seconds, Realm does so.

It didn't take long before he's stuffed his pockets, knapsack, and belt pouch with the paper money that ranges from local currency to other country currency like the US and Euros. "Now then, let's see what kind of room we can get now. I'll see about getting a room with a working TV too, for you Realm." He promises the magical sword.

You better... I always miss out on my soaps because of your summer adventures. Would it kill you to actually put your foot down and decline whatever vacation your 'family' arranges for you next year? Realm asks and he shrugs.

"It depends on where they're offering to send me. I mean, you're telling me you didn't enjoy our time in Tokoyo? I thought you enjoyed it cause of the fact that the hotel room came with a working TV." He says.

How about the fact that the owner planned on sacrificing my magic and your soul to awaken that eight-headed mythological serpent dragon? Realm remarks.

"Hey! It turned out alright." He says, remembering that particular adventure of last summer.

Only because the man didn't know that he had to also find the dragon's missing eight heads... Realm states dryly and he shrugs, he couldn't argue with that. *There are times when I wonder if purifying that bit of dark soul was such a good idea considering how unconcerned you've become since then.*

"Tat, and then you'd complain about how depressing I make my life to be." He muses as he walks out of the hidden temple, heading for the dungeon to free the rest of the tourist group who were being held so they can be sacrificed come the evening eclipse. The 'riest' had thought to make a snack of his fears before savoring to feast on his body only to learn find out that not only wasn't he afraid, he wasn't really human to boot.

Makes me glad that I'm not human anymore or else I'd be easy prey to the magics these guys employ to control their victims. He thinks to himself, true at one point he had been highly distressed at the fact that he truly was a freak of nature like his relatives have always told him but now, he's glad to be different since he's come to view normal to be boring.

There are times when I wish you were just like my previous owners. Void of the Realm says, likely picking up on his musings. *For one thing, our partnership would have been much briefer.*

"Well, excuse me for not losing some of blood every time I do battle with you in my hand or have you preform magic." He retorts softly as he leads the tourist group through the maze of stone passages. The 'riests' underlings wouldn't be back until an hour before the sun begins to set, so they don't have to deal with minions trying to keep them from escaping.

I still can't wait for the day when somebody manages to bind me to themselves, nullifying our pact. Realm informs him but he just shrugs, although he kind of dreads that day since he has come to consider Realm to be his best friend.

"You're just pissy because I won't use you to try and conquer the world like most of your notorious owners." He remarks in a whisper, glancing backwards to see if anyone has noticed that he's talking to himself. *'Its not like you ever succeed in that, you know. Sure, you help unite China, Russia, and even India but none of them ever got to be ruler of the whole world.'*

It's not my fault that they never believed me when I informed them that there's more land beyond their respectively known lands. Realm informs him in a defensive manner.

"We truly owe you our lives. Tell us, what is your name?" One of the older members of the party asks him.

"Huh? Oh, I don't usually give my name out but I guess you can call me James, it's the name I use during summer vacation at any rate." He says, it's kind of a habit by now to use his middle name when on adventures since James sounds a heck of a lot more impressive then his first name, which is Harry.

On another note, he never gives out his last name since he rather not have people hounding him once he leaves the country. The last

time he had told somebody his last name they maimed it into giving him the nick name Potty.

"James...?" Another asks, clearly wanting a last name to go with that name.

"James Smith." He says and with that, a lot of people congratulate him by using either James or young Mr Smith. He makes a mental note to use a different name once they return to the closet city, which wasn't Mexico City but some place he likely couldn't dream to pronounce if he ever remembered the name.

We could head to Mexico City. Realm points out and he nods as they climb into the various tour buses that had been forced off the main road and escorted here.

o - T - o

Beginning of the Last Week of August of 1990

Dursley's Home

"Hi uncle, I'm home! Did you miss me? Also, the cab driver is waiting for you to pay him by the way." He says as he walks into the house once his uncle opens the door wider to see the cab he called to return him to Privet Drive from the airport.

He hears his uncle sigh, but does head out to pay the name while he takes his luggage up the stairs to the small bedroom that use to belong to Dudley so his cousin could store his growing collection of broken toys and books.

"You survived I see." His aunt says after coming out of the kitchen and spies him heading up the stairs. He just smiles and nods, he's sure that Realm would have commented about this 'quaint' display of a family reunion.

Once he's in his room, he sets down the suit case on the floor before moving to lie down on the bed. He's kind of exhausted from the plane ride back to his country of birth. He had been busy enjoying his spending spree during what remained of his trip to Mexico, particularly the sight and sounds of Mexico City.

What money he didn't spend he donated to local shelters and churches once he's purchased his first class ticket to return to the UK. After all, his relatives were always hoping that he'd die during his time on summer vacation that they never bother to purchase tickets for him to come home. Not that he cared since he's more then happy to find his own way back to Privet Drive through means of magic transportation, which had been how he returned home after his defeat of Queen La, to returning home viva first class plane rides.

With a sigh, he sits up and moves to take Realm out of his belt pouch. Within seconds, the magical sword returns to its usual five foot state. With that done, he lies back onto his bed and allows his exhaustion to win, causing him to drift off to sleep, trusting Realm to keep his relatives from entering into his room to try and liberate what expensive souvenirs he bought during his time in Mexico.

o - T - o

Two Weeks into Summer of 1991

Local Park

"I'm starting to think they haven't gotten in contact with that travel agent to see if they can't sent me to my 'certain' death." He admits to Realm as he practices the martial arts that Realm has been teaching him in his dreams.

He only regrets that he couldn't practice in his other form. But then, it is one of the more practical threats he has hanging over the Dursleys since he's not willing to follow through with his various threats of bodily harm. He felt dirty enough making them, he would loath to follow through with them, which kind of means he's bluffing about

biting the lot of them to see if they'd turn into Leopard-People, which would make them freaks, something that the three would do anything to avoid.

I sadly have to agree with you on that. Which brings up why they haven't since it's long since become a routine for them to find some villain looking for young magical children for various schemes and rituals. Ones that are more then willing to pay handsomely on delivery of one such child in their clutches. Realm admits and he's sure that if the sword could visualize a face, that face would be sporting a frown. *I highly doubt it's because of them gathering some kind of reputation in said circles because of your heroics.*

"So... you think they have given up on the pursuit? Or that something is about to happen here in the UK that will, hopefully, do me in without them putting any kind of effort into it?" He muses after a few minutes of him going through a series of stances consisting of punches and kicks.

Now I'm dreading remaining around here. Maybe instead of relying on your relatives to arrange a trip, you can make the arrangement, like, I don't know, some place in China or Russia... Realm suggests and he rolls his eyes, not at all surprised that Realm wants to return to that part of the world, which would likely have somebody who'd be able to bond with Realm, allowing the sword to leave him.

"Forget it, you know I don't have the money and no, I'm not going to sell any of that real treasure we've collected since we partnered up. That's going to wait until I'm legal and goes to pay for my higher education or to invest so I don't have to work ever." He informs Realm in a firm voice.

Then a soft hoot causes him to pause and he glances upwards to find an owl circling overhead. Within seconds, the owl drops what's in its beak before flying off. He manages catch the letter in midair and while holding Realm.

He raises an eyebrow at the address on the front and with a glance at his surroundings, he turns the thick letter over and using a finger, slices through the wax seal featuring a badger, lion, eagle, and snake on a coat of arms. He skillfully takes out the contains and skims through the introduction before moving onto the list of items he's expected to purchase before the school year begins.

"Huh, I wonder how long they've been watching us." He wonders with a frown. "This could be some kind of trap, too."

Well, they didn't leave a return address so whoever they are, they're not too bright. Heck, they didn't even give you the location of the school. Realm points out and he nods as he rereads the first part.

"Might as well keep it regardless." He says as he folds the letters back into the envelop before putting it all into a jean pocket. With that out of the way, he returned to practicing his martial arts with Realm having to correct him a little bit when it comes to some of the newer stuff.

o - T - o

July 31, 1991

Privet Drive

He jerks as something heavy lands on the front door. He couldn't help but blink rapidly before glancing to the alarm clock to see what time it is only to find it's barely 5 am in the morning. He couldn't help but groan as the sound repeats itself.

"What a birthday..." He mutters after glancing at the calender once he's out of bed. He moves to where Realm is resting and skillfully swings the leather straps over his head, allowing the magical sword to rest on his back.

He walks out of his room just as his uncle unlocks the door while already ranting about how this better be important since it's bloody

five in the morning. His uncle's ranting halts and as he comes down the stairs, he spies the reason why his uncle has stopped mid rant.

"Oh dry up Dursley!" The giant of a man declares in an accented tone. He watches as his uncle backs away from the door, looking pasty white as the visitor bends slightly and twists his body to walk through the front door. He sizes the man up and knew that he had the advantage because of the fact that man is too big to effectively do battle in the house.

"A friend of your's uncle?" He asks after the visitor glances about the living room. Uncle Vernon gives him a dirty look but glances fearfully out the door, he figures his uncle is likely wondering if any of the neighbors are up at this hour.

"Harry? Harry! Well, look at you, you are the spitting image of James! Though you got your mother's eyes." The visitor says and he just stares at man, kind of surprised to learn his father's first name was James, not really sure if he should be offended that his middle name is the same as his father's first.

"And you are?" He asks as he moves to stand with the wall behind him. "No offensive but it's kind of early and people are... were trying to sleep. So if we could wrap up whatever business we have..."

The giant of a man blinks, clearly surprised at his manner. "Err... Oh, I'm Rubeus Hagrid, keeper of keys of Hogwarts." Rubeus says. "I'm here to take you to get your school things."

"I can't help but ask, how did my name get submitted to attend this school? I don't remember filling out an application to said school." He states to Rubeus.

"You mean you never told him?" Rubeus thunders at his uncle and he blinks before glancing over at his overweight uncle. He watches as his uncle backs away, almost looks like the man is trying to disappear into the kitchen but had second thoughts about that course of action.

Oh like you should be surprised they'd keep secrets from you. Realm pipes in as his uncle tries to defend their silence in whatever matter concerning this Hogwarts place. From the looks of things, their early morning visitor has finished wringing out his uncle and begins to murmurs to himself, from the gist of it, it sounds like Rubeus couldn't believe that he's ignorant about who he really is.

He rolls his eyes at that, already doubting that whoever Rubeus thought of him, it likely highly outdated. After all, he doesn't recall ever making mention about any of his adventures to anyone, and Realm isn't in any position to inform anyone, nor used his actual name.

Makes you wonder where this people were when your 'loving' relatives shipped you off to Africa. I mean, if they're so interested in seeing you attend this school, they could have spared some time to insure you're capable of attending their school. Realm muses before adding, *Of course that is if there really is a school for you to attend.*

"Just take him and be gone!" His aunt snaps and Rubeus looks startled.

"Can I at least change into something that includes a shirt?" He muses, not all that surprised that his relatives are offering him up once more. It's about then does Rubeus notices what he's wearing.

"Err, sure, don't see any harm in that." Their visitor admits and he couldn't help but roll his eyes as he heads up the staircase, his aunt and cousin moving quickly so he doesn't accidentally brush up against them.

Gringrotts Wizarding Bank

"No weapons beyond those carried by Goblins are allowed to be carried within the bank, wizard." One of the guards at the door says, practically spatting the word wizard. He cocks his head to the side as he calmly studies the Goblin in decorative armor.

"Like you lot can take it from me." He finally states after some minutes. He watches as the pair dismiss his statement, likely thinking he's incapable of using Realm in a fight.

"Like you can use it where it matters wizard." The guard says and he grins as he crosses his arms before his chest.

"Well, I can only say I hope you have your will made and filed cause it'll be your funeral, green-skin." He counters before Hagrid, it's the name the half-giant prefers, could say anything.

"And who do you think you are? Author Pendragon?" The other guard snips in.

"Oh no, I've got a very good idea of who I am. I'm Harry James Potter, the only one to survive the Killing Curse, you ignorant viking wanna be. Dubbed the Boy-Who-Lived, and I'm fairly confident that I'd live through any kind of fight we'd get into." He states, the viking comment comes from the fact that they had what appears to be bull horns grafted to their metal helmets.

The reaction from the pair of guards were mixed as surprise, disappointment, curiosity, and then unimpressed with a hint of dismissal. "Don't matter, the sword." The seconds guard says and he pauses as Realm agrees, for a few seconds at least.

With a shrug, he unsheathes Realm and holds the hilt to the first Goblin guard and when the guard touches the hilt, lightning crackles and within seconds, the guard is sent flying into the stone wall behind him, leaving an indent in the stone part of the door. The second guard takes a step or two away from him when he offers Realm's hilt to the guard.

"I thought so. The sword comes with me into the building." He says and finally enters into the bank, ignoring the minor crowd of witnesses as none stopped him. A minute or two, Hagrid follow suit, he's pretty sure that the half-giant was rethinking reasons why Realm is actually with him.

A few new guards popped out of the back rooms of the bank as he stands in the building, taking in the sights of it before finally heading for one of the free tellers. The Goblin glances from the hilt of his sword to the entrance before addressing him, "Your key."

He takes it out of the pocket he had placed it in when Hagrid had given it to him during their breakfast. After all, was fairly early in the morning and the half-giant had admitted that most of the shops in the alley don't open until at least ten thirty, which meant they spent quite a few hours in one of the twenty-four hour coffee shops, something which surprised Hagrid since not even their bank is open twenty-four hours and seven days a week.

"I also wish for all my bank statements going all the way back to my parents' deaths and I want a list of everyone who's had access to those vaults. I also would like to tour any and all vaults connected to my family." He says to the teller, the Goblin hadn't yet masked the look of startlement and surprise as he spoke.

I'll be damned if I leave any money within a mile of these creatures. Bet they get robbed by foreigners and other beings on a yearly bases. Likely cover those up too. He thinks as he recalls the enchantments Realm had reported to him while he had been standing on the floor before approaching this teller.

You know, we could always rob them blind. Wouldn't be that hard considering you're an unknown being to their charms and from what I've seen from your memories about your kind, I would say that it seems to be natural for you to have a form of resistance to any magic thrown in your direction. Wouldn't hurt to see what kind of magic they use on these bank vaults either. Realm muses.

'I'm not a low life thief, although, I wouldn't mind setting things up so we could do that. After all, my family might still have enemies who run in higher circles. It would be nice to get them where it would hurt the most.' He tells Realms while Hagrid finally adds something about taking something from another vault, a task Dumbledore had given

the half-giant along with the task of picking him up to get his school supplies.

With that done, the Goblin teller called for a lackey to take them to their vaults. He did catch the look of greed the teller had when the Goblin looked at his sword. He could only guess that he'll be offered money for it at some point in the future, likely when his luck was bad.

He found that attitude to be mildly amusing since he knew that unless one was born human, they'd never be able to use Void of the Realm. After all, he hadn't been transformed into a Leopard-Man... Leopard-Boy until he was about five years of age. *Try Panther-Boy since that's what black leopards are called.* Realm pipes in.

They completed Hagrid's task first and while he waits int he cart, Realm reports what kind of magic the magical sword could find on the metal door. He had been kind of surprised that only the metal door had any magic on it, it seems that other then a minor expansion spell casted within the vault, but the stone, the very bed rock of the bank weren't enchanted with any hint of magic.

'We could cut right into the rock around the door and, as long as we don't disturb the metal door no alarm will sound?' He asks Realms, pretty much summarizing what Realms has told him.

I could see that working. Although I would suggest entering into a vault and then cutting into the sides, that way they won't know what to check for when examine the outside of the vault. I think we could cover the holes with some kind of enchantment so we don't have to cut into the walls more then once. Realm remarks as the cart begins to move.

Once they finished visiting the vaults that belonged to his family, and having Realm send the contains of the vaults where the sword sends the usual treasure they liberate from villainous lairs, he receives a few volumes of bank statements. He watches as the Goblin vanish, highly amused and satisfied by completing its task. He frowns before

asking Realm to place an expansion spell on his back pack so he can have his arms free once more.

Once that's done, they leave the bank, although the new set of door guards did give him heated glares. "So, where to next?" He asks as they walk down the steps of the bank.

"Well, Flourish and Blotts is where most students purchase their school books. Though, I don't suppose you own a trunk?" Hagrid asks and he shakes his head.

"Might as well pick one up now then, maybe one pre-enchanted with a shrinking and expanding spell." Hagrid muses, likely recalling the stacks of files the Goblins had given him. "After all, students aren't allowed to cast spells outside of the school. Not until they're seventeen at least." Hagrid explains and he raises an eyebrow at that, wondering what's the point if they restrict your ability to practice magic outside of school.

Might want to pick up a book to see how they know. I might be able to find a way to block their monitoring spells. Realm supplies.

'You just don't want me to reply on you for magical support.' He muses to Realm as they enter a shop that displays book-cases, bed posts, tables, chairs, desks, dressers, and other wooden things. He left the talking to Hagrid as he moves to study some of the wooden animals that were on the counter. Most of the animals were what he expected which were deer, cats, birds, a fox, but what did draw his attention were the carvings of Unicorns, Gryphons, winged horses, wyverns (he thought they were wyvern since they only had four limbs, a set of which were wings), and a few others he didn't have names for.

"Like them?" A younger man inquires, likely coming from the back room. He nods while taking a few seconds to study the teen.

"Your dad?" He asks, waving a hand over towards where Hagrid and the graying man were looking at various styles of trunks.

"Great-Uncle actually. Parents were killed during the war." The teen admits and he sighs.

"Didn't sound much like a war since wars usually involve two countries. Sounds like they were terrorists considering how they preferred to spread fear. I mean, they pretty much tagged the site of their attacks, wanting to draw attention that they could do that again then anything else." He says to the teen.

"Tagged?" The teen inquires and he answers, "Left some kind of agreed upon image by the site of the dead. It's also used by gangs tag buildings and what not to mark out their territory."

"Ah." The teen says, though it's likely the guy found that to be surprising. "Hogwarts?" The teen asks and he nods.

"I'm home schooled, uncle doesn't want me to attend Hogwarts, not with Death Eater kids walking about the place like they own it. Heck, Dumbledore even got a 'reformed' Death Eater there as Potion Instructor." The teen explains, the brunet is clearly disgusted at the thought of one of these Death Eaters teaching kids.

"So you're allowed to use magic at home then?" He asks and the teen nods.

"Of course, be kind of pointless seeing as I'm being school at home." The teen explains. "My uncle's responsible to make sure I 'behave' but then, as long as I'm not in the muggle parts nobody cares when I do magic. Though it is polite to not do it in public."

"So only those that live in the muggle word are monitored for breaking this law?" He asks and the teen nods. He hums thoughtfully as he considers that, whatever guilt he might have felt preforming magic at Privet Drive gone.

"Nice sword, you a half-blood?" The teen asks him and he frowns.

"My mom was born to muggle parents. From the looks of things, my dad was born to an old family. I guess that would make me one." He admits.

"Orphan?" The teen asks and he nods. "Killed by Death Eaters too?" The teen asks once more and he answers, "No, but the head honcho actually."

"I see." The brunet says before grinning while adding, "You know, I like that; head honcho that is. It's down right disrespectful and so much easier to say then calling him You-Know-Who or the Dark Lord."

"Could use Dork Lord, you could pass it off as somebody not hearing you properly." He admits with a bemused grin and the brunet laughs after giving him an approving look. It's clear that he made the right kind of impression on the teen.

"You're a clever one, mate." The brunet teen says and he just grins.

The moment passes as Hagrid and the teen's Great-Uncle return to the counter, the graying man mentioning that the trunk will be ready in an hour or two's time. With that, he waves bye to the teen before leaving the store with the brunet waving back.

Once back outside, Hagrid then leads him to the common shops where most Hogwart students purchase their things. He did buy a small library worth of books along side his course books, after all, it wouldn't hurt to know the laws of this society and its history of development along with what he could find on various fields of magic. It would do well to know what to look for when facing off against future enemies. He did get a discount by signing a few unsold defense books, books that the owner will likely sell at a small fortune considering how famous he seems to be for something he can't remember surviving.

They then went to Pottidge's Cauldron shop followed by Slug & Jiggers Apothecary, a place where he purchased large orders of

ingredients so he can practice at Privet Drive once he learnt that potion making isn't monitored in so called muggle sections of the UK. He also purchased a book on potion safety when he spotted the book on a shelf by the counter, kind of surprised that it wasn't listed on his school list.

While at Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions, he inquired about what kind of material used for school robes and how a Hogwarts house crest gets magically set upon the robes. He also inquired about what kind of spells they had for resizing his existing cloths, if he left it up to his relatives, he'd be only wearing his cousin's cast offs. Cloth shopping had long since become something he did pretty much automatically after killing the villain of the summer using the villain's own money.

His questions to at Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions hadn't been answered, which lead him to believe that he'll have a devil of a time searching for the spells he inquired about since these clothing shops had likely made sure any books detailing said spells were 'lost', likely buying up the complete inventory before destroying them while squirreling a few away for personal use.

He did look at a few other stores that didn't sell anything he needed for school. Although Hagrid did make sure he toured through Magical Menagerie and Eeylops Owl Emporium, not that he was really interested in owning a pet, even if it's a bird used as a post-man.

With that, they returned to pick up his new trunk and at once, he begins to load the majority of his purchases into it, with the exception of those books not listed on his school list and none of his potion supplies since he plans to begin practicing making potion.

"Err... I know I'm forgetting something." Hagrid mutters and Hagrid then lists what's on the list, he saying check when needed but when they arrive at wand, he admits he doesn't have one.

"You're not a proper wizard without a blooming wand!" Hagrid says and with that, they head to Ollivander's Wand Shop. He isn't alarmed

when the owner appears behind them, although Hagrid did, to his private amusement.

"And you must be Harry Potter." The man muses, eyes glancing to Realm's hilt and then to his forehead, something which a lot of people had done during his time in the alley. "I see you had that scar of yours removed."

"I'm told it contained something foul by the one who removed it." He states calmly and the elderly man frowns before stating, "I can't sell you a wand."

Hagrid explodes yelling, "But he's to go to Hogwarts! He's got to have a wand! What kind of wizard doesn't own a wand?"

"Perhaps you would like to use my fireplace to speak with Dumbledore." Ollivander says after a few seconds of listening to Hagrid's rant. The half-giant nods and heads behind the counter, heading to where Ollivander had waved Hagrid.

"You might as well show me what you really look like, all I can make out is you're something similar to a werewolf." Ollivander states after a few seconds.

"That's fairly close." He admits and making sure to take off his runners and socks. Once they're off, he shifts into the form of a hybrid of a leopard and a human, gaining the illusion of an extra foot.

Surprise and interest flicker within Ollivander's eyes. He returns to looking human as he hears something landing in the back room. He gets his runners on, stuffing his socks into his pockets as a wizard arrives, one that could be called a classic wizard with the exception of the clashing bright colors.

"Good day, Harry." The likely color blind wizard says before turning his attention to Ollivander. "Hagrid has informed me of some difficulty considering young Harry's purchasing of a wand."

"As I've said, I can not sell Mr Potter a wand. From what I can tell, the boy already seems to be bonded to one." Ollivander states and he raises an eyebrow, curious to know if the shop owner is talking about Realm.

"I've never heard of a sword acting as a wizard's wand before." Hagrid rumbles softly, likely recalling the event with that Goblin guard.

"Oh no, the sword doesn't... can't be a stand in for his wand. I'm fairly confident that young Mr Potter knows what I'm talking about. It's not often that a wand transfers its loyalties to another." Ollivander says and he suddenly realizes what object similar to a wand he once used.

"I suppose I could try and owl those in possession of it." He admits, butting in when it looks like Dumbledore is about to recover to argue something. "Perhaps I'll purchase an owl after all since I don't want to bother any of you for one." He adds, he could only imagine what kind of spells exist to allow one to track a letter and he rather not allow anyone to learn of Opar's location.

He's already moving for the door and out of it before Dumbledore could recover. It didn't take long to arrive at the Eeylops Owl Emporium and walks up to the counter. "Which of these owls has been here the longest because nobody is interested in purchasing them and you're thinking of getting rid of?" He asks the cashier, the girl behind the counter just stares at him before pointing to the only Snowy Owl on display.

"I'll take it at a discount. Don't bother with a cage, but I'll purchase a perch." He informs the part-timer behind the counter and the girl just sighs but doesn't argue.

Once he's got the perch and change, he opens the cage and offers his arm to the owl. "Go find something to eat since you've got a long trip ahead of you once I find paper and a pen or pencil." He says after carrying the white bird a few feet from the shop.

The owl studies him before opening its wings and climbing into the air. By then, Hagrid arrives and they head to the Leaky Cauldron for lunch. It didn't take long for him to dig around his back pack for paper and a pen. He writes a short letter to Akin, another who lost his humanity during the same ceremony he did(which almost made them brothers), asking about the wooden staff that Queen La had used when preforming the ceremony, the same that he had gotten his hands on about a week later to vanquish her.

He folds it and puts Akin's name on it as well as Opar. Once outside, his latest purchase comes flying down, landing on his out stretched arm. "Stick around for a reply from Akin and remember to rest up before returning. I'm located on Privet Drive in Little Whinging, Surrey." He informs the Snowy Owl as he takes some string and ties the letter about the owl's leg.

The owl glances from the letter and then to him before tensing up. He pulls his arm back a bit and then kind of quickly, raises the arm with the owl on it. The owl leaps off within seconds of his arm raising far enough in the air, he watches the owl circle a few seconds before heading south, towards Africa.

Just to let you know, your owl is a girl. Realm informs him and he makes a note to go through girl names in order to find a suitable name for the owl.

Author Comments

Guess this is consider a Creature!Harry and maybe overpowered Harry considering he's also got Realm. Although I plan for Harry to have difficulty with spell casting because he's using a staff as well as the staff being more in tuned to going through different steps to produce the desired result. As I see it, being resistant to magic would also make it a bit harder for Harry to 'grip' it since there's a kind of buffer powered by his own reserve of magic that's always around him, screening the background magic and any magic Harry himself would release.

The Time Weavers

I Don't Own Digimon!

BlackGuilmon

Sleep evades him so rolls from his belly to his side before opening his yellow eyes. It was the fifth time that day that he finds himself unable to sleep and so yet again, he crawls out of the cave he dug with his own claws to escape the heat and being spotted by flying Digimon looking for Digimon to load data from. He rather not be forced to find some meaningless fight just because somebody wanted to load him. It just really annoyed him for some reason, he's fairly sure that he should know why but like sleep, the answer eludes him.

So before he exits out of the small den that he dug, he takes a few seconds to sniffs for Digimon before moving his head out of the tunnel to survey the surrounding area. Not seeing anyone around, be it up in the air or ground level, he hauls the rest of his body out of the hole. Once out of the dirt tunnel, he gives himself a shake before stretching to his full height.

With a snort, he turns eastward as he spies some pink rolling data moving about on the ground. He doesn't feel threaten from the pack so he turns southward for a few seconds, trying to decide in which direction he should wander in. His ears flap as he hears something giggling over top of him, a small swarm of Digi-Gnomes seem to appear out of nowhere and they circle over head.

After studying them for a few seconds, he dismisses them from his mind, they never harmed any Digimon before and doubts they'll start with him. So he decides to head westward, towards the river that flows through the rocky bank. He could use a drink and he might find some fruit floating on the water's surface.

Once more, his ears flap as the Digi-Gnome's chatter alter by a few notes but otherwise, he doesn't react to their presence as he trots confidently towards the river. Out of the corner of his eye, he can see that the Digi-Gnomes have formed a V formation with him at the head of it. Their continued presence means that there wasn't any other Digimon in the area or else they would be flying higher up in the sky. Which was pretty comforting in his opinion.

After a while the scent of water reaches his nose and he speeds up to reach the river to get a drink of cool, refreshing water for his parched throat and to maybe fill his empty belly. He hadn't eaten since the drought started and he can already tell that the river has shrunk once more. His ears droop slightly at the sight as he slows to a walk as he comes within sight of the river bank.

Before climbing down to take a drink, he takes a few sniff along the bank to see if there were any recent visitors. The Digi-Gnomes circle overhead, chatting away in that sing song way of theirs with some hints of purring. He moves to the edge of the rocky bank and stares down at the trickle that the once mighty river had been.

"Hmmm. . ." He hums as he tries to see a way down without causing him to turn his back to the sky but in the end, he just leaps down and lands with a thud on the wet sandy ground. He moves to the edge of the river and begins to drink, trying to keep his mind off the colour of the water as he does so.

After a few minutes, he finishes drinking his fill and he pulls his head back to study his surrounding before he begins to ascent the rocky bank. Digging his claws into the rocky bank, he pulls himself up as he continues to dig his white claws into the rough rocky surface. By the time he makes it the the top of the out cropping, he's panting and, ironically, thirsty once more.

As he stands there trying to get his breathing under control, the Digi-Gnome begin to circle him. Their chatter sounds worried and he can't help but blink at them before cocking his head to the side as he studies them with a hint of worry in his yellow eyes. He felt a lump hit

his mid-section as he begins to feel uneasy as more Digi-Gnomes begin to circle him, the level of his unease keeps increasing until he sighs.

"What's wrong?" He asks in a gruff voice, he rarely felt the need to speak but for some reason, he felt that he needed to voice that question. Within seconds he finds himself moving in a north eastern direction until they happen upon some kind of energy portal.

Within seconds of arriving, the Digi-Gnomes abandon circling him to circle the tear and in time, an image of a young human being attack by a tall humanoid figure that's blue with what appears to be gills around the neck. A large axe manages to hit the orange Digimon, a Patamon he IDs without thinking, and within seconds there is an egg where the Patamon had been, then as a tear opens up under the egg, he sees red and the figure advances towards the human boy.

For the first time since he can remember, he was beyond angry and he leaps into the energy gate without a second thought. He does note in pass that the egg that once was a Patamon pass by him on his way towards defending the young human.

"Pyro Grenade!" He bellows and a purple fire sphere hits the figure in the chest. He bites the back of the human's back pack and pulls the child away as the Digimon off some kind of dart out of the tip of the axe.

Carrying the child a few feet from the unknown Digimon, he puts the child down and moves to stand between the human and the Digimon. He feels and hears himself growling as he stands in a protective manner before the green clothed human. "I won't let you touch him!" He snarls furiously at the humanoid Digimon.

The figure looks slightly uneasy but the Digimon's facial seem to become firm as the known Digimon. "Your funeral then, *rookie* !" The Digimon says and begins to take a stand with the axe moving form the left hand to its right.

With a war cry, the Digimon charges towards him and with a cry of, "Rock Crusher!" He charges forward. His right arm crashes through the axe. He tackles the Digimon and bites down the unknown Digimon's right shoulder as his arms move to pin the Digimon to the ground.

They roll around on the ground until a punch to the side of his head causes him to let go of the shoulder to yelp in pain. As the Digimon tries to punch him once more, he bites down on the left arm and this time uses his left claws to scratch the Digimon's eyes, causing the offending Digimon to yelp in pain. Though he was tiring, he refused to give way to this strange Digimon who seems intent on harming the boy.

In the end, something happens and suddenly a rush of energy flares from his chest outwards to the rest of his body. The Digimon's eyes widen and once he lets go of the arm, he bellows, "Virus Breathe!"

At such close range the other Digimon couldn't help but get a face full of the mist and begins choking within seconds of breathing it in. As he gets off the Digimon, the humanoid Digimon moves to his knees as he continues to cough. With eyes like yellow diamonds, his left arm glows slightly and one Rock Crusher later finds the unknown Digimon vanishing into little bits of data which he absorbs without delay.

That done, he turns to face the human that he saved.

- **x** -

TK

The day had started like usual since his brother took some swan boat to see what's across the lake, he got up, moved the large leaf that Tokomon placed over him like a blanket, yawned as he rubbed the grit from his eyes as he sits up right, and waking Tokomon up. He casted his usual worried glance out at the large before getting up to go find some berries for breakfast. By the time he was done using

the restroom, he couldn't place his finger on it but some how, they weren't alone.

First they met with DemiDevimon who talked about proving himself by heading out over the water to find his brother, Matt. Though after a bit the blue cloth wearing flying ball of a Digimon arrived but not alone. Some tall humanoid Digimon leaped out of the water and began to swing an axe around.

Within seconds, DemiDevimon vanishes over the lake while leaving Tokomon and himself to the unknown Digimon who began to look highly pleased with himself, he even had this odd glint in his eye as the Digimon points the tip of his axe at him. To say that by the time one could say fight, Tokomon Digivolves into Patamon and a Boom Bubble later causes the dart coming out of the axe to land off target, namely little old him.

Sadly, his partner wasn't much of a match for the unknown Digimon and one axe swing later causes him to lose Patamon again. As the egg passes through a portal and gateway opens and out comes this large black Digimon with red markings that launches a purple fire ball at the Digimon before pulling him away from the unknown Digimon.

He's still in shock and numbly watches as the pair of unknown Digimon battle it out. The black dino or baby dragon breaks the humanoid's axe and then they wrestle around in the dirt until finally, the black Digimon breathes out some kind of mist and the larger Digimon begins to choke. Once the black Digimon gets off of the humanoid one, a few seconds after the Digimon starts to cough, the black one's hand glows and destroys the humanoid Digimon's head.

Instead of breaking apart and an egg appearing, the humanoid Digimon breaks apart into what seems to be a mist and then that mist goes straight into the black Digimon.

As he stares numbly at the Digmon's back, the Digimon turns around to face him, staring at him with his yellow eyes.

"... Thanks, I guess." He finally manages to stutter out and the Digimon takes a step towards him, his black scaly head cocking to one side as a hint of concern enters into the black Digimon's eyes. As the muzzle of the Digimon comes towards him, he holds his breath for a few seconds as the Digimon sniffs him, which was kink of ticklish.

The Digimon pulls his head away and he lets go of the breath he had been holding. "Boy you're big." He says as he gets to his feet. He hastes to reach out to touch the black Digimon, not sure what to make of the red marked Digimon who just showed up and savaged his attacker.

In the end, the Digimon moves his muzzle into the palm of his hand to which the large Digimon hums slightly, his eyes closing slightly from the contact. "So, what kind of Digimon are you?" He asks as he feels more sure of himself.

"I'm a BlackGuilmon." A gruffish voice says with a hint of childishness. "BlackGuilmon? That's a mouthful! Err... I don't suppose I can just call you Yami?" He asks and the Digimon now nicknamed Yami just hums as he shrugs slightly.

After a few minutes of silence, Yami stomach growls and he chuckles nervously, completely off balance here without Patamon here to support him. "You're friend... I'm sorry I wasn't able to come in time to save him." Yami finally says softly with a great deal of sorrow evident in his voice and in his eyes.

He blinks, kind of stunned by that confession and his expression soften as he addresses the likely virus Digimon. "I'm sure I'll hook up with him again. All I need to do is find his egg." On hearing that, Yami flinches slightly.

"I met the egg halfway through the gate. He's likely in my world while I'm here in yours." Yami explains and he blinks a few times as that sinks in. "Then we just need to find the others and maybe one of them knows of a way to get you home and to have Patamon's egg

returned to this world. If not one of them, then maybe Gennai will know what to do." He says as confidently as he can and Yami nods in thoughtful agreement.

Once more Yami's stomach growls and this time Yami just sighs. "Boy do you sound hungry." He says with a slight giggle while Yami straightens as he puts a hand over his mid-section with a sigh.

"I haven't eaten anything since the drought began." Yami admits with a hint of embarrassment coloring his tone. "Really? How long as the drought been going on then? A week?" He asks and Yami looks thoughtful before replying, "I believe it might have been four months by now, maybe even six. I don't know, I don't really keep track."

He can't help it, he just stares with wide eyes as he tries to wrap his head about the fact that Yami hasn't eaten anything for so long. "How come you look so healthy then? I mean, if I went that long without anything to eat I'd be skin and bones!" He exclaims and once more Yami shrugs as he answers his question, "It's common for Digimon to go so long without food, as long as we don't think we need food, we don't get hungry, or thirty."

He can't help but shake his head as he then begins to move his green hat since it's gotten loose slightly with all the stuff that's been going on. "Well then, let's get some berries into you, and fast since I rather not find myself as the main course!" He declares and Yami snorts but waits for him to take the lead.

Unknown to the pair of them, an observer watches as they walk through the forest looking for a more fuller berry bush for Yami to eat from.

Yami

As TK walks in front of him, he can't help but notice how short the child's legs were and frowns before an idea pops into his head. "Why don't you climb onto my back, I'm sure you're not that heavy." He

suggest and TK pauses and then gets this thinking look on his face before the boy nods in agreement.

"Can't hurt." TK declares and he lies down on the ground to allow the child to climb onto his back. TK grabs onto his shoulders as he stands up. It takes a few seconds for him to get use to this weight before he starts walking once more.

Other then stopping ever so often to allow the young boy to stretch and get rid of his cramps, they did made better time then they expected as within a few days and following a well worn path that seen a lot of Digimon if his scent of smell is correct, which it generally is. It wasn't long before the scent of food reaches him, causing him to drool slightly as he picks up the pace.

"Hey look, there's Gomamon!" TK shouts as a small white Digimon with purple marking gets tossed out of the door. "TK? TK! What are you doing here? And who's this? Where's Patamon?" The smaller Digimon asks after rushing up to greet them.

He moves closer to the ground to allow the boy off his back and then stands up once again as TK begins to answer the water loving Digimon's questions. While slightly confused as to why there was such a place like this in this world, it wasn't long before he enters into the building, heading straight to the back to raid the place of food since he figures they need a lot of food for their coming journey away from this place.

"Hey! What are you doing back here?" An egg type ultimate Digimon demands a he gives the higher level Digimon a blank look that screams 'What do you think I'm doing, idiot?' Though it wasn't long before he notices that he's not the only rookie Digimon in the kitchen and that the Digimon was with two humans that were older then TK, though one kind of seems to be related to Digimon.

"Get our of here, you! Only workers are allowed back here!" The egg Digimon bellows but once more he ignores him as he heads straight

for the fridge as his stomach growls. The two humans seem mildly amused by this so they don't make a move to stop him.

It's not long before he's eaten most of the vegetables and fruit from the fridge while the egg Digimon keeps huffing and puffing. As he studies the eggs within the fridge, half formed ideas of what he can make with them flutter within his mind.

Before he doesn't anything, he hears TK's voice call out on seeing the two humans and the other rookie Digimon. "He's with you? Then I'm charging you for the mess he's making in my kitchen." The egg Digimon declares and takes a few menacing steps towards the young blond, causing him to forget about the food to focus on the now visible enemy Digimon that's trying to threaten his charge.

"Back away from him." He orders in a very frosty voice as he turns to face the egg. "Or what? You'll beat me up?" The egg Digimon declares mockingly and he growls while he notices that the older blond clenches his fist while the Gabumon says, "Matt..."

"Don't make me laugh! Like you can ever hope of defeating me! The great Digitamamon!" The egg Digimon declares with a laugh that only made him mad, after all, he wasn't going to let anything happened to the boy even if means challenging an ultimate level Digimon.

"Rock Crusher!" He snarls out and the egg Digimon closes his shell, though he's proud to see the egg get sent through the wall behind the boastful Digimon while Gomamon manages to move TK out of the way. "TK, Gomamon! Over here, hurry!" The one called Matt shouts.

He's already slashing at the egg's surface and already his claws were causing grooves to appear in the ultimate level Digimon's rock hard shell. After all, he's sure to digging, be it through soft dirt or rocks. As long as the Digimon doesn't do anything beyond hide, he's fairly sure that he could break through the shell's tough surface.

As he's about to do another Rock Crusher, something wraps around his one arm. He turns and finds a Weedmon trying to stop him. A Pyro Grenade later and all that remains of the Weedmon was a Digi-egg.

As he's about to resume his task of cracking open Digitamamon's shell, he hears TK cry out in alarm. "We're not finished, not by a long shoot!" He growls before racing to the back to see what's going on back there.

He blinks as he finds yet another unknown Digimon attacking the group, only this time the two rookies weren't anywhere in sight while a Garurumon and an Ikkakumon, the two rookie's evolved forms battling against leafy humanoid Digimon.

Seeing that the two champions had everything under control, he moves to be by TK's side while glancing into the dinner every now and again. "You know, remind me to teach you how to behave in dinners, Yami. It was kind of rude to head straight into the kitchen instead of to a table." TK says, likely trying to lighten the mood.

He shrugs, for some reason, he just knew that this was going to end in a fight even if he had used his manners. Though for some reason, he kept looking expectantly at the elder blond. It was kind of confusing, really why that he haves this feeling that Matt needed to do something, something important but the what escapes him.

As Digitamamon comes out of the dinner, the egg Digimon pauses to take a look at the leafy humanoid Digimon then at the two champions before glancing at him. "DemiDevimon owes me big time for this." The egg declares and he snorts in derangement at that statement while TK says questionably, "DemiDevimon? What did he do to you? I mean, besides bring this guy here?"

"Are you saying that the rookie brought that creature here?" The egg growls while Joe and Matt blink in confusion. "He brought the one that deleted my partner and I think that one opened a portal for Yami here to come through." TK admits, he doesn't feel the need to

correct the boy, after all, from the look of things here, they didn't have Digi-Gnomes so they likely would doubt in the beings existence.

"So that little rodent paid me to keep those two here just so he can summon that thing here?" Digitamamon bellows while Matt pales as if he's been hit. "You mean you kept making up charges to keep us here?" Matt yells out in outrage and the egg Digimon snorts. "Of course I was! DemiDevimon kept arranging 'accidents' for your friend here so I have a valid excuse to keep him here, and you when you showed up."

Why do I get the feeling that this is old news for me?" He muses as he watches as a symbol begins to glow on Matt's chest. "Garurumon Digivolve too..." The light fades as the Digivolvution process finishes and the new and improved WereGarurumon declares, "WereGarurumon!"

Yami

They waited by the docks that night as TK told the other four about what happened that caused him to show up. He watches as Gomamon brings back another fish for their supper. Since Tsunomon didn't have any limbs, let alone hands and the older humans were busy making plans, it was up to him to spear the fish and set it by the cooking fire.

As Gomamon slips back into the water, Joe says, "Just great, now we got somebody new to worry about. Why can't this be easy? Wasn't defeating Etemon enough?" He turns away from the cooking fire to stare blankly at the glass wearing human.

For somebody with such a heavy bag, the least he can so is fill it up with useful stuff like fruit or even some herbs. He thinks as Joe begins to talk about how easily they could have been injured in today's battles and how there weren't any hospitals around to

prevent that. He could tell that Matt's already agitated enough without needing to hear what Joe has to say.

"Well, now what are we suppose to do? We're not exactly a team right now, not when all of us are scattered while we were searching for our fearless leader." Matt says. "Maybe things will look better in the morning." He decides to say something since it's clear that they all had a trying day.

The in-training Digimon seems to sigh while giving him a grateful look. Though the older humans seem to be surprised by the suggestion. "I think Yami's right. We might as well get a good night sleep before we decide on what course of action we take." Gomamon says after dropping the fish that was in his mouth on the bank with a paw over it.

"I think that sounds reasonable, what about you Matt?" Joe asks and Matt sighs before nodding. "I guess it wouldn't hurt." Matt declares as he spears the fish with a stick before setting it by the fire.

"I think that might be enough fish." Joe decides after counting the number around the fire. "You sure? I mean, you know..." Gomamon gives him a pointed look while he pretends that he didn't hear that.

"I'm fairly sure that he can make due with ten of those fish." Joe says and Gomamon shrugs while giving him a measured look. "I guess..." Gomamon says with a sigh, clearly having doubts about how much it takes to feed him.

"There's a good twenty fish there! How could you not say that's not enough?" Matt wonders and he just knows that Gomamon just gave the elder blond a dry look. He feels Matt's eyes on him, sizing him up before Matt says, "Oh, err... I can see why you're concerned."

He hears TK stifle a giggle as he picks up one of the unused sticks to poke the fire. "I think I'm going to get more fire wood." Matt declares and within seconds TK joins his elder brother. He spares a

look in their direction, sniffing before returning to cooking the fish while Joe decides to lie down on his back.

"So, Yami, what kind of Digimon are you?" He hears Joe asks. "I'm a BlackGuilmon." He answers, he just knew it was going to be a long night.

- **x** -

Tai

"Can't you make this thing go any faster?" He hears his partner ask for what seems to be the tenth time since the sun set. "Can you get any louder?" He counter in irritation before checking his Digivice and sure enough, they were getting closer to those three dotes.

According to his Digivice, it was three am and he's sleep deprived, he's legs were getting tire, his butt was aching, and they were both pretty hungry. "Hey! I smell a campfire!" Agumon says and he sighs in relief.

"Finally!" He declares as his partner and recent source of annoyance hums his agreement. While he would love to speed up, he doubts that he could keep up that pace for long so he keep kept peddling steady towards the direction Agumon is pointing in.

After about forty minutes, they finally make it to shore and he would have leaped off the swan boat and raced towards the three red dotes if it weren't for one tiny little fact. His entire body was aching and he was TIRED!

With a heavy sigh, he allows Agumon to take the lead as he slowly follows his slightly more energetic partner. As he approaches the fire, he can hear some soft snoring and he can't help but smile as he ID who's snoring.

Before they got any further towards the camp, somebody growls and a large lump of blackness moves, getting to its feet to face them.

"Who? What? Huh?" He hears Joe say sleepily, waking at the sound of growling.

"Yami? What's wrong?" He hears Joe ask and he calls out once he's got a good view of who's all among the group, "Hey Joe! Who's that and where's Tokomon?" "Tai? Tai! Thank god you're here! Where were you? What happened to Etemon?" Joe asks, it wasn't long before the rest of the others were roused from their slumber and within seconds more wood is added onto the fire while he finds himself getting a very good view of who Yami is.

"Is he a rookie or a champion?" He asks Matt after he answered their questions as he notices the way the large black Digimon kept studying him and Agumon.

"We think he's a rookie, though he did recklessly attack an ultimate level Digimon called Digitamamon." Matt says while TK leans on Yami's right side. He yawns before rubbing his eyes.

"I guess I can hear your side of things later. Right now I'm bushed and wouldn't mind some shut eye." He says and Matt nods with a sympathetic look fixed on his face.

"By the way, Tai. How did you know to come to this side of the lake?" Joe asks while Matt and him exchange duties. "Oh that? I found some note on the seat telling me that what I seeked was on the other side of the lake. Pretty helpful, huh?" He says and Joe nods in agreement before they both rest on their back.

It didn't take long before he finds himself fast asleep.

Yami

As Matt leads the way through the mountains, he can't help but be on alert as something within him tells him that they might be in danger. It's been a few days since they split up with Joe, Tai, and

their partners going one way while Matt, TK, Gabumon, and himself went the other way.

He perks up as he hears a yelling coming from up ahead. His ears flap as Gabumon also perks up. "I think somebody's in trouble up ahead!" Gabumon says to Matt as he hums in agreement.

"If you're sure." Matt says before they put on speed. It takes them a few minutes and they find a large red insectoid Digimon called MegaKabuterimon battling against a large rock dragon Digimon with a gun for it right arm.

A short red haired human seems to have a dart in his hand while looking worriedly at the battle going on before them. "You can do it, MegaKabuterimon!" The human calls out and Matt glances to Gabumon. "Right!" Gabumon says and takes a few steps towards the fight then the other rookie begins to glow.

"Gabumon Digivolve too..." As the light fades, revealing a four legged Digimon with white fur with blue stripes declaring to the world, "Garurumon!"

With his Digivolution complete, the canine Digimon joins the fight while he moves to stand protectively behind TK. "It's too bad you can't Digivolve, I bet you'd beat that pile of rocks, Yami." TK says after the battle rages on for a few minutes. He hums in agreement, not taking his eyes off the rock Digimon that the other two were having trouble defeating.

As the rock Digimon notices the other humans beyond the red head, the Digimon manages to back away from the other two Digimon to take aim at TK. As the gun fires, he grabs TK with his arms and pulls the boy out of the way of the dart while Garurumon takes the time to bite down hard on the gun arm of the rock dragon.

"Enough already!" MegaKabuterimon shouts out in annoyance and within seconds the ultimate Digimon roars out, "Horn Blaster!" The

attack hits the Digimon's head, causing it to crack for a few seconds before the rock Digimon falls backwards.

"Wolf Cry!" Garurumon bellows, the sonic waves causes the head of the rock Dragon to burst and within seconds the Digimon breaks apart into data particles. "Well, that's unusual." TK says and he can't help but ask, "How so?"

"Well, usual Garurumon uses his Howling Blaster, I mean, he only has one attack, right?" TK asks him as he lets the boy drop to the ground. "I have three attacks, I know Garurumon has six attacks, and MegaKabuterimon has seven attacks." He says and Matt looks surprised while TK just says, "Oh."

Within seconds MegaKabuterimon and Garurumon glow and within seconds a Motimon and Gabumon appears. "Motimon!" The red head shouts as the human races towards the in-training Digimon.

How odd, do they always return to their in-training or rookie forms? He wonders as he cocks his head to the side as he watches as Matt walks up to the new human. "Hey Izzy, guess you got attacked too by an unknown Digimon, huh?" Matt says, kind of stating the obvious.

"Well, to be honest, I hadn't expected to encounter anyone when we exited out Vademon dimensional hole." Izzy says before the red head notices him. "Looks like that's not the only new Digimon I get to encounter today." Izzy says dryly and Matt turns to look at him before nodding in agreement.

"Yea, that's Yami, according to him, he's a BlackGuilmon. He's kind of replaced Patamon until we figure out how to send Yami home while having Patamon send here." Matt explains and within seconds the one known as Izzy circles him, clearly studying him.

"I thought Digimon don't do names?" Izzy wonders and TK puffs out his chest as he replies, "Well, saying BlackGuilmon is such a

mouthful so I figured I'd call him Yami and he didn't object to the name."

"So, what do you plan to do with that dart?" TK asks while Matt takes time to survey the area. "I want to examine it since I think that what it contains is meant to affect humans since the Digimon didn't try and use it against either of the Digimon." Izzy explains and he hums as he recalls the first encounter with such an unknown Digimon.

"Well, I think we're in the clear." Matt declares as he walks over to join the majority. Izzy is careful with the dart and wraps the point up so they don't accidentally poke themselves with the point and find out the effects first hand.

A few seconds later, some kind of hologram appears and he doesn't give it much mind as he finds himself distracted as something scratches at the back of his mind but it seems that it refuses to make itself clear. As he closes his eyes and focuses on whatever it is, he finds an image of a human wearing yellow goggles with hazel reddish eyes and a red version of him with black markings. For some odd reason, he suddenly felt hollow inside and once the picture vanishes back into the blackness of his mind, he opens his eyes to find the rest of the group heading off.

It wasn't long before he's pacing behind TK as they walk towards some unknown destination.

- **x** -

TK

He finds himself in what appears to be a bakery. Grey shades shaped like humans move about the shop with one behind the counter. He hears a familiar hum and he finds Yami standing right behind him, an odd look in Yami's yellow eyes.

"Where are we? Are is this a dream?" He wonders and Yami moves towards the counter. Yami's hand touches the counter's surface and

he moves to follow his current partner.

Yami heads into the back and he hastes slightly but he follows since he's curious about why they're there. In the kitchen there were two grey shades that seem to be working there. Yami stands there for a few minutes before Yami heads towards the stair case.

"I'm not sure we're allowed up there." He informs Yami but Yami just hums before continuing so he follow after the Digimon. They soon enter into a hallway and Yami keeps walking, as if knowing where he's going which was kind of strange.

Yami stops before a room with an open door. In the end, he manages to squeeze pass Yami to take a look inside. He walks into the room that seems to belong to a human kid.

He does notice an Agumon figurine on a book case and on the desk top was a note pad with a drawing of a red dino with the name Guilmon written on it. "Weird..." He says and as he reaches to touch the pad of paper, everything fades black and suddenly, he finds himself being shaken by his older brother.

"TK? TK! You ok?" Matt asks him worriedly and he can't help but blink before rubbing his eyes. "What's wrong Matt? I was having the strangest dream of being in a bakery..." He asks tiredly while Matt raises an eyebrow.

"Oh yea? What were you doing? Pigging out on cream buns?" Matt asks jokingly and he frowns as he tries to recall the details of the dream.

"Well, Yami was there and we explored it until we got to this kid's room. There was something on the desk that I was reaching for when you woke me up." He tells his elder brother.

"Oh well, come on or you won't get any breakfast." Matt says and he nods as his brother heads to join the others. He turns to look over at Yami as Yami seems to be staring intently at the ground.

"It was a dream, right?" He wonders and Yami blinks before turning to look at him. "Maybe." Yami replies and he sighs before getting up as his stomach growls about the lack of food.

As they head off, he can't help but turn to face Yami who seems to be staring up at the sky with an odd expression in his eyes. "Come on, Yami! The others are leaving already!" He calls out to his new protector and Yami blinks as the black Digimon nods in agreement.

Within seconds, Yami and him caught up with the others as they head for Gennai's lake.

Yami

"I see, can I see this dart that you kept Izzy? I want to examine it in more detail and maybe come up with an antidote." The little old man says and the man holds out his hand while Izzy brings out the dart he got from the encounter with a rock dragon Digimon.

"Does that mean you know of a way to get Patamon out of Yami's home reality?" TK asks the little man though he doubts the Digital man known as Gennai has any definite way to return him at this moment in time. He looks at the map resting on the wall as the old looking Digital man answers, "I do know of a way to return Yami here back to his world and to get Patamon back, but I'm sorry to say this but that way has been blocked off for a while now."

"But I do believe I have something that might allow Yami here to Digivolve. It dropped out of a gate much like the one that Yami described, I even heard the giggles that sound like wind charms and when I looked up, it dropped on the ground in front of me." The little old man says, his turns to look at the man when he described the giggling.

"Giggling?" He hears Sora question softly. He flaps his ears as at the sight of the device that Gennai has in his hand.

"A D-Arc..." He says as his vision mists over as another image over laps this golden one, for a moment he saw one that was red instead of gold. "D-Arc you say? Mmmm, well, here you go, TK. I'm sure you'll use it well." Gennai says as hands the device over to the young blond.

"Wow, I wonder how it works." TK says and as he turns to look at Agumon, who was trying to steal some food from Tai's plate.

Within seconds the D-Arc begins to beep and within seconds a hologram of Agumon appears. Izzy reads off the information that the D-Arc is displaying. "Agumon, a vaccine attribute Digimon of the rookie level. Reptile type who's attacks are Pepper Flame, Claw Attack, and Spitfire."

"That's a pretty useful function." Izzy says as the hologram vanishes and the rest of the group hum in agreement while Agumon tries to look innocent while Tai notices that some of his food has vanished.

"Yes, I agree, that would be a useful function for a Digivice to have." Gennai muses. He looks down at his own claws, unsure why he felt so hollow...

= **V** =

Later that evening, he heard somebody get up and on seeing that it was Izzy, he closes his eyes and tries to go back to sleep. *Hope it doesn't take too long for the upgrade...* He muses as sleep takes him.

- **x** -

TK

He watches as Tai punches the iron gate one last time. He had mixed feelings about what just happened though it takes him a bit to realize that Yami wasn't with the group. "Where's Yami?" He asks

Gabumon and his brother's partner takes a look around before pointing at the stone pillar a bit at the back.

Nodding his thanks, he runs towards the large rookie to see what's caught Yami's attention. "So, why are you over here? I mean, everyone's over there, by the gate." He asks after staring at stone pillar for a few seconds.

"We're missing something... We need the things that fit here." Yami says in a puzzled tone and frowns as his ears droop slightly.

He can't help but blink before scratching the side of his head. Before he gets the chance to say anything though, something decides its the perfect time to attack. "Crimson Claw!" A newly arrived Devidramon roars.

He screams as the attack comes closer and he hears the attack connect with something, make that with someone. "Yami..." He says in awe as the black rookie holds onto the Devidramon's claws.

"TK!" He hears Matt call out but he can't take his eyes off of Yami as the rookie tries to push the arm away. The evil champion Digimon growls before sending Yami flying through the air.

"YAMI!" He calls out and tries to run to the fallen Digimon's side. *Please no, not now, not to him, not after what happened to Patamon!* He cries out mentally.

Within seconds he finds himself pinned to the ground while the others were trying to get their partners to Digivolve but it seems that they're all exhausted. "TK? TK!" He hears Yami cry out.

He moves his head and finds Yami getting to his feet, he can't help but noticed that the symbol on Yami's chest glowing slightly. Yami begins to growl and with a snarl the smaller Digimon charges at Devidramon. "Rock Crusher!"

The attack slams into the arm pinning him down. The larger black Digimon cries out before back handing Yami into a wall. The Devidramon turns his back on him to deal with Yami.

He can't help it, his tears flowed freely as a sob. *It's like with Devimon all over again. Please, somebody, anybody, do something!* He screams within his mind as he wipes his tears from his face.

A familiar glow erupts from his Digivice and then his new Digivice begins to glow as his original one's light dies down. "Blackguilmon Digivolve too..." An egg of light surrounds Yami and within a few seconds later, the egg breaks apart to reveal a really large black Digimon with red marking.

"Blackgrowlmon!" The new and improve Yami snarls with some steam coming out of his nostrils. Grey hair frame Yami's head while odd blade like extensions were around his wrist.

With a snarl the two black champions charge each other, Yami lashing out with his claws as Devidramon tries to slam into Yami. As the two exchange blows, he stares in awe at how big and furious looking Yami is as a champion level Digimon.

"Black Bite!" Devidramon growls and Yami growls, "Dark Blade!" The blade like extensions on Yami's wrists move into position before glowing. As Devidramon tries to get close to bite Yami, Yami slams a blade into Devidramon's left shoulder while Yami's other hand slashes at Devidramon's eyes, causing the Devidramon howl in pain.

"Black Exhaust Flame!" Yami snarls and within seconds, a stream of flame shoots out of Yami's mouth, engulfing the injured Devidramon. Within seconds a Digi-egg hits the ground as Yami roars in triumph.

"Yami?" He asks and within seconds the champion Digimon turns to regard him. Yami cocks his head to the side, an unsure expression in the champion's eyes. "TK?" Yami asks and then within seconds Yami returns to his rookie form with a confused look in his eyes.

"We won?" Yami asks and he just nods, though he did wonder what caused such a strange reaction in Yami when he was a champion.

TK

He kept glancing at the other room where Yami's currently holding up in as Tai and the other talk with Gennai about their failure to get through the gate when Myotismon opened the gate to enter into the human world and about how odd Yami had acted after finishing off the Devidramon.

He's more worried by the fact that Yami seems to be more withdrawn then usual. He bites his lower lip as his need to stick around to hear what Gennai's thoughts are on their situation to his wanting to go comfort Yami.

"I think Yami needs you, TK, I'm sure the others would understand if you head off to talk with him." Gabumon says softly and he's startled for a seconds before nodding in thanks to the fur wearing rookie.

He slips out as the others wait for Gennai to return with something. It wasn't hard to find his Neo-partner as Yami's curled up in a ball in a corner.

"Yami?" He says softly once he's within a foot radius of the large rookie. Yellow eyes move to look at him though the Digimon didn't say anything, he figured that the movement was an unspoken 'What?'

He sits down as he says, "Do you want to talk about it?" Yami's eyes flicker away from him before the black rookie moves to put his arms under his jaw.

"I didn't recognize you when I saw you." Yami answers softly, his eyes were down cast. "Well, we haven't really gotten to know each other, so, it could be, you know, that." He replies.

"I'm not sure that's the reason." Yami states softly. "Then what do you think the reason was?" He asks as he leans forward.

"I think the problem is that I'm a monster." Yami replies. He blinks before scratching the side of his head as he tries to think of something to say.

"Why'd you think that?" He asks after a few minutes of coming up with blank. "I heard a girl's voice call me one while I was looking down at you. That expression... It cut deep into me, it *hurt* seeing that look on your face." Yami states with a pain look in his eyes.

He looks away, he couldn't help but admit he was kind of scared as Yami roared on defeating the Devidramon. "It was pretty frightening to see you standing there, roaring over your victory over Devidramon. It didn't help that you got so big! Like in Greymon big!" He tells Yami.

"But what really scared me was the look in your eyes when you heard me call you by your nick name. I thought you forgot about me." He adds as he looks down into his lap, he can feel tears well up in his eyes.

His body shakes as some of his tears escape his eyes and land on his hands. "I couldn't stand it, seeing Devidramon beating on you when you couldn't really defend yourself! It made me remember what happened with Devimon again! I just lost Patamon and I was about to lost you!"

He sobs slightly and after a few minutes he feels something pick up his chin, he finds himself looking into Yami's face. "Don't cry, TK." Yami says softly as Yami's eyes gleam with tears as well.

"Yami!" He cries as he charges forward to hug the black coloured Digimon. He feels Yami rub his back as he cries into the black rookie's chest.

Unknown to the pair, Tai and Matt watch from the doorway for a few seconds before they move away from the doorway.

- **x** -

Yami

As the castle rumbles and breaks apart, he can't help but stare intently at the Agumon card. He has this minor desire to grab it and stuff it into a pocket or something, which was kind of weird since unlike the others, he wasn't very concerned about this Tai picking the right card.

In the end, Tai picks the Gomamon card and one Izzy puts it into the slot, the iron gate begins to open. As the group's cheering is cut short, he makes sure to pick up TK before racing straight towards the opening gates.

TK doesn't squirm much as they race the gauntlet of enemy Digimon trying to prevent them from reaching the glowing gate way to the human world. The other Digimon all Digivolve to deal with different opposing Digimon trying to block their path.

He's the first to make it through the gate and within seconds, he feels...

"Yami?" He wakes to hear TK standing over him, looking down at him. "TK?" He asks and finds that his voice has undergone a change in pitch as well as his surroundings.

"He's so... so... cute!" Mimi declares and within seconds he finds himself getting hug by the pink wearing member of the Digidestine while he tries not to faint from dizziness.

I think I'm goin' to hurl! He thinks as he finds himself in the air as Mimi spins around.

Yami

"So, how come you're red with black markings instead of black with red markings?" TK asks him as they walk towards Highton View Terrace.

"I'm a Gigimon, as far as I know, they only come in one colour." He says as he wishes that he was on the ground so that he can try and catch his tiny tail.

Though a small part of him notes that if he caught it in his teeth, it would hurt but the larger part of him didn't care since he didn't want to sit still at all.

The joys of being an in-training Digimon.

"I don't ever think I'll ever get this stain out of this shirt!" Mimi complains yet again and almost everyone sighs on hearing Mimi complain about it for the eighth time since they got off the school bus.

"It's your own fault, you just had to spin him." Sora reminds Mimi as they wait for the light to change.

Before anyone could say anything, they watch a police car pull up and shout at them about some kind of monster loose. He stops trying to draw his name in the air with his tail as he looks on as the others decide to check it out.

Huh, I wonder why this feels familiar... Mmmmm... I wonder if I can talk Matt into making some Guilmon Bread later... He wonders as TK carries him into a dangerous situation with a Mammothmon.

So with a look of concentration, he tries to recall what items they would need to make Guilmon Bread. Not giving any mind to the battle that's approaching.

- **x** -

TK

He sighs as he notices that Yami has drifted off to sleep while they wait for a subway train. He can't help but compare Yami as an in-training Digimon to when he's a rookie Digimon.

He sure is energetic and more talkative as Gigimon then when he's Blackguilmon. Though, why is he acting so different? I mean, none of the other Digimon act so different between their two forms. He muses to himself as looks at the top of Yami's head.

"Penny for your thoughts." Sora says and he turns to look at Sora before sighing.

"I can't believe how different Yami's been acting, I mean, Yokomon doesn't act very different from when she's Biyomon, right?" He asks and Sora looks down at Yokomon for a second while some little kid begins to yank on one of Yokomon's tentacles.

It wasn't long before Yokomon gets tired of having the kid yank on her after Sora's subtle attempts of getting the kid to let go.

After coming up with a false department store that sold Sora her 'toy'. Surprisingly, the car empties of everyone but Digidestine and their Digimon partners.

Though slowly, he finds it hard to stay awake...

- **x** -

Yami

"Well, now how do we hide you?" TK asks him as he examines himself in the mirror. He can't help but feel very relieved about finally being back to being a Blackguilmon.

He looks from the mirror and glances at TK as he says, "I could pretend to be a guy in a costume." For some odd reason, he can't

help but feel that this event was familiar like he's done something like this before but the memory escapes him.

"I'm not sure it would work." TK says with a slight frown on his face.

"Worth a try, isn't?" He muses lightly with a slight grin on his face while TK looks unconvinced.

"I guess..." TK says and he just hums slightly before returning to admiring himself in the mirror, for some reason he just couldn't figure out why his reflection seemed to trouble him.

= **V** =

"I can't believe nobody noticed anything!" TK says as they get into the park that they're meeting the others in. He just shrugs though he can't help but be uneasy about their trip through the city.

He's got a headache since something is trying to claw its way to the surface but it can't seem to make it. He sighs as TK calls out a greeting to his elder brother. "Hey Matt!" TK calls out and the blond seems to look relieved to see that TK arrived alright.

"How come Yami is... well, out of the open?" Matt asks. "It was his idea, if anyone asked I told them that he's my cousin dressed up in a costume. It worked oddly enough." TK answers after giving Matt a hug while Matt looks slightly embarrassed about it.

"And they bought it?" A disguised Gabumon asks in disbelief. "Yea, they did." TK answers and before long, the others begin to arrive with Tai being late and without a phone book.

He never found it, huh? He muses thoughtfully as he settles down behind TK while some of the others express their disbelief over the simplicity of his disguise.

TK

"Well that was unproductive." Matt muses as they head to the apartment he lives with his mom.

Yami hums in agreement as the black rookie holds a pole as the car moves. He sighs, he wanted to argue that he could make it home with only Yami to accompany him but at the same time, he didn't want to spoil the moment.

If he learnt anything about losing Patamon it was taking time to enjoy the precious moments you have with someone since you never know what the future might bring. He touches one of his black sweat bands from around his wrist that he's taken to wearing once they arrived home.

It was to symbolize his mourning lose of his first partner but it also a slight tribute to Yami. He was currently thinking of what to wear to symbolize Patamon.

"I think we should get off here." Yami says, snapping him out of his thoughts as he stares at the black rookie.

"But we're not even close of my home!" He says but Yami's already getting out and in the end, they followed Yami's example, though he did feel a bit miffed about this.

Yami sniffs the air and hums in confirmation before leading them through the shopping district. As they were rounding a corner, they ran into some trouble, pretty literally since they collided with two Digimon.

On holding his D-Arc, a hologram appears of the first Digmon that was a rock type.

"Gotsumon, a data attribute Digimon of the rookie level. Mineral type who's attacks are Rock Fist, Crazy Crusher, and Earth Shaker." He reads and then the image switches to the pumpkin headed Digimon.

"Pumpkinmon, a data attribute Digimon of the ultimate level. Puppet type who's attacks are Trick or Treat and Pumpkinmon Power." He reads before the image vanishes.

"He's an ultimate?" Gabumon asks in disbelief while Yami cocks his head to the side with an unreadable look in his eyes. "Seems so." Matt says while the pair recovered from seeing their information hovering over an unknown Digivice.

"Pretty amazing piece of equipment you got there." Gotsumon says with his arms crossed while Pumpkinmon nods in agreement while his arms were in a thinking pose. "Yes, very impressive." Pumpkinmon echos.

"Though, I've never seen a Digimon like him before." Gotsumon muses turning to study Yami and the pumpkin headed Digimon hums in agreement. Within seconds the two were dragging Yami off into a clothing store that's a bit away from where they encountered the pair.

He can't help but noticed that Yami's got this bemused expression in his eyes as well as a hint of sadness as the two crazy Digimon begin to dress up themselves. As Matt tries to stop them, Matt, Gabumon, and himself soon find themselves in some new cloths, cloths that he didn't remember putting on.

Somebody in the store must have complained and so they raced out of the clothing shop and a few stores away before stopping to take a break. While they were taking a breather, the pair of Digimon that arrived with Myotismon seem to have vanished. "Now where did they go?" Gabumon asks with a hint of a groan.

"Ice cream." Yami muses softly. "Huh?" Matt and Gabumon says and within seconds they're being offered stolen ice cream.

"How is it you know what they're planing to do?" He asks Yami and the rookie answers, "I can smell them and all Digimon think with their stomach at one point."

"No truer words have been spoken." Matt agrees with a hint of a smile before they're chased by the ice cream vendor.

"So, who wants ice cream?" Gotsumon asks once they stop running. Yami takes a sniff and his eyes go funny as a growl erupt from the black rookie's throat. Yami moves to stand by him with a stiff pose.

A dark laugh fills the alley in which they're hiding and suddenly Myotismon steps at the entrance of the alleyway. He can't help but sigh as Matt shouts out the ultimate Digimon's name. "Myotismon!"

As the ultimate Digimon's mouth opens, Yami shoots out a purple sphere of fire before charging straight at the more powerful Digimon, catching everyone by surprise, even Myotismon.

He closes his mouth before racing to see the fight going on between Yami and the vampire Digimon. Within seconds, he can hear the others follow at his heels. "What's gotten into him? The last time he picked a fight was with Digitamamon." Matt asks as crowds of people race in the opposite direction.

"Well... maybe it's cause he's a virus? I mean, virus are pretty territorial when faced with another virus." Gotsumon reasons while Pumpkinmon adds, "Did you see the look in his eyes? Definitely a viral response there."

"Yami's attribute is a virus?" Matt asks startled as they watch as Myotismon tries to hit Yami with a crimson coloured whip. "You mean you didn't know?" Pumpkinmon asks.

"He's fairly agile for his build, huh?" Gotsumon muses as they watch as Yami try and close the distant between Myotismon and himself. "Yea, he is." Gabumon agrees as Yami fires off three of his Pyro Grenade attack in rapid secession.

In the end, Myotismon is focused to head into the air, an ugly look on the Digital vampire's face while Yami growls as he looks up at the

vampire Digimon. "Fool! Do you know who you're dealing with?!" Myotismon snarls.

"A coward." Yami snaps at the ultimate level Digimon. "Why you! Grisly Wing!" Myotismon shouts and as the wave a bats come towards him, Yami uses Pyro Grenade and the two attack explode.

The vampire lord had fled as the attack meet, leaving them alone on the street with Gotsumon and Pumpkinmon. "How come you didn't do that back when we first met him?" Matt demands and after blinking a few times, Yami gives him a puzzled look.

"Cause he had back up, the coward didn't bring any with him this time around." Yami answers as if its plain as day.

"So then, what do we do with you two?" TK asks as he turns to look at Gotsumon and Pumpkinmon.

Myotismon

A silent snarl escapes from him as he marches towards his coffin. A cold anger clings to him after being driven away by a simple rookie, though the symbol on the Digimon's chest does make him uneasy for some reason. He slams a fist in the stone wall that's behind his coffin as he recalls how the Digimon that the young humans were calling Yami declared him a coward.

"Damn him! Next time we met, I'll be the victorious one!" He declares out loud to himself, not caring for the moment who hears him.

- **x** -

Gatomon

"What's got his cape in a knot?" One of the two Bakemon wonder after their lord and master march pass with a very displeased look on

his face. She rather not be the one responsible for causing Myotismon to be in such a mood.

Her ears perk as she hears his declaration of defeating a 'him' which makes her wonder which of the Digidestine got a hand up on the vampire Digimon. "Just leave him alone and get back to your rounds!" She orders the pair and within seconds, the two do as they're told.

She stares at the room that holds Myotismon's coffin for a few minutes longer before heading out to spy on that girl, Kari, who knows Agumon. *Hopefully next time Myotismon meet up with this mysterious 'he' that the 'he' will finish the job.* She thinks to herself as she heads out of the lair, a tiny bit of hope flares up in her chest on the thought of the vampire lord getting his just desserts.

- **x** -

Tai

"Well, that was an interesting phone call." He admits as he hangs up the phone after listening to Matt describes the night's events with a pair of Myotismon's 'hendmen' and how Yami drove the ultimate level Digimon away without even Digivolving.

There's just no end to the surprises that Yami seems to pull out of his sleeves. Makes me kind of wish he had Digivolved during the fight with Myotismon, he could have taken the guy out and save us all this trouble. He thinks as he flops onto the bottom bunk bed while Agumon's busy snacking on some fruit.

"What's wrong Tai?" His partner and closest friend asks. "Matt, TK, and their partners met up with a pair of Myotismon's henchmen, only the henchmen seem more interested in having fun then searching for the eighth Digidestine. Then Myotismon shows up and suddenly, Yami goes berserk on seeing the guy and begins to attack before the vampire could say a word. In the end, Yami drives Myotismon off and

they're now trying to figure out what to do with the two henchmen." He answers.

"Wow. Who'd have thought the... big guy had it in him." Agumon muses and he hums in agreement. "That and it seems that Yami's a good tracker, it seems that despite being in a populated city, he's got a nose for sensing and trailing Digimon. I wonder if we can use him to find Myotismon's lair, take the fight to him." He muses as he rolls onto his back.

"I thought we're suppose to trying to find the eighth child?" His partner muses and he shrugs. "True, but we can't just let his plans come to a head and we'd have more time to find him!" He says as his sits up to look at his partner. Agumon doesn't seem so convinced but doesn't say anything.

- **x** -

Wizardmon

"And where do you two think you're going?" He asks Gotsumon and Pumpkinmon as they try to sneak into the lair. The two look like they were caught with their hands in the cookie jar.

"Huh, well, you see..." Pumpkinmon trails off while Gotsumon puffs his chest out as Gotsumon says flatly, "We're here to steal the tag and chest that Myotismon has in his coffin."

He blinks, he wasn't expecting that when he approached them. "And we're willing to go through you to do so!" Gotsumon declares boldly and after a second, Pumpkinmon nods in agreement, gathering his courage doing so.

"I see, well then, I hadn't expected to try it so soon since I wanted to help Gatomon find who she's looking for but seeing as you two are willing, I feel that I'm obliged to help you two out." He says causing the two to get out of their attacking stances.

"Alright!" The two rebellious Digimon cries out before giving each other high fives.

Well, it will be interesting working with these two at least. He muses before they huddle up to discuss their plan to recover the true tag and crest of the eighth Digidestine.

Ryo

He enters into the living room en route to the kitchen when he heard something coming from the TV that his mom's watching. "I swear that's what I saw! A black dino the size of a child of about ten years old breathing purple coloured fire balls at this vampire! It had these odd looking ears with bands of red around his body!"

He turns as the man being interviewed holds up a sketch of said dino. "This is a rough sketch of what the thing looked like!" The guy says and he feels his jaw drop on seeing the dino.

It can't be... Guilmon, could it? He wonders as the image switches back to the reporter while his mind swims over the implications.

But then, Gallantmon had been in the blast radius with me, so could they have piggy backed with me here. He thinks as the reporter interviews a few others who claimed seeing a colour reversed Guilmon battling Myotismon.

He can't help but wonder just how altered the time line has become if Takato and Guilmon were really here at this time and place. It wasn't long before the news program switches to some other kind of news and he heads to the kitchen as he remembers why he exited out of his room in the first place.

- **x** -

Yami

He finds himself in a rather large tunnel. He takes his time as he studies the area as TK seems to gasp at their surroundings. This place seems familiar and yet he knew it this place wasn't in the Digital world either.

"Pretty big place, huh?" TK asks him and he hums in agreement and after a few seconds, six grey shades begin to walk into the tunnel from this door located at the top of these stairs.

Three of the shades were uniform in shape while the other shades come in different shapes with at least two of them having a tail while the smaller shade has large ears. He hums thoughtfully as his eyes followed the slightly hunched over shade that's about his size.

"I wonder where they're going?" The young boy wonders and then the child adds, "I guess we should follow them."

He trails behind the young blond as they follow the six shades as they walk through the tunnel, his eyes fixated on the hunched shade. After an indefinite amount of time, they arrive at the end of the tunnel and as they follow the shades out of the tunnel, both TK and him gasp on seeing a large red blob on the horizon.

"That is that? And, why is it in the human world?" TK asks and he doesn't have an answer as he feels a great deal of sorrow and guilt on seeing the massive blight resting who knows how far from them.

Beeping wakes him up and within seconds of hiding in the closet, TK's mom enters into the room to wake the young blond up.

As TK rubs his eyes, his mom exits out of the room, allowing him to come out of the closet. As TK begins to change out of his PJs, he looks out the window, staring at the building surrounding the apartment as images from the dream linger at the edge of his mind before vanishing completely as TK opens the door.

As he turns to look at the young boy, TK looks slightly troubled and asks, "It wasn't just a dream, was it? It seemed so real..."

"A memory maybe." He says softly and TK sighs. "So you had the same dream then?" TK asks and he hums as he nods in agreement.

"Well, I'll see if mom's busy and then we can sneak you into the kitchen for breakfast." The young blond says and he hums thoughtfully.

After about twenty or so minutes, TK arrives at the doorway and waves him forward.

As they enter into the kitchen, he frowns at the sight of cereal boxes on the table. "Mind if I make my own breakfast?" He asks and TK blinks before saying, "I guess, just don't make too big of a mess."

He hums in acknowledgment of the warning and slowly begins to look through the cardboards, searching for things once he preheats the over to a certain degree. Once he's taken out everything on his mental list, he then studies each item until something clicks inside of his head.

With a hum, he begins to measure out some flour, butter, and other things before putting all into a large mixing bowl. Using a big wooden spoon to mix the batter, he asks TK to spray the pans with some grease.

Once he feels that the batter is good, he puts it down and washes his hand before going onto the next step.

As soon as his hands are dry, he begins to take some of the batter and shape it before putting it on the cookie sheets he found in the kitchen. He uses up all of the batter and then opens the oven door to put the sheets into the hot oven.

Once that's done, he sets the timer on the microwave and then begins to do the dishes while the timer counts down.

The scent of fresh buns wafers through the apartment, TK looks into the oven's window with a hint of drool on his chin.

He manages to stop the timer before it beeps as to not attract TK's mom's attention.

Using the oven mitts, he takes the first tray out of the oven and sets it on the cooling rack. Before taking out the last tray, he turns the oven off and then sets the second on top of the elements on top of the oven.

"Oh, they really smell good, I wonder if they taste as good as they smell!" TK says in excitement while he smiles, an odd sense of pride bursting within his chest.

"They likely do." He says and once he's sure that they're cool enough, he hands a bun to TK and as the young boy takes a bite out of it. TK hums in pleasure and finishes off the bun in record time.

"Can I have another one, please?" TK asks giving him puppy dog eyes. With a sigh, he hands two down to the boy and as he settles at the table to eat, TK follows and every so often, he hands the boy a bun to munch on.

Before long, they're late with meeting up with Matt and so they leave the last few bun on a plat on the counter before heading out to hook up with the elder blond and his partner Digimon.

Wizardmon

He stares wearily at the tag and crest, wondering if it was worth the price they paid to get it. The sorrow he feels for Gotsumon who risked his life for Pumpkinmon and himself to escape as all those Bakemon appeared while Myotismon uses Crimson Lightning in a fit of anger and likely hoping that the attack would hit them.

Pumpkinmon rests not far from him as he pockets the tag and crest. The sun was bright out and with a few gentle nudges, he wakes the ultimate level Digimon. "Are we under attack?" The pumpkin head Digimon asks.

"No, but it's safe to head off in search for Matt, TK, and their partners." He says softly and Pumpkinmon nods soberly. "Now we just need the Digivice." He muses softly out loud.

"You think we'll be able to avoid the others under his command?" Pumpkinmon asks with a grim hint to his question. "We might if we stick to crowded areas." He answers.

"Then lets go before we're found and it's taken, unraveling our hard work and tainting Gotsumon's sacrifice." The ultimate says standing up. With a sigh, he gets to his feet and follows the higher level Digimon in search for the two blonds.

- **x** -

TK

They were taking a rest break in front of the building they promised to meet up with Gotsumon and Pumpkinmon the evening before. He hopes that neither of the Digimon ran into any trouble on their scouting mission. He doubts that Myotismon would be in a mood to let the pair off from not doing their jobs and helping the vampire lord against Yami's onslaught.

"You'd think after last night they'd do more then glance at you." Matt muses as few of the people walking pass gave Yami more then a passing glance.

He sighs as he looks around at the people walking about. "They might think I'm dressed like this to get attention or as an advertisement by some company about a new product." Yami answers as the black coloured Digimon finishes his soda.

Yami pauses and looks up as the rookie sniffs the air with his ears flap once as with a shadow of a smile on his face. "Where's Gotsumon?" He asks as Pumpkinmon appears with an unknown Digimon.

"We got the tag and crest, though... I'm sorry to report that Gotsumon gave his life for us to escape." The usually free spirited Digimon says and he blinks rapidly as that sinks in.

"I'm sorry for your lose, Pumpkinmon. I wish he never had to give his everything for this task." Yami says softly, surprising pretty much everyone.

After a few seconds, Pumpkinmon nods with some tears trailing down his orange face. "Thanks, it means a lot to hear that." The vegetable headed Digimon says.

"You're not so bad, for a viral." The ultimate level Digimon adds in a lighter tone and Yami looks embarrassed with the faint praise directed his way and scratches the back of his head with his right hand.

"So, who's your new friend?" Gabumon asks after a few uncomfortable minutes.

"Oh? Ah! This is Wizardmon, he joined us after catching us sneaking into the big bad's lair. It was through his tricks we got as far as we did." Pumpkinmon says and then adds, "Wizardmon, I'd like you to met Matt and his partner Digimon Gabumon. The little one is TK and the big black one is Yami who's a... what are you again?"

"He's a Blackguilmon." He says helpfully. "Huh, I never heard of a Guilmon before and now I'm know a Blackguilmon." Pumpkinmon muses in a thinker pose.

"Nice to meet you." The dark robed Digimon says, giving them each a nod in greeting. "Dido." Matt says and he grins as he nods in agreement while Yami echos his sentiment.

"So, now what?" He wonders as Wizardmon hands over the tag and crest belonging to the eighth Digidestined. "That's the question, isn't it?" Matt muses and Yami hums in agreement.

- **x** -

Gatomon

"They stole what?" She asks DemiDevimon in alarm. She had been busy most of the night camping on the roof top directly across from Tai and Kari's apartment building, so this was very new news to her.

"Yep, three Digimon were Wizardmon, Gotsumon, and Pumpkinmon and boy is Myotismon in a rage! Though the Gotsumon was deleted as they were escaping from the hide out. Boy I'm glad I'm not either of those two Digimon since by the time Myotismon get his fangs into them they'd wish they'd been deleted with their friend!" DemiDevimon declares with a short laugh following that rant.

Her mind was else where as the flying bowling ball muses about what kind of torture their lord and master plans to use on the rogues. *I feel it in my whiskers that the Digidestine put them up to this, but why didn't they have those three lead them to the hide out? Surely the Digidestine would have preferred an all out attack on the off chance they could delete Myotismon, right? After all, one of them managed to drive him back earlier last night so why stop there with one minor victory?* She wonders to herself for a few minutes.

Without saying a word, she leaves the rookie talking to himself to go off and find something to eat before returning to the search. Who knows, she just might find one of the two rogues and get them to tell her why they would risk so much without having any back up.

- **x** -

Yami

As they headed to the local park to meet up with the others, after all, Matt used some spare change to call Joe to ask him to phone the others to let them know that they have the original tag and crest.

Though on their way, he did pause and sniff the ground, he smelled some kind of Digital feline had been there recently which made him wonder why that made him feel slightly relieved.

Not mentioning the scent, he catches up to the small group as the find a suitable spot to relax in as they wait for the others.

As he curls up next to TK, he begins to wonder about random things like, why were there bird song in the Digital world and he's yet to see a song bird or about why the Digi-Gnomes intended for him to be in this alternate realm and then he wonders if he had a partner before he lost his memories.

As he's thoughts slowly came back down to earth, he notices that the others have slowly arrived, and by the time he sat up, Joe's racing towards them carrying Gomamon in his gym bag.

They hadn't started discussing anything really important, from the last bit of conversation he picked up on, TK was telling Izzy about the buns he made this morning before they left the apartment while Matt and Tai were talking about strategies with Wizardmon, leaving Mimi and Sora to talk about whatever it was that girls like to talk about. The other Digimon were taking the time out to rest since they might find themselves in a large battle by the end of tonight if Myotismon is still steamed about what happened with the tag and crest.

Once Joe's settled down, the discussion began.

- **x** -

Ryo

"How hard could it be finding a black Dino, he asks. It's not as if he's here to help me search." He mutters to himself as he walks around in what will soon become covered in Myotismon's fog and a battleground for the followers of Myotismon and the Digidestine.

It's almost evening and he's been at this since noon. As he steps into a restaurant, he blinks into a mirror facing the door and watches as a Digimon that could pass as Guilmon's twin brother walks by following a small kid who's roughly about eight or nine years old.

He quickly turns and heads out the door, trying to catch up to the pair, finally he calls out, "Hey Guilmon! Wait up!"

The black Guilmon's ears flap before the large rookie pauses and turns to look at him with a questioning look in his yellow gaze.

"What's the hold up, Yami?" A familiar voice asks and its then does he recognized the Digidestine of Hope, TK.

"Yami?" He echos, already thrown by the rookie's colour scheme, on seeing one of his old 'friends', but finding out that the Digimon he was searching for being nick named Yami was very out there.

"Well, saying Blackguilmon all the time would be a mouthful." TK reasons while Yami cocks his head to the side with a puzzled look in his eyes.

"Huh, so... where's your partner?" He asks TK, taking his eyes off of the black rookie to see TK's partner is in his arms.

"Patamon... He's not in this dimension, he's currently in Yami's Digital world since his Digi-egg fell through a portal as Yami was coming to rescue me from getting hit with this dart that's suppose to turning me into a Digimon." TK admits and he sighs, it seems that the group they were investigating was now active in this dimension.

"I don't suppose you know where Takato is, do you?" He asks the pair and Yami blinks before frowning while TK asks, "Who's Takato?"

With a loud sigh, he realizes that this was going to be one of those days...

Yami

They were in a restaurant with somebody who seems to claim to know him, true Ryo claimed he had been a Guilmon when they first met but he didn't know why that seem to sadden him. He hadn't changed that much, did he?

"So let's get something straight, Takato's Yami's human partner and you think he's suppose to be around here, somewhere, looking for Yami?" TK asks after listening to an explanation of how Ryo knew him and his supposedly human partner.

"Well, I think that's roughly it, yea." Ryo says and he could tell that TK seems troubled by this.

"I only came through this portal because the Digi-Gnomes kind of herded me towards an energy tear." He finally pipes in after a few minutes and a look of surprise flash in Ryo's eyes, as if he wasn't expecting him to say that.

"Digi-Gnomes? What are those?" TK perks up, likely glad for the change in topic. "They're little glowing creatures that cause wishes to come true. Where I'm from, they've been around as long as there have been Digimon. Some say they do the will of the Digital world." He answers and yet again Ryo gives him an odd look.

"You got it in a nut shell." Ryo agrees and he takes his time to regard Ryo once more, pondering over what to ask the almost teenager.

"Where's your partner?" He finally asks in a flat tone and Ryo winces at the question. "Hey, that's right, if you were friends with Takato and Yami, that means you must have your own Digimon partner, right?" TK asks.

"Yea, I do, but because of that explosion I mentioned, he's not with me at the moment. He's likely in the Digital world." Ryo answers and he guesses that make sense, after all, he found himself in the Digital world of his home dimension before crossing over to this realm.

"Who was part of our group then?" He asks as he remembers that dream from last night.

Ryo sighs, it's clear the kid wasn't exactly happy with all these questions or the fact that he doesn't have any memories of a time before he found himself in the Digital world as a Blackguilmon. "Let's see, there's Henry who is partnered with a Terriermon, Rika who's partnered with a Renamon, Kazu who's partnered with a Guardromon, Kenta who's partnered with MarineAngemon, and then there's Jeri who was partnered with a Leomon." Ryo says and he gets a flash of a leather wearing Digimon putting his claws through a Leomon's belly.

He looks down as the memory invokes emotions of disbelief and then righteous anger over the Leomon's deletion. He shies away from thinking about the Leomon's partner to muse about the other names. Oddly enough as he wonders about Henry and Rika, he gets another flash of a memory, this one connected to the tunnel TK and him dreamed of last night.

He saw a golden furred humanoid fox with purple gloves, a boy wearing an orange vest with a Terriermon hanging off his shoulder, not unlike the shades they followed last night. Finally, he sees a slightly red faced red head with purple eyes dressed in a shirt with a blue heart on it and in a pair of blue jeans.

The hollow feeling within him aches at the images of his friends that he can't remember much about.

"So, do you know if Takato taught Yami how to bake? He made some buns this morning and they were really good!" TK says and he hears Ryo's answer since he didn't want to look up from the table just yet.

"I wouldn't know if Takato had taught Yami how to bake. Though I do know that Takato's family owned a bakery and that this one time Henry, Rika, Takato, and their partners spent some time in Takato's family's bakery making themselves breakfast." Ryo says.

"That was during the time the D-Reaper was attacking the real world, wasn't it?" He asks as he recalls the red blob that TK and him had seen as they exited out of the tunnel with the shades. He hears Ryo choke on air for a second and then coughs for a few seconds before managing to get control over his breathing.

"You remember what the D-Reaper was?" Ryo asks and he cocks his head to the side as he stares at a far wall. "Last night... TK and I were in this tunnel and after a few minutes, six shades entered into the picture. We followed them to the end of the tunnel and once we got out of the tunnel, we saw this large red blob on the horizon." He says and TK hums in agreement.

"It was pretty hard to forget, seeing it there in the middle of a city." TK adds.

"I see." Ryo says with a frown on his face as the preteen looks down at the counter top.

Nobody spoke until their food arrived.

- **x** -

Ryo

He found it hard to think of Yami as the Guilmon that he knew, in some ways, a lot of the black Digimon's mannerisms seem to scream Takato and not the crimson rookie of old. After all, even without his memories, mannerisms were pretty hard to get rid of since one sometimes fall back into them without realizing it.

But if Yami was really Takato and not Guilmon, then what happened to Guilmon? Sure he heard that Takato created Guilmon but it shouldn't matter since Guilmon was as much a part of Gallantmon as Takato was, so its likely that Guilmon might have been... He presses his lips together as he considers that possibility.

"You know, I might be wrong about something." He admits and TK asks, "Oh?"

"Yea, I kind of just assumed that Yami was Guilmon because of the fact that Takato's human and Guilmon's a Digimon, therefore it was logical that Yami had to be Guilmon. But that doesn't seem to fly since the more time we're spending together, the more I come to think that I got it wrong." He says.

"Ok, then, who do you think he is now?" TK asks in a weary tone. "I think that somehow, during the explosion, Guilmon and Takato might have switched species." He says slowly and Yami looks alarmed while TK looks puzzled about that.

He decides to spell it out for the young boy. "I think Yami's Takato, I mean, you said that he cooked this morning, right? A lot of how Yami's acting screams Takato to me since mannerisms are more ingrained in the subconscious mind and shouldn't be affected by losing ones memory. Guilmon's a very playful Digimon, very open and trusting Digimon and other then a slight increase of viral tendencies, he's mannerisms shouldn't have altered this much."

TK blinks while Yami looks thoughtful. "So if we give Yami the antidote to the dart, he'll turn into a human?" TK asks after a few minutes of thinking it over. "I think there's more too it then that." Yami says gently and he nods in agreement with Yami's statement.

"I think to undo this requires Guilmon or whatever name he's calling himself by, to be able to reverse this. It might take a few years before we'll be able to locate Guilmon and I guess until then, Takato's going to stay as Yami until then." He says and TK sighs.

"I think we should keep this to ourselves." Yami says after drinking some water. He blinks in surprise while TK asks, "How come?"

"Well for one thing, I don't want the others' pity. I'm a Digimon now and for the time being, your partner. Just because I was human sometime ago doesn't change the fact that we're having a rough time

right now. You need me in the role of your partner until we find and bring back Patamon. The others might feel that they need to protect both of us because of the fact they don't want to risk losing me in a fight because I was once human. That would take away divert their attention during battle, something that we might not be afford to happen." Yami says, he can't help but agree with the human turned Digimon, his respect for Takato goes up a notch.

"There's more isn't there?" TK asks softly and Yami looks away from TK's face. "I can't help but feel that I did something really bad once, I want to use this as an opportunity to make up for that mistake. Instead of being the usual variety of Guilmon, I'm a Black-Guilmon which must mean something more then just a species switch. Maybe there's something in me that I have to confront and acknowledge, something I have to acknowledge so I can over come it." Yami says.

He sighs, while Yami doesn't remember anything about Megidramon, it seems that deep down, the goggle wearing teen still hasn't forgiven himself about forcing Guilmon to Digivolve into that mega level demon dragon Digimon. Although, he, too, had to admit that Yami's right about wondering why he's a Blackguilmon instead of the typical Guilmon.

Other then TK agreeing to keep silent about this secret, they soon switched to other topics as they wait for the waiter to arrive with the bill so that they can each head home.

Yami

It was around noon when the news began to cover the strange fog covering the district where the majority of the Digidestine lived with the exception of Joe and TK.

He ducks more into the hallway as TK tries to convince his mom to try and get to through the fog to help Matt and his father, TK's mom's ex husband. After a few minutes after they left, he moves to the window with a fire escape and once the window's open enough, he

climbs through it. He manages to close the window before climbing down, not wanting some thief to get in through the open window.

Once on the ground, he heads to the dock as something within him tells him that's where he needs to be. He hopes that he'll met TK along the way.

- **x** -

Kari

She stands at the device that Wizardmon had given her before charging off to distract the ghost Digimon while Gatomon and her head off to find a hiding spot. Within just a few hours, the world seems to be spinning out of control as Bakemon round out everyone in the district under Myotismon's orders.

She could feel the tag that holds the crest of Light under her shirt as they wait for a patrol of Bakemon to pass by the alley they're ducked into.

"I think we're safe, for the moment at least." The white cat Digimon that is her partner Digimon says softly after glancing around the street. She presses her lips in a thin line as she nods when Gatomon glances at her.

"What does he want with all of those people?" She can't help but wonder as they race through the street. "Don't worry about it, he won't hurt them until after he gets what he wants." Gatomon answers.

"And he wants me." She says with a hint of dread within her chest while Gatomon doesn't say anything as they suddenly hug the wall as Gatomon moves to check around the corner.

"Clear!" Gatomon tells her and with a nod, they race around the corner and when something moves before them, they duck into an alley.

"It's like a ghost town in here." She hears a kid's voice say while somebody hums in agreement. "I wonder where Tai and the others are, hopefully they're haven't been caught yet." An older voice says while a third says, "Relax Joe, I doubt Agumon and other others would allow something to happen to their partners." And that fourth presence hums in agreement.

As two foot steps walk pass, a large shadow pauses and then as she backs away, moving behind a large trash bin while Gatomon flexes her arms. "Yami?" The younger voice calls out.

"You found something?" The same voice asks and one called Yami hums in agreement. "Hello? Pumpkinmon? Wizardmon?" She glances at Gatomon as the white cat turns to look at her.

She moves out from behind the trash bin and gets a good look at the pair at the entrance way to the alley. She gives a passing glance at the boy her age dressed in green before staring frankly at the large black dino looking Digimon with red markings on his body.

Big. What her only thought on seeing the rookie while Gatomon seems to gawking at the black Digimon with a stunned expression on her furry face.

"Hi, I'm TK and this is Yami, he's currently my partner until we find a way to rescue my original partner, Patamon." TK says and she returns her attention to the kid.

"I'm Kari, Tai's little sister and this is Gatomon, my partner Digimon." She says and once she said that, the third person comes back.

"What's the hold up, you two?" The older voice asks. "Yami found Tai's little sister and her partner, who's Gatomon!" TK answers.

Within seconds, she gets to see an older kid with glasses with a little Digimon hovering by his shoulder.

"Hi, I'm Joe and this is my partner, Bukamon." Joe says and Bukamon grins as he says, "Hi!"

"Nice to met you." She says with a shy smile on her face as Gatomon nods, though her partner kept giving Yami the occasional glance.

"I can see why they call you Yami." Gatomon says and a ghost of a smile seems to appear while the tall black Digimon hums.

"I think we should find some place safe so that you can tell us what's what." Joe says and she nods in agreement, though she suddenly feels tire about racing through the street.

She must have look it as TK asks Yami, "Do you mind carrying her? I think she's tired of running around." With a nod, Yami drops to the ground TK gives her a smile of encouragement.

With a side glance at her partner, she climbs onto Yami's back, making sure to have her arms around his neck as he slowly and carefully get to his feet. "Let's go." Joe says and with that, they head off to find a secure place for their chat.

- **x** -

TK

He can't help but feel a bit distressed about what Gatomon and Kari had to say. It seems as if the whole group is scattered throughout the city and he rather not think about what could have happened with Pumpkinmon and Wizardmon.

He feels something on this shoulder and with a blink turns to find Yami looking at him. He smiles slightly, feeling a bit better as he looks up into Yami's yellow eyes.

It's still a bit hard to believe that Yami's true form is a boy named Takato, he wonders what it would be like, not even remembering

who his parents are let alone not remembering about Patamon or even about his friends and of course, Matt.

In that instance, he realized how thankful he was that Yami kept him from being hit with that dart since it, too, cause amnesia as well as transforming on into a Digimon.

Though Ryo never went into a great deal of information about either Guilmon, Yami's partner Digimon, or about Takato himself, he didn't mind since he rather learn more about his Neo-partner through their adventures and sharing dreams with Yami then just being told. Though he did wonder if it bothered Yami about not knowing more about who he was before he found himself alone in his world's Digital world.

"I just wish I knew how the others are." He says to Yami and the black rookie sighs as the crimson marked rookie sits down next to him while Joe and Gatomon move to comfort Kari while Bukamon keeps a look out for incoming Digimon.

"Keep hoping that they're ok and they will be, after all, you're crest is Hope, right?" Yami says, trying to help him feel better. He snorts but in someway, he can't fault Yami's logic.

"I guess, though, you think if you do Digivolve into Blackgrowlmon that you'll be able to, you know, remember me and the others?" He asks and Yami shrugs. "I hope so, but then, there were other things that required my attention at that time. It might have been battle lust that I was experiencing and I was coming out of it by the end there." The large rookie muses.

"Must be hard being a virus type." He notes while Yami just sighs. "There's nothing wrong with being a virus, it just that we have a different set of instincts then vaccine and data attribute Digimon." The black Digimon says and he smiles on hearing that.

"Well, you are more protective of me then Patamon and Matt combine, that's for sure!" He says with a little giggle while Yami

seems to be embarrassed though it's hard to tell if Yami's blushing or not since since he's totally black.

"Guys! I think it's time for us to move out!" Bukamon says as the in-training Digimon comes speeding towards them.

Yami

As they race through a back alley, he had mentioned that traveling viva the alleyways they could avoided being sported by larger and meaner Digimon on the streets. It had surprised him that they listened to his suggestion but he hadn't had time to think about it more as they move through the maze of alleyways as they head through the city hoping to find one of the other Digidestine.

"This is getting tiresome." A be-robed ghost Digimon called Phantomon says, appearing in a larger intersection of alleyways. He fires off a Pyro Grenade which the Digimon cuts through using his chain sickle. They pause and he makes sure to stand before TK while Gatomon stands in front of Kari. Bukamon Digivolves into Gomamon before moving into position in front of Joe.

He can *feel* the surrounding Bakemon and ever fiber within him wishes he can just launch himself at the offending Digimon who threaten those under his command. The only reason he's able to hold himself in check was simple, if he was out of range of TK its more then likely that Phantomon will take TK as a hostage.

"Now then, will you surrender or will we have to take you by force?" The leader of the Bakemon asks in his eerie voice.

He glances to his right side to look at Gomamon and then to his left to look at Gatomon. Neither of the other Digimon seems to have enough energy for a prolong fight and he doubts that Gomamon has it in him right now to go champion, which meant that they either surrender and hope to escape later or he Digivolves and chases the ghosts off.

"TK... I'm willing to test that theory right now, you know, the one we talked about." He says without taking his eyes off of Phantomon. "If you're willing to try then so am I, get them Yami!" TK says and within seconds the two Digivices in TK's possession glow.

"Blackguilmon Digivolved too..." He feels his skin unravel before his body expands. As new skin begins to cover him up, he felt new strength flow through him.

As the red frame within the egg begins to break appear within seconds of the last bit new skin finishes getting grafted to his frame. "Blackgrowlmon!" He roars with steam coming out of his nostrils.

"So it's to be by force, so be it. Shadow Scythe!" Phantomon cries out as the ghost Digimon swings his weapon and purple coloured energy comes flying towards him.

He easily bats the attack away, it hits one of the surrounding Bakemon and as Phantomon blinks in shocked amazement, he counter attacks using Dark Blade. The ghost Digimon seems to teleport out of the line of attack. The ball at the end of the chain wraps around his left arm. He humphs and jerks his arm away from the ultimate ghost Digimon while Gomamon and Gatomon fend off attacks from the Bakemon.

Phantomon doesn't let go of weapon and so he slams the ghost Digimon into the surrounding buildings and into his fellow ghost Digimon. He can't help but admit that this was kind of fun causing this Digimon to slam around since all the Digimon had to do was let go of the chain sickle to stop getting flung around.

"He looks like he's having fun." He hears Gatomon comment, he assumes that the 'he' she's talking about was him. "Well, I would too if I was capable of swinging my enemies around." Gomamon answers dryly.

He uses his other hand and like a rope lasso, he swings the Digimon around in the air before letting go of the chain on his end. As

Phantomon flies through the air, he takes a deep breath before using his Black Exhaust Flame attack, within seconds Phantomon is deleted and he resists the urge to roar over his victory.

On seeing their boss being deleted, the rest of the Bakemon flee the area and he snorts in satisfaction at how scared they were as they do so.

Some steam exits out of his nostrils once the last Bakemon vanishes from his sight.

"You really got to work on minimizing the damage done to the surrounding area." Joe says and with a blink, he glances around and then begins to scratch the back of his head, his claws moving through his mane of grey hair to do so.

"Err... At least I got rid of him." He states before he reverse back to his rookie form.

"And you had fun doing it too." Gomamon says and he sighs as he gives the white aqua Digimon a minor glare before turning to look at TK.

"You did an ok job, I think next time you should just finish them off as soon as possible. I mean, haven't you heard the saying about playing with your food?" TK says and he just sighs.

"Well then, now that we pretty much signaled our location, how are we suppose to travel around now?" Gatomon asks scratchily and he turns to study a man hole cover.

"I object!" Joe declares on notices where his gaze is on. "Ok then, you think you can drive that?" He asks, pointing to a van that's been vacated in a hurry. Joe groans while TK and Kari exhange looks with the other Digimon and themselves.

- **x** -

Kari

"I can't believe you thought that saying no would stop him from high jacking this van. Though I'll admit that I had my doubts about this as well but he's not hitting anything so you can open your eyes Joe." Gomamon informs the older boy sitting on the other side of Gatomon.

TK's sitting on the passenger side of the front as Yami sits in the driver's seat after taking the back half of the seat off so that he can sit comfortably on the bottom half of the seat since there wasn't any room for his tail to poke through.

While they all had their reservations about Yami's idea of high jacking a van, none of them wanted to go crawling through the sewers either and so they figured this was the lesser of two evils. So far, so good, though she's kind of sure that Yami's suppose to drive on the right side of the street then swaying over the solid white line in the middle of the street.

"Too bad the radio doesn't work or we could be listening to a radio station." TK says and she nods in agreement.

"This sure beats running around." Gatomon admits grudgingly. "Yea, my feet were getting kind of sore, it's been a while since we had to do so much walking and running around. After all, other then that train car that we spend the night in while we were on File Island or that train wagon that Etemon used to get around in, there didn't seem to be any type of vehicles around." TK says and she blinks before looking to Gatomon to confirm this.

"You're forgetting about that ship in the dessert." Gomamon says as Yami turns a sharp right.

"What about you, Yami, are there any vehicles in your Digital world?" TK asks and Yami replies, "I think I meet a Locomon once and then there's this demon motorcycle that was going around deleting these

peaceful Digimon. I know I met something similar to the bike but it escapes me for the moment."

"What's a Locomon?" She asks and Yami answer as he drives over a bridge, "A machine Digimon that's in a shape of a train. It's capable of using real world railroad tracks as a mode of transportation too."

"Huh, I wonder if those train tracks on File Island were built for Locomon to use." TK wonders while Joe seems to be chanting softly to himself, trying to block out what's going on around him while Gomamon tries to engage his partner in conversation.

"I'm getting low on gas. I think after this block we'll have to get out and walk around." Yami reports after it being silent for over twenty minutes, not counting to Joe's chanting or Gomamon's attempts at baiting Joe.

Soon Yami pulls over and parks the van. Once the engine is turned off, they unbuckle their seat belts while Gomamon finally gets through to Joe, or it could be because they stop moving that caused Joe to snap out of it.

"Land, sweet land!" Joe declares once they get out of the van. Joe tries to hug the concrete while Yami crosses his arms while saying, "My driving wasn't that bad, was it?"

"You just need more practice." She says and TK nods in agreement, giving her a thankful smile. She returns his smile, she's kind of glad she isn't the only kid her age to be part of this group.

"Well then, lead on, Yami." Gomamon says and the large rookie blinks. "Who said I was in charge?" Yami asks with a startled look on his face.

"Well, it was your idea to use the alleyways, your idea to high jack the van, and you're the one who can sniff out enemy Digimon." TK answers and Yami says, "Oh."

Yami begins to sniff the air and then turns to look at this odd building a few meters away. "I think we're needed there." Yami declares and they were soon on their way towards the building.

She falls into step with TK as Joe takes the lead. "You said that Yami wasn't your original partner but you two seem to get along pretty well together despite that." She says and glances at her own partner who's walking a few feet from her. "How long did it take you two to get to really know each other?" She asks.

"Actually, I'm still learning to get along with Yami. After all, I was pretty depressed about losing Patamon but then I began to worry about losing the others to those strange Digimon with the transformation darts. I still miss Patamon," TK holds up a hand and points the the black sweat band. "I'm wearing this to show that I still miss him even though I have Yami around to protect me. I know that Yami has to return to his world and though I'm going to miss him, I know that he's got his own partner out there that needs him as I got Patamon to take care of me and for me to take care of him."

She sighs but it helps to know that it's not an automatic thing that goes on between a human partner and their partner Digimon. Though she does feel a bit bad for TK, sure Patamon's his real partner but when Yami's gone, TK's going to miss him regardless if he has Patamon to replace him or not.

Tai

"Matt! Garurumon!" He calls out from his position on Greymon's shoulder. "Tai! Greymon! Boy are you two a sight for sore eyes." Matt calls out from his position behind his partner's head, but a bit before the shoulder blades.

"Have you seen Sora, Mimi, or Izzy yet?" He asks his friend and Matt shakes his head in a negative, he sighs and scratches the side of his head, he really hoped that Matt would know something about the others.

"I hope Wizardmon and Gatomon are keeping Kari safe." He mutters and Greymon says, "I'm sure she's fine, Tai. After all, she's got two champion Digimon around to protect her."

"Thanks buddy, I needed to hear that." He says with a tired grin at his partner as Garurumon comes closer to their position.

"So, what's the plan?" Matt asks once Garurumon has stopped about ten feet away. "Well, no point in splitting up so we might want to start finding the others. You think you're up to tracking them down Garurumon?" He calls out.

"I can try." The canine type Digimon answers and he nods. "Well then, which direction do you want to head in?" He asks the two since he's more then willing to let the other two to take the lead this one since Garurumon's sense of smell is better then when he's Gabumon.

After all if Yami's able to sniff out Digimon, why not this canine champion?

- **x** -

Mimi

"I'm getting worried about Palmon, Sora. You think Pumpkinmon will be able to find Wizardmon in order to healer?" She asks her fellow captive Digidestine. Sora sighs before answering, "With Birdramon carrying them, I'm sure they'll find him without too much trouble. Frankly, I'm worried about those panicked Bakemon. They seem to be ready to jump out of their bed sheets."

"I haven't seen Phantomon either. Wasn't he leading a squad of Bakemon in pursue of a girl seen with a Digimon?" She wonders as she recalls over hearing from a pair of Bakemon while taking her turn at the water fountain.

"Well, we don't have to worry about that guy, according to these pair of guards, it seemed that Phantomon was taken out by a Blackgrowlmon who's with three kids and another two monsters." A man overhearing them talk about a pursue says.

"That must be that Joe and TK are here in this fog too!" She says, suddenly worried for the pair.

"Yea, if Yami's here then TK's here and it's likely the other reason they're here is because Joe and Gomamon gave them a lift! We might actually have the whole team met up soon, after all, Yami did drive Myotismon off without needing to Digivolve, if he goes ultimate then Myotismon is toast!" Sora says with a sigh of relief.

She suddenly felt a whole lot more confident about their situation as she, too, smiles in relief as she can see the light in the silver lining.

- **x** -

Izzy

"Izzy, I think some of your friends are here." He hears Matt's dad tells him and he moves from this pine apple computer to look down at the group approaching the TV station.

"That black one is Yami, there's Joe, Gomamon, and TK! Though who's that with them?" Tentomon wonders and he hums in agreement, though he's glad to see some familiar faces.

True, it helps that in regards to power, Yami's likely the most powerful Digimon in the group without needing to Digivolve much but then he felt that he's being disloyal to Agumon and Gabumon respectfully. Not to mention the fact that Yami's only replacing Patamon as TK's partner until the way that Gennai mention is unclogged.

"It must be the eighth Digidestine and their partner Digimon." He says as at that moment, a patrol spots the group and approach in a

nervous manner.

When Yami takes a few steps forward, the Bakemon all seem to scream out in fright and flee in all direction. "It seems that Yami must have left an impression on a patrol of Bakemon if they're reacting in that manner." He sums up what just happen.

"Then I'm doubly glad that he's on our side." His partner says and he nods in agreement.

So they head down to welcome their friends, relieved that they had back up for their assault on the community center where Myotismon has all the hostages.

- **x** -

Myotismon

"What do you mean that Gatomon is the eighth child's Digimon!" He growls at the cringing DemiDevimon.

"It's worse then that, my lord Myotismon! It seems that Phantomon engaged to capture them and the large ebony Digimon with crimson markings Digivolved into his champion form of Blackgrowlmon during the confrontation. He swung Phantomon around like a rag doll before tossing Phantomon into the air and deleting him with a single fire attack!" One of the Bakemon says.

He stiffens as his mind recalls his own encounter with the black rookie with red markings. He suppresses a shudder at the idea of confronting the black Digimon in his ultimate form.

"Send out our strongest forces to the area they were seen in. Now get out, I need to concentrate!" He snarls at those present and with a gulp from the two cringing Digimon the pair flee from his sight.

Alone once more, he can't help but snarl silently as his carefully laid out plans are now disrupted simply by the appearance of the large

black Digimon with red markings.

"Perhaps I can help neutralize this black Digimon for you, though, there is a price you much pay for my help." He turns around to find a ninja style humanoid Digimon standing in the deepest shadow.

He schools his features as he regards this abnormal Digimon, he can't help but sense that there's something off about this Digimon. "And what is the price for your help?" He asks after a few minutes.

"Let's say that when the time is right, we will approach you and you won't question our request. You will do as we ask on this future matter as outlined by us, understood?" The unknown Digimon says and after weighing the pros and cons, he decides that he could afford the price.

"You have a deal." He says and before he can say more, the ninja Digimon vanishes into the shadows, leaving him alone with his coffin.

Yami

As the others rest in the staff lounge of the TV station and he's wandering about, making sure that there isn't anyone trying to retake control of the building, after all they're all taking turn patrolling the station, though it's kind of agreed on that both Kari and TK won't be part of this, after all, Gatomon and him were more then able to patrol on their own.

He stands on the roof, he had grown bored stalking through the halls of the station so he figured that he'd have a better chance at sensing approaching Digimon if he were outside.

As he gazes upwards at the layer of fog obscuring his view of the night sky. After all, without the city lights, he would have had the perfect view of the starry sky.

"Yami, geeze your hard to find!" He hears Gatomon exclaim and he turns to watch the white cat Digimon come towards him.

He's about to wave in greeting when he stiffens up. "Yami? Yami!" Gatomon bellows as he finds himself dropping into a pit of blackness.

As he looks up, he finds the hole leading out closing and then hears an deep chuckling, he snaps his head down as he tries to peer into the blackness of the field around him.

"Who would have thought that such a happy go lucky Digimon like yourself could alter so much with a simple colour change? I wonder what your *Tamer* would say if he could be here now to see you partnered up with another human?" A voice asks in a mocking way before doing that chuckling thing again.

It takes him a moment to realize that this being was part of that group that Ryo had mentioned that they had been investigating before they were caught up in that blast. *He thinks I'm Guilmon!* He muses though he struggles not to laugh at this being's conclusion.

"Pyro Grenade!" He growls and for a few seconds there was some light to give him a clue as to how large the playing field is.

"You missed me by a mile!" The being taunts and he growls as his anger gets the better of him.

He fires off three Pyro Grenades in response, though once more their light didn't shine much light on where this villain is hiding.

He growls in annoyance as he realizes that this unknown Digimon was likely waiting for him to get out of energy before closing in for the kill.

The trouble was, he's short on time since he knows that the others needed him while this being had all the time he needed, after all, this being is here to delete him and so far, this unknown Digimon was

succeeding in this as long as he's here, in this field of darkness where his opponent has the upper hand. After all, it stands to reason that this Digimon wasn't hindered by needing some kind of light to see him.

In the end, he closes his eyes and tries to use his other senses to locate this being, though it likely won't help him finish this fight in the shortest amount of time but in the end, he knew that ultimately, TK would prefer him to come back whole then injured.

Though the trouble is, he's not sure if he's capable of playing this waiting game, but in the end, he didn't see any other opinion.

He snarls as he comes to that conclusion.

- **x** -

TK

He's gone. He finds it hard to swallow that simple statement, after all, from the beginning of their relationship, Yami's has become a corner stone in his life, somebody that helped anchor him now that Patamon was beyond his reach.

He can't stop the tears that were welling up as the numbness that had kept him from feeling anything begins to fade. He races out of the room, he wanted to be alone so he can have a good cry.

He enters into an empty room and as he begins to sob, he wishes he can know how Yami's doing.

After thinking that and wishing that he could, one of the Digivices begins to make sounds. It takes him a second to realize that its the one that Yami called a D-Arc.

As he holds it, the screen begins to glow, much like it had when it gave that information about Digimon.

What the hologram shows was complete darkness though there's a hint of a growl coming from some where.

"What is this?" He wonders out loud as he uses his free hand to wipe away some of his tears.

"TK?" He hears Yami's voice say as the growling stops.

"Yami? You can hear me?" He asks his Neo-partner, a bit of his depression fade now that he's talking with the black Digimon.

"Yes I can." The crimson marked Digimon says and after a few seconds the rookie adds, "TK, I hate to tell you think but this fight is going take sometime. I know you and the others need me but whoever is controlling this field doesn't feel the need for this to be a fast fight. I want you to know that I will try and end this as soon as I can but for now, I need you to be strong and believe that everything's going to be alright, alright?"

He bits his lower lip as he think about this before nodding. "I trust you, Yami. If you say you can make it out of there, then you will." He declares as he resolves to do as Yami suggests.

"That means a lot, TK, it really does. Just remember, you guys were defeating evil Digimon long before I showed up so you guys can take Myotismon without me. Just trust in each other and support each other, ok?" Yami asks and he answer, "Ok."

The image fades and he decides to go find something to blow his nose in. As he turns around, he finds Kari and Gatomon standing slightly behind him with a puzzled look on their faces.

"That's kind of handy." Gatomon says in an amused tone and he reddens slightly and he nods.

"Yea, I guess so. So you guys heard that too? I just want to make sure since I don't want the others to think I'm imagining things." He says and Kari smiles as she nods in agreement.

"We heard it." The pair says and he smiles warmly at them, feeling only a tiny bit sad but overall, more then a little confident after his chat with Yami.

"Let's go rejoin the others." He says and they head out of the room, heading to where they last seen Joe, Izzy, his dad, Gomamon, and Tentomon.

- **x** -

Tai

It was Matt's idea to head to the TV station to check up on his dad, he didn't mind, after all, so far all they've encountered were minions of Myotismon.

Amazingly enough, neither of their partners had gone back to their rookie forms throughout their travels through the city. Even when they stopped to rest, their partner remained champions throughout said rest period.

"That's where you're dad works?" He asks as some of the fog clears to reveal a large building with a sphere in the middle of the building and on the top floor of the building.

"Yea. Come on before some Bakemon spot us." The blond Digidestine says, using his legs to get Garurumon closer to the building.

As they climb down from their respective partners, the two glow and within seconds, they're rookies once more.

"Matt! Tai!" He looks up to find some of their friend, his sister, and a grown up who's likely Matt's father coming out of the building.

"TK!" "Kari!" Matt and him call out to their respective siblings. As he hugs his sister, he can't help but noticed that there was two people missing from this reunion.

"Hey you two, we were getting pretty worried. Do you know where Mimi and Sora are?" Joe asks while still holding onto Gomamon. "Last I heard, Mimi and her family were captured. I'm now sure about Sora though." He says while Matt asks, "Where's Yami?"

He blinks and realizes that's who's missing along with Wizardmon. "Yea, where is the big guy?" Agumon asks.

"Some unknown Digimon showed up and trapped Yami in some kind of black area." TK answers. "And he hasn't managed to get out yet?" Matt asks in a kind of agitated tone.

"Well, from our talk, it seems that the Digimon isn't looking to finish him quickly." The young blond admits and he glances at the older two Digidestine, Joe and Izzy while they shrug.

"How can you talk with him when he's trapped in this area?" He asks and TK shrugs.

"The D-Arc that Gennai gave me began to make noise when I was all by myself and then suddenly an image of blackness accompanied by growling appeared." TK says.

Kari and Gatomon nod in agreement while Kari adds, "Then TK asked a question, the growling stopped and Yami's voice came from it."

TK nods and continues, "Then Yami said that it was going to take him sometime to get out of there and that we have to trust and support each other. He even said we can defeat Myotismon without him since we've been defeating evil Digimon before he joined us."

He blinks as he tries to get his head around this, though, honestly, he did admit that Yami had a very good point, the only problem was that they don't have a full number for their group since the girls were missing with their partners.

"Well, at least somebody believes we can pull this off." Gomamon says from his position in Joe's arms and Tentomon says, "I concur."

"Well then, the first thing we need to do is find Sora, Mimi, and their partners. It wouldn't hurt having Wizardmon and Pumpkinmon join us either." He says with determination and the others all nod in agreement.

As he moves to talk with Izzy and most of the others, Matt, TK, and their father move a bit off to have a family chat more then likely.

Wizardmon

"How are you feeling, Lillymon?" He asks the flower maiden as he arrives with more food that Pumpkinmon found from the surrounding area. As he puts the tray down on the counter and he then sits down on one of the taller chairs while Lillymon seems to be pacing the length of the kitchen. Biyomon and Pumpkinmon should be joining them shortly.

"I can't wait for round two with that creep!" The beautiful ultimate level Digimon snaps, it's clear to him that she's worried about her partner.

Lillymon stops pacing and after looking at the tray of food, begins to devour what she want's.

As Lillymon finishes about half the tray of food, Biyomon arrives on the heels of Pumpkinmon. "I got news!" The bird rookie calls out in an almost sing song fashion.

"Oh?" He asks as he turns to give her his full attention.

"Yea! It seems that sometime yesterday, Phantomon was deleted by a black Digimon with crimson markings who was with some human kids and two Digimon. And I'm sure we all know only one Digimon

who fits that description, don't we?" Biyomon says, clearly she still has more to say.

"Yami and if he's here then TK and likely Joe and Gomamon." Lillymon says with a slight grin on her face.

"The third pair are, hopefully, Kari and Gatomon." He says as Pumpkinmon sets out more food, this time for everyone to snack on.

"That's not all, later, after Phantomon was deleted, they were spotted over at the TV station and the few curious Bakemon who stuck around a bit longer say that Izzy, Tentomon, and an adult came out to greet them!" Biyomon finishes and he's glad they have something to focus on.

"So once we're done eating we'll head to the TV station then?" Pumpkinmon asks, contributing to the conversation and the two girl Digimon and himself nod in agreement.

- **x** -

TK

As they're finish preparing, mainly making sure everyone's used the restrooms, they're feed and watered, and weren't drop dead tired.

Joe had just finish regaling Tai and Matt about the van hijacking that Yami 'engineered', how was it hijacking when the keys were in the vehicle he didn't quite get but Agumon and Gabumon, who were listening in as they followed their partners seem to exchanges looks, likely not knowing if they should believe what Joe's saying.

He shakes his head as he walks with Kari and Gatomon while Izzy and Tentomon take the lead for once. Tai's younger sister and him got along pretty well and it's nice having somebody his own age to hang out with, even though Kari's a girl...

For a moment, he feels the impact of his missing partners but stops at the sight of a group of four Digimon coming towards them. "Hey look! There's Biyomon, Pumpkinmon, and Wizardmon!" He calls out, getting the others' attention.

"Who's the one flying over them?" Tai wonders once the older kids raced pass them to stand by Izzy.

"I think that's Lillymon, the ultimate form of Togemon." Tentomon says with an authoritative sounding way.

"Really? Cool!" He says before giggling slightly in happiness that their groups will soon be complete.

"Now we just need Mimi and Sora and everyone will be together once more." Gabumon says and the other Digimon nod in agreement.

"Wizardmon!" Gatomon calls out, moving to the front of the 'pack' to wave at her good friend.

Hopefully when they find Mimi and Sora, they'll find them almost completely healthy.

- **x** -

Yami

He pants as he breaks off from his assault on shadowy figures that seem to surround him.

After that short talk with TK, these outlines began to appear in the blackness when he had opened his eyes during the conversation and had stop concentrating on using his other senses.

Now he's paying the price as he lies on the ground, his anger and irritation that had been driving him on have left him, leaving him to feel the drain of his steady attacks at phantoms.

Stupid! I've been such a goggle-head in allowing my anger drive me forward, now look where that's got me! He snarls at himself as anger flares up within him, focused at his inability to keep a cool, level head in this instance.

"Where's a modify card when you need one?" He wonders softly to himself. A few seconds later he begins to wonder what a modify card was until he just shrugged it off as something to think about later.

"Oh dear, are you tired little rookie? And I was just getting warmed up!" The unknown Digimon says before laughing in a darkly amused way.

He scuffs at that, doubting very much that his enemy was just getting warmed up. The whole point of showing off those outlines were for him to chase after phantoms after all.

He's in control of this environment, which means that all of his abilities are geared into making what he wants happen in this battle ground. It's likely he doesn't have any powerful attacks because of that. After all, Myotismon's fog is slowly eating away at his energy reserve, thus making his attacks less potent, not that it help me to muse about it. Though the truth is, if Myotismon had attacked me with a Crimson Lightning while in the Digital world, I'd be lucky if I reversed to being Gigimon. He thinks as he admits that if he had gone toe to toe with the ultimate vampire Digimon a few days earlier then when they met, its more then likely that he would have come off worst for wear after such a battle.

It likely helps that Myotismon's natural resistance to other viruses had gotten lower as the ultimate tries to up his resistance to data and vaccine attribute Digimon. After all, why would somebody like Myotismon have to worry about attacks from viruses when the total of the Digidestine Digimon were from the first two categories?

He gives himself a mental slap, he's getting off topic as this pondering on his pair wasn't helping him out in the here and now.

His stomach decides at that moment to growl an agreement and he groans as the booming laughter of the unknown Digimon gets louder until it finally dies off.

He brings his arms under his chin as he begins to try and focus on what to do next. In the end, he'll have to stick with his original idea, which meant that he can't trust his eyes, though he hopes that whoever is out there won't start making phantom sounds to distract him, though this voice thing might just fall under that category...

Right now, he really wishes that Izzy was here since he's fairly sure that the young red head would think of something to counter this.

Thinking of red heads made him think about Rika and then about Henry.

He sits up as he realizes that it wasn't just the Digidestine that were counting on him, but also his previous friends from another life, one he had lived as Takato, partner of Guilmon.

He's not sure where the energy was coming from, though it did seem to be coming from his chest, but he soon felt more energized then he had a few seconds ago.

This time, this time I will stick to the plan and I will get out of here. I have everything to lose if it ends here. He thinks to himself as he closes his eyes once more, this time he tunes out the taunting voice, there's something there... something that may help...

TK

The raid on the community center had a few rocky patches but ultimately, when Gatomon Digivolved into Angewomon, Myotismon got a large arrow through his chest and was thus defeated while Pumpkinmon got attended to by Wizardmon for the injuries the pumpkin headed Digimon suffered from shielding Kari and him from the vampire's Crimson Lightning.

Wizardmon believes that Pumpkinmon will make a complete recovery, which seemed to relieve Gatomon.

Although everyone is kind of worried about this prophecy that Gennai send within a few minutes of them defeating Myotismon...

It didn't help that the people they were trying to rescue wouldn't wake up and that caused everyone to worry about their respective parents, though, lucky for Izzy, Matt, and him, neither of their parents were out of it, though he decided to try his best to comfort Kari since she had tried to comfort him about Yami vanishing.

"Are you sure you don't want to go with your brother and dad to see if we can get through that way?" Kari asks as they hang out by the main entrance way leading into and out of the building. Gatomon was with them just in case they missed some rogue Digimon that were Myotismon's minions.

"I'm sure." He answers, unwilling to say why he declined to go with them.

They didn't say much as they waited to hear from the others as they spread around the city, keeping themselves busy to take their minds off of what's happening with the sleeping people in the community center.

- **x** -

Yami

Impatience at his slow progress made him want to bite something or even try to dig his way out, his whole being resented being forced to sit around and do *nothing* while TK and the others are fighting for their lives at this very moment.

Why he felt that was a certainty wasn't something his thoughts pondered on for long.

As he feels his resistance weaken something moved and it wasn't him.

"Damn it Kai, I've had enough of this! He hasn't moved in *hours* , he's likely sleeping!" His inner conflict vanishes at this new development.

"That telepathy stuff is giving me a head ache, if you want to say something, do it like a normal person for once!" The same voice growls and is followed by a sigh.

"Cho..." He hears a second voice growl as something moves a bit to the left behind him.

"Kai, this mon is sleeping for crying out loud! You remember those reports we got about the Tamers. Sure this one's reverse in colour with a bit of an attitude adjustment, but the profile made it clear that Guilmon can't stay still for more then a few minutes and he's been known to be a heavy sleeper. He doesn't even have anybody around to give him directions!" Cho says walking closer to him.

"Idiot! Get back here!" Kai growls but Cho ignores this.

As Kai growls warnings at Cho and snarls orders for him to back away from him, Cho pauses slightly around his back.

The guy nudges him and he forces himself not to respond, lucky for him, this whole episode seems to satisfy that part of him that was screaming for him to something.

He allows his eyes to open slightly when he hears Cho come towards his head. He gets a slightly good view of what one of his captures looks like.

Despite the fact that they both have names, his noses informs him that they were, in fact, Digimon. It was likely that they had been human at one point but had taken that drug that alters a human into a Digimon, though it's likely they took it willingly and therefore the

added element that was part of the dart formula to cause the subject to get amnesia wasn't added to their dosage.

Cho's got the classic ninja going on as he's wrapped up from head to foot in loose fitting black and blue cloths with a leather face mask covering the Digimon's lower face. Glowing purple eyes surveyed him with a hint of disinterest and as Kai got a bit louder in calling Cho back, he thought he saw a flash of amusement flicker in those glowing orbs.

Cho turns around, his stance totally relax with his guard lowered, the man turned Digimon says, "See? He's fast asleep! He didn't even flicker his tail when I nudged him with my foot!"

Within a flash, he's on the ninja, the element of surprise was so great that Cho didn't even know what happened as he quickly launches himself onto Cho's back as he bites down hard on the back of the Digimon's head.

Kai shouts out, "Cho!" As Cho's body breaks apart into data particles, which he absorbs without a second thought, the area around him alters and he suddenly finds himself on the roof of the TV station with Cho's twin, the one called Kai.

He glares spitefully at the Digimon as he flexes his claws on his left hand. "Pyro Grenade!" He shouts and from his mouth a large purple fire ball is launched at Kai.

A blade appears in Kai's hand, cutting right through his attack. He slaps the blade out of Kai's hand, after all, the fire ball was meant to be a distraction to keep the ninja Digimon from noticing his approach.

"Stunning Mist!" Kai yells and from the area in front of the leather mask, the attack emanates from.

He counters with Virus Breathe before the pair of them back away. He could tell that Kai wasn't committing his all to this, its more then

likely that the ninja type Digimon that the man had be transformed into was looking for a way to distract him so that he could make a clean get away.

The distraction appeared in the form of a large hand coming down at them. He manages to duck away but Kai wasn't so lucky. Within seconds, Kai's swallowed by the large Digimon known as VenomMyotismon.

"More energy!" The mega bellows as he snorts but knew better then to stick around the roof where a giant Digimon could get a clear shot at him.

"Yami!" He hears his nick name and pauses as he reaches the door. He stares up at the woman angel for a few seconds before he feels something move behind him, so he falls forward as he enters into the stairwell.

True, he found himself falling down a row of stairs, hitting the wall hard enough to make him dizzy but otherwise, he was fine.

"I wonder how I get into messes like this..." He muses as he gets up off the ground, using the wall to aid in his efforts.

In the end, he races down the rest of the stairs but as he exits out of the building, something seems to cause the world around him to pause. He turns to look to where VenomMyotismon is frozen as well as where Angewomon is hovering in the air with her wings in front of her.

"I can't be here to do my part in this battle." He hears someone say, he blinks and turns to look to his right.

"MagnaAngemon..." He says with a hint of awe, after all, one simple slash from his holy sword and he wouldn't be alive any more.

The lower part of MagnaAngemon smiles slightly as the ultimate level Digimon nods slightly in his direction.

"And yet, destiny has proclaimed that two angels are needed to defeat this monster before us." He feels the angel Digimon turn to regard him.

"Take a bit of my powerful, Takato Matsuki, it should be enough to allow you to transform into Gallantmon: Crimson Mode for a few seconds, just long enough to take on my role in this drama." The ultimate level Digimon says and he can't help but blink.

"You must really hurt not to be by his side." He says to the angel Digimon.

"For now, you must stand in my stead. But yes, it does ache within me not being in my rightful place but it is not your fault this is so. I know I couldn't have asked for a better replacement though." The angel Digimon says and he feels his face heat up as he looks away from the holy warrior.

"I'll try my best." He promises as he looks back at the helmet covered face.

With a nod, MagnaAngemon breaks apart into light and the light speeds right towards him.

As time resumes he finds himself hovering above the ground with glowing white wings coming out of his back.

In his right arm, an arrow of light glows as he looks down to find Matt and Tai with their partners, he can hear Izzy's voice talk about hitting the loved ones of those they were sent to protect.

"Hey! Where did the crimson knight come from with the wings of an angel?" Tai wonders as the leader spots him before everyone else.

"I don't know but I think it's time for part about angels to come true." Izzy says and within seconds, he notices that Angewomon also has an arrow of light in her hand.

"You know what to do?" She asks and he nods before taking aim at Matt while Angewomon takes aim at Tai.

"Why are they aiming those arrows at us?" Tai wonders and Matt answers, "Just call it destiny and just hope it works!"

He lets loose his arrow and as it speeds towards Matt, he suddenly finds himself back by the TV station. He blinks and looks down at his arms.

That's how they found him, staring down at his arms with a sad look on his face.

TK

As they walk through the forest, he wonders what could cause Yami to have that depressing look on his face when they found him by the TV station, just like Salmon had told them where he was.

The look of utter sadness really tugged at his heart when he looked into Yami's yellow eyes. He could only imagine what caused Yami to look that way, though they didn't have much time to ask since the sky kind of ripped open and they witnessed the Digital world hanging in the sky above.

He had been about to ask but then, Joe almost fell off the the grassy ground and Mimi found the little Digimon that looks like a mouse.

Then they had new things to worry about as they learnt about the changes that began while they were gone to keep Myotismon from getting his hands on the eighth child, Kari.

Their meeting with the Dark Masters really hit home that they still had a long way to go before the Digital world was in the clear.

He didn't like how some of the others began to get snappy at each other, he hated how Matt and Tai went at it, after all, like the others

he's come to see Tai and most of the others as family, he didn't really think of Kari as a sibling since they've just meet within the last three or four days. It only help made it more so with her since she hadn't been around at the beginning of their journey.

No that he didn't want her as a friend, its just that... he didn't see her in the same light as he saw the others.

With a sigh, he returns to glancing at Yami as the ground jerks slightly and then suddenly, the whole forest seems to speed up.

"Now what?" He can't help but say with a frown. "Conflict more then likely." Yami answers with a hint of a dry tone.

He turns to look at the black Digimon while Tai and the others chat about what to do about it. He smiles at the Digimon hovering behind him, its the first time since they found Yami that the rookie decided to say something.

He leans a bit towards the crimson marking as Tai mentions jumping off the stripe of the land. Yami wraps his arms around his chest and picks him up before following the others into jumping off the fast moving stripe of land.

As they land on another stripe of forest, it stands moving and Yami moves him slightly so that one of his arms were free as the black Digimon aims for a tree before saying anything.

He takes hold of the tree branch and pulls him up, allowing Yami to do the same.

"TK!" He hears Matt call out as he moves closer to the trunk of the tree to allow Yami a chance to climb onto the branch.

"Matt!" He calls out as he realizes that the others hadn't mimicked Yami's leap.

He stares dumbly as the others speed away. "Well, this is just dandy." He says in a flat tone.

"Sorry." Yami says and he shakes his head. "It's not your fault. It's just that... everything happening way too fast." He states.

"And everyone's nerves are rare because of the sudden deaths of their friends." Yami sighs and he nods, it made sense.

"Matt's really sensitive right now and I think he's taking it out on Tai." He admits.

"I think Rika was like that, only I think at one point it was directed at her partner..." The black rookie Digimon muses softly and he gives his Neo-partner a startled glance.

"What did it involve?" He asks and the crimson marked Digimon answers, "It involved an IceDevimon who I think was loaded by Guilmon?"

"You mean there's another variety of Devimon out there?" He asks in amazement. "I think there's an ultimate named NeoDevimon." The human turned Digimon muses in answer.

"Well, I guess I shouldn't be surprised since you're kind of a living example of such things, huh?" He muses and Yami hums in agreement.

"So then, who do you think we're dealing with now? I mean, WarGreymon did destroy MetalSeadramon so..." He says and Yami looks thoughtful for a second before answering, "Puppetmon's made out of wood, right? This forest has trees so... We might be dealing with that one."

"Sounds reasonable to me." He declares and Yami smiles slightly.

"So... What happened in that dark field?" He asks as he's curious about what happened.

"I exhausted myself attacking phantoms, then when I was lying on the ground beating myself up, I then decided to try my original plan but that didn't work out since nobody was moving about. So, after a while, I was struggling with myself since a part of me wanted to move about while I wanted to stick with my plan." Yami says.

With a frown, the black Digimon continues, "While that was happening, one of the two men turned ninja Digimon grew impatient with what's going on and came up to nudge me to prove his point."

"You deleted him." He says and Yami nods in agreement.

"That I did. As I finish loading his data, the area effect vanishes and I had been facing off with the Digimon's partner when VenomMyotismon's hand came swiping down to grab us." Yami says, he frowns as he ponders what Yami had said about loading his opponent's data but decided not to ask.

"Well, I guess you missed us defeating VenomMyotismon." He says and Yami shrugs.

"I know that WarGreymon and MetalGarurumon used their attacks on the virus mega's lower body while the Digivices restrained his movements." Yami states and he blinks.

"Well, you missed out Agumon and Gabumon warp Digivolving and how they achieved it." He says and Yami sighs.

"I was the one who targeted Matt with the arrow of Hope." Yami admits softly with a far away look in his eyes.

"You mean that beautiful crimson knight was you?!" He exclaims and Yami nods.

"Patamon's spirit showed itself to me and told me I had to take his role as Gallantmon: Crimson mode. He misses you, a lot if I'm any judge." The black Digimon says and he blinks before looking away.

"He helped you achieve that, huh? That's why you've been... withdrawn." He says and Yami hums in agreement. "Yea, he did." The black rookie says quietly.

"It must have been strange, taking the likeness of your partner's mega form." He says and a slight smile hovers over Yami's face.

"Ever wonder how is was that Guilmon and I could exchange species? I mean, I'm sure the same thing could have happened with Ryo and Cyberdramon." Yami muses.

"Ok, what do you mean by that?" He demands with his arms crossed over his chest.

"Where I come from, Digimon and their partners Bio Merge to achieve mega level. Its like DNA Digivolving only with one of them is being human." The black rookie says and he just stares in awe.

"How did you achieve that?" He asks once he recovers his voice.

"I think we wished for it." The rookie says with his eyes unfocused as the rookie's gaze turns inward.

He sighs and it wasn't long before they're time together is cut short.

Tai

"Yami!" He shouts as he spots the crimson marked rookie Digimon lying on the ground, wrapped up in something that looks rubbery.

"Where's TK?" Matt demands as soon as they manage to get the red stuff off of him.

Yami gives Matt an odd look before answering, "Puppetmon showed up and before I can launch a Pyro Grenade at him."

"He's a mega and you thought an fire attack out work?" He asks and Yami shrugs. "It might have been enough of a distraction for us to

run away." The large rookie while Matt turns away and starts shouting TK's name while Gabumon gives his partner worried looks.

"So, TK didn't suddenly do anything strange before he disappeared?" Tentomon inquiries as he moves to talk with the elder blond.

"Leave him be, Tai. If he feels better shouting then let him." Yami says as he walks pass, he blinks and turns to look at the marked rookie while Mimi has a break down that only she can throw.

"But that yelling isn't helping!" He says as he turns to face the virus Digimon. "I think he knows that, Tai. I know what that's like, feeling helpless." The usual silent Digimon tells him, giving him some good advice though he's reluctant follow it.

"You're right but he's not the only one feeling helpless." He says and Agumon nods in agreement while Gabumon says, "Don't worry about him, Tai, he's my partner and it's my job to keep him safe!"

He watches as the fur wearing rookie races to catch up with Matt. He sighs as he mutters out loud, "Everything's just going wrong! How are we suppose to act like a team when everyone's edgy?"

"I know, Tai, I know." His partner says and Yami hums slightly.

"Think of it this way, so far, the Dark Masters have been content to take us on one-on-one as we enter onto their respective territory. If they keep following that pattern then as long as TK keeps Puppetmon occupied, we don't have to worry about the other two giving us a go." Yami says with a sigh.

"He's a little kid!" He growls as he turns to glare at the rookie who's suppose to protect the Digidestine of Hope.

"And that's why Puppetmon won't see it coming." Yami says with a smudge smile on his face, leaving him fairly confused as to what this Digimon know that he didn't.

"I don't suppose you can at least go off on your own and find him? I'm sure Matt won't blame you if you come back with him." He suggests after a few seconds as he looks from Mimi, to where Matt and Gabumon headed off to, and finally back to the red marked rookie.

"Good luck with Kiwimon." The virus Digimon says after humming in agreement and takes off before he can ask what Yami meant by that.

"That's one weird mon." Agumon says with his hands on his hip.

"No arguing with that. Now then, should I go after Matt or try and help Sora and the others with Mimi?" He wonders.

- **x** -

Yami

Well, at least I kept those two from getting even more aggravate with each other. He thinks as he follows TK's scent trail.

Though for some reason, he just knew a conflict between those two was just around the corner. He can't help but feel confident that TK's alright but, he could see what Tai meant by trying to get back on Matt's good side.

Oh look, a fun house. He muses to himself on seeing the house that belongs to Puppetmon. He stares at some 'bushes' but decides that his goal was in the house and as long as those plant Digimon don't try to keep him from entering into the house.

He gets this odd sense of deja vu as he walks through the hallway. He could smell that there were other Digimon around him, though not currently heading his way.

He looks into a room with an open door and finds a TV showing the forest. He glances down as something catches his interest.

"Dolls?" He muses as he walks over to get a better look.

He cocks his head to the side as he steps on something. He looks down at the broken remote before shrugging. As he slides the map from under the dolls with them only wobbling ever so slightly.

He rips the map into little bits before using his Pyro Grenade to destroy the left over bits. He looks around and finds a brown leather pouch to put the dolls in before putting over his head and under his left arm.

With that done, he heads off to find TK, his tail knocking over the television set as he turns to face the door.

His ears flap as he hears Puppetmon calling out TK's name. Within seconds, he's almost bowled over by TK.

"Yami!" TK says with a great deal of joy. "Let's go." He says and TK nods in agreement.

As they exit out of the house, TK asks, "What's up with the satchel?"

"Gifts." He says with a slight hint of a devilish grin.

"Oh, ok then." The young blond say as they head back to the others.

- **x** -

Kari

She smiles at the sight of TK arriving with Yami.

"TK!" She calls out in greeting, glad for someone who's not freaking out about something or another.

"Hey guys!" The younger blond calls out, holding a hand up as a greeting.

"TK!" Everyone calls out and then Matt charges forth to give his little brother a brief hug.

"Are you hurt or injured?" A frantic Matt asks while Yami takes off the leather pouch and begins rummaging through it while TK tries to assure his brother that he's find.

She pauses as she thought she heard something calling for her...

Yami

As the forest area vanishes with the defeat of Puppetmon, he glances at the others that were currently with him. His gaze softens as he watches as TK, Kari, and Kari's partner Gatomon chat among themselves. A glance over to Izzy and Tentomon as he studies Sora and Tai chatting while Biyomon and Agumon were at opposite ends of the group, looking outward, away from the center of the group.

He sighs and can only hope that they get out of this sun as well as that the others currently absent will, in the end, hook back up with them before the end of this adventure.

After all, he's getting pretty baked out here in this dessert like area. Though there was a city down the road that they will likely head for.

= **V** =

He watches as WarGreymon and Piedmon go at it. TK took off with Sora and Birdramon to seek out Matt and Gabumon, leaving him with Tai, Izzy, Kari, and their partners.

He sighs as he knew what was going to happen next as Piedmon slowly wore Tai's partner down.

WarGreymon's armour slowly but surely begins to crack and break under Piedmon's assault. He glares down at the ground as feels particularly useless in the up coming events that should have lead to something important...

He closes his eyes as he tries to remember the world where he arrived from to save TK from a fate almost similar to his.

Something stirred at his desire to help and suddenly he sees a softly glowing image of the symbol on his chest as well as a soft beeping out.

What is this? Why is it in me? I'm not suppose to have this, right? But... what's the harm if I borrow some of its power? He muses as his inner eyes watch the symbol.

Within the center of the symbol, a ripple seems to erase the triangle and he watches a scene where TK and Kari are climbing up a rope as Angemon distracts the clown Digimon. He holds his breathe as one of Piedmon's swords cut through the rope.

As the pair fall, TK manages to grab a hold of Kari and witnesses Angemon Digivolving into MagnaAngemon.

The image fades and once more he sees the triangle that's suppose to be there in the center.

I won't let that happen! He growls as the symbol begins to flash until it becomes too bright, causing him to snap out of his mind.

He feels power flow freely through him as he tries to wrestle with this sudden increase of intense emotions like rage, hate, and, most of all, fear.

"Blackguilmon warp Digivolve too..." Finds his frame growing and then the skin breaking apart to reveal silver armour with blue trim. A blue cape flaps behind him as a lance and shield appear in his hands.

The navy blue light surrounding him fades, revealing his new form for all to see.

"ChaosGallantmon!" He declares, even to himself his tone sounds frosty.

"That symbol!" He hears Piedmon mutter with a hint of shock and fear.

"Yami?" He hears the Digidestine wonder in awe one after another.

"I won't allow it to come to that! You won't make sport of them!" He glows with that frosty tone as he points the tip of his lance at Piedmon.

"Why don't we talk about this? I mean, a Digimon of your prestige and power could surely do more then simply being somebody pet..." Piedmon says moving back with his hands up.

His gaze narrows as he feels a hint of cold fury enters within him at the suggestion that he would think of betraying those he's established bonds with not just the Digidestine but also with his old group of friends.

"Is it just me or is it getting colder every time Piedmon takes a step back?" Gatomon wonders. "It's not just you, Gatomon. I think it's coming from ChaosGallantmon." Izzy says.

"Demon's Disaster!" He snarls and he lunges towards Piedmon as bolts of lightning crackle around his lance he thrusts it at Piedmon.

The clown Digimon manages to evade the attack and as the lance hits the ground, the area within a meter of the center point creaks and breaks under the pressure of the attack.

"WarGreymon!" He hears MetalGarurumon's voice call out.

As he stands from his crouching stance, he turns to see Matt and more of the others arrive. He blinks and then focuses on TK.

A bit of his icy exterior melt at the sight of the boy he promised to protect. It also reminded him that Piedmon has yet had a chance to

do what he had in that vision he witness.

"Is that... Yami?" He hears TK ask and Tai answers dryly, "Well, if he's not then Yami picked a lousy time for a game of Hide & Go Seek."

"And I thought seeing him in his crimson armour was something." TK says and those present call out, "What? That was Yami?"

"Err... I would have told you guys but I forgot to say something about it." TK says in his defense while MetalGarurumon moves to help WarGreymon heal.

"This is all very interesting, but he's getting away!" He states and the others all blink before realizing that he's right.

"Ah damn it, how did that happen?" Tai wonders and he shakes his head.

"Well then," He points his shield in the direction of Piedmon's den, "Judecca Prison!"

The recoil of his attack causes him to be pushed back as the beam causes the group to gulp in awe as his attack cuts through the rocky lair.

With the last of his energy spent on that one attack, he collapses on the ground as Blackguilmon.

"Yami!" He hears TK call out before he blacks out.

- **x** -

TK

He picks up the resting Gigimon that is Yami.

"Well, I've said it before and I'll say it again, I'm glad he's on our side!" Tai declares before he climbs onto WarGreymon's shoulder.

Matt holds out his hand to help him climb on while the others get divided between Birdramon and Kabuterimon.

"I wonder what set Yami off though. I mean, why did he choice this Dark Master to get freaked out about?" Matt wonders as MetalGarurumon moves along the path of ChaosGallantmon's attack.

"Don't know, I wasn't around for it. Must have been something about me, though. He's pretty protective like that." He says to his brother and Matt hums in agreement.

"Yea, he is." Matt says as MetalGarurumon continues to race along the ground while WarGreymon, Birdramon, and Kabuterimon flew in the air above them.

- **x** -

Yami

"So I missed the whole thing with Piedmon and Apocalymon?" He asks as he lies on the grass next to TK, not sure if he's happy on missing it or sadden that it's all over.

"And the photograph." TK adds and he sighs.

"Anyway, what made you so upset that you Digivolved into ChaosGallantmon?" The young blond asks.

"I saw a scene were Kari and you were climbing up this rope while Angemon tried to distract the approaching Piedmon. Then after batting Angemon away, he goes after you two. He grabs one of your legs and then when Kari won't let go, he cuts the rope causing you both to fall. You're tag and crest glow and Angemon Digivolves into MagnaAngemon, catching you both." He tell TK.

"Wow, but that's not what happened with you around. Though I'll admit, Piedmon wasn't really interested in fighting us but trying to

look for something among his books. Not that it stopped us though, it took about five minutes before one of MetalGarurumon's attacks hit and deleted him." TK tells him.

"And Apocalymon?" He asks and TK shrugs.

"As one of his clamps tried to crush us, something glowed from you and entered into him. Within seconds, he was gone. Gennai thinks it had something to do with you managing to Digivolve into your mega form." TK says.

He perks at that but then his ears drip in sadness.

"Gennai's setting up that gate right now, isn't he?" He asks. "Yea, he is, he wants to finish it before there's this eclipse. He mentioned that it should put everything to the way its suppose to be." TK says.

"So, you'll forget about me." He muses softly and TK reaches out to hold him to his chest. He felt something spark between them before TK yelps and lets go of him.

As TK pulls up his shirt, the tiny symbol consisting of triangles and a circle greet them on TK's left chest in red.

"It looks like a tattoo." He muses as TK tries to rub it.

TK

After finding out that the tiny red symbol won't rub off, he pulled down his shirt as Matt calls for them. He picks up Yami and heads off to walk with his elder brother to the site of the gate that Gennai had been constructing.

The old man nods as they come within range and Gennai says, "Now then, as soon as this gate fires up, you have two minutes to travel through, so I hope you said your goodbyes."

"We did." Yami and him pipe in about the same time. He notices a flicker of sorrow appear briefly on the old man's face before the man turns away.

A small point on his crest tingles briefly as Gennai turns the gate on. With a sigh, he lowers the in-training Digimon to the ground and with a nod, Yami bounces into the shimmering energy.

His head feels light but that point on his crest burns even as he rubs it. As he begins to fear that Patamon wasn't coming through, he yelps in joy as an orange blur comes out of the gate and into his chest with a shout of "TK!"

"Patamon!" He calls out in joy as the gate seems to vanish into a dust of data particles.

A slight headache begins but that point on his chest continues to burn. As he closes his eyes as he begins to feel dizzy and then he begins to 'see' events and 'feel' emotions that go with the events.

For one thing, while the events seem almost similar to what happened, they lack Yami in them, which altered how they played out and that they had Patamon always by his side.

It takes a few seconds but once the headache fades so does the burning on his chest.

As he opens his eyes, he finds that Gennai's gone from his sight, so he looks down to find Patamon looking a bit sad about something.

"Err, Patamon? Why do I have memories of events with your at my side instead of Yami?" He asks in a whisper.

"You still remember him?" Patamon asks with a hint of alarm but also with relief. "Yea..." He says.

"Well, at least I won't have to keep this from you then." Patamon says and he blinks, still not quiet getting what his original partner is

saying.

"Are you saying that somebody doesn't want us to remember Yami, at all?" He asks the orange Digimon and Patamon winces.

"The Powers That Be don't felt that it was too soon for you guys to know about other Digital realms. I don't agree with them but, then, I'm not capable of going against them." The rookie admits and he sighs but nods in understanding.

"I guess. I won't say anything to them about him then. But just because I won't say anything doesn't mean I'll forget about him, I owe him that much and so much more." He says softly and Patamon nods as the orange Digimon blinks some tears away.

"So do I, TK, so do I." Patamon says, smuggling more into his chest as he hugs his partner as some tears threaten to fall.

About an hour later, they learnt that they had to leave before the eclipse or else they'd miss their ride home.

He sighs, Patamon just returned and already he has to leave him.

As he waves back at their partners running along the side of the train car, he already figuring out what to wear as tribute to both of his partner.

- **x** -

Yami

He blinks as he finds himself in a lair of a giant Digimon with four red eyes glaring down at him. He tries to cock his head to the side before he sighs.

With a glance at the surrounding Digimon in the serves of the giant bird, he begins to walk towards the opening in the circle, ignoring the looks the 'ghosts' were giving him.

After all, according to some of his memories, all of the Devas were deleted when most of their number assaulted the real world.

He almost stumbles as he finds himself surrounded in some kind of bubble and is launched at full speed across this bridge suspended over this body of water.

Once the bubble breaks and he touches the ground, he feels a surge of energy and he finds himself Digivolving back into Blackguilmon.

He gives surrounding area a confused look, amazed at how well it had been repaired after the D-Reap incident.

With a flicker of his tail, he begins to look for a way out of this layer of the Digital world, after all, he rather not aggravate the phoenix Sovereign.

- **x** -

Antylamon

"I still don't know why I can't delete the little bugger! He's got that vile taint of human all over him!" Her fellow Deva, the sheep, growls as she stomps a hoof on the ground.

"It wouldn't be sporting, after all, he's just an in-training Digimon." The bull Deva says, she stays silent since she rather get back to her duties then to get into an argument about what they should do to the dimensional traveler.

Though she couldn't help but wonder at the dismissive look the young Digimon had when glancing at her fellow Deva, it was as if the in-training Digimon didn't believe they were even there...

With a sigh, she dismisses it as talk turns to the familiar topic of the awaking Chaos...

So ends The Time Weavers. Check out Zero Two! Time Chaos! for the sequel to The Time Weavers.

Hope to hear your thoughts!

Zero Two! Time Chaos!

I Don't Own Digimon!

TK

He sighs as he stares out of the kitchen window to stare out at the city he remembers saving four years ago from Myotismon's henchmen.

Though he's got two separate memories how they did so, one set had Patamon by his side while the more realistic memories had a black rookie Digimon called a BlackGuilmon that he had taken to calling Yami as being his partner during that crisis following Patamon's deletion and teleportation through different dimensions.

The red symbol on his chest is a constant reminder of which memories actually happened and not a fabrication. Unknown to him, he rubs the exact spot as he recalls the time Yami made buns in their apartment that one morning.

With a sigh, he gets to his feet and heads to the door to leave for school. He moves the hood of his green vest back before kneeling to put on his black runners. The vest wasn't zipped up, thus revealing a white T shirt with an orange company logo on the front.

Remembering to put his keys into his jean's pocket, he shoulders his back pack as he calls out, "Bye Mom! I'm heading off to school!"

"Bye TK! Have a good day at school!" His mom calls out and once he walks out the door, he runs his fingers through his hair before retying his green bandanna with lighter tribal designs. He feels the D-Arc, another reminder of what really happened, bounce on his hip as he walks to the elevator.

"Hey! Hold up, I'm coming!" He calls out and the glass wearing preteen presses a button that causes the door to open up.

"Thanks!" He says and then he notices that there's another in the elevator with her. "Nope problem! You're new here, aren't you?" The girl asks and he hums in agreement.

"Yea, I am. I'm Takeru Takaishi, though I prefer my nick name, TK." He says and he gives them a slight bow.

"I'm Yolei Inoue! And this is my good friend Cody Hida." Yolei says with a smile as Cody bows slightly in greeting.

"You both go to Odaiba Elementary? I heard it's close but, well, I wouldn't mind having somebody around to make sure I'm heading in the right direction." He admits to the pair.

"No problem, TK. I don't mind helping out a fellow student!" Yolei says with Cody nodding in agreement wit Yolei's statment.

"Thanks." He says and after a few seconds, the elevator lands on the main level, causing the three of them to walk out of it once the door open up.

For a brief moment, he pauses as he sees a van, a bitter smile appears on his face as he recalls the time Yami hijack on during the time this part of the city was covered in mist.

Ideally, he wonders what happened when the owner finally located it and what the person's reaction was as he turns away from the sight of the van. Knowing that he's focus needs to be in the here and now.

Yami

For the last four years, he's been wondering about as things began to jog his memory, giving him a better picture of what his life had

been like as Takato Matsuki, Tamer of Guilmon, a Digimon he created using a pad of paper.

He even know how come he knew so much of what was happening in that Digidestine dimension, it's because before he became a Tamer, he liked watching the TV show.

He wonders ideally if the second season of the show has started and if it had, did TK dress differently then he had in the cartoon or had his fears been made real when he left that dimension and the Digidestine of Hope forget about him?

He stops and blinks as he realizes that he's under attack by a Renamon, one that he can't help but admit seems a tad familiar as he is send flying through the air.

As he picks himself up from the rumble of the rock he crashed into, Renamon was already in the air, using her Diamond Storm on him.

He counters with a Pyro Grenade, the two attack meet and a minor explosion occurs.

Within seconds, Renamon closes the gap between them and he growls as he feels a bit of his more primal side of himself tries to wrestle free to teach this rookie a lesson.

He does the unexpected and rams his head into Renamon's head. Before she could recover, he's pinning her on the ground as he demands, "Why are you attacking me? I don't remember seeing any boundary markers!"

Instead of answering, the yellow furred rookie tries her hardest to escape. With a mental sigh, he knows it's going to be a while before he gets his answer or that some stronger Digimon shows up and tries to load their collective data.

Though a spike of worry course through him, he's now sure what's the cause but something was *wrong* with this whole picture...

TK

Slowly the pair warmed up to him and Yolei said she'd look at Cody's computer if his mom made some brownies.

As they round the corner, light glimmer off of somebody's goggles. For a moment he thought he saw Tai, Kari's older brother but the moment fades and he's staring at a kid with maroon red spiked hair, a navy blue long sleeve shirt with a light blue vest and brown coloured shorts with orange runners.

It seems that there's already a soccer game in progress as the kid, Davis, misses the ball and he snatches it out of the air with ease.

He studies Davis for a few seconds as the kid congratulates him a great catch and then tosses the ball to him. "You look kind of familiar, it must be the goggles." He muses as his hands go into his jeans pocket.

Davis blinks as he says, "Oh wha'?" Then as some of his fellow soccer players call out for him to rejoin them, Davis turns and kicks the ball in their direction before racing off to help his team.

He shakes his head before continuing on towards the building, he needed to see the principal before he headed to class.

Yami

As noon arrives, Renamon has finally stop trying to get out from under him and seems to have calmed down.

With a sigh, he gets off of her and takes a few steps back as he watches her with a subdued expression. Renamon slowly gets to her feet, though she looks highly uncertain about why he hadn't deleted her and loaded her data if he were to make any guesses at this point.

"What did you attack me? I didn't do anything to you that could warrant such an attack." He states, standing at his full high with a hand at his hip.

"Last time I check, it's survival of the fittest, load or be loaded." The fox Digimon says in a casual tone.

"I haven't loaded a Digimon since I got back to this world and that was about four years ago." He states and the fox Digimon perks up on hearing that.

"So, you're partner to a human?" The yellow data Digimon asks with a hint of interest.

He sighs as some memories of him being alone together with TK and Guilmon play before his mind's eyes. "One could say I've had two partners and last I check, both were alive, though the second partner I had, I was just filling in for his missing partner who suffered a slight... dimensional mishap." He answers.

"If so, then what are you doing here, in the Digital world instead of in the real world?" Renamon asks and he shrugs as he replies to her inquiry.

"Well, for my first partner, there was this explosion triggered by a friend of ours. It resulted in a very complex problem for him and myself, hence I'm here instead of by his side. It likely doesn't help that the second partner might be still in possession of my D-Arc."

Renamon blinks with a slightly unsure expression on her face. "You know, I think if you keep looking, you'll find your human partner, that is, if you're in the process of looking for one." He adds as it begins to sink into his mind why nobody came looking for him during the past four or so years.

Renamon looks slightly uncomfortable but inclines her head slightly before saying, "So then, I'll take my leave of you... What are you called?"

"I'm a BlackGuilmon but my second partner nick named me Yami. I tend to answer to Yami since few know of my species." He answers with an ironic smile at the fact that both of his partners had come up with nick names for him, true, they're both very different but they're still nick names he's answered to.

"Then perhaps I'll see you one day in the real world... Yami." Renamon says and he nods as she seems to fade into a tree's shadow.

It takes him a few moments to collect his thoughts before he heads off to get a drink of water from the stream with a mind troubled with depressing thoughts.

TK

It's the end of the day, Kari and him were collecting his shoes as Kari asks him about how his mom likes their new apartment. He informs her that his mom hasn't checked it out since she's been on the computer the whole time.

He felt a bit of an ache in his chest as the closeness he had with Kari didn't seem to be as intense as he remembered it. It likely doesn't help that Kari doesn't remember anything about Yami.

Davis appears as he finishes telling Kari about his mom when Davis appears at the doorway, panting slightly as the kid wearing blue gives him a threatening look on his face.

"Hey buddy!" Davis says in what appears to be with clutched jaws.

Kari replies, "His name is not buddy, it's TK!"

"Alright TJ, JB, or whatever it is! How do you know Kari?" Davis demands.

He blinks for a moment before he gets what Davis is on about. "How do I know her?" He asks as a shadow of a smile appears on his face.

"We went to the same summer camp back when we were eight." He says and Kari nods in agreement.

Before Davis could say anything, Yolei arrives behind Davis and he called out, "Hey Yolei."

Yolei nods before walking pass Davis to address Kari, asking, "You're Kari Kamiya?"

Kari hums in a yes while giving her a brief nod.

Yolei unfolds a piece of paper with the message on it that reads: "Come to the Digital world right away. The Digimon need our help."

"Are you related to Tai Kamiya? He sent this E-Mail." Yolei asks as he reads the message, for a moment he wonders about one of their villains from their past has come back as Kari says, "My brother needs us."

TK

He stares about the area of the forest around them, he sighs as his memories of his previous times in this world.

He did note the new cloths that Davis is now clothed in but his interest is in glancing around for wild Digimon who are likely more then a bit interested to find out what's causing all the noise.

"Wow, this place come with a new wardrobe." Davis says and he shrugs in an uninterested manner.

He sighs as they decide on a direction to walk in, he's too busy reviewing both sets of memories as he studies the environment

they're walking in.

He still didn't like the fact that, though he'll likely met up with Patamon again, he likely never see Yami again...

Too focused on his thoughts he just followed Kari and Davis through the forest.

He comes out of it as Davis stands before a soda machine. *Don't Numemon come out of those?* He muses silently to himself as he pauses to watch what happens next.

He snorts as some Numemon come out of the place where one reaches to get soda bottles. Davis looks pretty freaked out because of this.

It takes a few seconds for the stream of Numemon to end and for Davis to pick himself up off the ground. Kari chuckles slightly while he just grins as he shakes his head.

As they continue, Davis asks a few questions, mainly about about those Digimon that came out of the vending machine. He doesn't add to the conversation as he takes time out musing which of the plants within eye sight are eatable.

Kari's Digivice says they're getting closer and within a few seconds he hears his name being called. "TK!" Patamon says and within seconds he's reunioned with his first Digimon partner.

"Patamon! Boy am I glad to see you!" He says as Patamon lands in his arms.

Within seconds, an older Tai turns the corner of the path with Gatomon and Agumon hot on his heels.

Yami

He knew this was a dream but to him it didn't matter, he didn't ever want to wake up to the reality that he just found himself in.

"Yami?" He hears TK's voice ask and he hums.

"Is that really you?" TK asks and he blinks before sitting up right.

He blinks as he stares at the kid before him. "TK? What are you wearing?" He asks and the blond sighs.

"I guess I should call you Takato then, since you really don't look like a Digimon." TK muses and he blinks before looking down at his arms.

He gets to his feet and studies the out fit he's wearing. He smiles bitterly at his blue hoodie shirt as his hand goes to his card deck.

"True, but I don't mind if you call me Yami, after all, if Guilmon can call me Takatomon ever so often, why shouldn't you be able to call me by your nick name for me?" He says with a hint of amusement as he grins at the taller Digidestine of Hope.

The blond chuckles. "He calls you Takatomon? I guess I can see it." The green vest wearing Digidestine muses.

"He called me Takatomon because at the beginning, he didn't distinguish between humans and Digimon, so as I was telling him his name and then mine, he stuck a 'mon' at the end of my name. It was the night I also put on these goggles as I told him that I was a Digimon Tamer." He informs the blond with a sad smile on his face.

"So then, how is Guilmon? TK asks.

"I won't know, I'm still a BlackGuilmon and up to a few days ago, I thought it was a matter of time before Yamaki sends the other Tamers here to search for me. But now, it seems that I've been sent to a time before the D-Reaper appeared on the scene." He says with a sober expression on his face.

TK looks concerned about that. "I guess that explains why I'm here." TK muses and he snorts softly.

"Oh?" He asks as he crosses his arms over his chest as he studies TK's expression.

"I think you want some time away from where you are and I won't mind having you around here until you think of something." TK says and he blinks as his mouth forms a silent, "oh."

"You sure you don't mind having my about the apartment? If memory serves..." His eyes widen as he recalls what's likely happening with the Digidestine at this particular moment.

"What? What's wrong?" TK asks and he swallows as he scratches the side of his head while his other hand moves to his hip.

"You've got a new Digivice, right?" He asks after a few seconds.

"How do... Yea, I do. Why, is that a problem?" TK asks.

He swallows and after a few seconds, sighs in defeat. "Well the thing is, I know how your Digimon Emperor problem will end, I know who's behind it, and I'm fairly sure I can prove it too... The thing is... I'm not sure I should since it will alter the course of your world, not unlike what I did during the first set of adventures only I'm more aware of it." He says.

"How could you possibly know that?" The blond asks and he answers, "Cause some how, your Digital adventures ended up being a cartoon show in my home dimension, that includes your current trouble with Ke... err, with the Digimon Emperor."

TK's eyes narrow and he suddenly can't help but think of all the episodes of season two of Digimon. By the end of it, TK's eyes were wide and TK's face really pale.

"Err, you got all of that, didn't you?" He asks, wincing as a sudden headache begins to ascend on him.

"Well then, now that I know, you don't have much of a defense not to come over to my world." TK finally says after what seems like forever.

"Really? I mean, if you're sure..." He says and TK says, "I'm sure, although, I should point out one little thing, if my cloths are so different then my cartoon character, it means that there might be other changes to the... story plot."

He couldn't help but agree with that logic.

TK

As he slowly wakes from his dream, he feels something on his chest. Sighs and cracks open a single eye, blinking a few time to get rid of the blurriness, he moves his head up to see the weight on his chest.

Gigimon... Yami! He thinks as suddenly the full extent of that dream replays once more before his mental eyes.

Though the shock finally wears off and he moves a hand out from under the covers to stroke the red in-training Digimon that's on his chest.

For the first time on re-entering into the Digital world, he felt complete.

"TK?" He hears Patamon asks as the little orange Digimon yawns.

He turns to look at his original partner with some heat in his cheeks. "Well... I mean... It just wasn't the same without him." He stutters to his partner, suddenly aware that Patamon might have objected to having Yami by his side once more.

Patamon cocks his head to the side in confusion until Patamon's blue eyes turn to look at the little red Digimon sleeping on his chest. Then his partner's eyes soften before Patamon moves to get a closer look at the in-training Digimon.

"He's kind of... more... red then I recall." Patamon admits. "At this moment, he's a Gigimon, I think Gigimon only come in red." He says.

The ear flaps that were so similar to Patamon's ears flap for a few seconds and then the little red Digimon whom he nick named Yami begins to wake.

The little red Digimon hums and tries to roll onto his side, only to roll off his chest and on the other side of him.

"Huh?" Yami says in a sleepy tone and the little Digimon's eyes open to reveal yellow eyes as the in-training Digimon yawns and tries to stretch.

"TK? Patamon?" Yami muses as the little guy yawns once more before giving himself a shake to help fully wake himself up.

"Morning, Yami." He says as he sits up right while Patamon crawls into his lap. "Morning." Patamon says in a cheerful tone with a smile on his face.

"Morning I guess..." Yami says before getting to his feet as the little Digimon takes a look around the room.

Then Gigimon's stomach growls and the little crimson Digimon glances down into the bed in embarrassment.

"When was the last time you ate something?" He asks, kind of dreading the answer though it would help explain why Yami's an in-training Digimon in stead of his usual rookie form.

"Err... About two months." Yami admits while Patamon sighs.

"Your world really does obey a different set of rules, huh?" The orange Digimon muses and Yami nods.

"Well then, let me have my shower and then I'll make us some breakfast." He says before picking up Yami once Patamon moves from his lap to sit at the end of his bed. He puts the in-training Digimon by Patamon before heading off to the bathroom to take a shower.

After a short shower that lasts about fifteen minutes, he returns to the room to find Patamon stalking a giggling Yami who's taken refuge under his bed. He pauses on entering this scene and Patamon then leaps under his bed causing Yami to squeal before the little red Digimon races out from under the bed, racing towards his back pack to hide behind it.

It was pretty hard to think of the little Digimon as the same being that could Digivolve into ChaosGallantmon and was actually a kid about his age named Takato.

With a shake of his head, he moves to his dresser to grab some underwear and socks to put on before searching through his dresser drawers to find certain cloths to wear today in silent celebration of being reunioned with Yami.

He puts on a pair of blue jeans before moving onto his other items of clothing.

He finds the long sleeve black shirt with a red and white yin yang symbol on it. Fishing around though the drawer he keeps his hooded vests in, he pulls out a slightly off white vest that didn't have a hood on it.

He picks the red bandanna that's sandwiched in between his white and orange bandannas, he had four total even though he mostly wears his green one with most out fits.

Once dressed, he pauses as he tries to locate where the two Digimon were and finds Yami about to pounce on a stalking Patamon as his first partner slowly moves towards a pile of discarded cloths.

"Well, I'm done, who wants some breakfast?" He asks before Yami leaps off the shelf and onto Patamon's back.

"Food!" Yami yells as the little red Digimon jumps from his position on the book shelf and takes off running towards him while Patamon takes to the air.

He picks up Yami and the little red Digimon begins to cuddle into his chest while listing different foods in a kind of chant. Patamon rests on his shoulder as he heads to the kitchen with the pair.

Patamon flies from his shoulder to land on the counter while he sets Yami on the counter before beginning to search the cardboards for things he needs to make some pancakes.

Yami does stop his little chant as he begins to mix the pancake batter. "I thought you're normal breakfast was oatmeal?" Yami asks after he turns on a heating element and places a frying pan on the element.

"Remember that time you made those buns? Well, it seems my mom decided that I was the one who instructed you in making them, so she decided when I was nine to have me take some cooking lessons at a local community center, thinking that I was already a gifted baker." He tells Yami.

"Ah... And of course you couldn't really tell her the truth about me since, it is fairly hard to swallow the idea that a human can be transformed into a Digimon." The in-training Digimon muses and he hums in agreement.

"Maybe when you're back to being BlackGuilmon you'll make some of those buns since I never got the chance to have any." Patamon

says and Yami nods as he says, "Ok! But I also remember how to make a bunch of other goodies like cream buns, apple buns, and etc."

"Remind me to get some of those recipes from you." He jokes and Yami just grins widely. "Ok!" Yami pipes out.

With that said, he begins to pour some of the batter into the greased frying pan, thus beginning the process of making pancakes.

Gatomon

She frowns from her position in a tree at Kari and the others' school yard as she waits for Patamon to show.

Though the events of yesterday continue to want to be replayed within her mind, especially the part of her armour Digivolving into Nefertimon and Patamon into Pegasusmon.

"Gatomon!" She hears a very young voice call out and she blinks as she turns to her left to find a little red Digimon that's more then likely an in-training Digimon.

The little red Digimon leaps from the branch he was on to join her on her's. *He seems... familiar for some reason...*

"Yami!" She hears Patamon call out under them and the little red Digimon calls out, "Up here!"

Patamon looks up and his eyes widen on seeing her with the little red Digimon.

"Gatomon!" Patamon says with a hint of nervousness.

"I take it he's with you?" She asks as the little red Digimon tries to bite her moving tail.

"Yea, he is." Patamon says once he settles on the same branch as them.

"Aren't you a bit young to have a kid?" She muses with a slight grin on her face as she decides to tease her fellow rookie.

"He's not mine! He's... well, he's an old friend of TK's and he's here for a visit." Patamon says.

"Oh?" She asks and the little Digimon decides to join the conversation since he hasn't managed to capture the tip of her tail.

"Yep! I remember you, Gatomon! I even know who's got your tail ring too!" The little Digimon says cheerfully and she chokes on some air.

"You know where my what is?" She demands and she can hear Patamon sigh.

"Gennai has it! He'll give it back after Myotismon is destroyed!" The little Digimon pipes in.

"Yami!" Patamon shouts and the little Digimon who seems to be called Yami freezes before growing highly embarrassed while her mind's a whirl.

For some odd reason, the name Yami is connected with a large black Digimon that she can't remember much about or what he precisely looked like. Though deep within her, she knows that she should know this Digimon but something is causing her to get a very large headache all of a sudden.

"Uh, Patamon? I think I need to get to the ground." Yami says and Patamon asks, "What is it now?"

"I think I'm about to Digivolve." Yami says and she blinks.

"Oh joy." Patamon groans and as Yami leaps off the branch, he begins to glow. "Gigimon Digivolve too..."

She chokes on seeing how large the egg of light is and as it breaks, she feels her jaw drop at the large black rookie as the Digimon hits the ground. "BlackGuilmon!"

Yami

He sighs as he lands on his feet and then looks up into the tree to see what Gatomon's reaction was to his Digivolution.

The white cat Digimon with olive green gloves with stripes has this bugged out expression on her face and he sighs on noticing this reaction on the champion Digimon.

" **Yami** !" Gatomon yells and within seconds, the cat Digimon is giving him a hug. He blinks, he hadn't been expecting this reaction and from the look on Patamon's face, neither was the little orange Digimon.

"Glad to see you missed me." He says as Gatomon lets go and drops to the ground.

Gatomon sighs and then looks up at Patamon. "Err... That's not to say I'm not glad to see Patamon..." The cat Digimon stutters and he chuckles.

"The beings that I was with when I hatched decided that this group of chosen children weren't ready to know about alternate Digital world, so, once I returned I triggered a mild memory virus that suppressed your memories of Yami and then it rewrote the memories to include me, altering the events slightly." Patamon says after the orange Digimon takes to the air to come land on his head.

Gatomon looks slightly peeved at the suggestion but after a few seconds, she just sighs as she shakes her head. "Like editing out the bit about Yami hijacking a van?" The champion level Digimon muses and Patamon looks startled on hearing that.

He sighs, it seems he's never going to live that down. "Yami did what?" Patamon asks and he replies with as much dignity as he could muster, "You have to admit that it got us from point A to point B faster then if we had walked. Besides, I think by then, everybody's feet were getting sore, that includes Joe."

"So, I take it you guys convinced Joe to drive?" Patamon asks and he shares a look with Gatomon before the white Digimon answers, "No, Joe's was protesting in form of closing his eyes and covering his ears while muttering some chant over and over again. Yami had moved to the driver's side and then modified the seat by taking the back part off and tossing it out on the van before entering into the vehicle."

"So he drove... err... who was all with you guys at the time?" Patamon inquiries and he lists who was with them and where they sat. "Joe and Gomamon were in the far back, Kari and Gatomon were in seats directly behind TK and mine seat."

"I think I'm going to faint." The orange Digimon sighs in a light tone. "I didn't crash into anything or anyone." He defends his driving ability, after all, Yamaki had thought it was a good skill for his group to have, though out of all of them he had been the only one to be gun-ho about it.

Besides, Tally hadn't said anything negative about his driving... and it was only Rika and Ryo were the two that got busted using Riley and Tally's cars in racing against each other...

"I knew how to drive, there wasn't much of a risk, it was just my first time... out of the underground garage." He says, he had been going to say 'my first time as a Digimon' but he recovered in time since he doesn't think Gatomon could take any more shocks to her system.

" Who would teach *you* how to drive?" Gatomon asks with her arms over her chest.

"A government agent thought it was a good skill for our team to have." He answers.

"Why would a government agency want anything to do with Digimon?" Gatomon asks and he snorts softly.

"While I was with my first partner in the real world, Digimon would Bio Emerge and then go on rampages, so, the government created Hypnos to monitor and try and prevent Digimon from crossing over. Think Myotismon's invasion only space the time and place for each Digimon entering into the real world over a course of some months as well as lack any kind of leader." He says.

"Sounds chaotic." Patamon muses and Gatomon nods in agreement. "So it does." The white cat Digimon says.

"So... what do you two want to do now?" He asks, changing the topic since he made him homesick.

"How about raiding the cafeteria?" Patamon asks and he groans mentally as Gatomon agrees. *What is it with Digimon and raiding the school cafeteria?* He wonders as he follows the pair, making sure to duck every so often so that nobody spots him.

As he enters into the hall, they were passing by the auditorium's doors when a costumed wearing student races out of the door, crying if he's hearing the sobs correctly.

As he pauses in his progress through the halls, a pair of students were complaining about how they'll never find the lead villain at this rate. As he's about to continuing on, one of those speaking notices him and before he knows what's happening, he's pulled into the auditorium and pushed into the back where some other kids were dressed up before he could say a word.

"Looking good dude!" One of the dressed up students say and he waves in acknowledgment.

He winces as he hears whoever is in charge give reasons why those auditioning for the part of lead villain weren't good enough, be it from unimaginative costumes to bad performances.

More then a few fled out of the auditorium crying and more a few stumped off muttering threats under their breath.

Soon he finds himself at the front of the line. his lips were pressed in a thin line. "If there are any others who think they what it takes to be our co-star, then let them come out so I might dismiss them so I might begin morning the demise of my play!"

He growls on hearing that, a large part of him hated the fact that he was dragged from his two friends and forced into a line up he didn't want to wait in.

He stalks on stage ready to fry this 'director' with a well placed Pyro Grenade. As he growls become increasingly deeper as he notices that curtains were blocking his few of the people 'judging' the part of the villain.

With a snarl, he leaps through the middle part of the curtain and roars at them as he glares down at those seated below, trying to figure out which one had earned his ire. "Where's the wise cracking 'director'?" He snaps lowering his head in a more threatening manner, it wasn't hard to channel villainous traits, after all, he's a viral Digimon and all virals had an instinct when it comes to intimating and threatening others.

After a few seconds, clapping begins as one of the five stands up, the clapping increases as the four glance nervously at each other before mimicking the fifth person wearing a kind of french hat if he's correct.

"Bravo! Bravo!" The hat wearing preteen declares, he realizes that this was the wise cracking director he was hearing from behind the stage.

"The savagery! The stance! That snarling way you said that threat! You! You are perfect for this role!" He swears that the guy got starry eyed as he brings his hands together under his chin.

He blinks as he gets out of his stiff stance to stare in puzzlement as the guy begins to give him the creeps. "What's your name, oh angry fiend?" The director asks in a tone that weirds him out to the max.

"I go by Yami now a days..." He says and the director cuts in before he can give his real name. "Yami! A perfect stage name for a grand actor like yourself!"

"I'm so sorry, it is impolite of me to have asked your name without telling you mine own. I am Denji Kiyoshi, the head of the Drama club." Denji says and as the brunet gets onto the stage, he had a sinking feeling that he's going to regret ever meeting Denji...

TK

"Did you hear? Denji finally found his lead villain!" He hears some kids talk about the Drama club's auditions for a play as he walks to the table where Kari and Davis were located.

"Yea? I heard that the kid's so into his character that he refused to take off his costume!" A girl with the two boys say.

"Really? Won't the teachers force him to take it off?" The third member asks.

"I heard that the kid's getting special permission to keep wearing it, even to class!" The girl says.

He sighs as he shakes his head as he gets out of ear shot. It always amazed him what kind of rumors fly about. He suspects the only true thing would be that the head of the Drama club finally casted the role of the lead villain and that the rest was just something to be produced through the rumor mill.

"Hey TK! So, hear anything about the raid on the cafeteria?" Yolei asks as he meets up with her and Cody before sitting at the table with Kari and Davis.

"Nope, though I did over hear some kids talk about Denji finding somebody to fill the role of villain for his play." He says as he slides to be across from Kari.

"Really? Mister Hot Shot Denji Kiyoshi finally found somebody to play the villain for his play? That's pretty big news since last year he scraped his play since he couldn't find anyone worthy enough to fill that part." Yolei says.

"Oh?" He asks, startled at this revelation. Kari nods, "Yea, last year I had gotten a minor role as a lady in waiting, I was kind of sad that it was scraped, nobody ever got the chance to look over the script for the play since Denji wouldn't hand it out until all the roles were filled. I was really psyched to find out what the big deal was."

"Oh yea! Well then, I'll just have to mug the guy to get you the script so you can read it." Davis declares and he shakes his head, he really didn't like how easily Davis was willing to drop things just to wait on Kari.

After all, if you can't stand by your principles in hopes of courting the girl you like then that's not really a win-win situation since you won't be yourself when you finally get a date with her, just some phony person who people pity.

"What else did you hear?" Yolei asks and he shrugs as he chews on the food in his mouth.

"Oh, right, well, I over heard that the villain's some dude in a costume and it sounds like he refuses to take it off. I'm not sure if that's true though, especially the part about how Denji is trying to get him special permission to keep it on when he goes to class." He parrots the last bit he heard before he was out of range.

"Huh, sounds like the guy's a Furry." Yolei muses and he's not the only one looking for an explanation for what a 'Furry' is.

"What's a Furry?" Kari asks and Yolei's eyes widen before she goes into a lecture mode, something she is prone to do when Davis asks a question.

"A Furry is in reference to a member of furry fandom - fans of artwork, stories, and related products such as comics, movies, costumes, etc., which feature anthropomorphic animals. It also refers to a person who like to parade around in an animal costume in public areas such as the mall, the street, or the park." Yolei says.

He presses his lips together as that sounds very familiar to something he had been involved in once upon a time. It had to do with Yami. Then his eyes widen as he realizes why it was familiar.

That's how we explained Yami's appearance whenever we were in public areas back during Myotismon's invasion! He thinks as he sniffles a chuckle at the thought of calling Yami a Furry when the Digimon is pretty much all scales until he's BlackGrowlmon and then Yami gets a mane of grey hair.

"Are you ok, TK?" Kari asks him with worried expression on her face. "Sorry, I was just remembering a... Furry I saw once." He answers with a slight smile on his face.

"Oh? And what kind of animal was he pretending to be?" Davis asks.

"A large black dino." He answers and Yolei's eyes widen. "You saw him? The original Furry of Japan? The one that made international news throughout the internet?" Yolei asks in stunned amazement.

He chokes on his water at the thought that Yami was famous in a realm of fandom that didn't have to do with Digimon.

"TK!" Cody, Yolei, and Kari shout and within seconds Yolei is trying to help by pounding on his back.

It takes him a few minutes to recover from the coughing. "Sorry to worry you guys, its just that, I can't believe he's famous for..." He can't finish that, not if he wants to keep control over his need to chuckle.

And so, to keep him from being sent to the nurse, the others at the table changed the subject to something safer, which turned out to be soccer since Davis dominated the conversation from that point on.

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"TK!" He hears his name being called out and turns to find Patamon and Gatomon running full tilt towards him.

"Hey Patamon, Gatomon, what's up?" He asks, though he wonders if this had anything to do with Yami. He can't help but notice that the little guy wasn't in sight.

"Err... TK, it's about Yami... we were on our way to raid the cafeteria when we lost track of him." Gatomon says and he blinks as Patamon continues before he has a chance to say anything, "And we then back tracked and found him kind of auditioning for some part, which he got by the way. We tried our hardest but we couldn't help Yami get away and now he's in a dressing room with that Denji guy talking about the play they're putting on."

He blinks a few times as this slowly sinks in. "Let me guess, Yami Digivolved earlier and that's why Denji thinks he's a kid in a costume?" He says with a sigh and the pair nod in agreement. "Got it in one." Patamon says.

"Also... Yami and Gatomon aren't pulling my leg when they said that Yami hijacked a van, right?" Patamon asks and he blinks since this seems to come right out of the blue.

"Well, yea, I was kind of disappointed that the radio won't work as we drove through the streets." He muses as he recalls that particular event.

Then he frowns as he think about it and turns to pin Gatomon with a look. "Does this mean you remember Yami and the adventures we had with him?" He inquiries and the white cat Digimon nods.

"I do. Though I'm still dazed that a virus could cause us to forget somebody as unforgettable as Yami." Gatomon adds.

"So to reverse the memory block, all we have to do is reintroduce Yami to the others?" He muses out loud and then before he can get the pair to lead him to the dressing room, Kari calls his name from down the hall. "I guess we can try it after today's adventure." He says as he frowns at the thought of confronting Ken in his role of Digimon Emperor.

And so they head to the computer room where the others were waiting, though Davis likely wishes it was just Kari and him heading into the Digital world.

Yami

As he finally leaves Denji, who's currently making some alterations that he suggested, like instead of a princess the lead girl role should be that of a priestess as it opens up another realm of explanation as to why certain things happen like why the rescuer doesn't marry the 'damsel'.

As he heads to the computer room, he blinks as he notices the group walking down the hall. They weren't too far ahead so he easily caught up to them, after all, he's spend the last four years wandering around different layers of the Digital world connected to his home world.

"Yami!" Patamon calls out in relief, causing the group to pause to look at him. He notices Kari's face go from puzzlement to an unfocused look to a joyous look, it wasn't long before Kari gives him a hug with some tears threatening to fall from her eyes.

"It's good to see you again, Yami! I can't believe that... Oh it doesn't matter what does is that I remember and your back." A joyous Kari declares and he smiles softly at the grown Digidestine of Light.

"Huh? You know this guy?" Davis asks and Kari gives him one last squeeze before letting go of him before turning to address the others. She wipes some tears off of her face before saying anything.

"Yami here acted as TK's partner when Patamon was transported into another dimension, that was before I became aware that I was the eighth Digidestine and that Gatomn was my partner." Kari informs them.

"Maybe we should get out of here so that we might discuss this in private." Cody suggests.

The others agree and they continue on their way out of the building.

Kari

They had decided to hang out at TK's apartment since the blond Digidestined mentioned that his mom was likely going to be working late tonight, leaving him alone in the apartment with the two Digimon.

The short walk to the apartment building gave her time to sort between the memories of the adventures with Yami and the ones that featured Patamon in which he never vanished into a dimensional gate.

It brought back a lot of memories of being very close to the younger brother of Matt, like how TK suggested that Yami give her a piggy back ride, Yami driving a van that they hijacked, and the time when TK had been upset by the fact that Yami vanished into some kind of hole leading to some kind of shadowy field.

It was that closeness with him that had made it clear which memories happened, not that she blames Patamon from not saying

anything since if she hadn't seen Yami with her own eyes to trigger the flood of memories, which made her realize that they had to do the same with the others in order for them to remember.

It also help click why the blond Digidestine was wearing this other outfit. Looking between TK and Yami, it's clear that TK's change of cloths was meant to be some kind of tribute to Yami's return.

After all, when she met TK and Yami, TK had been wearing black sweat bands around his wrists to symbolize his morning for Patamon. It only made sense that TK would diverge more into that kind of symbolism as he got older.

Once they were within the apartment, Yami heads to the kitchen, more then likely to get something to eat. After all, Yami stands about their height if he were to stand straight up right.

"Ok, spill it! I thought Patamon's your partner! What are you doing with black and red there, TC?" Davis demands.

She sighs as, once again, Davis insults TK by altering the letters of his nick name. "Yea, he is rather... memorable." Yolei admits as she glances away from Yami as the other Digimon bounce or walk or fly to the kitchen to get some food as well.

"Well, I'm now sure how much you know about our group's first adventures in the Digital world, but before we faced off against the Dark Masters, Myotismon, and Apocalymon, there were two others, one was Devimon while we were on File Island and the second was Etemon when we first made it to Server." TK says as he pauses as they all turned to see what the racket going on in the kitchen.

She blinks as she watches as Yami takes out some pans, bowls, cups, spoon, and other things one used for baking. A glance at TK reveals that the blond didn't seem to care that Yami's taking all that stuff out of the cardboards. The others Digimon seem to be curious too but Yami just said it was a secret, causing the in-training Digimon to groan and try to wiggle the truth out of the black Digimon.

"Anyway, back with what we're talking about." TK says to get the others' attention. "Tai vanished during the end of our confrontation Etemon. Our group had been searching for Tai but as we didn't have much luck, the group slowly began to break up. In the end, Mat and I were the last to get separated." TK says, pausing as he collects his thoughts since it's clear that TK hadn't like what happened and that without her brother to keep them together they all drifted apart.

"Matt promised to be back in a couple of hours. In the end, he never showed, though I now know it was because of a Digimon named Digitamamon had Joe and Gomamon working for him in his dinner. A Digimon named DemiDevimon had been bribing the egg Digimon to keep Joe and Gomamon there and then likely did so again to keep Matt and Gabumon there." TK says and she blinks, slightly surprised to hear such a thing happen.

The others, too, were surprised but TK continues before any of the others could add their two cents. "It had been a while since I've seen my brother and so, I being an eight year old, began to worry about what's keeping him. So when the same DemiDevimon shows up promising that he's good and was more then willing to scout around for Matt, you could say I was ecstatic." TK sighs before continuing.

"When DemiDevimon showed up, he brought a 'friend', some kind of Digimon that looked pretty human. Patamon had been Tokomon at the beginning of that encounter but had to Digivolve into Patamon. He never got the chance to Digivolve again as the unknown Digimon slices Patamon, forcing Patamon to revert to a Digi-Egg." TK says as he pauses as he relives the memory.

"As the Digi-Egg falls into a portal, Yami appears and pulls me out of the way of this in coming dart. He puts me down before going after the unknown Digimon. In the end, Yami wins and the enemy Digimon breaks up into a cloud of data..." Tk says and the blond glances towards Yami for a few seconds before he continues.

"To say I wasn't a little scared of Yami was an understatement, I had just watched him attack a larger and supposedly more powerful

Digimon and come out victorious. I had just seen Patamon get transformed into a Digi-Egg by the Digimon that Yami had just destroyed. I was in shock and I thought I was going to winded up as a meal for Yami, only Yami apologized about not being able to arrive before Patamon was defeated." TK says and she could see why that would add to a young boy's shock.

"In the end, I asked what kind of Digmon he was and he replied that he was a BlackGuilmon. I thought the name was a bit too long and decided to call him Yami, he didn't seem displeased with the arrangement and with that, we headed off to find the others in hope they might know of a way to retrieve Patamon from Yami's home dimension, which was another Digital world." TK says and then the blond unclips the D-Arc hanging from his belt loop.

"I got this when we were at Gennai's house, according to Yami, it's called a D-Arc and its got some useful capabilities like a hologram showing enemy Digmon, listing not only their names, level, and attacks but also their type attribute." TK says and as if to give them an example, the screen lights up and suddenly an image of Gatomon appears.

"Gatomon, a vaccine attribute Digimon of the champion level. Exalted beast type who's attacks are Lightning Paw, Cat's Eye Hypnotism, Lightning Kick, Earth Shaker, and Tackle Punch." TK reads and she feels a bit stunned to learn just how many attack her partner has.

"I can't believe she has so many attacks!" She admits and as TK reclips the D-Arc on his belt loop the blond nods while the others agree verbally.

"I'm surprised Izzy hasn't taken a look at that Digivice." Yolei muses and TK answers, "Well, when Yami headed home and Patamon showed up, somebody in charge seemed to think it wasn't the right time for us to be aware of different Digital dimensions so they had develop a memory virus to suppress the memories of Yami and to rewrite them to include Patamon."

"Why would anyone want to do that?!" Yolei cries out in outrage, even going so far as to stand up.

"Calm down, Yolei, we can reverse the virus easily enough." She says and TK gives her a smile in thanks.

"Though that does beg the question, TK, how come that virus didn't work with you?" Cody asks and TK blinks as he asks, "How did you know it didn't work on me?"

"Well, you had been wearing the D-Arc back when we first met you on the elevator." Cody says and TK sighs.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I think it has something to do with this... parting gift that Yami gave me before he left. There's this tiny symbol not all that different then the one on Yami's chest right not, on my upper body. As I was holding Patamon, it began to burn and I was getting this killer headache. When it passed I noticed another set of memories containing Patamon in them but no Yami, but I also had my memories of Yami and then I asked Patamon about it and he was surprised that I remembered Yami and said that the Powers That Be were the ones responsible for the memory virus." TK says.

"Ok, but, why is he here now? I mean, SK, Patamon's here so you don't need him around." Davis says and TK sighs. "I think he arrived sometime during a dream we were sharing. I wanted to see him again and he really didn't want to be where he was so... He was there when I woke up, resting on my chest in his in-training form of Gigimon." The blond says.

So, as they sat there, thinking about this, she can't help but noticed a very appealing scent beginning to drift from the kitchen.

"What's that smell?" Davis asks and the goggle wearing preteen sniff the air.

"Yami's baking something in the oven!" DemiVeemon calls out from his position on the counter top.

"He knows how to cook too? Geese, TK has all the luck." The maroon hair twelve year old grumbles as Davis gets up from his position on a chair to see what's in the oven.

"So, what are you making?" TK asks as he follows Davis into the kitchen, Patamon seems very comfortable on Yami's head. She had to admit, the sight of those black and orange ears inspired her to take a picture, which she did and then took a few others of the in-training Digimon as well as her partner before putting the camera away to join them while Cody and Yolei decide to turn on the TV.

Yami sighs as he uses a wooden spoon to keep Davis from trying some of the filling. "Ouch!" Davis cries and DemiVeemon giggles as he says, "Yea, he's really good at smacking hands away using that spoon!"

"I won't know, I don't *have* any hands to have them smacked!" Upamon says with a giggle as the little Digimon bounces up and down.

She chuckles as Yami tries to pretend that he didn't hear that while TK tickles Upamon on the top of his head, between the ears. "Now now, don't annoy the cook." TK states as TK withdraws his fingers from Upamon, leaving the in-training Digimon to recover from the tickle attack.

"I think they're almost done!" Davis declares from his position in front of the over door with DemiVeemon clinging to his blue shirt, looking over Davis' left shoulder.

It wasn't long before her stomach rumbles and she takes a glance at the clock on the microwave. "I got to head home! Err, I don't suppose you can save some of those for me?" She asks and TK nods as he promises, "I'll put six aside for you and Gatomon."

"Thanks TK!" She says as she picks up her back pack on her way out of the apartment with Gatomn following her.

Yami

As the last members of the group leave, he stares at the closed door with a thoughtful look on his face. He had just met, talked with, and even baked food for a group of children he had admired back before he knew that Digimon actually existed.

"Well, that went well." Patamon muses from his position at the top of his head and he hums in agreement.

"I wonder how Tai and the others will react when they find out how they've been duped." TK wonders after a few minutes as the blond pauses from cleaning up after the minor gathering of Digidestine.

"It might take some time but they might get over it. Although privately, I can't help but wonder if anyone's been seeking out those human turned Digimon. I mean, we last time we encountered members of that group, they were in the real world, which makes me wonder if they're not only managed to secure a base of operation but managed to get a government to support their activities, after all, that formula likely needs a large financial backing and if not working for a government then they could have turned to illegal ventures." He says.

He notices that TK seems to be startled by that thought while Patamon says, "You know, you make a really good point."

"Yea, he does. But it's not as if a bunch of kids could do much against a group like that without some kind of back up." The blond muses and he cocks his head as he thought for a moment, he could hear a large amount of sneezing.

*****All throughout the multi-verse of various genre many different individuals sneeze before going back to their various plans on defeating alien invasions to government agencies hell bend on taking over the world to continuation of their race.*****

"True, but if they originate from my world then they likely know what to expect in the coming months since, after all, most of what's going on will likely follow the cartoon." He points out and Patamon asks, "You mean there's a cartoon show about our adventures in your world? Well, that likely explains how they manged to rewrite the group's memories."

"Another good point." He agrees and Patamon takes to the air, leaving the top of his head exposed to what feels like chilly air.

"You know, if I could get my hands on copies of those two seasons I'm sure the others would love to watch them and they just might believe me when I suggest we try and talk with Ken." TK muses and he shrugs.

"If we had a way of communicating with Ryo, he might be able to send us those DVDs." He admits and TK blinks.

"But Ryo's dead!" TK protests and it's his turn to get a confused look on his face. "Since when? I clearly remember him Bio Merging with his partner Cyberdramon to become Justimon during the whole D-Reaper incident."

"And that hasn't happened yet..." TK muses and he nods. "Maybe it won't..." TK says darkly and he snorts.

"Ok, lets think about this in a round about way. First off, if whatever happened to Ryo that you witnessed happened before that group and mine interference to begin with, then that means that for Ryo to appear in my world he would have to leave this world behind, right? So whatever event you saw 'kill' Ryo likely was a stage event. After all, Ryo clearly remembered the events that lead him and his partner to my world, so it stands to reason that Ryo just retraced his steps." He says after thinking about it for a good twenty minutes.

TK and Patamon blink and then the pair shared a look before TK slowly nods in agreement with his logic. "So Ryo knew that the

tournament was a set up from the beginning..." Patamon trails off and this time it's his turn to be puzzled.

"Err, what tournament?" He asks as he moves to settle down on the floor in the living room since he didn't want to ruin any of the furniture.

"You mean Ryo never told you about his adventures here?" TK asks and he shakes his head, though he does scratch the back of his head as he says, "Well, truth be told, none of us know Ryo all that well. He was kind of the last Tamer to hook up with our group and that was pretty much just before the D-Reaper made an appearance. Though Rika and Ryo do have some kind of history of competing with each other, though I think it's more Rika doing so then Ryo..."

TK nods slowly as if the blond begins to get a hint of group dynamics with him and his friends. "Well, I guess it wouldn't hurt to start from the beginning and then you can tell us more about the kind of adventures your group went through." TK muses and he nods, he didn't see anything wrong with that deal.

So he sat there, waiting for TK to begin his tale while Patamon made himself comfortable on the couch.

TK

It's been a few days since he listened to Yami's beginnings as a Tamer under his true name of Takato Matsuki, it had been the night after he had told Yami about what he knew of Ryo's adventures in this world since it had been late when he had finished and they had turned in.

He still found it hard to believe half of what Yami had told him but he did begin to understand what had happened to some of those Digimon that Yami had gone up against and what it meant when those data particles flowed into Yami's body even though that happened rarely.

It also pretty much explained why Yami's so damn powerful when compared to the native Digimon of his world's Digital world. It hadn't disturbed him much when he found out that Takato had created his own Digimon and that the Digi-Gnomes brought Guilmon to life.

In some ways, it also explained why during the explosion it had been Takato and Guilmon to switch out roles while Ryo and his partner hadn't been all that affected in the same way as Takato and Guilmon. After all, it's clear that Takato put a lot of himself into Guilmon when he created the crimson dino.

The part about Takato forcing Guilmon to Digivolve into Megidramon kind of made him wonder if that might not be the reason why Takato's a BlackGuilmon instead of just a regular Guilmon. It's very clear that Takato still feels guilty about what he forced his partner to become and its more then likely that this Digital Hazard has become more centered on Takato then on Guilmon.

After all, it was a highly concentrated virus that not only infected Apocalymon, but destroyed him before the mega could fight the virus. It also made some kind of perverted sense that he, too, was mildly infected by this Hazard since he has the mark symbolizing it on his chest. It had, after all, help keep him from forgetting about Yami, which likely prevented the D-Arc in his possession to vanish when Yami left their Digital world.

He hadn't told either the two Digimon living with him or the group about his thoughts but if Yami had put enough thought into why he bares the mark of the Digital Hazard then it's more then likely Yami would be horrified at exposing him to such a powerful and deadly virus.

Luckily, this thing with the Drama club seemed to occupy Yami's time in and out of school so it would be a while before Yami and him talked about him begin infected by a Digital Virus. It helps that most of the Digmon had taken to watching Drama rehearsals while they were in class, though it did make him wonder if the head of the Drama club, Denji, is even passing his classes since the kid spends

way too much time in the auditorium doing rewrites with Yami and a few of the other lead actors.

Which explains why he's waiting at the entrance way leading into the auditorium while Patamon rests in his arms as they wait for Yami and the others to be released from rehearsal. After all, they had a pretty big day of it, going around destroying as many Control Spires as they can.

In his other form of past time that doesn't revolve around Digimon and his time of exploring the virtual world of Fur-fandom, he's also been sending what he hopes were Anonymous E-Mails to Ken, even if Ken does hack into that E-Mail account it's under Takato's name which also includes his two main nick names of Takatomon and Yami.

After all, at this point in time, Takato isn't the one that's wearing any goggles, that anyone could see, and so he's decided to use the term Goggle-head for Davis. After all, Davis does wear goggles and does do some... questionable things that seem to fit under Rika's definition of what a Goggle-head is. It is also something that just seems to throw the maroon haired preteen off his game when it comes to insulting him by messing up his most commonly used name, so he just uses Goggle-head in retaliation.

It also helped smooth his irradiation with the supposed leader of their group who's obsessed with getting Kari to offically be his girlfriend. Not that he's trying to date Kari himself since he's fairly sure that they're still too young for that kind of thing. If Kari and him decide at a much later date they want to give it a try, then he'll be willing to try it as long as he's not in a relationship at that future point of time.

"TK!" He hears Yami shout out and within seconds he's already walking away from the door since he rather not get hit by the door being slammed open from the force of Yami's moving bulky frame. He turns his head to see Yami slowing from a flat out run to a fast walk to a walk that mimics his set pace.

"Rough day, huh?" He asks the crimson marked Digimon and Yami growls softly. "One of these days I'm going to do something that will burn this school down to the ground if only to make sure I don't leave any kind of chances of 'Mr Director' from escaping my righteous fury!" Yami growls and he sighs, he could only guess what set him off this time, after all, Yami's way too connected to his viral side to ever be considered a calm and slow to anger Digmon.

Not to say that Yami's got a short fuse, only that it's not as long as it had been when Yami had been human. Though the only area where Yami has a very short fuse would likely be when those he considers friends are threatened when they're in a harmless and undefensive position.

"Momentai!" Patamon pipes in and the look of surprise causes him to chuckle while Patamon joins in within seconds. Yami just shakes his head with a soft smile on his face.

A comfortable silence hangs between them until they entered into the apartment when they try and decide what they want for dinner.

Ken

Staring flatly at one of a series of E-Mails send to him by some kid named Takato Matsuki who has assumed names of Takatomon and Yami. He can't for the life of him find any records of a Takato Matsuki but then, the E-Mails were from some place in Japan, there wasn't any listings of an address and it wouldn't surprise him if these were being sent from some school library or public library too.

It didn't take him long to wonder how this kid found his E-Mail address, after all, his fans were always on top of finding his change of E-Mail address no matter how many times he switches it. It's the reason why he programed a filter for his E-Mails to sort through them and put them in the right folders.

All of these messages came to his attention simply because they don't fall under any of the categories he had programed in his filter. More then a few of them hinted that Ryo was very disapproving of his activities as the Digimon Emperor, he suppresses his curiosity about how this 'Takatomon' knew of his friendship with the missing Digidestine.

Though he really wants to reply to these E-Mails, demanding to know Ryo's location and how 'Takatomon' knew the missing Digidestine he grinds his teeth as his finger hovers over the delete key that will delete the folder containing all of the E-Mails from this Takato person. His head felt like a pack of dogs were rumping around in his skull, giving him a massive headache as memories and emotions struggle against his determination to just delete this file fold and forget about Ryo to focus all of his energies on conquering the Digital world.

Closing his eyes, he lowers his hand and places it on the desk top next to the keyboard. He gets to his feet and heads for the patio to get some air.

Once more he feels like his life is in turmoil as to what his path in life should be. The last time this happened, someone sent him an E-Mail setting him on the path leading straight into the Digital world... again, which confuses the heck out of him since before Takato began sending these messages to him, he had forgotten about Ryo and about... *that* Digimon .

It also brought back memories of his first meeting with Wormmon, though his mind only has fragments of the adventure that happened after meeting the green Digimon. It didn't help but just by thinking about this past causes him to get a fierce headache.

What's the harm in meeting with this... Takatomon? A minor part of him wonders as he leans on the metal railing, looking out at the setting sun.

He closes his eyes as he tries to think of reason not to meet up with this kid and came up with nothing in the excuse department.

He can't help but feel worn from this emotional hiccup that just popped up in his life once more.

TK

It was early morning when he woke to hear a message alert coming from his computer. He had kept the E-Mail address he had created in Yami's name open in hopes of a reply from the person behind the persona of the Digimon Emperor.

With a glance down to his side, he finds Patamon on the other pillow and he already can hear the soft snores of Yami coming from the floor.

Very carefully he rolls to the other side of the bed and then sit up before getting off the bed to head to his computer.

Not bothering to sit down, he moves the mouse rapidly around to get rid of the screen saver. He opens the index center and clicks the message from Ken.

He blinks, he had hoped that Ken would want to met with Takato but hadn't thought it would actually occur...

Scratching the side of his head as he yawns, he decides to wait until after school to reply to the meeting request. He logs out of the message center and then uses his original E-Mail address to log on to see if he had any new messages.

Once that's done, he takes his time on heading out of the room to have his shower, he collects the out fit he wants to wear before leaving the room.

Leaving his pant PJs in the bathroom, he goes straight to the kitchen to make breakfast for Yami, Patamon, and himself. He finds a note from his mom asking him to be quiet since she plans to sleep in late today since it is her day off.

It wasn't long before the traditional breakfast was ready to serve when the two Digimon exit out of his room, likely following the scent of food from the hallway as it wafers into his room through the open door.

Yami yawns as he waves a hand in greeting while Patamon calls out a sleepy "Morning, TK!" He nods as he finishes poring the rice into a large bowl.

Yami wakes up enough to help set the table while Patamon takes his place on the table as the little orange Digimon waits for him to serve him a plate with food piled on it.

He takes a bowl and pores Patamon some miso soup while Yami begins to pick and choose which of the dishes he wants to start off with.

As he places the bowl of miso in front of his partner, he pores some for himself and then scoops out some rice into a bowl before adding soy sauce to the steamed rice.

Yami pores a bowl of miso soup for himself, there was enough for a second helping if one of them wants more. He then begins on his rice as he waits for the soup to cool down before digging into it.

Patamon finishes the soup and begins to combine the Natto and dried seaweed before eating it. Yami hadn't picked clean the rolls of rolled omelets, though Yami hasn't really touched the Natto from what he can see of the black Digimon's plate.

There wasn't any fish to add to their meal but he's sure he'll add that to the list of things to buy when he goes on a grocery run later this week once his mom gives him the money to do so.

It was nice to have different options for breakfast even though this took him a little over an hour to make. While it is convenient to have milk and cereal or even oatmeal, sometime he just felt that he wanted something different then the two staples of Western breakfast and he owes this ability to have something besides such things to those cooking classes that his mom signed him up for back when he was nine.

He hasn't had any more lessons since they moved here but then, he's more then capable of following the recipes used cook books or off the internet.

"So, did you ever finish that homework that the school handed to you?" He asks as the bottom of the dishes begin to glare in the kitchen light.

"Yea, I did. I'm still surprised they haven't tried and force me to attend classes though." The crimson marked rookie admits.

"It likely because they don't register a student absent from class." He muses and the boy turned Digimon hums in thoughtful agreement.

"So you think they're slipping in this homework to try and get me to... slip out of 'character' and complain about already gotten this work load?" Yami asks in a thoughtful tone.

"While that does sound devious and very smart of them, I think it's more that they're trying to get Denji to attend classes again. I mean, those that also attend these strategy meetings have also been getting homework too." He says and the black rookie sighs but nods in agreement.

"If that's the case, why not just give the lot of them detention or call their parents? Besides that, what's so special about Denji that they're even allowing him to skip all of his classes?" Yami asks and he shrugs.

"I won't know, you'd have better luck asking one of the others since they've been going to this school far longer then I have, need I remind you of that?" He asks and Yami looks a tad embarrassed but nods. "I just might." Yami says.

"Anyway... Ken wants to set up a meeting with you." He says as he changes the topic as he begins to pile some dishes up for Yami to clear off.

"Wait, what?" Yami asks and then after a few seconds the black rookie with crimson markings demand, "How have you been in communication with *him* without him knowing it's you he's talking too?"

"I set up an E-Mail account using your name while listing Yami and Takatomon as screen names." He informs the very powerful rookie living with him in the apartment complex.

"Actually, this meeting is the first time Ken's ever replied back to me. It really surprised me that he's asking for a meeting at all. After all, I though he wouldn't bother even though I did mention Ryo's name a few times." He adds thoughtfully as Yami piles some of the dirty dishes in the sink.

"I guess your theory of Ken the Digimon Emperor is the same Ken Ryo was talking with during this tournament panned out." Yami states and he nods in agreement, after all, he never got the chance to talk with Ryo about anything during the tournament, so he had to relay on others as they describe their interactions with the preteen and who Ryo had been talking to.

The memory of his first meeting with the preteen pops into his mind, even about how Ryo admitted that Yami at that time couldn't have been the Guilmon he had known and that the mannerisms that Yami had been exhibiting had been Guilmon's Tamer, Takato Matsuki.

It had been Ryo who decided that somehow, during that explosion that they had been caught up in had somehow switched Takato and

Guilmon's species. It meant that back in the human world of Takato's birth, Guilmon had likely found himself there, as a human, likely one that looked very similar to what Takato is suppose to look like when he had been human.

It made him wonder how Takato's parents had taken the news of their son's disappearance or if somehow, Guilmon had found himself under their care.

With a sigh, he dismisses those depressing thoughts to glance at the clock on the wall. "Well, I had better head out. You coming with or are you going to finish up here before leaving?" He asks Yami as he gets up from his place at the table.

"I'll finish up here, grab my homework and an old back pack before leaving. Should Patamon wait here with the keys and then put them in your desk during lunch or should I just stuff the keys in the pack?" Yami asks and he says, "I'll leave them with you to be stuffed in your back pack."

Yami nods and it's not long before he's got Patamon in his back pack as he heads out to the elevator, leaving his keys hanging up next to the door.

Yami

He had managed to get away from the Drama club as the final bell rang out, he had repeatedly told the head of the Drama club that he had a meeting to get to right after school. So when he finally got up to go, remembering to grab the back pack he's been using to carry things to and from school, he left though Denji was giving him a look of begging not to go.

He shakes his head as one of his hands goes to the D-Arc around his neck as he waits for Ken to appear. He personally wishes that just for this one meeting, he could be human.

Unknown to him, his D-Arc screen begins to glow softly...

Guilmon

As he stands in the shed in the park, his mind was a whirl of memories as he stares at the back wall. According to his memories, that back wall shouldn't be there, that a large cave should be there, one that he... dug with his... claws?

As his head begins to ache, he kneels down on the ground as he feels some tears trail down his face. *Why can't I remember? If I'm not suppose to look like this then what am I suppose to look like?* He demands in his mind.

For a second he thought he hear wind chimes chiming. He blinks as he begins to feel odd...

Suddenly he feels something surge within him and in a flash, he blinks as finds himself flat on the ground. His ears twitch and he takes a sniff of the air.

He freezes as he causes his **ears** to flap . He moves an arm before him and he blinks as he stares at the limb that now sports crimson scales with markings of black. Three long white claws were where his fingers were.

As he gets up, he flexes those claws as he begins to get a sense of deja vu. He moves his tail next and as he turns to look at it, a memory of a seeing rats moving about before him and then him firing a ball of fire at them...

He blinks and gets to his feet, it was hard for him to stand straight upright so he hunches over. *All that's missing is Takatomon...* He muses and he feels light headed as new thoughts begin intrude.

"Takato..." He says out loud as he realizes an ache within him, causing him to feel very empty within himself.

After a few seconds, he snaps out of those thoughts and turns to stare at the back wall. He flexes his claws as he gives the wall a sober look.

After all, he don't know how long he's going to be like this and he really does feel like he should fix the back wall...

Takato

He coughs as he sits up. His vision swims for a few seconds and he finds himself suddenly deaf and that some how, his ability to smell had been plugged up.

He takes a look down at his body and finds himself wearing the same sort of cloths he had on before Bio Merging with Guilmon to become Gallantmon. Although his cloths were slightly baggy, most likely because he had been fifteen years old when that explosion happened.

His D-Arc screen flashes brightly and suddenly his cloths fit him. His left hand goes to his goggles as he uses his right hand to help pick himself off the ground.

It feels so weird being human again... He muses to himself as he begins to stretch his back since it's been a while since he's held his body straight up right.

As he walks around, getting the feel of his balance, he takes a look around in hopes of spotting Ken.

It wasn't long before he spots Ken wearing his school uniform. He could only imagine what kind of expression the preteen was wearing.

"Over here!" He calls out when Ken pauses to look suspiciously around. Ken looks startled and seems to study him for a second before walking towards him.

"Takatomon I presume?" Ken asks and he sighs. "Yea, though hearing anybody other then my partner call me that is pretty weird." He admits as he studies Ken's face.

"Partner?" Ken asks as his eyes seem to flicker around looking for his Digimon partner. "He's not here, his back in my world." He tells the other in a flat tone.

"Your world?" Ken asks in a skeptical way. "Yea, there are other dimensions out there, this world and it's corresponding Digital world is just one in a likely multitude of dimensions. I don't claim to have visited any other dimension other then this one but I think a common friend of ours had. After all, Ryo's enemy claimed he could bend space and time."

Ken blinks in surprise at the thought. "He ended up partnered with a Cyberdramon, if you're interested to know." He adds.

"How long have you known him?" Ken asks after a few seconds, as if finally deciding that his willing to probe for answers. "I've known him for about three years, though a friend of mine, Rika, knew him for about four years." He answers.

Ken gets this... stormy look on his face. "He's a pretty private person, I had to find out about his adventures here by talking with one of the local Chosen." He tells Ken and the stormy look fades from Ken's face.

"I guess I can see why he won't talk about it." Ken says with a sigh.

He watches as Ken's left hand goes to the back of his neck with a look of pain flashing in his eyes. "It's the Dark Spore, isn't it?" He asks and Ken stiffens.

"How'd you know about it?" Ken demands with great deal of anger and grabs a hold of the front of his shirt.

"Funny thing, in my world, there's this cartoon that's based on actual events that have and will happen in this world. Like the fact that you'll create a Digimon called Kimeramon and that a pair of created Digimon will transform those Control Spires you set up in the Digital world into 'fake' Digimon. I even know who's the real villain here too and it's not you." He says as Ken's grip loosens as Ken backs away in shock.

"You can't possibly... It can't be!" Ken says and he sighs. "Look, Ken, it hasn't happen yet, but it's capable of happening as long as you seek to create the 'perfect' Digimon. I had altered the events of the previous Digidestine and one could say that I'm altering them again. I'm mucking up this dimensions time stream and I'm sure the Powers That Be are highly peeved at me for doing so, but, I don't want thinks to progress as they're suppose to." He says.

Once more Ken has a hand over the place where the Dark Spore is lodged while his other hand balls into a fist. "So... Ryo knows what I'm doing because of this... cartoon?" Ken asks in a soft voice.

"Yea, I'm very sure that Ryo's seen the show, after all, it's still pretty popular where I come from. They even them out on season box set DVDs." He says as he studies Ken's reactions wondering just what Ken plans to do about all of this new bit of information.

"The ball's in your court, Ken, likely for the first time in a long time. That Dark Spore might be able to influence your emotional negativity but it's up to you to decide what your course will be." He says.

As Ken struggles with this, he can't help but feel alert and within seconds, he tackles Ken to the ground.

"And here we thought you're too goodie goodie to mess around with this world's events, boy." A male voice says and a humanoid cat Digimon with brown stripes on a royal red coat drops down from a tree with a gun that had just fired a dart that's likely aimed at Ken.

Oh 'ell... Goes through his mind as he stares at the black cargo pant wearing man turn Digimon who has a manic grin fixated on his fury face.

Ken

He can't help but stare at the Digimon that's standing there, aiming a gun at them. As he looks away from the cat looking Digimon, he notices that Takato had tackled him to the ground and he didn't know what to feel about that so he looked away and then spots a dart that not far from where they're laying.

How is this possible? That world... The Digimon... They can't be real... Can they? They have to be... Or else this... Digimon won't be able to exist in the real world... Were the thoughts as the yellow goggle wearing preteen gets off of him to stand and face the very human looking Digimon.

Though he can hear the other say something to the Digimon, his focus remains within his own mind as his mind races a mile a minute as this new concept begins to dawn on him. A cold lump settles in his midsection as he finally realizes what he's been doing to living, thinking beings...

He snaps out of it as Takato grabs his arm and pulls him up before trying to get him to move from his spot. "Ken, we need to move, it's a given that he's got friends on the way to this spot!" Takato hisses sharply at him.

"After then things I did... Maybe this is my punishment..." He says in a very low voice.

"He's not a real Digimon, Ken! He's part of the group my team of Chosen were investigating! They're about as native to this world as I am!" Takato informs him.

Startled out of his mood, he allows the red hazel eyed preteen lead the way as they try and get out of the cat Digimon's sight. A dart just misses the other preteen's shoulder as Takato ducks behind a tree.

He glances back at and notices the glint in the feline Digimon's eyes, he wonders for a brief second if he ever had such a look in his eye when he had been 'hunting' Digimon...

With a light shiver, he pushes those thoughts out of his head as he focuses on getting out of the park without begin hit by a dart. "We're... almost... home... free!" Takato pants as he points to where a camera crew is and he nods as he follows Takato towards the news crew who seem to be doing a segment here in the park.

They slow as one of the people spots him, the famous boy genius, Ken Ichijouji. He turns and the unknown cat Digimon seems to give them a dirty look before vanishing into the shadows of a tree.

"Ken Ichijouji! What a pleasant surprise? Who's your friend?" A news report asks and as he turns to face the news crew he mentally sighs, he rather not have to put up with the public...

"I'm Takato Kimura. Sorry about interrupting your report sir, it's just that we're in a rush to get some baking supplies since I'm teaching Ken here how to make a family recipe and hoped to cut through the park to get to a sale we heard about." Takato lies smoothly, so smoothly that he can't help but wonder if Takato's an old hand at dealing with the media.

He allows a polite smile to show on his face as he agrees with Takato's lie. "I think we got about twelve minutes until the sale ends. If you don't excuse us..." The report nods and as they head towards the gate of the park, he gives Takato a questioning look.

"Kimura?" He asks as they walk down the street. "Sorry, it's an ingrained habit, adding Kimura to my name in front of a news crew during an emergency was my way of alerting my friends and Hypnos that there's trouble about. You'd be surprised how often news crews

show up at the most inappropriate times, especially when you need to get to a pay phone or use your cell phone to give them an update." Takato says.

"What's Hypnos?" He decides to inquire as they walk, he is rather reluctant to head off on his own just after his life had been threaten once.

"It's a government agency that was set up to monitor and, hopefully prevent, Digimon from Bio Emerging in our world. You see, the Digimon from my version of Digital world are all fighters, they have no trouble deleting and downloading other Digimon. The problem is that when they Bio Emerge, they have a tendency to go on rampages, and since gates to the Digital world are rare, instead of capturing and returning the Digimon back to the Digital world, we... delete them."

He blinks as here he's being told that his first impressions of Digimon were true... in another world. "The rule of survival of the Fittest." He muses and Takato shrugs.

"Not all Digimon follow that but the majority of them do. But then, my experience in my Digital world is based on one experience since we only went there to rescue a friend of ours from one of the Sovereigns who had captured." Takato says.

"I see." He says.

"Yea, it turned out one of the Sovereign Digimon thought that by conquering the real world that they'd be ready to face an age old enemy, one that I don't really want to talk about right now." The yellow goggle wearing preteen says and he nods, guessing that that part of the story was a whale of a tale.

"Anyway, back to that cat Digimon." Takato says.

"What about him?" He asks and then remembers something, "What did you mean that he's not a real Digimon?"

"Well, you see, that group my team were investigating had been experimenting with chemicals, ones that were capable of turning a human into a Digimon. Everyone thought that was a rumor, that they hadn't gotten around to perfecting the drug. After all, we did find large tubes that housed a few people in the liquid with air masks and visors on their faces." Takato says and it takes a few seconds for Takato to resume his tale.

"We split up, I was paired with Ryo and his partner, Cyberdramon. We headed down into the basement when we confronted a scientist who had been in the process of taking a drug. As we were talking him out of it, he presses the needle through his skin and about five minutes, when we thought we had him secure did he begin to transform." Takato tells him, his eyes gazed over as the preteen relives the event.

"It wasn't that different from when a Digimon Digivolves only the sphere of light was a chaotic blend of colours ranging from a deep purple to a neon orange colour. The guy transformed into a humanoid bird Digimon and then before Cyberdramon and my partner could move in to attack, the guy slams himself on a table where more of the needles were, injecting himself with more of the drug."

They pause at a street corner with a few others. Once they cross the street, Takato continues his tale.

"We managed to phone the others using our cell phones to get out of the building as we headed for the stairs. Birdman underwent another Digivolution and stood well over two meters tall and since we didn't know what level we was, we Bio Merge with our partners, Ryo and Cyberdramon transformed into Justimon and my partner and I transformed into a Digimon named Gallantmon."

"As Justimon charged in, it seems that by becoming a Digimon, the scientist proceeded to activate all the traps that had laid dormant and that Justimon activated a prototype bomb by stepping on this basic wire trap." Takato sighs as he shakes his head.

"I went from being a fifteen year old Tamer to a black version of my partner with squat for memories and just a bunch of viral instincts with only my ingrained mannerisms." Takato says and he raises an eyebrow at that.

"About four years ago, I arrived in this world's Digital world to protect one of this group's targets, a young blond that I'm sure you know or at least, confronted." Takato says as the preteen stops before a coffee shop.

He gives Takato a blank look for a few seconds before he frowns as he goes through the few blonds he's met. "TK." He guesses and Takato nods.

"Yea, I spent a few weeks here protecting TK since his partner Digimon had been deleted and sent to my world as a Digi-Egg. When I left, I left my Digivice with TK and if TK had forgotten about me, I'm sure it would have vanished from this world. But TK hadn't forgotten me so he kept my D-Arc and about a week or two ago, he used it to bring me to this world once more, something I hadn't objected to since I had just recently discovered a reason why none of my friends had arrived in the Digital world and felt pretty low." Takato admits and he remembers a clipped device on the blond's jean belt loop, it helped that the same device is around Takato's neck.

"If what you say is true then why haven't you returned to your real world? Why are you still here?" He asks.

"For once thing, wishes have a tendency to become real when my world's Digital world is involved, as I had wished to met you as a human since I figured you'd take what I say more serious then if I were a Digimon." Takato says giving an amused look.

He sighs but decided that he's too drained to really argue with this guy, though he had to admit, it was nice to have someone to talk with who isn't interested in him just because he's famous...

As he's about to say something, Takato seems to stiffen and then with a sigh, Takato's body gets covered in a ball of light. It fades to reveal a very large black Digimon about his size with crimson markings.

"Well, it held out longer then I thought it would." The Digimon says in an amusement tone, the voice only had a brief hint of the voice belonging to the boy he had just been talking with.

"Aren't you the guy on that poster for some play?" He asks after he realizes why the black Digimon seemed so familiar.

"Likely, Denji's making a very big deal about the play that he's been waiting next to forever to act out. Your looking at the lead villain." The Digimon that was Takato Matsuki says. "By the way, call me Yami when I'm like this, I'm use to answering to that nick name while I'm like this." Yami adds lightly.

He nods and in the end, they didn't have much more to say to each other so they split up, each heading off in their own destinations, unknown to the two of them, a very surprised Digidestine had been sitting next to the window and had just witnessed a very surprising transformation . . .

Yami

He arrived back at TK's apartment to find that Matt's eating over. The elder blond nods in his direction as he takes off the back pack that's still hanging from his back.

He sniffs the air as he walks towards the table and takes a seat so that he can watch TK move about the kitchen. Patamon's resting on the cardboard as they all watch TK dance between dish, making sure nothing's burning as TK talks on the phone.

He perks his ears and can hear Sora's voice coming from the end of the phone. It seems that the two were talking about what kind of food

will likely be serve at this festival at the local university.

He sighs as Matt ends up with the phone while TK begins to take a roast from the over, well he's pretty sure it's a roast since TK's mom, Nancy, had bought one yesterday.

He gets up and heads into the living room to see what's on. It wasn't long before he found a local news show that had the logo of that news crew on it. He touches the D-Arc that's still hanging around his neck.

"That's a park not far from here." TK muses and he turns to give the pair of blonds a glance before wondering if he shouldn't just change the channel when he hears a phase that he heard just an hour ago...

- "Ken Ichijouji! What a pleasant surprise? Who's your friend?" **-** The reporter says and he hears TK choke on air, likely at seeing him next to Ken, as in him as Takato Matsuki, Tamer of Guilmon and the unoffical leader of his group.

- "I'm Takato Kimura. Sorry about interrupting your report sir, it's just that we're in a rush to get some baking supplies since I'm teaching Ken here how to make a family recipe and hoped to cut through the park to get to a sale we heard about." **-** The him on the screen says, he notices a slight flash of surprise in Ken's eyes before a fake polite smile appears on Ken's face.

- I think we got about twelve minutes until the sale ends. If you don't excuse us..." **-** Is all that Ken says.

He groans mentally as he just knows that this is just the beginning. Of what, he doesn't know but he's sure it involves him directly or indirectly...

Joe

His eyes widen at the news report and he moves to get the remote to raise the volume up but it wasn't soon enough and for a moment he felt despair... until he remembers that the same news show will repeat in an hours time on the sister station.

Although it took a while, mostly phoning Izzy to get tips on how to set up his VCR so that it records that news show. He almost forgot to put in a tape about five minutes after he hung up on Izzy.

He made sure that it was a new tape, it was so new that he had to use a knife to get the plastic off the tape. True, he'll have to go through the recording to get to the right part before showing the others but he's sure that when confronted with this news cast, Yami will be forced to tell them why he's... well, why he's posing as a Digimon.

Secure that everything's on the right track, he goes back to eating his TV Dinner while working on his medical homework at the same time...

TK

Gee, what next? Davis dressing as a Goth tomorrow? He ideally wonder as the two preteens vacate the screen and the man finishes his report.

He glances at Yami for a few seconds before he remembers the pans still resting on the elements...

Davis

As he looks through his dresser draws, he pauses and picks up a black long sleeve shirt that has a brass cross on the front of it with the words: Future's Grave.

"Davish? Why are you holding that shirt up?" DemiVeemon asks and he blinks before turning to look at his partner.

"I don't know why but... something tells me I can freak out CK if I were to wear this to school tomorrow, kind of freaky, huh?" He tells his partner before reluctantly putting the shirt back into this draw before deciding that maybe he should just take his dirty laundry down and do his dark cloths with the hope of having one of his usual blue shirts to wear to school tomorrow.

Yolei

"What do you mean that there isn't any local listings for a Takato Kimura?!" She yells into the phone. She can't believe that she just missed running into the Ken Ichijouji and now she can't even get a hold of this Takato's phone number, let alone address...

Tai

This Takato Kimura almost looks like he could be Kari's twin brother! They got the same eyes, though he's got my taste in hear gear. Huh, I wonder how I would look in a pair of yellow goggles... He wonders from his position at the table.

As he looks away as the news leaves the park, he can't help but muse if this Takato kid was a good baker if he's teaching the Ken Ichijiouji how to bake a family recipe. If so, he wonders how much he can pay to get the kid over here to make him a good dinner, say... every day of the week as he looks cat eyed down at his liver sticks.

Izzy

He sighs as he gets off the phone with Joe, he had been kind of surprised that Joe wanted to record a news report.

He's glad he got the time of said news report so he can watch it to see if it has anything to do with one of them or about a Digimon.

Anyway, maybe I should just ask TK to borrow his D-Arc in hopes of copying that Digimon Analyzer, I can't seem to get very far trying to recreate it using the one that Gennai gave me. Izzy muses as he turns off the screen to his computer.

From the smell of things, it seems that dinner's served.

Guilmon

He pauses as he stares up at the night sky, he felt a chill enter within him and he suddenly begins to worry about his partner and part-time parent, Takato Matsuki.

I'm sure he's fine... Right? He asks himself before the chill vanishes and his eyes widen as he remembers that he's yet to have dinner.

Yami

Yip, some how, some way, I just know I'm going to have it rough over the next few days... He muses.

Matt

He can't help but glance between the two before sharing a look with Patamon.

Drama much? He muses with a slightly bemusement grin on his face as he shakes his head slightly before turn around to watch TK begin to set the food onto the table.

Yami

A phone ringing is what wakes him up from his position on the floor. It didn't surprise him much to find that TK's already wake.

After all, much like Guilmon, he finds himself to be a heavy sleeper as a Digimon and few things manage to get through his slumber.

As he sits up on the floor, he yawns and his ears stretch out as he does so. He gives him a slight shake as he hears the phone ring again.

While not totally awake, it doesn't stop him from getting to this feet and heading to the bathroom to do something before heading into living/kitchen part of the apartment.

As he enters into the main section of the apartment, he notices Patamon seems to be trying to go back to sleep on the couch. He heads to the table to sit down, careful where he puts his tail among other things.

"So, who was that on the phone?" He asks the blond as TK pours some batter over the waffle iron.

"Oh that? It seems Joe's got some news that he wants to share after school today. I doubt that you'd be able to make it since the rehearsals are going to be on again and I doubt Denji's going to let you off two days in a row." TK muses and he winces at Denji's name.

"He's obsessed with me! It reminds me how obsessive Jeri was with Leomon when they met for the first time! And they ended up being partners later!" He groans, he wonders if this is what the lion Digimon had been going through as Jeri chased him around the park with Calumon aiding Jeri.

He remembers how he phoned Henry and then Rika asking for their advice. He's only thankful that when he leaves this reality, he won't have to deal with the obsessive head of the Drama club. Though he wouldn't put it pass any of the Digidestine to find a way to film the

play, although he doubts that any of his friends will ever get a chance to see it so all things considered, that might be a good thing.

After all, when he leaves this world, it's not as if he'll be carrying a knapsack or something that one of the Digidestine could slip the tape into.

"Really? How odd." TK muses with a slight grin on his face, likely trying to picture the scene that he mentioned.

"Not any odder then how Kazu and Kenta ended up with their partners or how Impmon ended up with a pair of Tamers." He tells him. "True." TK says, clearly remembering the tale of his group's adventures.

"It still hard to believe that after all of that you guys still forgave him." TK says softly and he sighs.

"Jeri was the one who didn't want Impmon to be deleted and she's the one that suffered greatly from his actions against us." He reminds the blond and TK nods.

"I don't know if we'd have that in us to do the same if something like that happened." TK admits and he snorts. "You did for Ken when he used a Control Spire on Agumon." He points out and TK sighs.

"Hard to say, after all, our lives aren't following that cartoon show for event for event." The blond counters and he can't help but smile slightly as he hums in agreement.

TK

The second group of Digidestine arrived at Izzy's place without too much trouble.

Although he was kind of thrown by the black shirt that Davis is currently wearing, although when Kari inquired about it, the maroon

haired preteen grumbled about 'stupid driers that cut out before they do their jobs' before turning around to ask Kari out on a date to help him feel better.

It wasn't long before they were ushered into the living room by Joe. As they sit down on the floor, Joe looks around before asking, "Where's Yami?"

"He's stuck in Drama rehearsals. Since he wasn't there yesterday, the head of the Drama club would be very reluctant to let him out of today's rehearsals." He tells the oldest Digidestine.

"It's that Denji kid, isn't? The one that scrapped his own play because he couldn't find anyone good enough for one of the parts?" Tai asks and he nods.

"Let's just say that this year, Denji found his villain." Yolei says with a great deal of bemusement, after all, there were way too many rumors floating about concerning Yami and the story plot of the play. He never pressed Yami to find out which were true and with weren't although Yolei has done some subtle probing as had Kari.

"Really?" Sora asks and all of the second group of Digidestine nod. "Yami's the lead villain." Patamon pipes in.

The older Digidestine blinks as their expressions range from amusement to disbelief. "Well, he does suit that role to a T, doesn't he? When I first saw him, I couldn't help but think scary." Sora muses and Matt nods in agreement.

"Seeing him pick a fight with Digitamamon wasn't the greatest first impression." His elder brother muses.

"Yea, differently glad he's on our side." Tai declares once more.

"Ah come one, how frightening could the guy be? I mean, sure he's large and black, but he's ok." Davis says and he sighs.

"That's because you've never seen him fight." Kari says and he nods. "The first time he turned to look at me, I thought I'd end up a meal for him." He adds with a sigh.

The newer members of the group all share looks though their Digimon were more interested in the snacks that Izzy has set out.

"You're got to be kidding..." Davis says and everyone but Joe, Yolei, and Cody shake their head as they hummed a negative.

"He acted different when we first met him, he was more... more... wild would be the right word to describe him. He is after all, a viral Digimon and they are very prone to violence." He says, though the real reason is likely because Yami back then didn't even know who he was and was pretty much going on instinct and bits of ingrained behavior.

"How different is he acting?" Tai asks and Kari answers, "He's a lot more talkative, relax even, and he's not as ferociously protective of TK as he use to be but that last one might because of Patamon."

"Anyway, I would like to start this meeting. It does touch on Yami though but first, I recorded something that I thought you guys might want to see before I tell my story." Joe says after a short period of silence.

With a group shrug, the older teen presses the play button the the TV screen comes to live. He sighs as the reporter calls out to Ken as he approaches with Takato.

Like before it was Takato who answered the man's questions and then Ken going along with the lie and they then leave. Joe pauses the video and even rewinds it so that they have a clear picture of the two preteens.

"God! Do you know that I tried to get this Takato's address and that according to the operator there isn't any listings for a Takato

Kimura?" Yolei explodes and he gets startled before turning to stare at the purple haired girl.

"I'm not that surprised to know that." Joe says as he adjusts his glasses. He blinks and gives Joe a questioning look.

"Not long after that was recorded, I saw those two standing in front of this cafe that I was in. I couldn't hear what they were saying but I didn't think anything of it until a flash of light caught my attention and where the yellow goggle-wearing kid had been standing was Yami. They talked some more before they split up, each heading off in different directions." Joe says and he can't help but stare as it takes some time for him to realize that not only does Ken know about Takato and Yami but it seems that the Digidestine will find out about it now too.

"Are you sure you weren't imagining things, Joe? I mean, Yami... human?" Tai says and he just sighs as does Patamon.

"Technically, yea, Yami's actually a kid named Takato Matsuki who comes from another dimension's future and has somehow switched species with his partner, Guilmon." He says and it wasn't long before everyone turns to look at him.

"Huh?" Was something the whole group says.

"I was kind of surprised too, when he and I shared another dream and I found him as somebody my age wearing a pair of yellow goggles. That was how he ended up back here, in this world since he didn't want to remain in his world's Digital world after finding out that he's somehow been thrown into the past when Ryo had triggered some kind of lab explosion." He explains.

"What about the whole, switched species thing?" Davis asks and he sighs as he says, "You have to understand how they achieve mega level to really understand that part."

"Ryo's dead!" Tai says and he just shakes his head while Izzy asks, "How could the process of achieving mega be any different then in our world?"

"First off, Ryo's very much alive in another dimension. And it can apparently, especially when both partners make a wish while residing in their version of the Digital world. They call it Bio Merging and it's not all that different from DNA Digivolving with the exception that instead of two Digimon merging it's the human partner merging with their Digimon partner." He explains and Izzy's eyes light up while the others digest this.

"You're saying that they become one with their partner Digimon when they do this?" Izzy asks and he nods.

"Takato was Bio Merged with his partner, Guilmon, in the form of Gallantmon. Ryo was Bio Merged with his partner, Cyberdramon, in the form of Justimon. They were investigating a group that seemed to have perfected a drug that would allow a human to transform into a Digimon. Sounds familiar doesn't it?" He says and most of the older Digidestined eyes widen as they realize what that sounded like.

"That rock dragon Digimon... It was a member of that group, that's what you're implying isn't it?" Matt asks and he nods in agreement.

"And the last pair were spotted in the real world when a pair of them sucked Yami into that hole of darkness. It goes to suggest that the group has likely found funding to create more of this drug in the last four years, after all, what government wouldn't want to have access to creating improved soldiers?" He points out.

"But how could this group be here if they're suppose to be in Yami's home dimension?" Sora asks.

"Ryo's originally from this world, and when this explosion happened, it not only sent Yami and his partner back in time, but also Ryo, who arrived back in our world. If Yami and his partner hadn't switched species, they might have landed here as well. After all, this group

must have gotten caught up in the blast and followed Ryo here." He says.

"This has long night written all over it." Yolei says with a sigh and he can't help but agree as the others begin to think about what he had said. It was clear that until they got most of their questions answered they weren't going to end this meeting anytime soon...

Ken

It's about three days since his meeting with Takato and he's yet to head into the Digital world since then. He frankly admitted that he's a bit scarred to enter into that world, to take on the mantle of the Digimon Emperor. He didn't even know where to start to try and clean up that mess.

He could tell that the Digidestine were still going around, destroying the Control Towers that he erected throughout the Digital world.

With a sigh, he exits out of the monitoring screen and decides to work on his homework, though he can't help a stray thought about what Wormmon is up to...

TK

"I wonder what the Digimon Emperor is up to, he hasn't shown his face to mock us recently and I'm getting worried." Cody admits as they rest next to a stream.

He sighs, nobody has yet asked why Yami had met with Ken but he's sure that they'll ask about it soon. Privately, he had been hoping that Ken would arrange a meeting to talk with them about his persona of the Digimon Emperor, but so far, nothing.

"He must have something big planned." Yolei says.

"Or he's given it up! Come on you guys! He's likely shaking in his boot at the thought of facing me and Veemon here!" Davis brags and once more he can't help but feel that a good slap up the back of his head was needed to knock some sense into the kid but resists that urge.

"I don't think that's what's going on, Davis." Kari says and he nods in agreement with the Digidestine of Light.

"Ken's likely got a lot to think about, that might be why he hasn't done anything recently." He says, pretty much letting the Gatomon out of the bag.

" **WHAT DID YOU SAY?!** " The others plus their Digimon bellow. "Do you know what you're implying?" Yolei yells while Davis shouts at him, "What do you mean the Digimon Emperor is Ken?"

He sighs not really looking at them though Kari did seem to sigh, it seems that she, at least, had come to that conclusion on her own with the single lead of Yami send with and talking with Ken.

"Well, I was kind of hoping that Ken would try an approach us by now. After all, you heard Joe say that Yami transformed back into BlackGuilmon while in Ken's company. Did any of you wonder why Yami was meeting Ken and that Ken didn't seem to freak out when Yami transformed?" He asks as he turns to look at each of them with a raised eyebrow.

"What happened during the meeting? That news crew showed them running towards them, what were they running from?" Kari asks.

"They were running from one of the members of that group who decided to dart Ken. If it weren't for his partners reporting him missing, I would have thought that that the group would have kidnapped him." He admits.

"Is there anything else that you've keep quiet about that we should know about?" Gatomon demands.

"Actually, I'm not sure how to break this to you guys, but, well, in Yami's home dimension, there's this cartoon that currently has two seasons... one call Digimon Adventures and the second season is call Zero Two." He says and the others but Patamon give him owlish looks.

"According to Yami, it's a very popular show, one that has some movies to go along with it too." He says after a few minutes and Kari and Cody seem to get what he's implying as do most of the other Digimon.

"Just spill it, DB!" Davis exclaims in a huff although Yolei seems to thinking very deeply about the clues.

"You even wonder why Takato wears goggles?" He says flatly to Davis. "Well duh! There's just plain cool piece of head ware." Davis declares and he felt the urge to bang his head against something hard.

"What TK's trying to say, this cartoon is based on our adventures." Kari says to their supposed leader.

Davis looks to his partner and Veemon nods in agreement, not satisfied, the kid with white goggles on his head glances at the others and they, too, nod in agreement.

"So you're saying that there's a cartoon about us?" Davis asks him and he nods.

"That pretty much explains a lot about him." Gatomon muses from her position next to Kari.

"Yes, it does." Kari muses.

"So the reason why you didn't mention this or Yami is..." Yolei trails off.

"Yami likely didn't know how he knew so much about what's going on four years ago and now he hadn't wanted to interfere but, well, let's guy say that I pressed him about it before helping him to cross over into our dimension. I was very thrown about it, though as I pointed out to him, things have changed, I'm not acting like I had in the cartoon and then there's that group who also likely know the gist of the events and likely the ending too." He informs them.

"So that's why Yami met with Ken? To talk him out of his 'conquer' of the Digital world?" Yolei asks.

"Actually, Yami went to talk to Ken about Ryo but I wouldn't be surprised if the conversation got sidetracked as Yami diverges about how he ended up here." He says, he had gotten the whole encounter out of Yami after Matt left that night.

"So he might continue with his plans?" Davis asks and he sighs. "I think what Ken really wants is to see Ryo again." He says simply.

The group grows silent, he didn't blame them, after all, in the cartoon it had taken a lot of effort and the deletion of Wormmon to snap Ken out of this view of this as some kind of computer game.

It also helps that there weren't as many Control Towers in the Digital as there had been by the time Ken from the cartoon had stopped being the Digimon Emperor since in the cartoon, the Digimon Emperor constructed whole solid lines of them, one built within a few feet of each other as he traveled around in his floating fortress, following the destruction of that created Digimon.

It means that BlackWarGreymon will never come to exist but it also means that there won't be a lot of Control Tower Digimon when Myotismon finally sends his two henchmen to do his biding here in the Digital world.

"So, Myotismon really did somehow survived deletion..." Gatomon muses and he nods.

"He'll try for Ken to make copies of the Dark Spore Ken has in the back of his neck and implant them in younger children who will nourish this copies and cause them to bloom into flowers that he'll consume. He'll also try and open a gate to a wishing dimension in order to regain a body, leaving his human host. He'll then feed once more on the energy that the children carry to try and put our two worlds into darkness." He tells them.

"But we win, right?" Davis asks and he nods as he answers, "Yea, we do win that battle, but in the war between light and darkness... well, it's just a minor victory, after all, as long as light shines, it will cast shadow but where shadows are, there is light since neither can exist without one another even if each side thinks otherwise. Kind of like siblings in a way."

"Great, we're in a sibling dispute." Yolei grumbles and he laughs at the comparison while Kari seems to smile lightly as well while Davis grumbles about how it's likely the elder's fault for the fight while Cody seems to frown, likely thinking about something while the Digimon chuckle.

The mood seems to lighten and he wonders what's to happen next when Ken 'offically' surrenders to them.

Yami

He can't figure out why he felt a shiver move down to the tip of his tail and then back up to the back of his head. He had to admit, experiencing it as a Digimon was something he'll likely always remember it. Although it seems that someone had noticed his shiver and within seconds became very vocal about it.

"Wah! My most prized actor is coming down with a cold!" Denji exclaims causing pretty much everyone within range to sigh, including him.

"Gee, what are we? Chopped liver?" Asks the girl playing the priestess role to her samurai rescuer. The guy just shake his head while Denji calls for Natsu to go buy him some cold remedies using the bundle of bills that Denji hands him.

He had long since learnt not to even try and correct the Drama head, it only made the situation worse, not better. Once Natsu heads out of the auditorium, Denji then began to offer him a jacket, somebody's hot chocolate, head gear, pretty much anything that's within sight.

Must not use Pyro Grenade, must not use Pyro Grenade, must not use Pyro Grenade, must not use Pyro Grenade... He chants within his mind as his baser instincts want him to snarl at Denji or do something to get the preteen to **back off** .

"Denji... ah, there's something in the back that... needs your... attention." The stage manager says, more then likely remembering the last time he lost it and rather not want a repeat performance so soon.

Everybody seems to sigh in relieve as Denji heads into the backstage, beginning to forget about his so call 'cold' as the head of the Drama club begins to mutter about incompetent set designers. He relaxes and begins to push the coats, sweaters, and hats off of him, though the kid with the hot chocolate snatches the cup back and he mentally sighed, he wouldn't mind drinking that...

It was a typical rehearsal for the Drama club, though he did wonder if he'd still be around when December comes around, after all, how things were progressing with the Digidestine front he wouldn't be needed here in this world. Which meant that he might not be here to do his bit for the play...

He shudders as he imagines Denji's reaction to that news...

Tai

He can't help but shake his head as the director heads to the backstage and Yami begins to peel off the layers of clothing draped on him. He did find it amusing how quickly Denji's moods shift and as Sora comes back with some hot chocolate, she asks, "So, what did I miss?"

"Oh, nothing much, just Denji declaring at his 'prized' actor is coming down with a cold and sent one of the kids out to get cold medicine with a bundle of bills that Denji had in his pocket. It also looked like Yami was going to blow his top as Denji fused over him." He tells Sora as he accepts one of the cups.

The red head shakes her head as he takes a sip of the hot liquid. "And they still haven't yet had the actors stand on stage to act out the play. I'm beginning to wonder if Denji isn't a little... well, odd in the head. I mean, having the backstage people practice going through setting up the stage with props until they get it right before having the actors even go on stage to act out their parts?" Sora says and he had to agree with her on that.

"At least we know why the set date is in December instead of having it preformed sooner." He points out and Sora nods in agreement as she takes a sip from her cup. "So, do think Matt can get the equipment from his dad to film the play?" He asks and Sora nods.

"He's asked early enough, though I would think the problem will be with getting Denji to allow us to film it." Sora muses and he snorts as he says, "If we can't get his permission, we just ask the teacher supervising the Drama club or the principal's permission. After all, they could make a small profit selling tapes of the performance to those who want to see the play but can't make it to during the three day showings."

"Good point. The money could go towards field trips and purchasing new equipment." Sora muses.

It wasn't long before Denji returns from being back stage and so, once more, the set performers were given the signal to begin their

roles of changing the set and props without the curtain being closed. This allows Denji to remind certain people where certain things were to go, he did give them that, they were getting better memorizing where each item is suppose to go and therefore they got faster at taking down the props and settings and putting up the newer ones.

I'll give Denji that, he knows what he wants and he won't stand for anything less. He muses as they watched, yet again, the backstage people hurry about on stage, doing their jobs.

Matt

"So, how did it go?" He asks the group of preteens.

"We're stars!" Davis exclaims with a foolish grin.

"Huh?" He wonders, glancing first towards his little brother and then to his friends.

"Apparently in Yami's home dimension there's a cartoon based on our adventures in the Digital world as well as a few movies." Cody answers and Yolei nods in agreement.

It takes him a few seconds for this to sink in and then he sighs as he shakes his head. "I just know that Tai will have a field day with this." He mutters and Kari seems to grin slightly at her brother's reaction.

"Anything else happen?" He asks, he knows he'll have much to think about later concerning this news of a cartoon show about them.

"You ever wondered why Yami was with Ken three days ago?" His little brother asks and he nods, he had wondered about that but there had been other things occupying his mind at the time.

"Well, Yami met with Ken to talk about Ryo. They got attacked by one of those human turned Digimon, that's why they were racing

towards that film crew, they were being chased." TK says and he sighs.

"It turns out that Ken's the Digimon Emperor and the only reason neither of them mentioned it has to do with wanting Ken to contact us." Yolei informs him.

He sighs as yet another secret has been revealed, though this one likely was set up to protect Ken from them pressuring him into cooperating with them. After all, back when they were facing the Dark Masters, he didn't want to cooperate with the group and that caused a whole lot of trouble, though TK believes that it was from the stress of finding themselves confronting more enemies in such a short amount of time.

He had briefly wonder how TK had come to such a mature explanation but now that he recalls Yami being with them, it made sense that it was Yami who recognized the 'heart' of the problem and likely had given TK that reason. Considering what they now know of Yami, it's likely that Yami's group had gone through similar stressful episodes when they were dealing with their adventures.

Which means that we really got to sit down and have Yami tell us about his group's adventures one of these days. He muses as the younger Digidestine and himself head out of the classroom with their respective partners being held in their arms, although Patamon's resting on TK's shoulder.

It wasn't long before they hooked up with Tai, Sora, and Yami before they leave the school as Tai and Davis chat about soccer.

Ken

About two weeks since his meeting with Takato, he found himself in the back rows of an auditorium, watching as... backstage people scamper about on stage altering the scenery.

It wasn't hard to spot Yami, after all, he's the only one in 'costume'. Though it does beg the question, why weren't the actors on stage acting out their lines? And why was that kid making scratchy remarks about why that plant should be over there and not there?

"Kind of confusing, huh?" A voice muses and he turns to find a semi familiar face standing next to his seat. "I'm familiarly sure that when you drop into a rehearsal, you see the actors acting." He says with a slight shake of his head.

"Yea well, Denji's an interesting guy, after all, last year for lack of a proper villain, a play was called off." Tai says moving to take the seat just ahead of him.

"I believe the one that's sprouting out emotional dialog would be Denji?" He asks as once more the guy that had been making scratchy remarks halted those on stage and had them repeat setting up the props once again.

"Yip, Denji Kiyoshi, the head of the Drama club and one of the most confusing students that likely walked these halls. After all, according to Yami, Denji has never left the auditorium to attend classes since Denji declared him the lead villain. The teachers actually stop in here and give out the homework to those that follow Denji's lead." Tai says and even he found that a bit much, after all, even when he taking on the mantle of the Digimon Emperor, he still attended classes.

"But Yami's not a student... is he?" He asks the teen and Tai nods. "He isn't though everyone thinks he is. Most of the homework is review for him from what I figure." Tai says.

"So nobody tried to... get him out of his costume?" He asks and Tai laughs slightly. "Apparently so, after all, Denji has to have something working for him if the principal hasn't expelled Denji and his club members so how hard is it to believe that the same could apply with Yami?" Tai says with a grin.

"Point taken." He says with a hint of a smile on his face, he turns to look back down at the group of kid that were hanging around Yami, it seems that they were talking among themselves for a bit before they would stop and watch the props on the stage before giving Denji side way looks and then they'd chat among themselves once more.

"Has he even handed out the script?" He asks after a few minutes as he gives the brushy haired teen a questioning look.

"I think he keeps editing it during school hours and considering all of this, I'm not surprised. Though I heard Yami talk to TK about the blond joining them during school hours just to review the script and maybe, just maybe, help Denji finish it." Tai says before adding, "After all, TK's mom is a reporter and his dad is into network television so he's got the background to have the 'privilege' of reading it."

"Really? I hadn't known." He admits.

"Yea, Matt, that's TK's elder brother, has his own band, The Teenage Wolves." Tai mentions and he sighs, it seems that he really didn't know the first thing about these people that he, as the Digimon Emperor, had considered below him and 'unimportant' since they weren't 'perfect' human beings.

"There aren't that many Control Towers and you haven't been around to repopulate the Digital world with them. I guess you threw in the towel, huh?" Tai asks after a few minutes of silence and he hums as he nods in agreement.

"I can't being myself to go into the Digital world any more, not after what I had done to the natives that live there. I was perhaps worse then any evil Digimon that existed." He says, his mind going to a certain Digimon proclaiming himself a Dark God.

"Devimon used Black Gears to control Digimon reactions on File Island, the only difference is that you did it on a much wider scale then he ever did and actually went around giving orders, I've yet to

think of seeing a hint of Devimon around whenever a Digimon was under the influence of a Black Gear." The ex-goggle wearing teen tells him.

"I think it would help if I knew what you're talking about, but I'll take you at your word." He admits, after all, he really didn't know much about Tai and his group's adventures in the Digital world.

Tai grins widely and says, "Well, since you're here, that means that you have to stick around for later. Yami promised us that he'd talk about his adventures with his group when you made a willing appearance. Who knows what kind of stories Yami has to tell?"

He gets kind of thoughtful about that and had to nod in agreement, "Yea, who really knows..."

He guesses that Tai's already sent out the E-Mail before approaching him, he returns to watching the rehearsal slowly begin to come to a crawling end. He makes a note to phone his parents as soon as possible to inform them that he won't be home for a while. He's sure that they think that he's doing something with Takato and they'd be right if what Tai says will come to pass. He'll have a chance to get to know the kid turned Digmon a bit more.

Yami

And so they arrived at TK's apartment and they chipped in to order in a great many pizzas as well as two liter bottles of soda. After all, it wasn't just the hungry stomachs of the Digimon that they had to feed but their own as well.

During the pass weeks, he had a lot of time to ponder how he'll begin his tale and to find his resolve to tell it before such a large group of people. His thoughts drifted to the night he just got his red D-Arc and the dream he had that starred Rika and Renamon.

Even to this day, he didn't know why he had that dream, after all, it could have featured Henry and Terriermon or maybe even Ryo and Cyberdramon... but then the last two were likely in the Digital world by then.

Too bad she and I never got around to discussing it again. I'm sure she wouldn't have kicked my butt if I brought it up later, after knowing us for three whole years... He muses, after all, none of the Digidestine have had such dreams, although those few dreams he shared with TK seemed to be so very different then that single dream starring Rika and Renamon.

"You haven't touched your second piece, aren't you hungry?" Patamon asks him and he blinks before turning to look at the orange Digimon, making sure to tap DemiVeemon gently on the head for trying to take one of his slices.

"Yes I am, I'm just busy musing about something concerning Rika and me I guess. Something I never got a chance to really talk to her about... I guess it's kind of late to do much about it." He muses before taking one of the slices on his plate and taking a bite out of it.

"Sounds like someone's got a crush on a certain someone." Yolei says in a sing song way.

He pauses and freezes for a few seconds before feeling his face burn as he realizes what Yolei's implying. "No! It's not like that! Geeze, couldn't you wait until after hearing my tale before making those kind of assumptions?" He asks, although a bit of his anger came from the fact that it reminded him way too much about how Jeri had seemed to imply the same thing when he was fourteen years old.

He sighs as he noticed Yolei's expression and sighs., "That just sounded too much like something I had a talk with one of my friends, it's a sore subject. I'm sorry for snapping at you, you didn't know." He says to Yolei and that seemed to cause Yolei to relax as she nods.

"Anyway, I think I'm done setting up the video camera." Kari says and he can't help but wonder why they need to record him telling this story, but then, it might have more to do with remember his point in time then anything.

After all, they never did get many souvenirs from their adventures in the Digital world. After all, that photograph symbolized the lies they had been given.

It didn't take long before he finished off his portion of pizza. It wasn't long before most of the humans had also finished their meal and were pretty much just nursing their glasses of cola.

So it wasn't long before he found himself, once more, center of attention, the focus of the group. He takes a deep breath and slowly releases it before signally for Kari to turn on the video camera. One the light turns on, he begins his tale. (See Digimon Tamer Episode 1 through 51 for reference)

Kari

"Wow, just, wow." Tai repeats once more as they head back to their apartment. Not that she blames her brother for repeating the same phrase for the tenth time since they left TK's apartment.

After all, in some way, they never expected to hear about how a Digimon Sovereign decided that it was time to take over and rule a human world, let alone about how a group of college students nick named the Monster Makers create Digital lifeforms, or about a rogue program that not only threatened the Digital world and the Digimon, but went on to invade the human world because it viewed humans as going beyond their natural world's ability to support them.

"It wasn't as black and white as our adventures, was it?" She says to her brother and he nods his bushy head in agreement.

"I guess at least the Devas had some pretty good reasons to try and conquer the human world, well, at least from their view point. What's more unbelievable that these Digi-Gnomes took the light of Digivolution and transformed it into a Digimon." Tai says and she nods.

"It also kind of explains why Yami's so much stronger then most of our villains, after all, it sounds like that Digital that's connected to his world seems to home the Digimon's fighting skills. Which makes those opponents that manage to crossover pretty skilled since not only did they manage to Digivolve to their current level but they survived that long under such conditions... It's no wonder Yami's as skilled as he is even if he's suppose to be human." She says and Gatomon hums in agreement while Tai gets thoughtful.

"I wonder if that downloading the fallen Digimon's data really helps beyond healing I mean. After all, Yami's done that once if what TK says is true. He had downloaded that fish Digimon's data when he deleted him." Gatomon muses.

"They seem to believe it does and from how Yami describes his Digital world, wishes and desires have a way of coming true." She reminds the white cat Digimon who's resting in her arms as they finally reach their apartment building.

"If that were true, then why do these Digimon keep Bio Emerging? There might be something to the idea that they're looking for a human to partner with." Gatomon points out.

"We may never know, after all, Yami and his group have been dealing with such things for three years and they still haven't come up with any definite answers." Tai says and she nods in agreement with that.

After all, from the few encounters with other Digimon, they themselves don't seem to know why they desire to come to the real world only that they have this need within them to do so.

Izzy

He really couldn't help but feel excitement about what he had just learnt from Yami, AKA Takato Matsuki. His mind is a buzz of different thoughts about learning how this one group of college students were given credit for creating the Digimon that inhabit this other dimension's Digital world.

He could only imagine what it would be like to sit down and have a nice long talk with any member of the Monster Makers, although he would prefer to ask the one called Shibumi since the man has had more experience with the Digital world then the rest of the group.

He's also fortunate that TK and Yami didn't have any problems with him borrowing the D-Arc and he had promised to return it within a week's time.

Ken

Hearing the whole of it... I guess I can why Ryo hasn't returned, after all, it sounds like he found some place to belong, although... I do hope that then Yami heads home that he talks Ryo into at least trying to visit, it would be nice to talk with him then to talk about him. He muses as he rides the subway train back home.

Although he hadn't been thrilled with how late it's been, after all, there's that group out there with their own agenda. It made him wonder why they haven't tried anything yet, but then, there's likely more to it then what any of them could think about, after all, they're not much of a threat since they don't know where to begin looking for this group and their activities.

For all he knows, they only showed themselves because somebody reported seeing Yami as Takato and they had gotten edgy all of a sudden, maybe even panicky...

As long as I get home safe and sound, I'll be happy. He decides as he rubs a point on his neck as the train continues on its course through the tunnels of the subway.

Yami

Things seem to have returned to normal as the end of October finally arrives. Not only did it bring about a change in the air, Halloween, but also, a change in the rehearsals as they, the actors, finally get to be on stage. Although it was only to help with the lighting... But is was something to do other then sitting or standing around watching the back stage crew move about on stage, taking apart and setting up the props for the play.

There was going to be a festival at the local college, one that requests that those attending it to be wearing costumes. It's the same festival that Sora and TK had been talking about a few weeks ago.

He wouldn't mind dressing up, but doubts they had anything that could fit him while he's a BlackGuilmon. He knew that TK has plans on dressing up in as ChaosGallantmon and Matt's dressing up as a monk. He's not sure what the other Digidestine were dressing up as but he's sure they want to keep it a surprise until the last minute.

So, from his position on TK's bed with Patamon resting on the top of his head, likely looking much like how Calumon and Guilmon looked with Calumon on Guilmon's head, right between the wing like ears that Guilmon has on his head. They watch as TK checks himself out in the mirror before putting on the blue cape before picking up the grey lance that's trimmed with navy blue and the shield that totally grey in colour, event he designs on the shield lack colour.

"Looking sharp, TK!" Patamon declares and he hums in agreement with the orange Digimon.

"Thanks you two." The blond says and after lowering the helmet's visor, TK heads out of the room.

He gets up and follows, it's not long before TK leaves, he didn't want to attend the festival in the form he's in and Patamon wanted to watch some Halloween cartoons that some stations have on even though it's only the twenty-seventh of October.

He sighs as he looks out at the city from the living room, a bunch of mix emotions were getting pretty jumbled up within him. He really wanted to attend this festival...

Guilmon

The school's costume party is today and he hates his costume. At this point he would rather attend the party as his true-self then to wear the costume that Takato's parents had gotten him, his 'grandparents'.

True, he's come to love them a great deal but in many ways, they just couldn't replace Takato, who's pretty much his parent, brother, best friend, and, of course, Tamer. Although it was recently that he remember who he really was, he had never been very comfortable being called 'Takato' from the moment he woke up in that hospital and his 'mom' exclaimed Takato at him.

I wish I could just go back to being Guilmon again, my life was so much less complicated back then. He thinks wistfully as he walks towards the park, his mind going over a time when Takato had been there, at his side.

He pauses as he feels something stir within him and as he comes to a complete stop, he finds his vision begin filled with bright light...

Takato

He groans as his head pounds, it fades after a few seconds, leaving him standing at a slopped posture for a few minutes until he straighten up to his full height.

"I wonder what caused that? And how long am I going to be like this?" He wonders out loud as he takes a look into a mirror like surface to examine himself. He sighs as the fingers of his left hand goes through his shaggy brown hair before he moves his goggles so that they hang around his neck.

In the end, he decided the first thing he needed to do is to have a shower.

"You think TK minds if I clobber a costume out of some of his cloths?" He asks Patamon and the little Digimon says, "As long as he gets them back, I don't think he would mind."

"My thoughts exactly." He muses but before he heads into the bathroom, he pauses and glances at the cardboard where the jello powder is.

After all, it'll wash out, right?

Takato

I'm surprised that nobody has yet to call TK a Goth. He muses as he, for the first time, takes inventory of the cloths that TK has in his closet and draws. He had just finished with the grape jello powder and he's glad that there was a black towel for him to use to dry his hair. As it should hide the purple make shift dye that he used.

With a sigh, he begins to take out a lot of black coloured cloths and jeans. He found a few chains that were likely there to keep ones wallet from getting pick-pocket or getting lost.

He's seen plenty of Goths back home so he's got a good idea on what types of cloths he could use even if he's reluctant to use nail

polish and/or lip-stick. The chains would help in that department, though he didn't know what to do about fake piercings and jewelry and he didn't want to go through TK's mother's room looking for such either.

So he just has to make due with that he has and he does so, as once he's put on a pair of black jeans, he then goes on to use a simple long sleeve white and then puts on a simple black vest that lacks the bulk of the others. He then begins to attach the chains about the jean pockets as well as around his waist in the belt loops.

He used a bit of mouse to style his hair and remembers to pick up a pair of shades. Before heading out of the room, he puts the cloths back to where he found them.

As he looks through the front hall closet, he finds a black trench like coat, which he puts on once he puts on the pair of black runners that TK usual wears. He takes sometime studying his appearance without using a mirror.

"So, how do I look?" He asks Patamon as the little Digimon waits for the microwave popcorn to finish popping. The orange rookie hums as Patamon takes his time taking in his appearance. "Great, I guess. Just remember to bring back some candy!" The little Digimon says and he chuckles slightly, he should have known as he shakes his head as he turns away to head out of the apartment.

Renamon

She almost lost her composer on seeing a red version of the only Digimon who not only defeated her, but told her not to give up hope of finding the right partner while letting her live. Though that was only a few weeks ago, it seems as if it were a life time ago...

I imagine this is either a Guilmon or some sub-variety that's cousin to BlackGuilmon. She muses to herself, although she can't help but be glad that Rika's in school or else her partner might have her attack

this red version of a Digimon that's likely related to that Digimon called Yami. She rather not find out whether or not he'd let her life if she lost against him.

For a second, the red version of Yami pauses and gives the air a sniff as he glances around. For a second, the Digimon's eyes turn in her direction and she felt her whole being freeze up as memory of looking into eerie yellow eyes that were so so similar to Yami's yellow gaze.

And then that second is over as the red version of Yami heads off in the direction of some kids dressed up in some costumes. The Digimon calls out a greeting and the kids greet him warmly in return.

She wanted to investigate what's going on with this red version but she also didn't want to be far from Rika's side. *Choices choices...* She muses but she already knew which choice she'll make.

Takato

It didn't cost a thing for him to walk through the gates of the college to attend the festival. It felt so different, walking about as a human, it's still so odd, like a waking dream as he moves about the various groups, couples, and clips.

He nods at those also dress as Goths one of the group he passes says as one of their number returns with some drinks, "'s up."

He walks pass game booths ranging from shooting hoops to card games to picking out mini pumpkins from a bucket to see which prize you won to a limit of one free ticket lotto just after you entered through the gate.

A lot of students had parents sign permission slips that allow them out of school for part of the day. He expects that TK and the newer Digidestine will likely show up after lunch or during...

The Drama club didn't have rehearsals to day and it didn't take long for him to spot Denji dressed up as a samurai chatting away with one of the instructors, likely getting tips about something he rather not know about.

He made note to stir clear of the other kid as he walks into the building, according a program guide, there should be some amateur films and classic cartoons being shown in the various classes while classic films were running in the auditorium until midnight tonight.

The cafeteria is playing host to various cooking clubs ranging from traditional dishes to totally organic meals to classic dishes from various cultures from around the world. He's privately glad for the large breakfast since the smells weren't causing him to feel like drooling.

Although as Yami, he never did that much but like he observed so long ago within the first few days of being Guilmon's partner, food was rarely far from a Digimon's mind and that did include himself as Yami, though he usually had other things to think about, or to brood about as the case was during the happenings of four years ago.

With a sigh, he waits for a bit before moving towards the map that's displayed by the skeleton that should show which programs are running in which rooms. It didn't take long for the group in front of him to head out, allowing him to get a clear view of the map.

He can't help but raise an eyebrow on noticing different artistic group programs going on in some of the classrooms ranging from painting, computer graphics, clay working, and drawing. It's likely that most of these programs were centered around Halloween.

Ah what the heck, it's been too long since I've worked with pencil and paper. He muses to himself as he begins to plot his route to the one of the programs that should be starting soon.

Guilmon

It was lunch time and he just realized that his lunch vanished with his costume and back pack, which made him hang his head with a sigh as he heads out of the cafeteria, he couldn't stand the scent of all that food...

Once more a familiar, yet half forgotten scent reaches his nose and he glances around, half expecting to see Terriermon or Renamon, though he doubts he'll encounter either since it's he has yet to see either although he had seen Henry, Kenta, Kazu, and Jeri...

"Are you going to show yourself?" He wonders after he finds a spot that the scent seems to be coming from, which was a tree by the chalk shred, the same one he helped Calumon get into in what seems to be another life time.

"So you did sense me before." Renamon says, appearing in the branches of the tree. He manages to mask his startlement, this wasn't what he was expecting, and yet it did make it feels like old times.

"I thought it was my imagination." He tells her. "It's been a pretty long time since I've seen a Digimon around here." He adds.

"I see. Tell me, what kind of Digimon are you? I've seen one like you but of a different colour back in the Digital world." The yellow furred Digimon says and that perks his interest.

"Me? I'm a Guilmon." He tells her and she sighs. "Ah, that explains why he named himself a 'Black'Guilmon." He hears her mutter softly and he felt his heart beat increase, it sounded as if she might know of what became of Takato!

"You didn't... I mean, to say..." He stutters, suddenly dreading the answer.

"Delete him? No, I didn't win our encounter, though I'll admit he was an odd one. He mentioned being separated from his partner and that's why he's in the Digital world. He even told me to call him Yami

since that's the name he feels comfortable answering too." Renamon says and he lets out a sigh, although he's a bit puzzled why his partner was using a different name.

"Perhaps you know where his Tamer is?" Renamon asks and he couldn't suppress a chuckle at the thought of Takato as his 'Digimon.'

"Sorry, I just find it... ironic is all." He replies with a grin.

"I suppose that it would be news to you that he temporary partnered up with another until the true partner Digimon of said Tamer was returned. He mentioned that for a time about four years ago, he had done so and that this child might still have the D-Arc belonging to him." Renamon says and he blinks as his mouth opens.

"That would be news." He admits after recovering from his shock.

"It's puzzling is all. I mean, there aren't many humans partnered with Digimon at this point in time, let alone back then." He wonders as he tries to puzzle this out.

"If it helps, he mentioned that the partner Digimon had a... dimensional mishap. There were talks about that time period about a Patamon who had the protection of all four Digimon Sovereign for a while there who vanished in the same manner he appeared. They did mention that an... exchange happened that involved said Patamon, which make me wonder if Yami might know more about then most." The yellow rookie muses, her pose is relaxed and he sighs, the only 'person' who had been partnered with a Patamon was a cartoon character, one that Takato had likely enjoyed watching before he entered into the goggle wearing kid's life.

"Only person that I know of being partnered with a Patamon is TK from that Digimon cartoon show which only has two seasons to it." He says with a sigh, almost wishing that Takato would just Bio Emerge and be done with it.

"There's a cartoon show about Digimon?" Renamon asks and he can't help but be a hint amused by this. "First season begins with seven humans at summer camp receiving seven Digivices. On taking them from the air, they're swiped up in between two waterish looking panels and arrive close to their in-training partner Digimon. There's some introductions between the Digimon and the humans before they try and drive off a champion Digimon." He says, taking a moment before continuing his summary of the show.

"Their partners Digivolve into their rookie forms as each of the children call out their partner's names. They cause the champion to become unbalanced and then there's more introductions as the Digimon try and explain about Digivolution and why they should call them by their rookie names. They're still on this cliff and the champion recovers and causes that section of the cliff to fall into a fast flowing river." He says, one more taking a breather before continuing.

"The Gomamon that's partnered up with one of them calls for some fish to appear and they float down river on the living raft. It's not long before they're walking along the bank and the Digimon begin to get hungry. The goggle wearing preteen has this spy glass and uses it to spy ahead, he spots these telephone booths on this beach. They run the rest of the way only to discover that they don't work and they all begin to get hungry. It's not long before they note the emergency food that the human partnered with the Gomamon has and they take about how long it would last them, if they didn't have to feed their partners. The Digimon mention about foraging for their own food while the goggle wearing preteen shares food with his partner, an Agumon." He says and Renamon seems very interested in this story, even though he's not going into much detail.

"A Shellmon shows up and the other Digimon aren't in any fighting condition, leaving the Agumon to fight alone. As the Shellmon holds the Agumon down, the goggle wearing partner grabs a metal peice of rubble and charges at Shellmon. Surprise, surprise, Agumon Digivolves into Greymon and sends Shellmon packing only to return

to his rookie form as soon as the danger is gone. That pretty much sets the tone for most of the adventures, really." He says as he lists the villains that they face off against.

"Their first opponent is a Devimon, next is an Etemon, then a Myotismon that manages to become VenomMyotismon and Agumon and the Gabumon of the group get the ability to become Megas, then they face off against four Mega Digimon who are Piedmon, Puppetmon, MetalSeadramon, and Machinedramon, and finally against Apocalymon. With Apocalymon gone, the humans and Digimon part at the end with the goggle wearing preteen talking about how they'd want to return one day." He says and is about to continue on to summarize the second season when the bell goes.

"Well, I got to go, I hope we can talk some more later." He says to the fox Digimon and she nods as she watches him leave.

Takato

"That's pretty good." A voice says by his left shoulder which causes him to try and stifle a cry of surprise as he freezes. He turns head to find one of the art students looking down at his drawing from behind him.

"Thanks." He says as he blinks a few times, unsure at how to respond, after all, it was just a doodle of one of the scarier D-Reapers agents, the one that Guilmon and himself had fought while they were Gallantmon Crimson Mode.

"It definitely sends chills down my spine." The young man with hazel green eyes and dark, almost black hair says and he can't help but review what he drew. "I guess you can call it Techno-Organic." He muses to himself, after all, isn't that what all Digimon were in the end? Some kind of hybrid between data and flesh while they exist in the real world?

"Seems to be along that line." The college student agrees. After a bit, the guy moves on and he sigh as a glance at the clock hanging on the wall told him that there is still some time before this class ends.

I guess that means that TK and them are likely arriving. I wonder if Tai and the older ones will be arriving now too. He wonders as he takes a look around the room, noticing the younger kids about six years old with their parents, kids about his age and older, and even mothers with very young children like around the age of three.

The class ends and he makes sure to sign his name as Takato Kimura on the picture before heading out of the room. After all, he's already using that as his name so there isn't any reason to change that when out in public.

TK

"Ah, cool! Check it out, we each get a free lotto ticket!" Davis cries out as the presto leader of their group dress up as a viking charges towards the booth.

"Sometimes I wonder if he's on a permanent sugar high." He muses to the others as they follow at a slower pace. "I think it's just the festive nature of his species." Yolei says in a sage like way.

They all have a minor chuckle about that as they arrive behind Davis as they wait in the line up at the lotto place. He takes some time to glance farther in at the game booths that seems to be all over the front part of the college. His interest spikes on noticing the many hoop games, after all, he's not that bad when it comes to Basketball, he might have joined the school team if it weren't for so many things happening all at once.

"So, did Matt tell you what time they'll be arriving at?" Kari dressed up as a vampress, complete with pasty white make up and fake canine teeth. "I think they're arriving after picking Mimi up from the airport." He answers.

"Mimi? We haven't met her yet, have we?" Yolei dressed up as an American soldier complete with dog tags and fake rifle. He smiles slightly as he turns to look at the purple haired preteen and then down at Cody, who's dressed up as a goblin, well, he thinks it's a goblin since Cody is wearing green face paint and wearing plastic ears with an old English style shirt and pants that looks like something out of that recent Harry Potter movie.

"I think you'll get along with her pretty well, Yolei." Kari answers and Yolei presses her lips together before asking, "You really think so?" He nods his head in agreement, "We know so, after all, she is one of the original Digidestine from four years ago."

"Which one is she?" Cody asks and Kari answers, "She's the Digidestine of Sincerity and is partnered with Palmon." Yolei then asks, "What's she like?"

He left it for Kari to answer as he gives her a guilty look since the helmet's visor is up, allowing others to get a clear view of his face and him a clear view of what's in front of him. The line moves and Davis continues to list where he wants to go, what he wants to do, and what he plans on winning.

As they get closer to the person handing out tickets, he finally spots the older Digidestine, they not only had Mimi, who's hair is dyed a vibrant pink, but also Joe dressed as a mummy. He holds up his lance as they turn his way and Matt raises his traditional monk staff, his way of returning his greeting.

"Who convinced Tai to dress as a business man?" He wonders as he studies the costumes the teens were wearing. "Our dad, surprisingly." Kari answers in a dry tone. "He doesn't even look like the Tai I know and idolize!" Davis cries out and seems to begin to 'mourn' the Tai he knew.

He sighs as he rolls his eyes, although it did harken back to the 'memories' he received from Yami from that latest shared dream they had together where Tai not only cut his hair but became a diplomat.

He did wonder, briefly, if the Tai he knows will try for the same occupation...

With a slight shake of his head, he focuses on what Sora is wearing. He can't help but raise an eyebrow at the fact that Sora seemed to have not only dyed her hair a neon green colour, but also spiked it. Most of her cloths pretty much screamed 'punk' since there does seem to be a lot of chains attached to black leather cloths.

Nice touch with the fake piercings. He muses to himself as he notices how many hang off of Sora'a left ear and the three that hang onto the right eye brow. All in all, it was fairly scary how much such things could alter his opinion of somebody who had been like a surrogate mother to him during their adventures four years ago.

Mimi moves to block his view of Sora and it wasn't as shocking to see Mimi also dressed as a punk but, again, it pretty much help drive home the fact that cloths really do help one form an opinion of the person wearing them. He glances at Matt before looking at Izzy, who's dressed as a wizard complete with wand if that stick behind his ear is part of the costume.

All in all, all they would need now is Ken and all of the Japanese Digidestine would be attending this college festival.

Takato

It took him about two hours of Digidestine hunting before he finally located a pair, Sora and Mimi dressed in punk. He almost had passed them by if it weren't for the fact that he recognized that shade of pink with Mimi.

"Sora?" He asks as he gets within a few feet of the pair and the two look started before turning to look at him, both were pretty confused.

He moves the shades he's wearing to reveal his reddish hazel eyes and Sora's eyes widen. "Yami? I mean, Takato?" Sora asks and he

smiles slightly as he nods.

"You forgot to include Takatomon." He adds lightly with a bit wider grin as he allows the shades to rest on his nose once more.

"But how? I mean... well, how?" Sora asks and he shrugs. "Don't really know, TK had left just a few minutes before it happened. I had a shower, used some grape jello powder as dye, and then raided TK's closet and draws. It's eerie how many black cloths TK has, I never paid it any mind until now." He admits to the pair and Sora smiles slightly as Mimi's look of puzzlement vanishes to be replaced with a look of understanding.

"Well, it's nice to see met you as a human, Takato." Mimi says and he nods. "It's nice to be human, at least for a little while." He admits.

"It must feel pretty different after all this time." Sora muses softly and he nods as he says in a soft and sober tone, "It is, hopefully you'll never have to know just awkward it can be, spending so many years as a Digimon and then finding yourself human for a limited time for unknown reasons."

After a few minutes, Mimi claps her hands, dispelling the slightly depressing mood. "Well, then, since you've been here for such a long time, you won't mind escorting us two, lovely young ladies about, now would you?" Mimi asks and he bows slightly as he says with a minor grin on his face, "It would be my honor, Princess Mimi, Lady Sora." And then he then offers his arm to her which she accepts as she giggles while Sora seems to be stifling a chuckle before moving to walk on his other side.

After all, even as a BlackGuilmon, his mega form is still that of a knight.

TK

"Hey TK, take a look at this." Tai says and wonders over to see what has the teen's attention. His eyes widen slightly as he stares at the picture of a very feminine being that sent a slight chill down his spine, he glances at the signature and sighs at the name, Takato Kimura.

"It is rather good, it just might win a prize later tonight." One of the art students says who approached them. "When was he here?" He asks and the student answers, "Early this morning, I think he's still around, after all, the lotto draw is later in the evening."

He shares a look with Tai, he can't help but wonder what changed Yami's mind... or should he say Takato's mind...

"Well, thanks for telling us." Tai says and the student nods before heading back to putting clean paper onto the many desks for the next group to use.

"I wonder what his costume is." Tai muses and he knew who Tai's talking about. "Can't be too well thought out since there wasn't much at the apartment." He answers as he tries to imagine Takato in a dress or something.

"Where to next?" Matt asks as they exit into the hall. "I guess we could always try one of the amateur films." He says and Matt nods while Tai checks the program guide and map that's taped to the wall next to the door.

He can't help but wonder when they'll encounter Takato.

TK

As he walks home with Takato, he can't believe everything that went on that day, specially the fact that Takato had flirted with both Mimi and Sora and that they flirted back! Of course then they spotted the three of them, they hadn't known that the purple haired kid was

Takato but, well, it's one thing to know that both girls were desirable it was another seeing it acted out before their eyes.

He studies Takato out of the corner of his eye as the hazel red eyed boy carries not just the candy that was awarded to him for that picture but also his purchases as well, mostly candy for Patamon to snack on.

"So... you think either your brother or Tai will ask Sora out? I mean, they were giving me the Evil Eye until we split from them." Takato asks and he sighs, he knew what the usually human turned Digimon was talking about.

"That's for them to sort out." He states and Takato sighs but nods.

"Guess so, still, they were pretty frosty to me over the whole flirting thing. I mean, come on, it been years since I had the chance to flirt with girls and I think Mimi and Sora knew that and were just playing along. Besides, for all I know, I might just find myself back in the Digital world of my dimension tomorrow morning! It might be months before I even get the chance to Bio Emerge so that I can find Guilmon." Takato says and he hums in agreement.

"Kind of surprising that Kari won the lotto, wasn't it?" Takato muses after a few minutes of silence, they were just a block away from the apartment. "Yea, it was, but then, I couldn't think of another who deserved it." He admits and Takato hums in agreement.

He wonders how long until Takato transforms back, after all, it's almost seven thirty...

He stops that thought in its tracks, not wanting to even go their at this moment.

By eight, Takato had finished rinsing out the purple jello dye and his cloths had been cleaned. While Takato was showering, he was going through Takato's card deck, studying the different cards that made up Takato's collection, he was pretty surprised by what he found.

Although he did return them to Takato once Takato finish putting on his cloths. As Takato finishes adjusting his yellow goggles, the other preteen begin to glow until suddenly a flash of light occurs and once his vision has cleared, Takato has become Yami once more.

"At least it waited until I got my cloths on." Yami says with a sigh and he can't help but agree.

Guilmon

"Well, finally!" He says to himself out loud, after all, he had pretty much expected to transform back long before eight o'clock but hadn't.

Unknown to 'Takato', somebody had witnessed the transformation and who suddenly found themselves fainting as a glowing web begins to encase the witness...

Yami

The month of November began with Denji declaring to them that they're all going to sit down and go over music suggestions, something that should have been expected by the club at large but they hadn't since a lot of them groaned, first the delay with the props and then the lights and now with the music.

He admitted he'd have to give some thought about which song he wants to portray him as he enters onto the stage, allowing him to stay out of the bulk of the discussion while each of the lead and secondary actors tried to think up songs off the top of their heads.

In the end, he intervened on their behalf, pointing out to Denji that this kind of came out of left field for them and that, right now, they're thrown by this sudden demand and that, perhaps, Denji should give them a week to get a list ready like he had given him.

Denji agreed and then for the rest of the rehearsal they read through their scripts while sitting around in a circle while Denji added his two cents by trying to get more emotion out of them all, which include the minions and others that were to die during various scenes within the play, likely killed off by either the samurai, himself, or by their own hand to regain their family honor in the play.

After all, they were trying for realism here, to portray a bit of how such things had operated in the pass.

Before they left, they all handed in the scripts since Denji doesn't want what's going to happen within the play to be known outside of the circle of the Drama club, not even by their parents or siblings.

Already it's seems like it's going to be a rough month as he left the school wearing a red poncho that Mimi had bought for him to wear before she left on the fifth of November, just two days ago.

Yami

"Oh come on! Pretty please with a cherry on top!" Kari asks as she gives him her best puppy dog eyes and he could just imagine a sweat drop appear by his head as he stares into the eyes that were so similar to his own when he's human.

I'll give her a six out of ten, but then, few could beat Calumon's puppy dog eyes when the little guy decides to bring out the big guns. He muses softly to himself as blinks before turning his head to glance at Gatomon, hoping that the cat Digimon might be able to do something about her partner and her sudden obsession with reading the script.

The digital cat gives him a bemused expression so he returns to studying Kari's expression. "I promise I won't tell anybody." Kari says as she tries to up her cuteness factor.

" **Yami** !" Davis bellows as the goggle wearing preteen comes stomping towards them, causing both Kari and him to turn to stare as the carrier of the Digi-Eggs of Courage and Friendship gives him a murderous look.

" *What are you doing with* **MY** Girlfriend ?!" Davis growls and he can't help but give Davis a seven out of ten since Davis definitely has the surprise factor when it comes to looking scary.

"Davis . . ." Kari says with a sigh while he feels Gatomon leap onto his head and settle down between his ears. Kari blinks and gives her partner a questioning glance while he likely looks startled about this action.

"What? I wanted to lie up here after seeing Patamon do it so often if only just to see what it's like." He hears Gatomon say and he could just imagine the grin on the white champion's face that went along with that statement.

Kari gives him a questioning look and he shrugs, he doesn't have any problem with Gatomon being on his head, she might be a bit heavier then Patamon but she's likely lighter then Veemon and the rest of the Digimon partners. "It's no different then having Calumon ride around on my head when I'm human." He adds and Kari smiles slightly as she nods, likely relieved by his attitude.

Although Patamon might be a bit jealous, after all, I think I've come to be his favourite perch. He muses to himself while Davis gets this startled look on his face before Davis recovers to once more to demand answers about Kari's previous performance.

"Just one minute! Why were you flirting with Kari?" Davis shouts as he points an accusatory finger at him and he sighs while Kari says, "He wasn't flirting with me, I'm not your girlfriend, and I was trying to get Yami to tell me about the play that he's starring in."

"I don't see why you're asking me, I'm not going to divulge a summery of the play, I will respect Denji's wanting to keep this quiet."

He says to the pair, though it's more focused on Kari then on Davis.

"Those words fill me with such joy! I am so honored to have a noble and honorable actor among my cast!" Denji declares from behind him.

He slowly turns around to look at the kid that seems to have stars for eyes and he can't help but feel that sweat drop appear once more as he gawks at the head of the Drama club. "Already I feel the passionate flame of gratitude filling my being! That's it! I must begin on the sequel!" Denji declares, throwing in a pose before racing back to the school to go collect his notes before heading home.

"I am now overcome with the desire to know about this play if he's going to write a sequel." Davis says once Denji vanishes into the school. "You do realize that I might not be around to act in that second play, right?" He points out to the two Digidestine while Gatomon still sits on his head.

In the end, as they recover, TK and Cody exit out of the school and head towards them, Yolei had business with Matt's band so she's long since departed.

"Denji looks pretty fired up about something. You should have seen him racing through the halls, heading straight for the auditorium. I almost expected to see burn marks on the floor." The blond tells them while Patamon seems to have focused on him and Gatomon with a puzzled look before the orange Digimon looks bemused by the fact that he had Gatomon on his head.

"Yea, we know. He was inspired by my defense of his wishes against Kari's inquiry about the summary of the play. He did his usual speech and then a pose before racing inside to collect his notes to start on a sequel." He tells the two newly arrived pair of Digidestine who were carrying their partners in their arms, although Upamon might have preferred to have been squashed into Cody's jacket since the little guy seems to be shivering every so often, likely because unlike

Patamon, Gatomon and himself, he's at a much lower stage of evolution then either of them.

True he's wearing the poncho that Mimi gave him but he really didn't need it since more Digimon could survive in different climate conditions. It was likely why he never been too bothered by the heat of midday during the few times he was moving about in it when he had been living in that dessert layer of the Digital world. Although he never was in much of a hurry when he had been, which also might have helped to keep him from dropping from heat exhaustion.

As he is muses over that, they were slowly heading out of the school gate while the others begin to discus their recent adventures in the Digital world as they search for the other Digi-Eggs.

TK

He sighs as he reviewed the recent happenings against Myotismon and his two hench-mon. There were some good points, like not having to worry about BlackWarGrey and the Control Towers and yet there were some bad points, like nothing keeping Myotismon from going straight to kidnapping kids and it didn't help matters when that organization that had that drug that could turn humans into Digimon has been helping Myotismon in collecting a large number of kids.

Toss in Deamon and his lackeys and it's not really surprising that Ken had been kidnapped, again in his mind, by Myotismon and that group and that those copy spores had been implanted into those kids that they had kidnapped. A group that numbers more then what those memories of the second season told him.

Luckily though, that group that were 'native' to Yami's world had added some kind of delay to the kids, something that had upset the Myotismon controlled adult, he can't really think of the man as anyone other then Myotismon even though the man's just hosting the Digimon's 'spirit', which probably translates into data.

They also received that energy from Azulongmon's Digi-core, so Patamon can now Digivolve into MagnaAngemon once more.

"So, which song did Yami pick from your collection?" Patamon asks as they walk to the school to addend the opening night of Denji's play. Matt, Yolei, and Izzy had likely arrived early to get everything set up for the camera equipment that his father got for them.

"I think he choice that song Animal from that band, Three Days Grace. I can't say it doesn't suit him, since it does, although I'm sure he could have found a better one." He answers.

It wasn't long before he spots Ken hanging about the school gate with Wormmon in his arms. He smiles softly at seeing the supposed boy genius. "Hey Ken, come to see the play, huh?" He says as he speed walks up to the rarely seen Digidestine. "Yea, I am..." Ken says and he nods as his smile grows a bit.

"Then lets walk in together. I'm pretty sure we're early." He says and with that, kind of half dragged, half led the other through the school gates and towards the building.

Ken

A voice comes over the sound system as the curtain remains closed as the mood and setting of the play is set. 'In the kingdom of Yuu that lies in the country of Jin, a young and powerful priestess is born. Her parents named her Sora in hopes that her powers will grow without limit into the great sky above them.' The narrator pauses before continuing as the back ground music alters slightly.

'But in the country of Jin lurked an evil presence that few dare spoke about, a presence simply called Gekido, Wrath.' The narrator continues, 'None living in the country of Jin remembers a time when Gekido hadn't roamed the lands, causing havoc among the citizens of Jin. Even the Daimyos of the various kingdoms of Jin have yet to vanquish the evil that Gekido personalize so the Emperor of Jin

began to invest in various temples, hoping that the gods might take pity on them and send them the means to rid the lands of Jin of Gekido.'

The music continues to darken as the narrator continue to speak, 'On Sora's third year of birth, the young girl child was visited by a monk who had received a vision from the gods, telling him to seek the one named after the vastness of the sky in the lands of the bravery, for that child shall hold the key of breaking Gekido's power over the lands of Jin.'

'And so, once young Sora had been tested, she was given to the temple in hopes that she shall fulfill her destiny. And so young Sora trained for ten years, being shuffled from one temple to another as word reached Gekido's hears of this child's destiny to break his power.'

'But Gekido was old and possessed a patients greater then that of mortal men. For in secret the evil creature named Gekido took command of a temple shrine between the boarders of two rival kingdoms and waited for the day that the temple council sends the young priestess straight into his waiting clutches. And so Gekido's trap was sprung just days shy of Sora's fourteen birthday.' The narrator says and sounds of battle get pumped over the speakers.

But there was more before the curtain opens and for the play to begin. 'Those escorting the young priestess were killed within seconds of them entering into the shrine by Gekido's minions, they neither had time to send a message out or to properly defend themselves. Within hours, Sora was brought before Gekido and on seeing the slip of a woman had laughed. Unimpressed by Sora, the entity spared Sora's life but he stole her eyes so that he was the last thing that she ever saw.'

'It would be four years before anyone noticed the silence about the young priestess. When the Emperor ordered that the young woman be brought before him, to see if she has received any wisdom from the gods on how to rid his lands of the demonic entity that they

called Gekido, the temple wasn't able to fulfill his wish and it was only then did they launch an investigation. When they learnt of her last location, the two Daimyos of the local kingdoms send out their samurai to check on the temple shrine.'

'So great were the two kingdom's rivalry that instead of working together to assault the shrine, they fought, causing the two kingdoms to go to war with the shrine as the prize. And so these two kingdoms continue to war as our story begins...' The narrator says as the lights finally dim allowing the spot lights to supply the light for the stage as the curtain opens to reveal a traditional court where nobles were attending on the Emperor.

"His lord acknowledges the diplomat of the Kingdom of Chuugi." The emperor's chamberlain announces to the crowd of nobles that were seated on their cushions, holding paper fans. From off stage a new actor comes forward and crouches before the minor platform where the Emperor of the country of Jin rests.

"My Emperor, what is it that you wish to ask of my humble being?" The crouching man asks. "His lord wishes to know the status of the rescue of the young priestess from the dark and treacherous one's clutches." The chamberlain says after bending down to listen to the 'Emperor.'

The diplomat asks with the barest hint of nervousness, "Isn't this a bit much, most benevolent one, to do all this for a woman? Surely by now those attending the temples could do more then anything an unproven slip of a woman could possibly do."

The Emperor's eyes narrow and the chamberlain clears his throat before asking in a steel like tone, "Are you saying that our master doesn't know his own wishes, diplomat? Are you saying that you know better then our divine Emperor?"

He can't help but raise an eyebrow as the actor playing the diplomat tries to beg for forgiveness for implying such. He had to admit, the performance seems fairly natural as the chamberlain dismisses the

diplomat from Chuugi and then calls for the one from Rei to come forward with the same kind of news.

"I am told by my legitimate lord that we are getting the inference from the cowardly Chuugi as they seek to deny you of this priestess of who you wish to speak with. We hope that you would be so kind as to ask the Daimyo of Chuugi to recall his soldiers and samurai so that we might begin our assault to reclaim this most gifted priestess." The diplomat from Rei says, he can't help but find that to be a very real response in the arena of politics back then.

"I don't understand why he said that, after all, this isn't real, right?" Wormmon asks as the diplomat from Chuugi calls insult on the diplomat from Rei as it seems that the chamberlain was believing the 'lies' coming from the other's mouth.

"Actually, that's likely how it would have worked back then, Wormmon. As the narrator had said, the two kingdoms that those actors are supposedly from are rivals and making your political enemies look bad before the Emperor and others would be a step towards ruining their fortunes." He tells the green rookie softly and guards arrive on stage to arrest the diplomat from Chuugi for baring live steel before the Emperor.

If this had been real, those from the kingdom from Chuugi would soon find themselves struggling to get back into the Emperor's good graces or keeping their status at court. "I never thought Denji would go into that much detail." TK says softly to his left as the chamberlain declares that the Daimyo of the kingdom of Rei has his approval to assault the temple in his name.

The diplomat repeatedly bowed from his position on the ground as he thanks the divine Emperor for trusting in the power and might of the Rie kingdom.

The curtain comes down once the spotlights dims and the narrator begins once more, 'With the kingdom of Chuugi in disgrace, it wasn't long before the Daimyo of Chuugi is forced to call back his forces or

else lose face before the Emperor by defying the support that the kingdom of Rie now has. But the Daimyo would not give up on letting the Chuugi claim the maiden hidden in that shrine...'

The curtain opens and the spotlights brighten to give them a better view of the stage. They find a very well dressed actor on stage, pacing as his wife is seated by a desk with an ink set close to her right hand. Two bodyguards stand at attention at the entry of 'room.'

An actor, the lead of good guy of the play arrives dressed in red samurai cloths with two plastic swords resting in the belt around the actor's waist. "Let him in." The pacing Daimyo declares and the two bodyguard move their spears, allowing the star to enter into the study.

Within seconds, the lead good guy is crouching before the Daimyo of Chuugi kingdom says, "You wished to see me, my Daimyo?" "Yes, I did Kizuna. I have a mission for you, one that could save our kingdom from ruin by our deceitful and petty rivals from Rie. As you have heard, the Daimyo of Rie has stolen our rightful claim on the shrine that likely has the priestess of destiny that the gods have told will free us of the dark one's presence in our country." The Daimyo says and then moves to a cushion to sit down.

"Through deceit, our rival in Rie has forced me to call back my vassals so they could lay siege on this shrine. I have my reason to suspect that Gekido might have his talons in the Daimyo of Rie, for how else could the Daimyo trick our regal and majestic lord and master and cause the Emperor to cast us aside so casually? But I think we can use this to our advantage, young samurai." The Daimyo says to his vessel.

"Though I am humbled that you have such trust in me, my lord, I must ask, what is our advantage in this?" Kizuna asks and the Daimyo smiles slightly and looks a tab more relax. "Why, the element of surprise, young samurai. For now Gekido doesn't expect us to act and will be preparing to relax his guard on the temple shrine since it is his puppet that now is given the task of assaulting the temple. I

have trust in your skills to slip into the temple and rescue the maiden priestess out from the demon's very nose." The Daimyo says.

"But that can't be, I mean, why would the Daimyo lay blame on the other Daimyo when his diplomat is the one responsible for the trouble." Patamon says softly. "It's a trait that's fairly common, laying blame on everybody but yourself. I did it often enough while acting as the Digimon Emperor." He says softly as a ninja appears to give an update of the forces that guard the shrine.

It wasn't long before the curtain closes and the lights dim.

TK

The narrator begins once more while the backstage crew moves about behind the curtain, altering the props like they rehearsed for a solid month.

'And so Kizuna packed lightly for his mission while in the court of the Daimyo of Rie, preparations were underway for the assault. Although both Daimyos tried to keep secret their plans, it didn't stop Gekido from hearing of them and planning on how to best use this for his advantage.' The narrator says and the curtain opens to a changed set that had very few hints of the study it had been just moments ago.

"It is such a pity that you are not held at the shrine, isn't it miko?" The black coloured villain with crimson markings says followed by pleasant growl as Gekido turns to address the lead actress playing the role of the heroine of Sora. Sora doesn't say anything as she stares down at the floor.

"It is too bad that our Emperor has grown so impatient with his vassals, but then, trying to destroy me has always been the goal of your rulers since I arrived in these lands and began to recruit vassals from the local Ogre tribes, goblin gangs, and kitsune clan. But then, mortals such as yourselves never could tell the difference between a

wife and a cousin." Gekido says, causing the beings seated about the court of monsters to chuckle and jeer.

"What are your orders, mighty one?" An actress dressed up as a fox-girl asks. Gekido gets to his feet and moves to pick up a large axe from a rack of weapons. Gekido tests the balance of the weapon and then turns to face the kitsune.

"How long as it been since human blood has covered our bodies, Kikyo?" Gekido asks with a cruel grin on his face, one that sent a few shivers down his spine even though he knews that Yami's just acting. *He didn't have to do it so well though.* A small voice says within his mind.

"Far too long, mi'lord, far too long." The kitsune says in a husky voice and her sentiments were shared with the rest of the room. As Gekido moves from the weapons rack, a few of the Ogres move to take some weapons off of the rack while the goblins began to chat among themselves while most of the kitsune headed off stage, likely to go rally the troops.

"Who moves with darkness of the night?" Gekido shouts at his followers as he punches the air with the arm that's holding the axe. "Gekido, Gekido!" The others in the room chant and then Ogre with three horns shouts out, "Who is it that strikes fear deep into the heart of all?"

Once more in a chant the extras call out, "Gekido, Gekido!" One of the two kitsunes that remain in the room calls out, "Who calls forth the demons of the night?" And once more they chant, "Gekido, Gekido!"

"Blood calls to blood, kin calls to kin!" Gekido chants whirling the axe in his hands as he continues, "Shades of night, I call forth my right! As my right, take my might! With my might, take flight! Fly this night oh shades of the night, my enemies to see your might this night!" Gekido snarls and smoke bombs erupt on stage but Gekido continues on with his rhythm.

"Blood calls to blood, kin calls to kin!" Gekido bellows and the others chime in, "Blood calls to blood, kin calls to kin!"

Gekido turns to face the entrance of the room and with a sharp motion, brings down the axe to point to exit. With a roar, all the extras charge out of the room, soon leaving only Gekido and Sora on the stage.

"You can't keep him from me." Sora says not really look in Gekido's direction. "True, but then none of the threads say he has to be *whole* . After all, you aren't as long as I keep your eyes from you." Gekido says with a smirk.

"Fiend." Sora growls and Gekido chuckles. "Oh yes, remember that feeling, priestess, for as long as you have that feeling filling your heart, I shall never be gone from this world. It only makes you more **human** ." Gekido says and with that the villain of the play makes his dramatic exit.

"He really does his part pretty good, doesn't he?" Patamon asks. "I think it's the viral tendencies that's allowing him to pull off that kind of performance." Wormmon pipes in.

"Likely, having the 'black' in his species' name only makes him more... more... incline to listen to those instincts." Wormmon adds before the narrator begins, and Patamon hums in agreement.

"Or more aware." He says with a slight frown as he recalls a few times when Yami had been pretty... feral.

The narrator says, 'And so Gekido and his followers head for the shrine to spring his trap, to cause more chaos in the country of Jin. For as long as the Emperor of Jin and his vassals believed that the young priestess is being held at the temple shrine, they won't search any where else for her. And without her sight, the few guards left to keep her from running off had an easy time of it guarding her, keeping her from escaping from Gekido's fortress.'

'That night also allowed demons to move about in the realm of dreams. Causing all of the nobility to experience a nightmare beyond their ability to put into words. The Emperor wasn't exempted from their wanderings either. Throughout the country of Jin, few got restful sleeps that night.' The narrator pause for a moment before continuing.

'It took a week for the Daimyo of Rie to assemble the largest force he could muster. After all, if he succeed in this task, the Daimyo could see the his star rising in the court of the divine Emperor of Jin. It would also secure the fall of his rival, the Daimyo of Chuugi. After a few days to make sure they had enough supplies, the Daimyo himself marched at the head of his force, secure in the knowledge that he could not fail.'

'But samurai Kizuna of kingdom Chuugi did not have to worry about moving with a large force like the Daimyo of Rie. In fact, by the time Gekido's forces finish arriving, Kizuna was a day's ride from the temple that was the focus of Kizuna's mission.' The narrator says after a few seconds, the spotlight begin to brighten as the curtain opens to revealed a forest area with Kizuna leading a 'horse' with packs on it.

As Kizuna moves towards some rocks, the 'horse' begins to whine and pull away. As Kizuna tries to regain control of the 'horse', a pair of kitsune appears from behind the rock with daggers and from the surrounding trees, three goblins with maces.

"Well, well, well, what do we have here?" One of the fox girls muses. "Han, Han, Han, can't we see the packs? I think we got ourselves a trader posing as a samurai." The other kitsune says while the goblins move to surround Kizuna.

"Be gone foul beasts or feel the power of my blades." Kizuna says as he lets go of the halter, allowing the 'horse' to flee as Kizuna hands go to his swords resting in his belt. The two kitsunes have scowls on their faces and the goblins growl at the samurai.

"This mortal did not just call us what I think he did, did he sister?" Han asks in a hard voice. "I think he did, sister, I think this unimaginative fool of a male call us *foul* ." The other kitsune growls while the goblins hefted the maces up.

"That brings back memories." He muses softly as Kizuna takes un-sheaths his sword. "I bet its the ones about Angewomon fighting LadyDevimon." Patamon muses softly and he nods. "It really does." He admits as Kizuna slowly begins to kill each of the minions, but doesn't see the reinforcements arriving with a net until its too late.

The scene ends with a goblin striking Kizuna in the back of the head, knocking the samurai out. The lights dim and the curtain closes over the laughter coming from the minions of Gekido.

'And so our hero finds himself captured by the followers of Gekido and taken into a dark room to await an audience with our villain, Gekido. But Gekido had other things on his mind then the arrival of one lone samurai. For Gekido was too busy making arrangements of how to give those that seek to capture this shrine a taste of a very bitter defeat, even though they were still weeks away from arriving to do battle with his followers.' The narrator says.

'After leaving his enemy alone in a dark room with little for food and drink for a week, Gekido's plans for the temple were near completion so the evil Gekido decides to meet the fool who thought he could slip through his net of scouts.' The narrator says and on that note, the lights brighten and the curtains open to reveal a new arrangement of props with Gekido seated on a wooden chair with a small saucer of what appears to be sake in his left hand, his yellow eyes half open as a kitsune attends him.

Kizuna is brought before Gekido by a small squad of four Ogres, two had maces while the other two had spears. "So you are the one that my scouts found coming from the east." Gekido says and then takes a sip from his saucer before continuing in a lazy fashion, "It seems that my hospitality does not agree with you."

Those with Gekido snicker as Kizuna moves to get onto his knees so that he may look upon the beast that is head of the army. "You discriminate this shrine by your mere presence, vile one. I do not fear you and your fellows! For I am samurai, I am living and breathing symbol of honor and duty! Your master does not scar me." Kizuna declares in a foolhardy matter.

"It is not the Way of the Warrior to be shamed and avoid death even under circumstances that are not particularly important. It goes without saying that to sacrifice one's life for the sake of his master is an unchanging principle. That I should be able to go ahead of all the other warriors of this country and lay down my life for the sake of my master's benevolence is an honor to my family and has been my most fervent desire for many years." Quotes Gekido before taking another sip from his saucer and Kizuna looks startled.

"I know your codes, boy. How else could I become as successful as I am if I do not have something binding them to my service? If I had no banner to rally them by?" Gekido tells the hero of the play causing Kizuna to gasp in horror. The kitsune pours more sake into the saucer.

"You're only confident because I am bound by these ropes, beast!" Kizuna growls as the samurai tries to struggle to stand. "You don't even know who you are talking to, do you Kizuna of the kingdom of Chuugi? If you can guess who I am in three tries, I just might cut your bonds and allow you to preform seppuku, that is, if you can guess rightly." Gekido says, watching the hero through half lid eyes with a highly bored expression with a hint of amusement coating his tone.

"I don't care who you are! You're just an underling of that demon, Gekido!" Kizuna shouts out, trying to get to his feet but one of the Ogres keep the samurai from standing up. In response, Gekido laughs a sinister chuckle that sent shivers through his body, it takes a few seconds for him to remind himself that Yami is only acting.

"Oh yes, you can be sure that I'm acting in 'Gekido's' best interests." The villain says before taking a sip of sake. "I believe that Ryouji might be able to make our guest here so much more comfortable." Gekido says to the Ogres and they chuckle as they drag the samurai away.

Once the samurai has been taken off stage and Gekido drinks from his saucer. Then a goblin scout comes onto stage saying, "My lord! The advance scouts of the Rie's army have been spotted two days journey from here."

"If the scouts are so close then the main body should be at least four days behind them." Gekido says, moving the saucer before him, swirling the liquid within the saucer before downing it in one gulp. The kitsune moves and pours more sake into the saucer.

"Your orders, my master?" The goblin asks, standing at attention. "Pull back from that section of the forest, order the human mercenaries companies to patrol that part. After all, we want the humans to be in shock when we march onto the battlefield. We wouldn't want that surprise to be spoiled now, would we?" Gekido says slyly and the goblin nods eagerly at that before bowing before heading off stage.

Gekido sips from the saucer as the lights dim and the curtain closes as the narrator begins to speak once more. 'And so the armies of the kingdom of Rie arrive within a week's march of the shrine. The scouting force begins to lay the foundations of a siege camp when they weren't scouting the terrain, observing the human mercenaries that Gekido employs.'

'And so the reports sent to the generals of the army from the scouts told of human occupation at the shrine since they only saw human companies moving about the area. The Daimyo of Rie's confidence soared at the news, for he could send reports hinting that his rival in the kingdom of Chuugi might have been the one responsible for the capture of the priestess.'

'By the time the main body of the army arrives, Gekido once more sends for our hero, Kizuna.' The narrator says and the curtain opens as the lights brighten to reveal a slightly changed props but otherwise it was pretty much the same as the last scene.

Gekido stood tall with his arms on his hips as he studies the beaten form of Kizuna who's now wearing rags for cloths with some bits of red paint in place of caked blood. "Has Ryouji manage to educate you in the ways of the world yet boy?" Gekido asks.

Kizuna doesn't say anything and after a few seconds, Gekido grins. "I see, so you still hold onto the idea that your cause is just even though Ryouji gave you visions of the how your world really works? Just look at the injuries you caused to yourself in hopes of dispelling those thoughts. Just how many tables have you destroyed in your efforts to kill yourself, boy? Three? Five?" Gekido muses and its then did he notice that Kizuna wasn't bound by ropes.

"I believe the count was nine my lord." One of the Ogres says and Gekido smiles as he nods. "Ah yes, that sounds about right. After that Ryouji had to ward the table to be unbreakable if I recall." Gekido says with amusement oozing from him.

"Anyway, since you've come this far to see the priestess I'll let you on a little secret." Gekido says and after a few seconds Gekido moves to stands a bit closer to the prisoner. "She hasn't lived at this shrine at any point in time. My vassals captured her as soon as she arrived with her escort and then spirited her out of this place after within seconds of her escort's bodies falling to the ground. She's been living in 'Gekido's' fortress ever since." Gekido says.

As Gekido moves away the samurai seems to collapse into himself as he falls to the floor, his body racking with sobs. "Take him to the fortress, put him in the care of the miko. I'm sure those two will be happy to 'see' each other." Gekido says and the small company of Ogres nod as two of them move to pick Kizuna from his position on the ground.

Ken

"Master, what shall we do now? The armies have arrived and some of the human mercenaries are beginning to fret." A kitsune asks once Kizuna is taken off stage.

"Just hand them more gold, that should quiet it them down. After all, pay a man enough and they'll walk bare foot through the gates of eternity and challenge the god of death to walk back through them once more." Gekido says and the kitsune smiles before asking, "And perhaps allow them free access to chilled sake?"

Gekido grins toothily as he nods, with that, the kitsune hurries off stage to do as bid. "And so it comes together as I knew it would as it had back then and so it shall be in times to come." Gekido muses just loud enough for them to hear, the microphone likely helps with that.

The lights dim and the curtain closes. 'And so Kizuna is sent to the fortress where the priestess's to rescue is being held. Kizuna was never bound once Ryouji finished with him.' The narrator says.

'The problems with the human mercenaries did go away after a generous amount of gold was given to their companies as well as a very large ration of sake for each company. Must like Gekido knew it would.'

The narrator pauses before continuing, 'The Daimyo and his generals were already opening the victory sake as they went over the maps and deployment of enemy soldiers. So assured of victory that they never noticed the lack of Intel on the temple itself and what numbers guard their 'prize'.'

'And so after two days the Daimyo and generals finally launch an attack on the mercenaries. They slaughtered most of the undisciplined companies as the army presses forward towards the shrine. But unknown to the armies belonging to the kingdom of Rie, Gekido and his forces pull out of the temple and began to circle

about them. After pressing towards the shrine for a full four days, the trap within the temple kills the leaders of the army and with them dead, Gekido and his vassals move into the chaos of their deaths to slaughter them.'

'The survivor flee to the capital to report to the Emperor.' The narrator says and the curtain opens as the lights brighten.

"I see. So it seems that evil one had her all this time. It is likely that she is already broken to his power." The Emperor says in a grave way and those survivors just crouch there, saying nothing.

"You may go an prepare your final rites." The chamberlain tells them and they get up from their positions before heading out of the room.

"Bring me my priest, I which to speak with him about this matter." The Emperor says and the chamberlain does so, heading off stage, leaving the Emperor alone on stage, pacing slightly.

It wasn't long before the chamberlain arrives with an actor dressed up as a priest. "You may go, chamberlain." The Emperor says and the chamberlain bows repeatedly as he backs off stage.

"You and your council claims that this priestess shall break Gekido's hold on my country. And yet, you have not mentioned that she is in his clutches for years! How can she do as foretold if she's tainted by him?" The Emperor says angrily.

"The gods would not have chosen her if she could not bare the strain of her burden. The gods have decreed that Gekido's time on this world has come to an end, it is only a matter of time before the foretold time comes." The priest says calmly with his hands hidden in the long sleeves of his kimono as the Emperor paces on stage.

"You expect me to sit around, waiting for a *girl* , an untested *woman* to do a man's job?" The Emperor snaps at the priest, using the most of the same words the Chuugi diplomat had used less then a month ago.

"If you want him gone, then yes, you have to put your faith in the gods otherwise you just play right into his hands as your forefathers have done, my lord. Have not the kingdom of Rie been thrown into turmoil with the loss of their Daimyo? Have not the kingdom of Chuugi fallen low from your favour? Surely you know your history better then most, after all, how many kingdoms have fallen during the times that they've hunted for ways to defeat Gekido?" The priest says sternly.

"The gods will break him, my lord, just be patient. The time draws near, I feel it in my bones. Do not seek to provoke this demon in any way, my lord or you will find yourself broken like your great-grandfather." The priest says in a softer tone.

As the Emperor sits down to contemplate, the priest bows and walks off stage and in doing so, the lights dim and the curtains close.

'And so the country of Jin is thrown into chaos once more as rumors of what happened to the Daimyo of the kingdom of Rie spread. The stories grew grander and more wild until what little of the truth had been lost. People cried out for the Emperor to do something to protect them and their families.'

'As the kingdom of Rie gets embroiled in civil war between relatives of the previous Daimyo, the Daimyo of Chuugi sent a generous donation of gold that he was spared such a humiliating and deadly situation, after all, he only lost a single samurai while the kingdom of Rie lost most of its army and it's Daimyo to a trap set up by Gekido.'

'Kizuna appeared days ahead of Gekido and his army. It had broken his heart to see the miko destined to break Gekido so weak looking, so frail. It shattered the halves of his heart to learn that Gekido had stolen the girl's ability to see. Kizuna vowed right then and there that before he died, he shall see Sora freed from Gekido's grasp. Unknown to Kizuna played right into Gekido's hand by making that vow...'

The lights brighten and the curtains open to reveal Kizuna and the blind priestess Sora. There doesn't seem to be any goblins about, the lights weren't that bright, and the scenery seems to be more like a cave then the other scenes that came before this act.

"Calm down, Kizuna. Pacing won't help solve anything." Sora tells the samurai in a stern voice, her head turned towards the pacing Kizuna. "How can I be calm? How can you be calm? He stole your eyes, your ability to interact with our world!" The samurai declares as Kizuna turns to look at Sora.

"There are other ways to view the world, Kizuna. And as for why you should calm down, its simple, our time to confront the ancient will come in due time. By trying to press the issue now, you'll do what he want you to do and we'll fail, which will allow him to continue to exist in our world. Be patient, Kizuna, as long as we're in his fortress, we are safe from indirect interference that could also make us fail. We were meant to be captured by him and to be his prisoners for a time. If you can not trust yourself, trust me and our gods, for they will lend us aid when we need it, not before." Sora says to Kizuna before she turns her head away to bow before a discarded statue that has more then a few dents in it.

Kizuna didn't look very comforted by Sora's speech but did stop pacing to first stare at the statue with a frown and then gazes at Sora, his expression softens before a sober look grows upon Kizuna's face. Within seconds, Kizuna begins to go through the piles of trash. After a few minutes, Kizuna begins to pile broken weapons out of the trash heaps.

Once Kizuna moves from the larger pile of trash, the samurai begins to study each weapon. "It just might work." Kizuna says thoughtfully as he hefts a broken spear and an axe with a broken wooden hilt after looking at snapped blades be they for swords, axes, or daggers. It wasn't long before Kizuna pulls out a thin knife once he moves to the table where the statue is and begins to pry the head of the axe off of the wooden hilt.

As expected, the lights dim and the curtain closes, signaling the end of the act.

'And so Kizuna from something to occupy his time while he waits for Sora to finally agree to try and escape from Gekido's fortress. While Kizuna and Sora wait patiently within his fortress, Gekido began to set some of his plans into motion that even though he may fall before the pair, his influence in this world will continue. The villain even proceeded with a very risky venture, one that not even the gods themselves know if it will succeed or not.'

'And so days become weeks, weeks became months, and the season of summer gave way to autumn which gave way to winter. Finally the day came, the day of the winter equinox, the day that Sora had been waiting for since Kizuna arrived within at the fortress...'

The curtain opens to reveal a much larger set, one that not only had what appear to be Gekido's set of rooms, but also a hallway as well as thin rice screens. There were two places for actors to enter onto the stage from off stage. There were some Ogres stationed outside of the large room that Gekido was resting in. They could hear soft snorts coming from Gekido.

Off stage, they can hear Kizuna asks Sora, "Are you sure he won't wake?" They hear Sora's voice answer, "Every equinox, Gekido must slumber, it isn't a question of will he wake, its can he wake."

"But why didn't we do it during the autumn equinox?" Kizuna asks. "Because, not only is this the winter equinox, but winter is connected to the element of water which is in opposite of Gekido's element of fire. Not only can't he wake but all of his enchantments are weaker this day then anytime of the year! Today not only can I get my eyes back, but he's ties to our world are at their weakest as well." Sora explains.

"That... actually sounds very well thought out." He admits softly and his three comrades hum in agreement as the pair appear on stage,

with Sora keeping a hand on Kizuna's left shoulder as she follows him on stage.

"Makes you wonder what other elements Denji had linked up with seasons." Patamon muses as it wasn't long before a fight broke out as Kizuna rounds the 'corner' while Sora waits for a few seconds before slipping behind the fighters to enter into Gekido's chambers.

Kizuna falls to the ground as the axe he had been using flies far from where he landed. In panic, Kizuna grabs what's avalible, which was a dagger and uses it to cut the towering Ogre's leg, hamstringing him as the Ogre falls to the floor. Kizuna stabs the Ogre in the chest, 'killing' him.

With the last Ogre guard dead and alarms sounding, Kizuna uses the 'walls' to get to his feet, making sure to grab a sword before going into a stance even though he's 'limping'.

While Kizuna was doing that, Sora finished unsealing a box that had the image of an eye carved on it, a minor bit of smoke and Sora's 'sight' was returned to her as goblins begin to appear on stage being lead by a kitsune.

With a war cry, they charge Kizuna one at a time and they watch as the weaken samurai tries to defend the hallway while Sora begins to go through the items within Gekido's room until she happens upon an old wrapped object. As the priestess unwraps the item, Kizuna begins to falter under the assault of fresh goblins.

The priestess reveals a pair of swords with white ivory hilts and as Kizuna falls to the unslaught of goblins, Sora calls out, "Kizuna! Catch!" The two sword sail through the air and land not far from where Kizuna is.

A flash bomb is set off as Kizuna touches the swords and the goblins and their leader cry out in terror as they back away. "Aaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh!" Kizuna cries at the top of his lungs once the

samurai is standing and within seconds, charges at the goblins and the Kitsune, driving them off stage.

While that's happening, Sora seemed to find what she was looking for, a jeweled black dagger. "Give me the strength needed to do my task." Sora prays softly.

As Sora gets up, she moves to the resting body of Gekido holding the dagger in her left hand. Once her right hand is on Gekido's head, she gives a war cry of her own as she lowers the blade, likely right at the spot where the spine and head are connected.

With that done, she then plunges the dagger into her chest and falls to the floor.

A few seconds later, Kizuna appears on stage carrying the two swords, he drops them as he sees Sora laying on the ground. A cry of anguish escapes from his throat as the samurai rushes to Sora's side. As he weeps, all other lights dim while a bright spotlight shines on Kizuna.

Thunder rumbles out over the speakers and a thunderous voice says, 'Wake, young maiden, your time has not yet come.'

Thunder rumbles once more and all of the other lights brightens as that one spotlight dies. "Kizuna..." Sora says and Kizuna declares, "Priestess!"

With that, the curtain close as all of the lights within the auditorium brighten as the narrator says, 'And so Sora is given new life, the hate that Gekido had worked so hard to bloom within her chest dies with her old life, leaving her feeling only pity for the ancient being who has caused so much suffering in the world of men.'

'Kizuna kept the twin swords that Sora had discovered while Sora threw the black dagger into the closest pit of fire. They stole away from the fortress while Gekido's vassals tried to get organized, thus ends our play.' The narrator declares.

Within seconds, a dim of clapping drowns out the music that started to play as Kizuna moves from behind the curtain, a few seconds later, the music changes once more before Sora comes from behind the curtain and etc for Yami, aka Gekido.

Yami

"They sold how many copies?!" He exclaims, totally stunned by the number that TK had told him. "You heard correctly the first time, 'Gekido'." TK says teasingly.

He growls as he gives the blond a glare, it's been three days since the last night of the play and he's been avoiding the school like the plague. After all, Denji hadn't been *happy* to learn that he would be leaving soon and had chased him a good five blocks as the Drama club head shouted out offers to get him to remain for another semester.

It had taken a lot of creativity to finally shake Denji from his tail and he had then wrote a letter of apology which pretty much says that if Denji finishes the second script before he left, he'd take it with him to read. If he liked it, he promised to come back by the end of the school year to preform it. He even said to contact him through TK since the blond has been and likely always will be his main connection to this dimension.

After all, TK still has that Hazard symbol on his chest and he didn't know how to get rid of it. It did make him wonder just hopes it doesn't cause TK harm...

"I still don't appreciate you telling Denji to use me as a contact." The blond reminds him as if the Digidestine of Hope was currently reading his mind. He flicks his tail in a dismissive way from their hiding place by the bridge in Highton View Terrace, Patamon had been positioned in a higher spot so that one of them had a better view of the area.

After all, some of the kids with copied spores were beginning to bloom and that's what lead them to this bridge since it is the closest portal leading out of the real world. It didn't help that odd vans have been parked not far from their hiding spot. He could smell something odd coming from those vehicles, but he hadn't been able to get anyone to allow him to investigate them to see what secrets they hold. He was rather put out since they keep growing in number...

Although he can't really blame them for not trusting him when it comes to large vehicles, after all, he had ruined a van's driver seat and drove around the fog covered ward help conceal Myotismon's activities from outside of that ward.

And then least not forget about the more recent one when we were trying to rescue Ken... I'll admit, I had never drove a motorcycle before that night but at least I managed to keep up with the semi-truck. I also don't see the problem with Davis' hair, either, after all, he likes his hair spiked and it was. He thinks to himself as he looks away from TK.

He takes a sniff and frowns, that scent... it smelt familiar.... Patamon caws like a crow, the sign that the orange rookie has spotted one of the fake spore carrying kids.

TK's D-Terminal beeps and it didn't surprise him as TK reads out loud, "Three kids spotted. Sora." TK types away at the keys of the D-Terminal while he presses his lips together. As TK finishes, the blond gets up and takes two steps out of the cover.

"Coming?" TK asks and he answers, "It would look less suspicious if I moved out of here on my own after a few minutes." TK looks thoughtful and then nods. "Ok."

He watches the blond head towards Sora's hiding place, Patamon likely already waiting for them. His yellow eyes flicker to the hiding spot and then to the closest van. With a sigh, he counts to hundred before moving out of the cover, heading as casually as he could towards the closest van.

After all, his gut tells him that there's something about those vans that were important...

A casual look around reveals that nobody's paying him much mind and he then opens the side door and hurriedly climbs in. He raises an eyebrow as he realizes just how much space there was. *Oh... wasn't there something about enclosed spaces... I really wish I remember what Henry and Kenta had been saying about it, but then, I had been too busy watching Calumon bug the others into playing 'stripe' poker with him...*

And so, he moves to explore the large amount of space that seems to totally disagree with the size of the van that it's concealed in. He can't keep his eyes from lighting up as he finds a large number of scattered pages next to a worn note book. After a quick glance around, he picks up the lot and heads off to the marked area for restrooms so that he can read them without anyone spotting him.

His D-Arc bounces against his chest as quickly walks straight through the door and after a bare look, heads into one of the stalls. He closes it and locks it, that done, he grins slightly at the sight of the toilet. *Well, they do have to have something for their Digital member to use.* Were his thoughts as he closes the lid and moves to sit on the tank so that his feet can't be seen from under part of the stall.

Kari

It didn't take them long to get there, after all, Yolei and Cody had chipped in for the taxi ride, the very reason why they had been carrying the money at all. True, taking a bus or the subway might have been cheaper but it would have taken longer to get to the bridge.

As she pauses to watch the taxi to speed away, she sighs and give herself a minor shake before turning to catch up with Yolei and Cody,

their partners were in their knap sacks. She gives the vehicles the briefest of looks before focusing on the group of kids on the bridge.

"I really wish this wasn't happening." She admits softly to herself. "Wishing isn't going to fix this mess though, Kari." She hears Gatomon pipe in and she can't help but sigh as she hums in agreement with her partner's statement.

"Doesn't mean I have to like any of this." She admits with a sigh as they finally made it to the hiding spot where the others were hiding out at. For a second, she wondered where Yami was but then decided that the crimson marked Digimon was likely off doing some kind of mission.

"Any sightings of Oikawa or Arukenimon and Mummymon?" Yolei asks those gathered about the tree. "Not yet but they'll more or less make their appearance as more of those kids begin to show up." Her brother says and most of the Digidestine hanging about the tree nod their heads in agreement.

Then Patamon pipes in, "Hey! Where's Yami?" The little orange Digimon begins to look around for the crimson marked rookie.

TK sighs while they all began to glance around as they try to find the black rookie. "You know, I bet he's in one of those vans." Gatomon muses and TK groans but Tai says, "Well, it seems that we don't have time, look!"

Tai points and they all look at the area of the bridge to find Arukenimon and Mummymon herding the kids off the bridge while pairs of people move towards the vans that line the parking spots on either side of the street. The traffic seems to be gone while the figure of Oikawa stands in the middle of the street with a computer. One by one, the vans moved to line up behind Oikawa while humanoid Digimon began to appear on the outskirts of the group of kids.

"I guess Yami was right about those vans." Upamon muses from Cody's arms. "I guess so." Sora agrees as they head towards the

large group standing slightly behind Oikawa.

It wasn't long before the in-training Digimon Digivolve into their rookie forms while they move to confront the group on the street. "Hold it right there! Let those kids go, you banshee!" Davis calls out and Oikawa smirks and presses the enter button on the laptop.

A large golden coloured light portal opens up before Oikawa and within seconds, the group of kids with humanoid Digimon follow Oikawa into entering into said portal. The vans then follow seconds after the group vanishes. They also manage to get through the opening of the portal just as the third van drives through the portal.

TK

Ok... I knew it was a strange place but this... this is just weird. He thinks to himself as he stares at the winding road that's laid out in wacky way. There were reef like structures hanging about in the air, some purple in colour while others were in yellow and black.

He trues to look upwards at the 'sky' and finds a portion of it looking like it came from a spider web made out of a blue substance. For a second, he thought he saw something flicker but shrugs as he turns to find the trucks beginning to alter in structure.

Suddenly one of the trucks breaks apart as something within the truck slices through the interior of the van. A war cry erupts as a voice cries out, "Atomic Blaster!" A light show later and a black Digimon with dull grey metal armour covering their shoulders and arms.

"I think we might have found Yami." Gatomon muses as the cybernetic black Digimon roar as humanoid bug Digimon erupt from the same van that Yami's destroying. "I wonder what he's called now... I mean, he's not BlackGrowlmon or ChaosGallantmon." Tai wonders and he shrugs as a few glance in his direction.

"Let's see... Ah got it! That's BlackWarGrowlmon, he's an ultimate level Digimon of the virus attribute. He's a cyborg type who's attacks are Atomic Blaster and Radiation Blade." Izzy says from his position on the ground with his laptop out.

"Gee, I wonder if he's big enough." Yolei wonder dryly and he smiles slightly as Yami begins to target the other van once he got rid of the human turned insect Digimon. Those in the front seats flee out of their vehicles, trying to escape before they explode.

"Shouldn't we try and stop him?" Cody asks and he blinks before forcing himself to look away as he suddenly remembers who they were chasing. "Uh oh..." He says as he watches as some of those kids begin to transform.

"What's... ah. I see." Sora says, likely sighting what's caught his attention. As Oikawa moves to take the energy from the sprouting spores, the kid would then begin to glow just enough to block their view of the kid's skin as the child's body alters into a new form.

"I think we should stop what's going on over there." He says and the others agree, it wasn't long before all of the Digimon with them Digivolve to their usual armour forms and for Wormmon, champion form. Flamedramon charges forward with fire surrounding him as Halsemon, Nefertimon, and Stingmon take to the air while Digmon races on the ground.

Pegasusmon pauses before taking to the air, giving him a look and he sighs. He knew what he had to do so he takes his D-3 and remembers what that scene had been like. Light flashes from his hands as he focuses on having Angemon and MagnaAngemon join the fight.

Although, he privately wishes he could some how, some way, help Yami achieve mega without Yami using his portion of the Digital Hazard. After all, it had been anger that had been the focal point of how Yami warped Digivolved into ChaosGallantmon. It would help if there were mega Digimon on their side since that is what level

Myotismon will be achieving once he absorbs that energy from those fake spores.

Yami

He felt the van start up as he manages to get halfway through the puzzling notes and in the end, he sighs and just shuffles through them, skimming each until he reads about how they managed to locate the supposed 'core' of the Digital world in another dimension. They had plans of heading to said world and then trying to trap this 'Yggdrasil' so that they can finally and truly use Digimon as a weapon for military purposes as well as ending Digimon free will.

That pretty much made him see red and it wasn't long before he used Pyro Grenade within the restroom. As human turned Digimon enter into the ruined man's restroom, he growls before launching himself at them. Caught by surprised and overwhelmed with his onslaught for a split second caused most of the Digimon without an exoskeleton to be either knocked out or deleted.

Fresh strength began to flow from his chest area while the string holding his D-Arc is sliced off as one of the recovered insect Digimon try and behead him. He can't remember if the D-Arc hit the ground or not since he found himself too busy to really care what happens to his Digivice just as long as it doesn't break, he's happy since he could always recover it later, after destroying as many of the van as he can as so to put a very large and very sticky monkey wrench in the works.

Whooutd

Startled by that rush of air, he blinks as he brings a hand to take out the dart. He turns to look at the Digimon with the gun and a surge of anger begins to battle it out with whatever knockout drug the dart contained.

With a howl, he pulls more at the energy flowing within his body and it wasn't long before he's cocooned within a sphere of light. His hide peels off and the frame of his body expands. As seconds tick by, red beams of light come out from certain sections of his body as he goes from champion to ultimate.

The light breaks away to reveal him as his ultimate level body, BlackWarGrowlmon. After slashing the walls of the van with his blade, he cries, "Atomic Blaster!"

The space pocket seems to explode around him as his attack rips through the last bit of defense the van had, allowing him to see the outside. It wasn't long before the assault by the insect Digimon ends once he deletes them. He takes aim at one of the other vehicles while he's dimly aware of more Digimon coming to confront him.

He roars as that van erupts into flame and takes aim at another van, ignoring the little voice in his mind that's trying to tell him to be care of where he's blasting or else he might hit one of the Digidestine or that group of kids.

Dimly the presence of the two angel type Digimon flying through the air with they flying horse Digimon causes him to blink and focus on those three for a few seconds before he sobers up to begin looking for TK. "I just know I'm going to have a major headache when this is all over." He muses out loud to himself before he feels something hit him in the back.

"Radiation Blade!" He snarls as he turns to confront another swarm of human turned Digimon. He manages to fling a few of the Digimon at the fleeing line of van, causing a minor traffic jam, though one van's already farther along on the road and he pauses as he watches it vanish into another portal, leaving this wishing dimension.

I wish I hadn't allowed my anger to cloud my judgment. I'm sure I could have found a better way to stop them all before that one got away from me. He thinks as he slashes at the enemy Digimon charging at him. *This would be so much easier if I were either*

ChaosGallantmon or Gallantmon since I would be slender and less bulky.

Suddenly a familiar voice says calmly, "Bio Merge Digivolution." It wasn't long before he felt a very familiar feeling. He finds himself surrounded by silver background with the image of TK floating before him. "Bio Merge Activate!" TK declares, he watches as TK's D-3 morphs into a D-Arc that seems to be very similar to his golden one with the exception that TK's D-Arc had silver trim on a green background.

He feels TK within his being as his skin frame bursts to reveal ChaosGallantmon's silver and blue armour as he calls out, "BlackWarGrowlmon Digivolve too..." And then in a combine voice, **"ChaosGallantmon!"**

The background vanishes and they stand once more in the wishing dimension. *"Wow, everything looks so small!"* TK says as they glance about. *"What do you expect, TK? We're a mega level Digimon. I'm sure you remember how tall I became last time I became mega."* He muses while everyone seems to be staring at them.

"TK? Where did TK go?" Kari asks and they turn to look at the group of Digidestine once more. **"Hey you guys, what's up?"** They say with causes most of others to gasp as they likely hear the bit of TK in their voice.

"TK!" Tai exclaims and TK voice says without a hint of him, "Well, yea, I guess so. I also somehow morphed my D-3 into a D-Arc during our Bio Merge too. You wouldn't believe how amazing this feels! It's like I can take on the world!" He chuckles within their being as he points out, *"Well, as nice as this is, we might want finish destroying the vans before we're forced to focus on what's happening with Oikawa since I'm sure that MaloMyotismon will be making an appearance soon."*

"That reminds me, what got you tick enough to Digivolve into BlackWarGrowlmon?" The naked blond within the silver coloured sphere with rings of a silvery white hovering about the sphere. With a sigh, he focused on that bit of information and pictured it begin transferred to the blond. It wasn't long before TK begins to swear in a creative fashion.

With a nod from TK, they continued his mission of annihilating the remainder of the van and those defending them while leaving the Digidestine and their partners to confront the large floating mouth that signals the beginnings of MaloMyotismon.

Guilmon

He blinks as a light appears and as the ball of light fades it reveals his Tamer's D-Arc. He smiles sadly at the Digivice for a few seconds before taking it out of the air. "Takatomon..." He says softly as he holds it close to his chest.

Then suddenly the golden D-Arc comes to life and he holds it out. A light comes from it and then it reveals not just sight but sound. A dual voice cries out, **"Demon's Disaster!"**

The attack is aimed at a van and he blinks in confusion. *Why are they destroying that van?* He wonders but he can't take his eyes off of the hovering screen that's giving him a view of where his partner is.

So he finds a spot to sit down and watches the events unfold wherever Takato is at this moment in time.

TK

They finished with the van as well as the adult human turned Digimon. Those kids that had been transformed weren't happy about their transformation and had moved away from the battle field to

mourn their passing humanity. *"You think we didn't have a way to transform them back."* He hears Yami muses and he sighs.

"But they don't know that." He points out and he feels Yami agree as they turn their gaze from the group of children to the Digidestine who weren't doing anything, although Davis seems to be trying to snap them out of it. *"Oh yea, he did that mind trick. Oh look, Davis figured out that trick of multiplying his partner."* Yami says as they watch as ExVeemon and Raidramon make their appearance while Izzy, Sora, and Tai snap out of it by having Pegasusmon, Angemon, and MagnaAngemon guide them through it.

"Demon's Disaster!" They declare as they decide to target MaloMyotismon as the mega turns his attention to the group of children huddled together. The attack hits the evil mega in the left shoulder, causing one of the mouths to vanish.

The mega cries out in pain. "Why can't I read you?!" MaloMyotismon growls as he clutches his shoulder. **"You know, that's easy to answer, there's two minds in this body, not just one, but two."** They say as they move into a different stance as they hold the shield to face the other mega.

"Now then, why don't you just do give into your cowardly nature and start running away? After all, this is your second time being a mega, you weak nerve fool. You obviously just don't have what it takes to stay a mega since you have such a weak constitution. You were better off as a Ultimate since you lived far longer then you ever do as a mega!" They state in a matter of fact voice.

"I'll make you eat those words!" MaloMyotismon snaps as the mouth on the right side opens. **"I highly doubt you know the ins and outs of your new body while Yami's highly familiar with our body. You don't stand a chance battymon. There's a reason why we're have Destiny as part of our name, it's because we're favoured by those how run the Digital world. You and others like you will never truly win because there will always be others to**

pick up where we left off. The state calmly and confidently, MaloMyotismon's face screws up into a foul look.

"Crimson Mist!" MaloMyotismon shouts and they leap into the air to avoid the jet of mist. They cry out as they descend, the lance slices the mega's chest while MaloMyotismon tries to dodge the blunt of their attack, which had been aimed at the other's face.

MaloMyotismon lashes out with his claws but they block that with their shield. They counter attack by using their weight as they jab their lance forward, right into MaloMyotismon's right knee cap before they leap back as MaloMyotismon screams out in pain.

"You know, we wouldn't mind a piece of the action too, you know." Pegasusmon says dryly. **"Our apologies. You guys can take it from here then."** They tell the rest of the Digimon, though there weren't any DNA Digimon among the crowd, but then, that had happened when they were facing BlackWarGreymon.

Though instead of splitting apart, they remain merged together so they can defend any attacks launched at the human partners. *"So... you think he'll open that portal?"* He asks Yami from his position from within ChaosGallantmon.

"I doubt he has the will to throw off our comments, he not only doubts his success in his survival but the injury to his knee makes him feel weak. This dimension will only allow those with confidence in their abilities to succeed. Wishing isn't just enough, you have to have the mind set and the drive to act on such desires." Yami says and then after a minor pause, *"That's how I think it works at any rate. Henry and the Monster makers had been highly interested in how the Digi-Gnome do what they do. After all, they don't grant the wishes of everyone."*

"Huh, you know, that does make some kind of sense. I wanted to help you go mega and I guess you wanted to go mega, right huh?" He muses and Yami hums in agreement as Angewomon uses Heaven's Charge to hold MaloMyotismon while Nefertimon and

Pegasusmon uses Golden Noose to help hold MaloMyotismon while the others prepare their attacks.

"Yea, I had been, I wanted to become either Gallantmon or ChaosGallantmon. I also regretted allowing my anger to get the better of me. If I hadn't allowed it to cloud my judgment, I could have found a way to destroy all of the vans before that one got away." Yami states in a steel type tone that hinted at anger that's likely directed at himself then at those responsible for the vans.

"You do have a bit of an anger problem, but I think I blame the Digital Hazard for rewarding your expression of it." He admits as the other Digimon's attacks cause MaloMyotismon to scream out in pain while Davis, Cody, Yolei, Ken, and Kari call out encouragements. As the smoke clears, it reveals a very injured MaloMyotismon who seems to have developed an expression of loathing.

"Huh, I never thought of it that way. I guess it makes sense, I always do feel a rush of energy flow through me whenever it happens. I never really questioned where it came from either." Yami muses thoughtfully. he feels a slight smile tug its way onto his face.

"I wonder if you'll be able to Bio Merge with Patamon once I'm gone." Yami suddenly wonders and he feels his jaw drop ever so slightly as he blinks. He closes his mouth with a slight snap and tries to think of reason why that couldn't work.

"I wonder if we'd Bio Merge to Seraphimon." He wonders after a few minutes in which MaloMyotismon tries to delete the children who not only had those fake spores but were transformed into Digimon once the possessed Oikawa absorbed that energy. MagnaAngemon defects the attack that's targeting that group.

"I think there's another angel that you might be able to transform into, I think he's called Dominimon, though there's nothing official about his existence, just a bunch of rumors really." Yami says and he hums thoughtfully as MagnaAngemon creates Gate of Destiny and the others begin to herd the mega into its clutches.

And so ends Myotismon's threat for once and for all. *"Glad it's over."* He says and Yami hums, within seconds, they un-merge from their Bio Merge from of ChaosGallantmon.

Guilmon

He couldn't believe his eyes, true he had seen something that seemed like a scene out of that cartoon but to see TK up close and personal, he felt a bit faint as well as dizzy since not only was Takato with a group of supposedly fictional group of characters but his Tamer had been Bio Merged with said blond.

"Great work you guys!" TK calls out and the image shifts to the group of Digimon. As they transform back into their rookie forms, the extra Digimon fade. "TK!" The orange Digimon called Patamon shouts while that's echoed by the other Digidestine, although he's not sure why Tai, Izzy, and Sora were numbered among that group since weren't suppose to be in that wishing dimension, well, they weren't in the cartoon but it seems that they were now.

"Yami!" Patamon says and moves from floating before TK to perching on Takato's head. *That answer that.* He thinks lightly as he continues to observe the scene going on before him.

"Ok, so, what now? I mean, how do we get out of here?" Davis asks after they congratulation each other. "I think if you wish hard enough to go to either the Digital world or to the real world, it'll open a gate to either opinion." Takato answers, he can't help but note the different voice but then, he had a different voice then when he's a Digimon too.

"I think we should get Gennai to examine them. So I vote the Digital world." Sora says and 'Yami' turns to look at the group of Digimon, he's not sure where they came from but he's sure that when Takato gets here, he can explain.

The others agree and Takato sighs. "I think its time for me to head home." Takato says softly and he smiles slightly. After all, how often has he wished for Takato to be by his side since he remember who and what, he really is?

"You know, I wish we could send a copy of that tape with you." Tai muses and 'Yami' sighs while TK adds lightly, "And a copy of that script that Denji labored over too." 'Yami' groans and his interest was piped.

"Where is your D-Arc?" Izzy asks and it wasn't long before the screen moves rapidly as 'Yami' begins to look for it. "I think it came off while I was in that restroom..." 'Yami' groans and he can't help but smile, it seems that although his partner is going by another name and in a different form, he's still the same old 'Goggle-Head' as Rika would say.

"I wish you were here now, Takato. I really missed you..." He says as he feels that ache within him.

Suddenly the screen fades and he blinks as something begins to happen about a foot away from him...

Looping Naruto: Time as a Samurai

I Don't Own Naruto!

Naruto

Age: 4

*Well s**t.* He couldn't help but think as he stares into a mirror of some shop he managed to sneak into on waking up in an alley. He runs his digits through his dirty ratty blond hair, he couldn't help but notice minor red highlights, likely from his hair soaking up a bit of his blood from receiving head injuries.

Pretty depressing to know I was getting targeted at this age... He adds in a distracted kind of way as he tries really hard to focus enough to try and mold his chakra since he wants to change his appearance before anyone noticed him in this clothing shop. A very difficult task considering his body is starving, sore, and feels like a set of cloths feeling way too tight but, finally, just as somebody comes out from the backroom, he manages to add more red to his hair and to make his whisker marks vanish; he couldn't do anything for his cloths or his eyes.

"Oh you poor dear! You're filthy! Come with me and we'll get you cleaned up." The elderly lady says in a grandmotherly tone.

He resists the urge to roll his eyes as he takes hold of the offered hand, allowing the elderly woman to guide him towards the washrooms. He bites his tongue to keep from laughing at the woman's antics, knowing perfectly well that if he hadn't managed to alter certain aspects of his appearance, he'd have been kicked out of the shop with the 'kind' woman shouting threats about what would happen if he dared return.

Once the dirt and grim had been scrubbed from his hair and his face, the lady has him sit by a corner with some toys. He gives into his childish urges to play with the toys but keeps an eye out so that he could make his escape since it wouldn't do for either his altered appearance to faint, causing him being thrown out in a very quick, hurtful fashion or for his fictional mother not appearing before the store closes.

His chance comes when a small family enters looking to purchase a new wardrobe for their eldest for the beginning of the new semester at the Ninja Academy. He also resists the urge to take the stuffed purple rabbit or any of the other toys. He sighs in relief, more then a little surprised how hard it had been to fight the temptation to take a toy.

As he wonders through the streets, he makes sure to re-apply his disguise so nobody recognizes him. A few click in a disproving manner at the sight of his bloody, ratty cloths but nobody stopped him offer him new ones either. He was just another orphan who wandered away from their minder, a child who's the responsibility of said minder too. Leaving people to leave him be, occupied with their own lives then the life of one of Leaf's many orphans. Which was fine by him since he may look like a toddler, he's anything but.

He did tire too easily and almost fell asleep a few times when he stop to rest. He also had to release his disguise because of how trying it was to keep it running. Neither his mind or body were in any real shape to handle using chakra, his body starved and his mind trying to keep him from acting his body's age.

By the time evening has arrived, he finally decides that it's time to do something about his hunger. Making sure his disguise is still working, he walks over to a table that had yet to be cleaned now that the supper rush is over and serve as slowed. He manages to climb up onto a chair and begins to grab what's left to first eat it and then to put it into the cloth napkin to take away with him.

He couldn't help but glance around as he does so, pretty much expecting somebody to show up to shoo him away but before a serve even comes to the door, he's done and is jogging away from the restaurant to eat what he grabbed in an alley a block away. He's more then a bit relieved that what he had stolen hadn't been too much since it means that he won't get sick; something he only vaguely remembers experiencing when he was young.

He studies the cloth napkin and then folds it up before pocketing it since he could find future uses for it. He has had experience in doing his own laundry(not like he had a choice) and he did recall a simple chakra control exercise he heard about during a few loops where he managed to attend other Chuunin Exams in other villages. He never got around to confirming if it was an actual exercise but it sounded like something he could practice at a moment's notice.

I don't think it's safe to give tree or water walking a try at this time. Might want to remember to pick up a few leaves for the leaf floating exercise though. He muses before trying to list what other chakra control exercises he could do without being in a practice field.

He yawns a bit as he wanders about one of the neighborhoods, he is thirsty and it seems easier to sneak a drink from one of their garden hoses then to risk going out of the main part of the village to visit a pond or stream out in the training fields. As he walks around, he couldn't help but notice how new most of the houses seem, which makes him wonder about the year.

In the end, he finally found a part of the village that still hasn't been worked on and after investigating one of the houses, he found some ruined beds that still have sheets. He manages to drag the ruined bed out from some fallen beams and then searched around for a pillow. He sighs as he manages to get not one but two out from under the beam, using some chakra to help increase his strength.

As he curls up on the bed while cocooned in the blankets, he couldn't help but wonder about what happened to cause this neighborhood to look like it served as a ninja battle field as

exhaustion won out and caused him to fall asleep while holding one of the pillows as if it were a stuff animal.

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Sunlight broke through his deamless sleep and it took a few minutes before he finally just groan and gave into the fact he couldn't remain asleep with sunlight in his eyes. It took him a few moments to realize that he wasn't in his apartment or in a sleeping bag, he doesn't panic as he instead tries to recall what happened.

He lets out a sigh as he remember and smiles in a sheepish fashion. It didn't take long before he got a much better look at the room he spent the night in as well as the condition of his bed, sheets, and pillows. Shaking his head, he begins to look around for some paper and ink so he can store the lot in a make shift storage scroll. He wasn't going to touch the rest of the house simply because it's more then likely the house has already been looted and what's left likely isn't worth the trouble for him to try and fix.

He's more then a little relieved that he found an intact ink bottle since it meant he wouldn't have to use his own blood in substitution of the ink. He didn't relish the thought of searching around for a knife so he can cause himself to bleed. He's not sure how powerful his healing ability is at this point in time or misjudging how deeply he cut, causing himself to die of blood loss.

After all, the youngest body he's ever woken up to experience a loop in had been a week before his tenth birthday. True, he found that during those loops of that setting, he still can't seem to become a Genin earlier then age twelve but he could improve his physical growth by simply eating healthier food and modeling his physical training schedule after Gai and Lee's own. It had moved him to tears when he actually reached around six feet in height and had a more finished look to him then anything in his previous loops.

Its one of the reasons why he picked up medical training in hopes of achieving that kind of body without him starting out as a ten year old.

He is still polishing those skills in fixing up stunned growth and malnutrition in teens and adults. His studies had led him to be able to regrow Lee's chakra coils too, among other medical 'miracles'.

He leaves the bottle of ink under a floor board, hiding it just so he knows where one is when he needs it. One never knew when one might need in the coming times until you lack it. While he didn't know how long the little cashe will remain hidden, he does plan to keep an ear open so he can visit this neighbor before any rebuilding begins just to recover that ink bottle.

Might even take a gander around the rest of the houses too. He muses silently to himself as he walks out of the ruined two story house. His stomach has yet to wake or else it would be growling impatiently to be filled.

With a single hand sign, he once more disguises himself as best as he can walk through the village without being harassed for being the Demon Brat. As he tours around the village, once more getting a feel of his birth place. He also manage to steal some grapes from a fruit stand that's manned by some teenage girl who's fighting off sleepiness, which is likely why he got away with it too.

He also caught his first sight of a group of Uchiha that weren't the familiar three Uchiha who he's come to know like the back of his hand. Which is why he just stood there for a few minutes watching said clan members until they left his range of vision. *That's pretty shocking... Although, I wonder how many Uchiha have the Sharingan?*

He finally rests in a park and after reapplying his disguise, he takes out the cloth napkin and began to cover it with his chakra. It takes about three hours before he managed to get the square bit of cloth to, for a few seconds anyway, fully stretch out while he's holding only one corner.

He manages to get the square bit of cloth hold it like a wooden panel or tile for at minute before he lost control of the chakra coating the

napkin. He loses more then just interest by then as his stomach growls, reminding him that he has had more then those few grapes. With a sigh, he gets to his feet and heads in the direction of the closest shopping district to scavenge or steal a meal.

He steals a persimmon, grape tomatoes, and some scraps of tables, adding a few more napkins to his collection. As he eats his meal, he hears a quiet conversation talking about the latest events happening in Hidden Leaf. He is a bit puzzled by the mention of the war with Hidden Cloud until he recalls that the treaty with that village hadn't been signed until he was six, which help to impress upon him that he's much younger then six too.

That explains that ruined neighborhood. Must have been some battle to engulf a neighbor like that. Summons must have been part of the battle. He decides.

"I'm fairly glad that I'll be leaving the village soon. It's a bit unfair, keeping a hard working merchant like myself here as they investigate us. I'm going to be late for the rest of the stops now." One of the men says and that brought him up short as he realizes something.

"I'm not in the academy... Nor a ninja." He muses softly to himself. *Which means I don't have anything holding me here... and they can't label me a Missing Nin either.* He thinks to himself as he realizes that he finally has a golden opportunity to leave Hidden Leaf behind, to hit the road and wander around about these countries without needing a mission to take him there.

"I might not get another chance like this either in my other loops." He mutters. *And I've learnt pretty much all that Hidden Leaf is willing to teach me, unintentionally or not.* Which lead to another thought of, *I could learn a different profession too. Maybe become a business-man or trick my way into getting adopted by a samurai to learn their tricks. I mean, clear out a few casinos and then approach some down on his luck samurai into adopting me.* His mind raced with the

possibilities since for the first time, he doesn't feel any pressure to remain a ninja as his profession.

After all, nobody had been willing to even teach him how to be a decent ninja, so why would anyone take him on to teach him another profession? And then there had been the times where he tried to learn another profession on his own, the council would then pass some law about passing a minor test to qualify to possess certain, key components for one of those profession.

It always set his teeth on edge at the fact that the Third never countermanded those laws, saying that the council is in charge of the civic side of the village and did have the authority to pass said laws. *Civic council my a*s, they're adding their two cent into Ninja matters so it's only fair for the Hokage to have a voice when it comes to civic matters. This is a military village after all, making the Hokage the ultimate authority in the village.*

Then he sighs as he already knows why the Third's position didn't have the authority it needed. Which had made Tsunade's position even more rocky because not only does she arrive after spending decades away from the village but the council passing laws in her absence so they could keep their power. It also didn't help that Danzo had his own ANBU forces to support the council's decisions.

If it weren't for an outside threat, Hidden Leaf would have had a civil war on its hands in under five years... He muses to himself, not the first time and likely not for the last time. *God, you might as well ask all the village ninja to hand in their headbands so you can give them police uniforms, turning this village into a civic one; totally getting rid of the position Hokage all together.* He muses sourly as he begins to head for the warehouse district to steal a couple of things before leaving the village.

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Yuuta

Six Years Later

*Da*n brat... If only he wasn't so darn good at picking this stuff up.* He thinks as he watches the ten year old meditate under the waterfall.

Since they were the only ones in the area, the brat's usually disguise isn't up, allowing bright blond hair to fall around the shoulders as water runs from the head down to the rest of the body. The brat's body is very muscular with little in the way of body fat. No scars marred the brat's body and it's likely that there never will be scars either considering how fast and effective the brat heals.

The problem is, and will always be, that this charade will come crushing down when the right people get motivated to dig around. Then I'll be force to watch as they cut the brat down before being asked to commit suicide to banish the dishonor of taking in and teaching a whelp of 'common' stalk. He thinks to himself, already feeling a dull ache in his chest at the thought.

He had come to regard the brat as his son or as his grandson and the thought of witnessing the brat dying causes his heart to ache. *I shouldn't have taken the brat's offer and money. It would have been better if I had just gone to the monastery to become a monk.* He thinks as he watches a couple of birds flutter over to the brat and land on him for a few seconds before taking off.

He could have done well as a ninja. He muses to himself as he takes a sip out of his water skin. "He's got the right kind of drive that will make him successful in any kind of work he pursued, creative, and sharp instincts when it comes to screening people." He muses softly.

He's his father's son. He muses as he studies the young demon container, the first container of the legendary Yoko non Kyuubi. *Well, their lose seems to be my family's gain, if our enemies continue to dismiss us as un-important.*

"Still, they should have taken better care of him..." He mutters softly to himself before shaking himself out of those lines of thought as he

takes up his two swords and began some practice of his own.

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Naruto

He slowly stretches after he reaches the bank after being under that water fall for the pass day and half. He climbs slowly up the bank to where the camp is, pausing at the sight of Yuuta practicing his skills using his personal pair of swords. The family pair remain back at the estate's family shrine.

He smiles at the sight, more then a little eager to practice with his own pair, though they were just training blades. He couldn't help but reflect on how successful his gamble had been when he had approached a very drunken and bankrupt Yuuta within eight months of leaving Hidden Leaf.

Just after I finally pulled off a Shapeshift into a seventeen year old and cleaned out eight casinos within a week of each other. He muses as he moves to get dress and maybe grab a bite to eat before practicing with his training blades.

Still surprised he didn't insist on bring an escort of servants to attend to our needs while we train. He privately muses as soon as he puts on the matching breast plate for his training swords, allowing him to empower them in typical samurai fashion. He's had plenty of clones reverse engineer samurai armor and then re-create the armor until it could be passed off as something created by a genuine master.

It wouldn't be long before I can come up with a prototype that can be transported around. Going to have to be accompanied with a special tent though. He muses as his thoughts seem to circle around his ideas of improving what the samurai class has to negate chakra of offending opponents. It's why samurai are the go to guys for enforcing the country's lord's will.

Though only ten years of age, he's physical features are very unrecognizable from what his previous experience at being this age. Particularly when it comes to beginning a new loop in a ten year old body. For one, he's much taller then a ten year old has a right to be, he's got a solid slab of muscle, which pretty much means he's not scrawny looking in any way. *I could pass myself off as a thirteen year old if I have a mind too.*

He jerks out of his thoughts as Yuuta begins a sparring session. Within seconds, thoughts of anything but the spar vanish from his mind.

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"Seems there's been a shake up in Hidden Leaf." His instructor in the ways of the samurai informs him and he glances up from his meal. He couldn't help but stare dumbly at Yuuta as he tries to wrap his mind around the fact that something happened to the Third Hokage.

He glances over to Leaf Chuunin but the man doesn't seem to react, likely already knowing of the change. "Really... How does this affect us?" He asks after flickering his eyes to the scroll the ninja had delivered in a slightly curious fashion.

"Not really, although from the sounds of this Goro is pushing for a war with Hidden Cloud. Seems that there's new evidence of an old incident involving a ninja clan, the Hyuuga clan I believe." Yuuta muses, clearly bemused at the idea that the ninja village going to war without the offical backing of the Daimyo .

"I wasn't aware that the Hokage controlled a country..." He says in a dry tone, he notices the slight stiffening of the ninja but that's it. "I do believe that Hidden Leaf is a village located in the Land of Fire, which means that Hokage can't cause an international incident with another country without at least consulting with our Daimyo." He adds and he could tell that the Chuunin looked alert at what he just implied.

I know that Hidden Leaf has more freedom then most villages but still... It's pretty arrogant of Danzou to believe he can just declare war because of something that's at least four years ago. He privately thinks, he wasn't stupid, he knew who's really pulling the strings of this so called 'Goro' the Hokage.

"Our dear Daimyo seems to be willing to indulge this... Goro. For now at least, at least until this war interferes with our hiring of ninja for our various tasks." Yuuta says and he couldn't help but find that explains the war with Hidden Sound, and possibly with a certain organization.

"It wouldn't matter if this Goro had a fetish for cattle or makes a hobby of collecting pretty boys or, more common, gambling debts a mile long; just as long as we still have a supply of ninja to hire we don't care what goes on within the village." Yuuta explains, pretty much summarizing the common attitudes that circulate throughout noble circles.

That... pretty much explains a whole lot. He decides while the Chuunin justs presses their lips together, clearly not liking the implications of what Yuuta had said of the 'Hokage'. *I wonder what would happen if I manage to get a bill pass that forces everyone in the village to become nudists?*

"Shall we send a reply?" He asks, glancing meaningfully at the ninja still within seven feet of either of them. Clearly listening in on their conversation, not that the ninja had any other opinion...

If it had been me, I would have interrupted within seconds of the conversation to put in my two cents. He reflects, which kind of made him sigh mentally. He's never figured out how he always managed to get away with speaking his mind.

But then, I've never had to deal with samurai, at all. He admits. *And there's likely a very stronge connection between the two.* He adds privately with an ever so tiny upturn of his lips.

"Our presence is requested for an upcoming festival, but that's a month away." Yuuta states in a dismissive manner as he rolls up the scroll. The man gives a look that clearly says 'you are dismissed.'

Within seconds, the Chuunin vanishes in a whirl of leaves and he sighs softly. He glances off in the distance as it finally sinks in that there's a new Hokage ruling over Hidden Leaf and it wasn't his 'granny'. He knew things would turn out differently without him living in Hidden Leaf but, he's always been around to witness said changes.

"It's not as if this effects you, you know." Yuuta says and he blinks as he turns to regard Yuuta for a few seconds before finally nodding.

"True, it's just... Hard to wrap my head around the idea of this village having any kind of authority to go to war." He admits, which is very true considering his current studies in how to be a samurai in Fire Country.

Yuuta studies him for a few minutes before just accepting that, deciding not to push it. "We'll be moving camp." Yuuta informs him and he nods, he could only wonder if there will be some kind of attempt upon either of them.

True, nobody seems to take them seriously at the moment but this is a golden opportunity to try and kill them while they're away from the chakra fortress.

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Three Years Later

He glances down into the arena as his mind slowly chews over the changes that have happened to Hidden Leaf. He's particularly stunned at the fact that there have been more then a few clans that have moved out of Hidden Leaf, like the Inuzuka clan and the Yamanaka clan.

It says something when a clan that values loyalty decides to vacate their 'home' after living within it for at least four or so generations. He thinks to himself, he had become quite fond of baiting Kiba. *I knew Leaf had rot... but, I never thought it could be bad enough to drive any of the ninja clans away...*

He touches his blades before glancing towards the Fire Daimyo's wife, suddenly wondering if his position as her honorary guard could hint that the Daimyo doesn't particularly like the changes occurring within his village of mercenaries. He has come to be known, in samurai circles at least, as a very gifted swordman and becoming well known for his management of Yuuta's fallen fortune, which is slowly growing despite the debts the family has accumulated.

He also became aware of how many ninja were hidden within the crowd. At first he just passed it off as the invasion but now... he wasn't sure what to think since this was an unknown situation for him, something that he did enjoy but also found a bit frustrating since he couldn't predict what's to come. *I know changing a few things can affect things on a scale from mid to large size things but I've never been able to totally changed things on this scale before. Just think, it all started because I just by picking up and moved away at age four...*

Though not wearing the chakra armor, he is wearing a modified training breast plate that he had developed. He had managed to create plans for it and then aged it so it appeared older then it actually was before handing it over to the Fire Daimyo. The man hadn't been impressed at first but within the last year, the Daimyo had approved the plans, which has allowed him to finally commission the breast plate.

Definitely a sign that all is not well in the land of Fire. He muses as he reflects on that particular event before recalling the other changes that have been showing up within the few years. Though he's been among the ruling class for almost a decade now, he still has a lot to learn about what goes on within the minds of the nobility. He had always thought they came up with the strangest and silliest things,

but he had learnt that while true as such things do come from not really having to deal with the consequences of their action, he also found they often had way too much time on their hands and were frankly bored during most of their time when not dealing with business.

Not a very good combination, that. He admits as he glances up at the box where Goro, the so call Hokage of the village is sitting with the Kazekage. He noticed a very familiar one armed, elderly man sitting between the Kazekage and the puppet Hokage.

Ah well, what's done is done and it's not as if everything will right itself when the next loop begins. He reasons to himself as he focuses on the match between Neji and a grim looking Choji. He never wouldn't have believed that Choji would have Neji fleeing before him but down on the arena, that's what's happening.

Neji would try to strike but Choji's always spinning about, making it hard for Neji to close one of the chakra points. But Choji couldn't keep spinning about throughout the match, which does give Neji a chance to strike a few blows. He couldn't believe how slow Neji's attack is, so different then the Neji he remembers and faces off against in the normal stream of things.

"The Hyuuga boy looks ready to drop." The wife of the Fire Daimyo muses to her neighbor. "That he does, that he does." Was the answering reply.

He frowns at the sight of Neji panting, he raises an eyebrow as Neji rubs a spot on his chest. Neji then coughs and shivers, he's never seen Neji like this before. *I've never seen him sick, have I?* He wonders as he resists the urge to grip his swords.

He glances through the crowd and finds somebody making a handseal. He blinks for a few seconds before he creates a shadow clone to investigate said person. He could only imagine what the clone will find. *A snake likely.* Before his clone could take out the

hidden nin, Neji falls unconscious after being sent flying into a wall by Choji, ending the match.

"I wonder why it took so long?" One of the neighbors, wealthy merchant, wonders. "The out come was already pre-decided after all."

"Pre-decided?" He couldn't help but ask and the man explains, "Goro placed a lot of money on the Akimichi getting first place in this examine. Everyone gave the Akimichi long odds in succeeding against the Hyuuga, only makes sense seeing as this Neji had been rookie of the year back in the academy."

"I heard rumors that Hidden Leaf is insisting on all of their ninja getting seals place upon their bodies to help keep their secrets from getting stolen once the nin is dead." The merchant's wife says and he feels a lump develop within his midsection.

"This is the first I've heard of it." The Fire Daimyo's wife muses with a frown. "Don't the Hyuuga already place said seals upon their branch members?" His lord's wife wonders and he nods in agreement.

"Perhaps, I won't know personally. Although, considering some of the things I've heard, the Fifth Hokage doesn't seem to care about such things." The merchant's wife replies and he just couldn't help but shake his head at the danger that seems to have gripped his village by the throat.

And so the ninja of Leaf become slaves... He thinks to himself. *It sounds like something Orochimaru would do to his 'ninja'. Oh wait, he already does!* He adds bitterly, though he soon begins to try and control his emotions.

It seems just being back to this village seems to rub his nerves raw, making it hard for him to act the part of an aloof samurai bodyguard. He's more then a little glad when, during Gaara's match, the invasion happens. It offered him a chance to do something about his

frustration at the changes his village has gone through thanks to Danzo and his puppet Hokage.

He didn't have to go far from the Fire Daimyo's wife's side, more then a few ninja, which include Leaf nin, tried to approach. It seems they weren't aware of the properties of the modified breast plate. They likely weren't aware of the fact that it can generate a chakra shield like the full set of armor, even if the field covered wasn't as large as the full set of chakra armor. Not that it mattered once they got within blade range as many lost their arms, knee caps, and then heads to his twin blades.

"Didn't expect much of a fight, eh?" He muses at one of the three Root members trying to get pass him after witnessing the death of their commander. As one, they try a jutsu but it never touched him while he takes out another member of the squad.

"Don't you like it? It's the latest in chakra armor. It's not as bulky as the real thing, so it doesn't cover the same area but it works just the same. So, piss off and go do something useful like counter this invasion!" He snaps as he takes on a defensive stance, not that he expects them to do anything other then to complete their objective.

He knows that most of the nobles close to him were likely just faking this, which means that there were witnesses to this attempt by Leaf ninja to abduct the Fire Daimyo's wife. It will likely cause the Fire Daimyo to come down on the village because of this attempt at treason on Danzo's behalf. It's likely one of the reasons why the Root members believed that he wasn't dangerous too.

In the end, the remaining members fell back to regroup or whatever. He glances about the stands, more then prepared to kill all those looking to get within reach of his blades. He ignores the slight fidgeting that some members of nobility do around him, he wouldn't be surprised that more then a few were sick from the blood being splattered about the air.

About two hours later, the fighting ends and he finds himself escorting the Fire Daimyo's wife and friends out of the village. He could only imagine what kind of reports are going to be founded upon the Fire Daimyo's desk before the week is out.

I wonder what Yuuta's reaction is going to be... He wonders to himself. He couldn't help but have grown fond of the old samurai, especially since he'll likely never have any contact with the man once this loop is over and done with.

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Yuuta

Days Later

What deity have I offended now? He wonders as he stands before the Fire Daimyo's desk. He just knew it had something to do with the brat's performance as the man's wife's bodyguard to Hidden Leaf.

"What is your take on the latest sake coming out of Moon Country?" The Daimyo asks him, catching him off guard for a second before he considers the question.

"I have yet had a taste of it as my shipment has been back ordered." He answers honestly. "But then, having a coup tends to cause all sorts of problems to such things." He adds, it had been fairly hard to learn about the coup but then, the brat did try to have an ear on foreign affairs that don't concern them.

"Really? I hadn't been aware that was common knowledge." The Fire Daimyo says as the man glances up at him after finishing signing some documents. "Not even the prince himself knows of it."

"My ward seems to enjoy ferreting out any and all news in regards to foreign affairs. If only he pays half as much mind with local affairs." He says and the Daimyo seems to think on this for a few moments.

"Well, I'm sure young Asa has learnt his lesson in that regard." And then after a few seconds, adds, "It seems that Hidden Leaf had been invaded by Hidden Sound, Cloud, and Sand during the last Chuunin exam and Asa fended off various attempts upon my wife during it."

"That includes from Leaf itself." The Fire Daimyo adds in a very blank tone but he felt the hairs of his neck raise up. "It seems as though my ninja need a gentle reminder of why one doesn't bite the hand that feeds them."

He's suddenly feels very glad that he's not a ninja.

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Naruto

Year Later

He rides through the gate without the two Chuunin guard stopping him, but then, he had only gone on his daily ride. He's been stationed within Hidden Leaf since the Daimyo's forces finally stormed through what little defenses Danzo had managed to erect within a month's time after the Chuunin Exam. The true battle hadn't been getting into the village but subduing and rooting out the pockets of Root ninja commanding various strongholds within the village itself.

They did try to take as many of the ninja alive as they could but they didn't have much luck since those seals upon all regular branches of ninja had a death function, killing the ninja instantly when it looked like they were going to get captured. True, the area within the chakra shield did protect the ninja from their seals but when they left that field...

Rare was the Chuunin and Jonin that survived to see Hidden Leaf, there were plenty of Genin though that survived and were promoted simply to fill the higher ranks of the village positions. He could still recall seeing Iruka among the dead, something he hadn't expected

and rarely witnessed. It's one of the reasons why he plans to kill Danzo and every Root operative he can get his hands on in the next few loops. He plans to prolonging their suffering for hours, he couldn't risk doing days without them likely getting rescued.

Danzo is never going to get this powerful in the future. I don't care if I have to kill the whole council, never again. He vows silently to himself at the sight of twelve year olds marching around in over-sized vests. It wasn't just the ninja population of the village that have undergone a transformation but also the civs.

"Can't wait for those two clans to arrive to take over." Yuki, a nephew of the Fire Daimyo, mutters to his right while astride upon his white gelding warhorse. "This is so depressing..." Yuki adds.

"Depressing or not, we are here under orders. Orders from your uncle." Kozue, the third son of his family, reminds Yuki.

"We're only here for the experience this occupation provides us." Yuki counters and he listens to their bickering with half an ear, more then a little curious as to how he ended up friends with the pair before he remembers his usual selection of friends and just shrugs the matter off.

"This is probably the safest way to get this war experience without a war going on." He agrees with Yuki. "But don't forget that what we did here is a reminder to all ninja of who really holds sway over their lives and ultimately, their rights." He says, glancing over his shoulder at the pair.

"Can't believe they allow it to get so bad... These ninja always valued their rights and freedom so highly..." Yuki says as they arrive at the stable.

"Like it really matter in the end, what's done is done. Nothing short of time travel can change the past." Kozue states in a matter of fact statement.

"Are we so sure these ninja haven't figured out how to pull that off?" Yuki wonders and he couldn't help but chuckle at how close to the mark Yuki almost hit. Kozue sends him a flat look that reads 'why are you encouraging him?'

"Considering what they're seal masters are capable of, I wouldn't put it pass a few to figure out how to loop time." He says with a slight grin upon his face as he dismounts off of his own gelding, a young cherry bay.

"Not like their seals have helped them much if at all." Kozue points out and he just shrugs as Kozue walks pass while leading his liver chestnut gelding through the open doors that a stable boy is holding open. Yuki just sighs as the nephew of the Fire Daimy follows their by the book friend.

There were other young samurai stationed within Hidden Leaf but most of those have a tendency to treat this like a vacation or follow the lead of those that do at any rate, which often puts the three of them on the outskirts of that social circle.

It wouldn't surprise him that in a few years, Yuki heads off to a become a monk since Yuki isn't cut out to be a samurai and it's unthinkable that a direct blood relative to the Daimyo would try and pursue a profession of some kind of tradesmen, even though Yuki's own father had been a very gifted one.

Kozue, being the third son, means that he'll never inherit anything from his father, thus making Kozue somebody nobody felt like associating with for the simple fact that Kozue won't be able to really amount to anything in social circles, even if Kozue's elder brothers died, they were old enough to have their own children and thus one of those are more likely to inherit the position as head of the family. Most third sons usually become monks but as Yuki wasn't cut out to be a samurai, Kozue wasn't cut out to be a monk

He doesn't ponder why he wasn't included into the currently forming social circle that's coming together in Hidden Leaf. After all, he was

adopted and stands to inherit a family that's still recovering their standing after suffering years of set backs. While it helps that he's clearly skilled as he's slowly helping his adopted father's clan businesses and holdings more prosperous. And he's a capable samurai, already a favorite of the Fire Daimyo's and he'll likely remain so, most still don't see much of a future for the clan he stands to inherit and many were fearful that he's a bit too loyal to the Fire Daimyo.

Considering how court politics work, a little disloyal was to be expected among the nobles, which samurai number among. It was a place of plots and intrigue, where rivals publicly get along with each other but try to ruin reputations of those rivals in hopes of benefiting from their falls by adding enemy holdings to their holdings. In someways, they weren't so different then what goes on within Hidden Leaf's council but the differences come about in how slowly those plots come to fruition and how many generations said plots have been going on.

It had taken years for such plotting to bring down Yuuta's family to where it is and it'll take years for him to restore it back to what it had been, even when he's using every bit of knowledge he's grained during previous loops to do so. *And even then, one word from the Fire Daimyo and it would all be for nothing.* He muses privately, not that it really matters since in less then a decade, this loop will end and everything he worked for will be erased anyway.

I wonder if the next loop will start with me being twelve? He wonders as he takes off his horse's tackle before rubbing the gelding down. *I wonder if it'll be before the team assignment or after the mission to Wave?*

As he muses over such things, he just nods as Kozue and Yuki walk out of the stable after changing out of their riding cloths, leaving the stable boys to deal with their mounts instead of doing so themselves. He only attending to his mount because he could use the distraction and he's still got an independent streak a mile wide despite his new position in the world.

Memories from month old clones slowly begin to file into his mind as those clones dispel themselves. He'll create a fresh wave once he's done in the stable. He did frown ever so slightly as those clones that were tasked with trailing after the group of teens come in.

Looks like I got something new to deal with. He muses before thinking about how to break up that social circle as swiftly as possible since he rather not deal with assassination while in this village.

The Belt: Buffy the Vampire Slayer

I don't own Buffy.

"This is so not going to work and you know it Buff." He says to the much changed Slayer who had recently come back from the death viva his amazing resurrection abilities that he learnt during a first aid course. The semi blond wolf monster just snarls and gives him a very pointed glare, causing her now mismatched eyes to glimmer in the sunlight as they head for the site he's been preparing to perform a magical ritual that will hopefully allow his good friend Buffy to finally take off the enchanted belt made out of some kind of canine, wolf apparently, since the Hellmouth struck again just before summer vacation.

We all were told to leave the belt be, but she just had to try it on. He thinks to himself as Buff finally turns away to begin trekking towards the ritual site that they choice simply because it was in a secluded spot not far from Sunnydale. He just knew this ritual wasn't going to work, after all, Will is the aspiring wicca of the group.

And we've only been researching for about a week to boot. He admits while Buffy growls softly and for some bizarre reason his mind alters those growls into word which then arrange themselves into sentences. He hadn't known Buffy had gotten a few of those curses but it made sense since Buffy has decided to stick close to the docks, which likely lead to her overhearing sailors cursing, giving the transformed Slayer a new vocabulary when it comes to swearing.

While an amazing ability to be sure, the ability to understand Buff in her current form had grown old fast. Particularly since Buffy had suddenly decided to become chatty, something that she hadn't been before she put on the enchanted leather belt. Though it likely had to

make up for the fact that nobody but him could understand her new default setting in the language area.

Not having anyone understand her might just be the reason why she's opened up her emotional flood gates. Well, at least until she discovered that I understood what those growls and snarls meant. He admits as he once more follows after the huge deformed wolf that was his friend and crush.

Semi blond and brown locks of hair spray out like a mane, going pass Buff's newly altered shoulders, hiding her altered pointed ears pretty well. Buffy's hands contain four thick fingers tipped with thick black claws, talons even, with the thumb being farther back on the hand then a normal human one. The same holds true for Buff's feet, though the big toe has moved up the foot so it's not touching the ground. The limbs were oddly enough, the same length even though Buff's legs are now molded after the back legs of most double bent legs.

Buffy's new appendage just kind of hangs limply in the air behind her, only moving slightly side to side as Buffy walks either on two legs or on four, although he believes Buffy is more suited, graceful even, when walking and running with all 'paws' touching the ground then just the back two. Unlike Buffy's semi blond and brown mane, the fur upon her tail is totally a soft brown as was most of the fur about the back paws. It seems as though the front part of Buffy's body is more blond then the back part of her.

Buffy's newly shaped head did indeed seem to focus around having a muzzle, elongating and narrowing Buffy's face. A slightly black nose at the tip of it with a mouthful of sharp looking teeth. More threatening looking then most vamps' and demons' teeth. Buffy's right eye looks human, it's the left one that seems to be set in black with a dark amber for the eye color, it's pretty hard to pick which of the eyes were the most unnerving given Buffy's new look.

I wonder how much of her new bulk is fur? He wonders while carrying the notes he made about the ritual they're about to do this

day at noon. They hope doing the ritual during the middle of the day would help counteract the belt's nighttime magical nature.

They had other items that symbolizes the taming of one's feral nature too since the belt is about embracing one's inner wolf or what one considers their inner beast. They were to help with the outer protection of the ritual. He's fairly glad that the ritual they were about to preform didn't have strict rules of how to go about it, heck there was a bunch of notes and suggestions about how to personalize the ritual to try and focus on what part they want to target for purification.

They finally arrived at the ritual site and he begins to take off the plastic they set up yesterday to keep local wildlife from messing with the drying paint he used upon the ground. While he's doing that, Buffy fumbles around with the key to unlock the chest that contains the items generally used for purifying ones self since he had brought the 'taming' items today.

Slowly they begin to set the stuff up with him taking the colored candles to set them up in the correct place within the painted rune diagram with the belt around the outer part being set up to act as a shield to keep the wildness within Buffy from escaping so it doesn't cause any chaos in the world beyond the ritual ground marked out by the painted lines and various Nordic runes mimicking a modification the book suggested when dealing with ones inner realms.

"This is a really bad idea, Buff. Neither of us are trained in magic and we live upon the Mouth of Hell! Which is chaos central, might I remind you. We're not tempting fate, we're about to pretty much inviting it in for cake and coffee!" He says once more to try and talk Buffy out of what they're about to do.

:I refuse to remain looking like a monster, Xander! I was suppose to spend the summer with my dad and I can't, now while I look like this.: Buffy softly growls and ends with a snap of her jaws. *:Who knows when Giles and Willow find something to solve this problem?*

It could be months! I'm not prepared to wait that long and I doubt this town can wait for the Slayer to return to normal either.:

He presses his lips but in the end, just shakes his head as he glances through his notes, looking for the incantation that will trigger the mystical diagram. Buffy carefully steps between the painted symbols to take her place in the ritual drawing upon the ground. He moves to stand at the point of earth, which is north and begins to walk in a counter clockwise fashion as he begins to speak the trigger in English since he's hasn't seen the need to brush up on his Latin.

He finishes saying it by the time he found himself in the south position of the diagram but only begins to repeat it while still walking outside of the painted circle. He did this until he's walked around it for four times. He then glances into the circle to find that yes, the candles have lit up but other then that, nothing.

Then the flames of the candles suddenly grew to a full foot, causing even Buffy to jerk and snarl but that's all that Buffy did. He watches as the painted runes located within the inner ring begin to not just glow white but take on different colors, the colors representing the four elements. Red for fire, brown for earth, green for water, and blue for air.

He began to go through the notes to try and find a reason for the common white paint to take on other colors. Though privately, he already knew that the Hellmouth has just struck again and the only thing he could do was prepare for the worst while the outer protective ring take on a black and steel gray color.

A flash causes him to be pushed through the air for about a foot or two and as he recovers his vision, he finds that the black and gray outer ring has vanished while the items contained within said ring glowed a soft color silvery blue. He looks towards the center to find Buffy floating at least four feet in the air with glowing runes of the four elements being featured upon Buffy's furry body. He couldn't see any real part of Buffy's face as her muzzle is pointed straight up in the air, giving him a very good look of her throat though.

"Hopefully, we'll make it out of here a live..." He muses out loud as he stands up, not bothering to brush off the dirt on his pants and shirt. He frowns as a soft snarl erupts behind him and he glances behind him only to find a puma.

The puma studies him for a moment before leaping over him and into the mystical diagram. He's a bit stunned when the feline transforms into a semi-naked woman. Then the woman glances in his direction and everything goes black...

Hours Later

He groans as he finally opens his eyes and then he blinks them while trying to move onto his other side. Sleep still has its hooks on him and doesn't want to let him go, although with sunlight beaming down, he pretty much had no choice but to finally sit up and rub his eyes. He frowns as he finds himself resting on a table top and it doesn't take long before he notices that what he thought was sunlight wasn't, it was just the overhead lap.

"Good to see you're awake Xander. Though you did chose a rather inconvenience place to nap on though." He hears Buffy say.

He jerks his head and glances over at the Slayer. He recalls two different things before he supposedly fell asleep and he's not sure which was to be believed honestly as one set does indeed have him getting up onto the library table and taking a nap while the other had to deal with some kind of ritual Buffy and him had been doing, though the reason why seems a bit fuzzy...

He quickly gets off the table before glancing around in hopes of noticing why they were there in the first place. "Remind me again why we're in the library during summer?" He asks his amber eyed friend.

"Just going through a crate of new books and weapons." Buffy answers and he shakes his head. His memories over the last week

felt fairly off, he's just not sure why though as he thinks through the boring first week of summer.

It wasn't long before Willow walks through the doors with a box of donuts and a bag with soda in it. Thus causing him to snap out of his thoughts. "Hey Xander, glad you decided to wake up." His oldest and dearest friend says.

"Must have been the late night movie I watched." He says and frown as he notices a crimson tail poking out behind Willow. He couldn't help but feel as though something was off at the sight of it, although noticing that Buffy had a tail causes him to wonder if something is wrong with him, although he did note that he does lack a tail, which seemed to relieve him for some reason.

As he moves to have a donut out of the box, he really can't help but feel as those the world is off kilter slightly. *I just can't put my finger on why that is though...* He muses as the two girls chat about their upcoming run, a time where they finally shed their current form for a time to enjoy the raw power of their other form.

Did Buffy do something to her hair? He wonders as he taps the top of his soda, ignoring the desire to picture of Buff and Wills running about in the furry nude, chasing after nutty squirrels and jumpy rabbits. Or imagining that there were females racing about like that at this very minute.

I'm sure it'll come to me. He decides as he finally opens the bottle but pauses to greet the G-Man who just exited out of his office with his nose in a book. It didn't take long before Buffy asks Giles if he's sure Giles and him would be able to manage a full night without either Willow and herself around.

Maleficent's Choice: Danny Phantom

I don't own Danny Phantom

Danny

Energy pools around his fists, causing a more intense green glow to appear to visibly as he dodges blasts while hugging the wall as he flies straight up. His current opponent called herself Maleficent, a grown ghostly woman wearing cloths that he's pretty sure Sam totally approves of while welding a brown staff that is tipped with a navy blue crystal sphere with blue, gold, and silver stones circling the crystal sphere.

He first set eyes on this particular ghost when Maleficent was hanging around the football field after school as the soccer team practices. The supposed Disney character had vanished after a quick scuffle and the second time was during gym class where the woman had summoned this energy trap that she then sent after a classmate who's on the track team.

Naturally, he manage to keep the strange thing from engulfing the kid and after taking the fight outside of the gym, he tried to get this ghost's plans but this particular ghost kept a 'stiff upper lip' as they brits say. Before departing, Maleficent blasted him into the roof of the school.

This particular encounter started with Maleficent coming after him while he was human, trying to make it home before his curfew. He, of course, transformed into a ghost and it didn't take long before Maleficent to reveal just how out-classed he is in terms of power, causing him to flee until he can come up with a plan while Maleficent tailing him, not letting up on her attacks.

Just what is it that this ghost want anyway? He couldn't help but think as he finally flips over to counter attack. A much larger energy beam shots forth, only catching Maleficent slightly by surprise but a shield quickly forms to block his attack.

With a pause in the other ghost's assault, he charges at Maleficent with the intent to use physical means to defeat the enemy since it's clear that Maleficent isn't going to run out of power to fire at him. The shield's color changes from pink to green, his fist slams into the green shield.

"May, may, resorting to physical violence already? How... boorish." Maleficent says with amusement.

He jerks back away from the shield but not quick enough as the shield transforms into a sphere with him inside. He pounds on the shield from the inside but it does give. "Let me out of here!" He shouts as he watches as Maleficent turns her back to him.

Maleficent doesn't say anything as the ghost holds the staff before her with both hands. As he watches, the blue crystal begins to glow and those stone floating around the crystal speed up. Seconds later, a green rift opens that leads into the Ghost Zone.

Powerless to do anything but float helplessly in the sphere, he is taken into the Ghost Zone. He turns around and watches as the portal the ghost created closes, keeping him from using it to return home. With the portal closed, he finally glances around the Ghost Zone, trying to find a familiar landmark that he could use to guide himself to the Fenton Portal.

"The ghost-boy, eh? An odd choice for an entry but acceptable." A male voice says and he quickly turns to find an elderly looking ghost dress in the classic wizard look, complete with long white beard and tiny spectacles resting upon the guy's nose.

"Glad you approve." Maleficent says in a dry tone and once the ghost wizard hands over a sheet with a number on it, the she-ghost

drifts forward, pass the unnamed ghost. He couldn't help but grow more confused about what's going on, particularly once they enter into the large black colored stadium as he spotted other ghosts walking about, each dressed in classic cloths.

"Need help finding the stables, Male?" A cheeky ghost inquires to Maleficent. The other ghost pales and backs away before Maleficent with fear shining out of the ghost's glowing green eyes.

"I remember where they are." Maleficent states as his captor moves towards a set of stairs. A few ghosts snicker at the cheeky ghost, finally cause the guy to fade from view from embarrassment.

What, stable? He thinks, his eyes widening. "He said stable, didn't he? Last time I checked, I don't eat hay." He says, crossing his arms over his chest.

"You obviously never read up on witches, have you boy? I believe you're about to receive an interesting lesson then." Maleficent informs him.

"I don't like the sounds of that." He finally says and as they're halfway down the stairs, he hears muffled sounds, sounds that did send a minor chill down his back. "I'm not going to like this, am I?" He wonders out loud.

"Probably not, but you and the others will return to normal once this tournament is complete." His captor states calmly and he couldn't help but murmur about how 'comforting' that sounds in a sarcastic tone. It's clear that Maleficent ignores that as he finally glimpses stalls along both sides that house horses that were sporting the typical ghostly aura.

"I'm shocked they're even going to allow you to enter that halfbreed. It seems you are rusty in your racing skills. You might as well give me your legendary collection now and get it over with. It would be less painful that way." He glances to his left to find a witch ghost

dressed in white and looking pretty much the opposite of Maleficent's choice in cloths.

Its like having Sam and Paulina standing before me... Only sounding smarter then Paulina ever has... He muses as he waits to see Maleficent's reaction since his capture hadn't moved since this Paulina style ghost began talking.

"I see you're taste in stud remains consistence, Aurora. All muscle and not brains." Maleficent answers and from his angle, he notices a condescending smirk upon the goth style ghost's face.

"He can't be that bright if he got himself captured. I guess being the Savior of the Ghost World doesn't require a lot of brains." Aurora counters and he couldn't help but say 'Hey!'

"And yet I don't recall you coming up with any plans to deal with Pariah Dark. Now if you excuse me, I must give young Daniel prepared for the coming trials. I'm sure it didn't take much to not just transform your choice and have plenty left over to create a good quality fetch." Maleficent states and before the white theme ghost could think of a rely, his captor continues down the hall.

"Looks like this room has seen better days..." He couldn't help but mutter under his breath after trying to engage his captor in conversation a few minutes after they left Aurora behind. He tried not to stare at the various horse housed within those stalls, not sure what he would see if he stared into their glowing eyes. Nor did he want to imagine what it would be like to be in their shoes...

The door moves inwards and then slides to the left side of the wall, allowing Maleficent and his prison through. Torches light up dimly once he's within the room. With out any motion from Maleficent, his prison moves to the center of the room and as his prison vanishes, something forces him to transform into his human form.

As he tries to transform back into a ghost, he watches as Maleficent holds her staff high in the air once more. He begins to back away as

the crystal begins to glow brightly while those stone begin to rotate rapidly around the blue crystal sphere. Seconds as he's about to bolt to the right, Maleficent slams the butt of her staff down on the stone floor.

His vision swims while his nerves suddenly feel raw. He falls forward and by the time his senses sort themselves out he finds himself laying on his side. He a grunt, he gets off of the floor and rears slightly before falling down onto all fours, his fears confirm as he glances down to find silvery white hooves.

"Not bad, a little on the short side, but that is to be expected." Maleficent muses, causing him to glance in the witch's direction, he fells his ears flattening and he lets loose an angry bellow. Not that this stops the black clad ghost from approaching him.

He moves away from Maleficent's out stretched hand while trying to snap at said hand, just stopping an inch short of Maleficent's fingers. "Good to see you still have that spirit, you'll need it." Maleficent says and he jerks as Maleficent moves her staff, only to find a halter appearing about his head.

He shakes his head, trying to get free of the halter, Maleficent seems content to allow him to try and free himself. As he stand there, slightly dizzy from his attempts to shake it off, Maleficent easily grabs hold of the halter on his right cheek. He snorts as he turns to glare into Maleficent's green gaze.

Maleficent pulls gently on the halter and he just sighs, it's clear that acting out would only amuse Maleficent. He follows Maleficent out of the room since Maleficent has a good hold of his halter, which help keep him from falling behind. They would come to his assigned stall a few rows to the right of the transformation room, an area that doesn't seem to be very populated since his only neighbor is four stalls to his left and on the opposite side of the row.

He watches as food and water appears within the stall within seconds of standing in it. He glances around at stall, trying to ignore

the fact that he's extremely pale looking horse. The smell of grain and water suddenly made him aware at how hungry he is.

He stares at the two pails, not really wanting to eat the grain but after feeling around his mouth, he finds he really doesn't have much of a choice since he lacks fangs to eat meat. He slowly lowers his head and walks up to the pail holding the grain, he noses the surface but doesn't take any as he doesn't feel hungry enough to take a bite.

He turns to the pail filled with water and pauses to stare down at his face, a bit surprise to note that unlike what he expected, his eyes were glowing a pale blue color instead of the more common green. He almost knocks the water over as he snaps his head to glance over at Maleficent who seems to have snorted.

His ears flatten and he glares at her for a few seconds before drinking his fill of the water. Once that's done, he couldn't help but wonder what to do next seeing as he doesn't want to eat the grain but doesn't have anything in the stall to take his mind off of what's going on.

I wonder how long it'll be before Tucker and Sam launch a rescue mission? He wonders as he moves to the opposite wall to lay down. He has had a pretty trying day after all.

Maleficent

She waits until the ghost-boy-turned-ghost-horse drift off to sleep. She couldn't help but have a slight smile upon her face as she stares at the very pale white stallion with glowing silver hooves and sporting blue eyes. *I'll wait until he's eaten some of the grain before giving him apples and carrots.* She think as she touches her staff on the wall of the stall.

She watches as a protective shield expands around the stall, she rather not take any chance considering how venerable the teen is at this particular moment. She walks away from the stall and as she gets closer to the entrance leading into and out of the stable, she

finds other shields protecting other stalls, meaning that their 'owners' have left for the night.

She hadn't wanted to capture such a high profile person to use for the race, she could only hope that the fetch doesn't dispel or raise a lot of suspension too early since the fetch does need to last until this tournament is over since she's fairly certain that young Daniel's friends wouldn't haste to launch a rescue mission.

Perhaps I can purchase a camera and take shots of him as he is to use as blackmail material. I doubt he would want his friends to know of his transformation. She muses with a smirk upon her face as she heads for her reserved rooms.

Danny

I just had to win or place in all of those other races, didn't you Fenton? You just couldn't let anyone out shine you, eh? I'm so stupid... He mentally groans as he waits for the gate to open. He's not sure how many races that need to be done but this tournament is coming to an end as each race gets run.

At least they don't expect us to have jockeys on our backs. He thinks for the hundredth time since he fell asleep in that stall. He presses his chest up against the gate, ignoring the urge to rear up to slam his hooves upon the gate like a few of his fellow racers.

A buzzer sounds and the gates surge open, finally allowing him to escape those starting boxes. His ears flatten as he thunders forward to join the rest of the 'pack' while his head lowers slightly. His nostrils open wide as he breaths in a large amount of air in one stride and exhales in preforming another stride.

No ghost powers could be use upon the track while the race track is in-session for an actual race or for training purposes. He had hoped to escape while out on the track but it wasn't meant to be. He hadn't done much while out on the track during his practices, he pretty much sulked and glared hatefully at Maleficent.

He feels somebody trying to force him to give way, so he just sped up and tried to get more into the inside rail. His teeth clinched as he increases the length of his strides. Slowly he approached the front of the pack; most of those leading the pack had gone all out at the beginning and are being forced to slow down.

In some ways, he can ignore reality and recall what it is like to fly through the air back home. He recalls the sensation of wind causing his hair to get messed up, the feel of weightlessness, as if gravity was only an opinion to him. Then his lungs begin to burn and his legs begin to ache, causing him to remember that he's not capable to achieving that flight ability until after he's been returned to normal.

Anger boils up in his midsection, causing him to push aside those feelings. He remains on the leader's heels, gently reminding the golden mare of his presence behind her. He doesn't recall crossing the finish line but does realize he must have as the crowd cheers and minor displays of fireworks erupt from the stands.

His anger reseeds and he slows down, moving more to the palomino's right while the black stallion who came in third moves to his left. He finally slows to a walk as a large pair of doors open wide to allow them to head back to their stalls where they'll receive a shower and personal grooming session from their 'owners'.

He does glance backward, noting that this race seemed to be a few yards longer then the last race he ran in as they had raced passed a statue of the minotaur with the claymore instead of the statue of the pan playing satyr. With a swish of his tail, he picks up his pace as he turns away from staring at the various statues.

God, what did I ever do to deserve this? It's so humiliating being offered a treat like some kind of pet... So glad that nobody I know has seen me like this, I'd never live it down... He thinks to himself as he heads for his stall, not reacting much as water suddenly rains down upon him before he makes it to the stable rows.

He shakes his body, sending water drops about while also being hit by other droplets sent flying from some of the others. He just grunts while a few of the others whinny softly, almost chuckling at what happened. A certain bulky teal colored stallion bellows after rearing up, clearly intent to display how angry he was, about what, he doesn't know nor really care since they've had a fairly trying race.

Others move out of the teal's way, some rushing forward down the rows while others just back up. As the teal stallion drops down onto the ground, the teal's ruby red eyes turn towards him as he moves unhurried forward, noticing that he's not very impressed with the emotional display. While he could sympathize with the other stallion, he just didn't see how throwing a fit would help speed things up.

The teal snorts and paws the ground while glaring at him. He makes a soft rumble while glancing away from the teal stallion, not picking up his pace, although he finds a few of those before him have stopped moving to watch the teal stallion. He just sighs as he hears steps coming towards him.

Just back off, buddy. You really don't want to mess with me. He thinks at the teal stallion who is coming towards him with flatten ears. He turns his head just so he has a clear view of the teal stallion with his left eye.

The teal pauses and for a time, they stare at each other until finally, the teal turns his head away and seems to sag, as if collapsing in onto himself. He moves and nudges the other stallion, nickering softly at the other, finally, the teal shakes himself and replies with a soft neigh.

With the confrontation over, everybody continues on their way back to their stalls where their 'owners' were waiting.

- = **Break** = -

This is getting old... He thinks sourly as he stands once more in the starting gate. He doesn't know how long its been since these races

started but if he heard Maleficent right earlier, the last race of today will mark the end of the tournament. Although he doesn't really trust his, 'owner' it did sound as though that for those who managed to place will be receiving minor metals and for the winner, they will be receiving a trophy as well as never having to worry about getting chosen to run in another tournament ever again.

Wonder if they'll keep that promise... He muses to himself as they wait for the buzzer to sound so they can leave these gates far behind them. He also reminds himself to wait until the statue of the swordsman before going all out since this race will be going pass all of the statues on the right side of the track, the finish line was located around that left bend.

And lets not forget that I'm finally facing off against Aurora's chosen racer. He thinks as he glances a few places to the right. A ruby colored mare with glowing yellow eyes seems to be staring down the race track with an intensity of some kind of bird of prey.

Shaking his head, he waits for the announcer to finish speaking since it usually signals that the race will be beginning very soon. His body tenses, ready to spring forward as soon as the gate open wide. He's not disappointed as the buzzer sounds and the gates open second later, allowing them to spring forward, some exploding out of their gate.

He matches his speed with those hanging out at the back of the pack. He notices that the ruby mare submitted by Aurora is in the middle of the pack. He glances away as he focuses on who's in the lead, making sure to keep his speed steady.

Hooves pounding upon the ground as heavy breathing surrounds him, his own breathing being just as heavy. Bits of the track arc in the air until they fall to the ground or hit a fellow member of the racing pack. Hoof prints litter the track before him, he couldn't help but note as he keeps a steady pace.

As they make it half way, he begins to speed up as does the rest of the pack, causing the leaders to be forced to add more speed just to remain at the head of the pack. He moves slightly more outside of the pack since most were struggling to get as close to the rail as they can. Without anybody before him, he lets loose, lengthening his strides as he focuses at the turn pike.

Slowly he passes by the mid-section of the pack, coming to be at least sixth as five others race before him. He feels more then sees somebody to his right as he continues to try and over take the fifth human turned ghost-horse before him. A flash of red out of the corner of his eye confirms that its the ruby mare trying to over take his position.

He pointedly ignores the mare, more concerned with trying to go up a position. Suddenly the one in third seems to stumble and then finally fall, rolling slightly on the ground. He manages to leap over the others who hadn't reacted in time to avoid the fallen.

He ignores the sounds of frustration and anger behind him, more occupied trying to make it pass a baby blue stallion in second then anything. It wasn't the first time something like this happened and could, likely, be the last time it happened all things considered.

In the end, by the time the horn sounds, he has placed third of this group. With the race over, the other two before him slow down and so does he. Almost as one, they glance down the track, to see what has become of the fallen and those the had been tripped up because of it. He does note dimly that the ruby mare placed fifth, not that he particularly cares.

Seems like I passed, wonder if these means that Maleficent wins that bet seeing how I placed third and will be racing in the final race of the tournament... He wonders as he slowly walks towards the open doors that lead to the stable, their stalls. *I wonder how much of a sore loser Aurora is...*

Maleficent

She couldn't help the smirk that graces her face, particularly given how red Aurora's face is while sporting a murderous expression. "How could that half-breed win without using any ghost powers?! He's scrawny, weedy looking teen! He doesn't have the build to be anything but a sprinter!" Aurora screeches as she finally turns away to go attend to her charge.

"Looks like you haven't lost your touch after all, Maleficent." Merlin says while Nimue stands on the elderly seeming man's right. "Though it sounds as though Aurora will be in a state for the next decade." The famous man adds as Aurora finally just screams in outrage, so over come that she couldn't find any words to describe her anger.

"Too true. Although I fear the boy will not be up to placing in the final race, but that doesn't matter much now, seeing I had only picked in order to fulfill the bet Aurora and I made after our most recent argument." She says to the legendary figure.

"Sadly, I have to agree on that, but otherwise, I can see why young Daniel has managed to make such an impression upon the worlds are large. Who knows, I might have to greet the lad in person one day to congratulate him on his performance here today." Merlin muses and she stifles a chuckle at the thought since she gets the feeling that the teen won't want to be reminded by these events.

"I'm sure the lad would be honored if such a thing happens." She manages to say with a straight face. With a nod, the greatly admired dead man moves to go congratulate the other two who sponsored winners with Nimue keeping pace with Merlin.

Once out of the sponsor box, she teleports to the stable entrance and then walks through the rows, heading for her charge's stall to bush the currently pale white stallion and to be sure that he hasn't pulled anything.

Danny

He groans softly and slowly rolls onto his side. It takes him a moment to realize that he wasn't in his stall anymore nor was he a ghost-horse. He quickly gets out of his bed and moves to look at the calender to see what day it is.

He's a bit shocked to find it had only been two days since the day he had been captured by Maleficent, transformed into a ghost-horse, and raced in that tournament. He slowly shakes his head but as he glances to the mirror, he almost jumps at the sight of a bronze medal pinned up to it with a note under it.

He glances around as he slowly approaches the dresser upon which the mirror is attached. The medal lets go of the mirror's surface and the letter falls slowly to the top of the dresser. He catches it before it does so and reads it.

Congratulations on placing third, young Daniel. To be honest, I hadn't expected you to place at all in the final race as you lacked the right build and the stamina to make it around the total track, though I knew you possessed the right heart to be a great race horse, also known as pigheadedness.

Enjoy the next few decades, young Daniel for the next tournament will be held in about fifty years hence. Not sure whether or not I'll be looking you up for that one as of yet.

Maleficent

He just sighs as he stares down at the bronze medal, not sure just what he's feeling while doing so.

*Like heck I'm going to be doing **that** again. Once was enough.* He decides as he glances to the window at the sound of birds chirping.

The End

Hollowed Lifestyle: NarutoBleach

Don't own Naruto or Bleach!

???

Shaking its body, a slightly furred raptor shape Hollow raises to its feet. This Hollow's mask covers the upper part of the Hollow with a dinosaur's appearance, ending just a few inches after the glowing amber eyes. Other then having white claws, this Hollow sports a short mane of blue fur growing where the white mask ends, the rest of the Hollow is pitch black.

This Hollow stands roughly four feet while standing upright and is roughly a good seven feet from nose to tail tip. The hollow hole rests in this raptor Hollow's chest. The hole is roughly three inches in diameter.

The Hollow taps its raise foot claws on the sandy surface of the Hueco Mundo while the raptor like Hollow glances around in a bird like fashion with quick, sharp head movements while bringing its forelimbs close to it chest and turning the clawed three fingered 'hand' to face each other while slightly balled up.

Then very suddenly, the raptor like Hollow sprints forward, heading off in a random direction. The Hollow continues to race about the dunes of the Hueco Mundo as hours turn into days and days turn into weeks. Though the raptor came across other tracks upon the sand dunes, the raptor Hollow didn't give them more then a slight look before continuing on its way.

Finally a petrified forest of white trees finally appears on the horizon of the raptor Hollow. The raptor Hollow slows before reaching the trees of this strange forest until the beastly spirit stops just a mile

away from the nearest tree. The Hollow glances around the area, clearly cautious as to what to expect of the forest.

The raptor Hollow's masked head cocks this way and that with its pale yellow eyes blinking every so often. The raptor Hollow bends down and sniffs a patch of sand before suddenly vanishing from its position as something serpentine in looks bursts out of the sand just a few feet before where the raptor Hollow had stopped.

This new comer sports white sections of armor all along its back. Each white bony plate has a spike upon it. The serpent Hollow's head appears more like crocodile or alligator's head then a snakes. This twenty foot long Hollow also sports along its sides fins.

The raptor Hollow screeches loudly at the sand swimming Hollow while holding its forelimbs stretched out and head lowered. The raptor Hollow's body is tense, more then ready to spring forward to attack the other Hollow at any moment.

The sand swimmer Hollow's fins dig into the sandy surface of Hueco Mundo and swings its head to the side to get a better look at its current prey. A single glowing yellow eye stares at the tense raptor like Hollow and then, with a blink, the sand swimmer quickly lunges forward while swinging its massively build head complete with reptilian snout, jaws wide in hopes of clamping down upon the smaller Hollow.

With a squawk, the raptor Hollow turns and quickly races in an arc, trying to get behind the much longer Hollow. Not that it helps as the serpentine Hollow seemingly follows after the bird sounding Hollow. The tail end of the sand swimmer moves, though not before the raptor noticing the club at the end of it.

The raptor Hollow picks up its pace, heading straight for the forest in hopes of the sand swimmer giving up on hunting it. The sand swimmer does follow the raptor into the forest but is soon attacked itself by an ape like Hollow who had been attracted by the commotion between the raptor Hollow and the serpentine Hollow.

The ape like Hollow doesn't notice the raptor, allowing the newly arrived Hollow a chance to make clean its get-away while the other two Hollow fight it out.

Years Pass

The raptor Hollow studies the clearly injured Hollow before it, a Hollow that appears in the shape of a bone covered monitor lizard. The monitor puffs up and hisses at the raptor Hollow sporting blue hair. The lizard like Hollow's tail moves in a minor arc, displaying the spikes growing about tail's surface.

The raptor snorts softly at the monitor Hollow, the raptor is more curious as to where the lizard's attacker is since it's bad form to leave something as injured as the monitor Hollow alone. Though the raptor would have no problem finishing off the three legged reptile Hollow stationed within this open stretch of forest, some instinct within the raptor Hollow kept it from charging forward to consume this 'prize'.

The raptor quickly tries to bolt away but this 'rock' formation suddenly springs to life and tries to grab the raptor Hollow, but only gets a fist full of sand and feeling of the raptor's claws digging into its back. The inorganic looking Hollow roars and tries to make a grab at the Hollow attacking its back. The raptor Hollow falls back as an arm tries to grab at it, causing the raptor to be much closer to the injured monitor Hollow.

The monitor and raptor stare at each other for a second, each not sure what to do concerning the rock like Hollow. Their staring contest ends as the rock Hollow begins to charge up a Cero in its 'hand'. The raptor Hollow lets out an alarmed sound and moves out of the way, only for the hand to follow after it.

The monitor lizard Hollow completely forgotten about as the rock Hollow decides that the healthier raptor Hollow has priority. Thus it surprises both the raptor and the rock Hollow when the monitor Hollow suddenly lunges forward, biting into the rock Hollow's ankle.

The raptor Hollow chirps in a startled way before hissing as it lunges towards the rock Hollow's chest, attacking this rock Hollow's hole.

The rock Hollow manages to kick the monitor away and throw the raptor in the direction of the monitor. The rock Hollow stares at the two other Hollows, expecting the two to attack each other but neither of them do more then glance in each others' direction before charging at it once more.

The raptor concentrates its attack on the upper part of the rock Hollow while the monitor focuses on the bottom, as it is the only part it could reach as the monitor lacks the raptor's build for leaping upon opponents. The double teaming causes the rock like Hollow to become frustrated and to stay on the defensive.

Time passes and as no new opponents arrive, the three continue fighting, each growing weary but the two more animalistic Hollows began to tag team the rock Hollow, allowing for a few moments rest while the rock like one receives none. Once the raptor feels that the battle has gone on long enough, the raptor Hollow begins to focus energy into it's claws and teeth while the monitor Hollow keeps the rock Hollow busy.

The white claws seem to glow softly and when the raptor opens its mouth, glowing pointed fangs can be seen. The raptor Hollow leaps, this time aiming for the throat of the rock Hollow. The glowing claws and fangs enter neatly through the white outer coating of the rock Hollow and as the rock Hollow pulls the raptor off, the claws leave glowing trails about the chest area of the rock.

When a large foot claw suddenly lashes out, slicing into the chest hole of the rock Hollow, the rock screams, dropping the raptor. After a few seconds, the monitor powers up a Cero and blasts up into the chest. Bits of outer cover flies through the air and once the rock Hollow is laying on the ground, both Hollow beginning attacking and devouring the uncovered bits of the rock Hollow.

Within seconds, the spirit particulars that make up the rock Hollow finally break and are absorbed by the two feeding Hollows. Then, the two remaining Hollows stare at each other for a few seconds before the raptor heading north, leaving the monitor to head off in a southeastern direction as best as it can considering it has three legs.

Two Centuries Pass

Guided by instinct, the raptor approaches a field where Gillian are created. The raptor Hollow is edgy and is jumping at every little thing while hanging around the edge of the field. The scent of many Hollows litter the field and the raptor drools slightly at the smell, but still doesn't move into the field, content to hang around the edge of the field.

Then, over time, a number of other Hollows appear, many baring an alien, yet delicious scent. The raptor swallows and shakes its head, focusing in on what's about to happen in the center of the field. The raptor Hollow is torn between joining the gathering Hollows and being cautious about the other Hollows that keep appearing.

Then, as if some unspoken signal is given, the Hollows within the field bodies begin to become unstable until they finally break apart while their skull masks remain. A huge black mass seem to pause and the masks begin to try and race each other up to the 'face' of the forming body. The raptor watches in awe and dread as one of the masks fits itself upon the face.

At which point the other masks are absorbed into the black mass. With a mask now fitted upon it, the mass begins to finish forming a huge body, white spines and armor jet out of the massive body. The raptor lies down and trembles at the massive Hollow as it roars.

The raptor shakes even more as answering roars ring throughout the area. The newly formed Gillian moves through the forest, heading off to another place where Gillians live and battle. The raptor just watches the huge Hollow go, its appetite gone, for now at least.

After a while, the pull within the raptor fades and the raptor gets to its feet. With a single look in the direction the Gillian had lumbered off to, the raptor Hollow heads for hunting grounds as far away from the Gillian fields as possible.

Years Pass

The raptor Hollow subtle watches these new being that seem to be resting a distance away from it. The raptor Hollow felt an odd loathing for these beings that seem to be traveling after a goat like Hollow that walks upon its back legs. The raptor knew that the goat Hollow had found new hunting grounds that weren't within the dead forest that it continues to call home.

The raptor couldn't help but think that, just perhaps, the goat-man Hollow's new hunting ground and this group of beings were related to each other. The raptor had encountered plenty of fellow Hollows who seem to vanish and then reappear carrying alien scents. The raptor knew that those that did so would, in time, vanish completely from Hueco Mundo.

The raptor hadn't cared about such things before, believing that whatever those Hollow had hunted and finally turned the tables and hunted those Hollows; consuming them. It was the nature of how things worked within Hueco Mundo and the raptor didn't see any reason why said nature continues to be true else where.

Now though, the raptor's interest in the going ons have been piped and though some instinct within the slender Hollow is screaming at it to run away, the raptor's curiosity kept it from following that course of action. Thus the raptor remained within a mile or two of the straight group of beings but also planned to run if those beings moved to attack it.

The only real mark of time passing has been when the group would travel for a long stretch of time and then stop for a minor stretch of time before traveling once more. The raptor couldn't help but be

curious as to what the group could be doing during those pauses but believed it to be some kind of trap, so the raptor kept its distance.

They're making those sounds again... The raptor muses as the group begins its usual routine. The raptor sighs wistfully, ever since the group has arrived, they have made these sounds that struck a cord within the raptor Hollow, as if the raptor should know what those sounds mean.

Soon, the group is on the move and the raptor waits a bit before following after. The raptor knew that the group was getting closer to the 'den' of the goat-man Hollow as the raptor has come to know the forest very well as the years advanced.

The raptor Hollow continues to resist the urge to head for those fields where Gillians are created, though the raptor couldn't help but wonder if there couldn't be a way to skip that part of a Hollow's evolution.

A bellow echos through Hueco Mundo and the raptor hurries forward, eager to see how well the group is fairing against its fellow Hollow. The raptor isn't disappointed as it gets close enough to get a much clearer look at the strange beings and, of course, a good look at the goat-man Hollow. As the raptor watches, the group its been following for four stops were using gray looking spikes, *swords* it recalls, to attack the goat-man Hollow.

Over the course of the battle, the group doesn't just rely on their swords but also using spirit energy to cause things to happen. The raptor watches as the goat-man Hollow finally falls to the ground and then as the butt of one of the swords is slammed into the mask, causing the mask to shatter, revealing a head that is very similar to the group's.

The raptor lowers its own head to touch the mask upon its own head while a brief exchange goes on between the unmasked Hollow and one of the members of the group. A soft sobbing carries through the

air and the raptor watches as the but of the sword is pressed into the forehead of the unmasked Hollow.

The raptor jerks slightly as the unmasked Hollow's body vanishes, leaving the group of seemingly human beings alone where they stand. The raptor squawks when one of the member glance in its direction. As gracefully as the raptor could, the Hollow turns tail and races away, hoping that it doesn't become their prey as the goat-man was.

Miyako

"Should we pursue, sir?" One of her classmates asks as the strange looking Hollow sporting, of all things, a snort mane of blue hair. "It has been following us since we arrived here, in Hueco Mundo."

"Tsh, leave the coward be, we've spent enough time here. Let's get that gate open so I can wash this sand off." Officer Shizen states.

Still, I think I'll add it into my report. She decides as the gate back to the Soul Society opens, allowing them to return home.

???

The raptor sniff the site where it last saw that group of seemingly human beings. The raptor sighs softly, finally relaxing as it realizes the scents of the group never left that fight site. The raptor chirps softly before turning to glance at the now empty den.

The raptor investigates the hole but doesn't find anything out of the ordinary and so leaves, not caring if another Hollow decides to take it over. The raptor preferred to be nomadic within the forest as it kept its life interesting. *Always new Hollows to see and enemies to avoid.*

Century Passes

The raptor Hollow screams as it is pulled into along out of its only remembered home. It lands hard in what appears to be a rice field.

The raptor spats out plant fibers and blinks rapidly at the sudden change to the atmosphere.

As the raptor gets to its feet, its opponent has already recovered. The huge turtle-man Hollow giggles and sometimes break out into song about how a 'lowly' Meno Hollow struggling against the 'great' Adjuchas known as Sancho Lalo. The raptor Hollow found the song to be much worst then the other's giggling.

He's toying with me! How dare he! I shall enjoy the look of disbelief and dawning horror when I'm standing over it, ripping into his hole! The raptor Hollow thinks, its eyes flashing red for a brief few moments as the raptor's anger rages for a short time before subsiding.

The raptor goes over what little it has observed of its opponent, which isn't much but for the first time in its life, it won't allow this to end, not even if it is absorbed by this Adjuchas. The raptor won't settle for anything less then consuming this one, be it from the outside or from the inside.

And so the raptor launches itself at the other, claws glowing with energy and the turtle-man Hollow doesn't move, thus claws break through the turtle-man's chest armor. The turtle Hollow howls while touching the marks the raptor's claws have created. Not that the raptor paused to give the turtle any real time to do much other then defend himself.

The raptor found itself tired too quickly and the raptor pulls away, not happy that the turtle managed to hold an arm over the chest hole since damaging the hole tends to cause the Hollow to be 'knocked' out. *At least he won't come out of this untouched...* The raptor thinks with a great deal of satisfaction as the turtle-man punches the raptor's head, the raptor feels the web cracks upon its mask.

Then, suddenly, the raptor finds itself before a huge cage. Within seconds, the form of the raptor is shed and a young blond man stands where the raptor once stood. "Kyuubi..." The blond says.

Naruto moves to the cage and the dead man stares into the depth of the cage to find it not only empty, but the back part gone. "Guess the fox finally found a way out..." The blond mutters softly, running a hand through his bright golden locks.

Then something gets knocked over and the dead ninja turns to look behind him. "Well, I'm sure as hell ain't going to go out without a fight. My afterlife might suck but it is my afterlife." Naruto states, remembering exactly what had happened that caused him to end up before this cage.

The blond charges up the technique that the ex-ninja had learnt during the search for Tsunade while charging towards the white vortex that seems to be eating away at the blond's mind. Naruto leaps and holds out his right arm that contains the Rasengan made up of blue and white energy.

The ball hits the vortex's center and a huge explosion occurs, engulfing Naruto.

Hours Later

Naruto clutches his hands and, to his surprise, finds that he now sports a thumb. Next, the ex-ninja moves his tail before finally opening his eyes. A groan escapes as the twelve foot long, raptor like Adjuchas slowly moves to stands on first all fours and then just on his hind legs.

As an Adjuchas, Naruto now sports a pair of ears and sports a pair of strange orange with red striped tendrils that poke out from a few centimeters after the predominately white mask that covers the top part of Naruto's snout and head. Instead of glowing amber eyes and short blue mane, Naruto now sports glowing blue eyes and bright yellow fur around the head and middle part of the tail, which seems to form an A with a single stripe of fur on the top and a stripe on either side of the tail.

The rest of Naruto's body is black with a thin layer of white fur covering most of the chest and growing down to about the hips of the back legs. The creamy white fur covers the forelimbs and Naruto's legs. The pads upon the hands and feet were colored red while the claws being a off white. (Search up **Psychoraptors** ((owned by Freakzter)) on DeviantArt for an over all adult picture of Naruto's Adjuchas form)

Naruto glances around the rice fields that he landed in and had faced off against that insane turtle-man Hollow. Naruto moves down the hillside farm, keeping to the paths while doing so. It felt like forever since Naruto had seen a sunset and so once away from the fields, the strange Hollow finds a spot to lay down to enjoy the view of a setting sun, careful about the large dewclaws upon his feet.

By the time the sun fully sets, Naruto is ready to explore this seemingly new world that his enemy had brought them to. *Going to have to keep watch for Shinigami... Don't want to tangle with them.* Naruto thinks to himself as the new Adjuchas Hollow gets up off the ground.

Picking a random direction, Naruto takes off at a slow runs in that direction. Stars slowly become visible in the clear night sky as the typical night life slowly comes alive as the Hollow moves through the country side of the Living World.

Months Later

What a waste... Naruto couldn't help but think as the ex-ninja stands at an edge of a battle field, watching as the dead continue to fight, not even aware that they're dead and should be concerning themselves with something else, like keeping eyes out for hungry Hollows.

The raptor like Adjuchas glances upwards to the circling dragonfly looking Hollow that seems to have lay claim to this battle field. The other Hollow dive bombs the ground traveling Hollow, causing Naruto to hiss while ducking out of the flight path of a fellow Hollow.

The flier fires a few stingers from it's long, flexible tail and, finally, Naruto just moves on since he isn't really hungry enough to fight and consume the irritating bug like Hollow.

A few miles away from the battle field, Naruto pauses as the raptor like Hollow senses a large group of spiritual beings coming down the road the mammalian raptor Hollow has discovered. Naruto moves off the path and continues until he's found something to duck behind. The raptor also suppresses his spiritual pressure as best as he could.

Minutes pass and finally, a group of five humans come walking down the road. Each having a bow strung about their shoulder and grim looks fixated to their faces. Naruto watches as they walk pass, his body tense for flight or fight.

Once they're gone from his sight, Naruto still doesn't move until he feels a battle take place. Naruto sprints for a few hours up the road, wanting to put a lot of distance between that strange group of spiritual empowered humans and himself.

Naruto had come to the decision not to eat pluses and humans since he's pretty sure doing so attracts the attention of the Shinigami, a group of fellow dead humans that have taken it upon themselves to keep Hollows out of the Living World. Naruto's fairly confident that to attract a Shinigami's attention is to cause havoc among humans, killing those with untapped spiritual potential just to consume their powerful souls.

After a while, Naruto slows to a walk, at which point he goes from running on all fours to walking on two. The ex-ninja turned Hollow sighs, pondering the thought of returning to Hueco Mundo for a time, he doesn't know if that group got a taste of his spiritual presence or not. For all he knows, that group didn't go after him because they didn't consider him to be an immediate threat.

Naruto frowns as he muses about the fact that he feels homesick by being in this world. A homesickness not for Hueco Mundo but for

Hidden Leaf, a place that he's not sure even exists any more...

With a sigh, Naruto causes a Garganta to open and returns to the Hueco Mundo without a glance back into the tempting World of the Living.

Five Centuries Pass

As it rains, Naruto watches as a little boy with orange hair and a vast amount of spiritual pressure follows the lure of a Hollow named the Grand Fisher. The over seven centuries year old Hollow growls softly in disapproval at this Hollow's choice of 'prey'.

As the boy's mother races towards the bank where the child is standing before the lure, Naruto is already in the air as the 'main' body of the Grand Fisher appears to strike a death blow on the boy so the fellow Hollow can consume the resulting soul that comes out of the broken body. The claws hit the mother and a moment later Naruto's foot dewclaws dig into the Grand Fisher's mask while Naruto's fangs and front claws dig into the Hollow's unprotected back.

The Grand Fisher doesn't stand much of a chance as Naruto manages to kick the mask off of the Hollow's head. Within seconds, Naruto breaks the Grand Fisher's now weak neck. As the would be child eater's body breaks apart and gets drawn into Naruto, soft cries of Mommy echo through the stormy atmosphere.

Naruto turns to the scene, sighing softly at the sight of blood oozing out of the claw slashes upon the mother's back. "Please help my mommy..." The orange haired child begs at him, startling Naruto quite a bit since the child should be afraid of him.

Finally, Naruto bends down and licks away the blood, not sure if his saliva had a healing factor in it or not. *Couldn't hurt to try...* Naruto admits while ignoring the fact that it's a little too familiar to have the coppery taste of blood within his mouth.

As the woman begins to groan softly and flex her hands, Naruto steps away from the child's mother. "Mommy?" The orange haired child asks hopefully.

"Ichigo..." The woman says before becoming unconscious once more and the claw marks still slightly oozing blood.

"We need to mommy to daddy. He'll know what to do." The newly dubbed Ichigo says and stares up to him with a hurt puppy look.

"Fine, climb onto my back." Naruto says after a few minutes. The raptor Hollow drops down to allow the child up onto his back before raising slightly to pick up the other. With that, Naruto moves away from the bank while Ichigo grabs a hold of his tendrils like riding reins.

It took a rough hour to finally get to a local clinic within the area. Naruto gently lays Ichigo's mother down by the entrance, Ichigo gets off of his back to move to his mother's side. Within seconds, Naruto's walking up the side of the building and breaks a window to grab a doctor and then holds the man over the street for a few seconds, making sure that the man saw Ichigo and the boy's mother before putting back into the building.

With that, Naruto continues his climb to the roof. "Bye, Mister Raptor! Thanks for helping my mom!" Ichigo calls out and he shakes his head, bemused by the boy's innocents.

Seven Years Later

Ichigo

"Why are we here, Ichigo? Shouldn't you be in school?" Rukia asks him.

He doesn't answer as he stares into the river while mentally going over the day his mother almost died. The day he witnessed one Hollow devouring another, the one that caused his mother's injuries

consumed by a Hollow appearing almost like a dinosaur, like a raptor.

"Fine, climb onto my back."

"A Hollow had lured me to the bank of this river about seven years ago." He finally says. "At first, it looked like a girl my age. I don't recall what happened really but suddenly, my mom is laying on top of me, bleeding and there's this colorful dinosaur leaping onto this rodent looking thing. I managed to get out from under my mom, trying to wake her up while the dinosaur manages to cause the rodent's mask to fly off and then, second later, a sharp crack comes from the two."

He sense rather then sees Rukia giving him a sharp, pitying look. "Then a Shinigami showed up to chase the Hollow away?" Rukia asks and he laughs.

"No, nobody showed up and in the end, I pleaded with the colored Hollow to help my mom. It bend over and began to lick the blood off. A few seconds afterwards, my mom woke for a brief few seconds before returning to being unconscious." He tells Rukia.

"I told the Hollow that we should take my mom to my dad and the Hollow then tells me to climb up onto its back. It carried my mom in its arms while I grab hold of these strange extensions growing from the Hollow's head." He can still remember their color. "We made it to a clinic and after gently putting my mom on the sidewalk before the clinic, I climbed down to be by her side."

He snorts as he recalls what happened next. "The Hollow then climbed up the side of the building and on reaching a window, punched through the window and then grabbed ahold of this doctor that was next to the window. After dangling the guy outside for a few, the Hollow pushes the guy back into the office before climbing up to the roof, that's the last I saw of it, by then, people were coming out of the clinic to help my mom."

"I'm sure the doctor didn't enjoy that." Rukia says and he snorts softly. "So you come back here annually in hopes of seeing it again?" Rukia asks after a few seconds.

"Nay, I come back here to imagine what my life could have been like if that Hollow didn't show up to kill the attacker and decide to help. To remind myself that of what could happen if I'm not quick enough... not strong enough." He murmurs the last few words under his breath.

"What would you do if you ever encounter that Hollow again? The one that saved your mother's life?" Rukia asks him.

"Guess it would depend on the circumstances." He finally tells Rukia after a few minutes.

Naruto

The mammalian raptor Hollow sneezes and Chico says, "Bless you." Naruto glances over to his 'old' buddy, the one the raptor had teamed up with to take down a certain rock like Hollow centuries before.

"Somebody must be talking about me. That was, what, the seventh in the last fifteen minutes?" Naruto muses as the neo-chimera looking Chico continues to tinker with this hand held TV.

"You Japanese and your superstitions..." Chico mutters as the four handed Hollow begins to move to another position now that Chico has screwed the battery protector back on the hand held TV. The insect wings get spread and Chico begins to hover at least four feet in the air.

Naruto watches passively as his fellow Adjuchas buzz around the park that's devoid of human life. "Did we really have to come this far north just to get a stupid signal? Couldn't we just ghost through a motel to find a working cable connected TV?" The ex-ninja inquires.

"Why go to all that trouble when we have this?" Chico asks him, twisting one of the four eye stalks towards him while Chico's main pair of eyes are focused on the tiny TV screen. Suddenly as Chico raises an extra foot in the air, the much shorter Hollow chuckles and within seconds, Chico causes the volume on the hand held TV to go up.

Naruto raises his head into the air before getting up off the snow covered ground. A few seconds later, Naruto pushes a picnicking table over and then climbs onto it to see the tiny screen, careful to avoid Chico's fluttering wings. *What we do to watch the latest episode of Friends...* The dead blond muses softly to himself.

"You know what would work with this? Popcorn or something chocolaty." Chico says and other then Naruto's pointed ears lowering slightly for a few seconds, they perk up as Joey begins to say something.

"We should invest in some kind of satellite or disk so we don't have to always find this signal." Naruto remarks during a commercial talking about the satellite TV.

"And where would we store it when we're in the Hueco Mundo? I mean, humans will steal everything that isn't nailed down!" Chico says, flickering a very reptilian tail.

And we won't? Naruto wonders but snorts softly. *Of course its not as though we steal it to sell it...*

"What the hell are you two doing?" Naruto pauses and glances over to see some Shinigami staring at Chico and him with a finger drifting between Chico and the raptor like Hollow.

"Trying to watch Friends on NBC. And you?" Naruto asks in a very prickly tone in turn.

"But... but... but..." Shinigami stutters, clearly flabbergasted about seeing not just two Adjuchas level Hollows but seeing them not trying

to kill each other or hunt down a Plus or three.

"Shhh... Rachel just showed up with a date!" Chico says and with that, Naruto returns to looking over Chico's top shoulder.

"Maybe I shouldn't have laughed when Moena mentioned how oddly Hollows behave up here..." The Shinigami mutters before leaving.

"Yea, yea, tell Moena we're still considering her offer about doing that time share." Chico says just before the new guy gets too far out of hearing range.

Few Months Later

"Why are we here again?" Naruto asks Chico as they followed behind this huge group of Hollow heading for this Las Noches place. The ex-ninja couldn't help but be wary of the idea of a Shinigami wanting to go to war with their fellow Shinigami.

It's almost parallel to what Orochimaru and Mandara did when they decided to destroy Hidden Leaf... The mammalian raptor thinks to himself while Chico says, "No more hunger, not more dealing with those voices..."

Naruto blinks, true the raptor Hollow knows about the hunger but the voice one was news to him. "Oh..." Naruto trails off.

"Plus, we are Adjuchas class Hollows. Which, if I recall correctly from that speech that girl says, means that there's this chance that we'd be able to avoid going to the fighting pits." Chico says and Naruto blinks slightly.

"Their going to make us fight for this... honor?" The ex-ninja asks slowly. The raptor really didn't like the sound of that as it causes him to recall the fighting pits a certain snake had created in order to see how well the test subjects were fairing...

Ok, first order of business once I look more human, train. Train like I've never trained before. Second order of business, gather as much information about this guy's goal. Third, make a list of everything this guy has at this finger tips, be they just kitchen stuff or cloths. Fourth, figure out how to take control of Arrancar creation thing and see about creating a convincing fake. Fifth, kill the Shinigami guy and everyone loyal to him before running off with said Arrancar creation item. Sixth, spend rest of life turning every Hollow in Hueco Mundo into Arrancars. Naruto tells himself, making a mental checklist for what to do once he becomes an Arrancar.

"I wonder if they'll be able to do something so we can get satellite channels here in Hueco Mundo?" Naruto muses out loud after they get within a few miles of the Arrancar fortress base commonly known as Las Noches.

"That would be great, won't it?" Chico muses thoughtfully. "I wonder if they've got computers... I always wanted to work with one..."

"You only wanted one to play games on." The ex-ninja couldn't help but remark as their guide is greeted by another group of seemingly human Hollows. A certain woman Hollow with green hair gazes over the group of Menos before gazing upon Chico and Naruto.

The mammalian raptor Hollow watches as the woman's eyebrow raises slightly after the Arrancar takes in his facial features, likely staring at Naruto's orange with red striped tendrils or glowing blue eyes, after all, Hollows with other eye colors other then yellow are rare. *I wonder what happened to that red eye sand swimmer?* Naruto wonders ideally while they stop a few feet behind the assorted group of Menos.

"Looks like somebody likes what she see." Chico says to him, elbowing Naruto in the neck. "Wonder if she'll still think so when you're an Arrancar..."

The ex-ninja snorts softly, highly doubting the idea that the woman Arrancar with green hair is thinking such things. After all, Naruto's

pretty sure the dead aren't interested in such things.

Its not as though she's the only one interested in me... The raptor like Hollow muses as most of the welcoming committee were studying him as subtly as they can, not that Naruto's all that surprised since he is rather colorful compared to other Hollows no matter their class.

"Menos over to the right! Adjuchas to the left!" Their guide orders and with that, Chico and Naruto moves to the left while the rest move to the right.

"Names?" A pink haired Arrancar man asks once they had gotten close to the welcoming group.

"Naruto Uzumaki." The mammalian raptor Hollow answers.

"Really? How... interesting." The pink haired Arrancar muses while writing that down on the clip board.

"Chico Tadeo." The neo-chimera looking Hollow answers.

"Follow me please, I'll take you to see Lord Aizen." The pink haired Arrancar says, most of the other group begins to leave as they followed the pink haired guy.

Some of the group head off to the right while what remains head back into the fortress by following them in before heading off in different directions. Naruto kind of relaxes with them gone, the dead blond hadn't liked having so many powerful beings so close.

"I must say, I've never encountered a Hollow as... colorful as you, Uzumaki." The pink haired guy muses after a few minutes of the three of them walking through the building.

"While as a Meno, I had a short blue mane and typical yellow eyes." Naruto says to the Arrancar, he's a bit reluctant to speak with this

one. There's something of this guy that reminded him of a certain someone, he just can't remember who at the moment.

"I did become an Adjuchas when a Hollow named Sancho Lalo opened a gate to the Living World within seconds of our fight. Once Sancho was defeated, I was became as you see me now." Naruto sums up how he achieved Adjuchas, though he left out a lot of important bits.

"Really? I've never heard of a Hollow going up a class while in the Living World... I wonder how else that has affected you..." The pink haired guy muses and Naruto feels all of his fur stand slightly up.

Naruto wasn't looking forward to any future encounters with this guy now that he has a general idea of why the pink haired man creeps him out. *Great, another mad scientist... Why did I think Hueco Mundo would be free of this brand of bastard?* Naruto wonders to himself.

They finally arrive in what appears to be a lab and pinkie gives them a glance before moving into the room. "My Lord Aizen, I have brought two new Adjuchas class recruits who wish to serve in your army." Pinkie says, bowing to about waist level.

Naruto lays eyes upon the power hungry Shinigami for the first time, a man with dark brown hair done up in a slightly messy style. Aizen's brown eyes home in on looking upon the mammalian raptor Hollow, interest slowly lighting up in the Shinigami's eyes. The raptor Hollow also couldn't help but note that instead of wearing black, this Shinigami standing before him seems to have a preference for white cloths.

A few seconds later, Aizen glances at Chico for a second or two. "When you are ready, get onto one of the tables." Aizen states in a manner that clearly shows that this man is use to having other do as directed.

Within seconds, Chico and Naruto rest upon a metal table each and a machine begins to move once the Shinigami Aizen inserts a crystal that Naruto couldn't help but notice seems to contain a small inner sphere. Oddly enough, this item seems to call to the ex-ninja upon coming out of a cloth bag that Aizen had hanging from the belt about the waist.

The machine powers up and the barrel of the machine points itself at Chico. A light show later and Naruto finds himself staring at a black haired man sporting a short beard and mustache now rests upon the table. Naruto couldn't help but notice that a patch of bone plate covering his changed friend's forehead with some bangs poking over the top of the bony plate. Blue hued eyes sparkle in wonderment as Chico moves to look at the rest of the body, a short thin sword is resting not that far from Chico.

As the barrel of the machine turns to Naruto, the raptor like Hollow couldn't help but wonder if Chico's is suppose to have that hole in the area of right shoulder. The light hits Naruto and seconds later, Naruto's body felt off then he's grown use to, although for some reason, he still has a mask over his face.

Taking hold of the mask, Naruto pulls it down off his face and then turns it around to stare at the white skull mask that is unchanged. *It's so strange, seeing this mask when it's not glued onto my face and being seeing reflected in a mirror or surface of water...* The blond Arrancar muses while continuing to stare down at the mask that's been with him for since he became an Adjuchas class Hollow.

"Huh, the mask remains whole but there's no hole." Pinkie muses, reminding Naruto that he's not alone. "How... interesting..."

Naruto glances at Pinkie, not particularly liking the glimmering interest that's shining bright from the dressed Arrancar's eyes. Holding the mask with his left, Naruto gets off of the metal table, it takes a few seconds for the ex-ninja's balance to adjust and once it does, Naruto glances to the table in search of his sword.

The sheath of the Zanpakuto that was released during Naruto's transformation is orange in color. The bindings on the hilt of the katana type sword is white with the guard appearing to be made from a type of gemstone, considering it's red in color Naruto believes it to be ruby.

Huh, I wonder if it's unusual to have a gemstone as a sword guard... Naruto wonders as the new Arrancar picks up the katana type Zanpakuto with his free hand. *I wonder if there are any sword masters among the Arrancar's ranks. I rather not learn this particular art from that traitor.*

Before The Winter War

"I don't see the point of coming all the way out here just to watch something *humans* have created." A purple hair Arrancar known as Xavia complains; Xavia is new to the unit and is also the unit's current leader as they prepare for the upcoming conflict with the Soul Society. The woman like spirit with what remains of Xavia's mask hanging around the woman's cheeks.

"It's not as though any of us knocked you out and dragged you here. Nor have we tied you to a chair..." Chico remarks, pointly staring at the nail polish resting at Xavia's elbow.

"Or forced you to go by that nail polish..." The brunet Arrancar called Rafael remarks while polishing one of his knives.

"You really have no taste in colors..." Remarks a fellow blond Arrancar called Alvara says, clearly disapproving of Xavia's choice in color while she herself is wearing a face mask.

Alvara and Xavia were the only two female Arrancar in the unit of twenty that includes Chico and Naruto. They have also been going at it from the moment Xavia replaced Leon Orcot, a blond Arrancar that seemingly vanished off the face of Hueco Mundo two weeks ago.

Not even Naruto could make heads or tails of why said Arrancar seemed so hellbent on finding this 'Count' D person, though privately, Naruto figures this D to be the guy's old lover or a source of some kind of unfinish rivalry. *I'm going with the first simply because how unlikely it is to mean another with another epic rivalry that has become the guy's obsession...* Naruto muses while trying to tune out the upcoming feminine battle. (Sorry, couldn't help it! I don't own Leon Orcot from Pet Shop of Horrors.)

"Why hasn't some punk Shinigami hasn't shown up yet to investigate this area?" Wonders the second black haired Arrancar in the group, one known as Cedonia. "There's twenty of us, somebody should have come to investigate the source of Hollow energy that we're generating..."

"Shinigami aren't that common outside of Japan." Naruto reminds the tattooed Arrancar and Cedonia just huffs at that. "Besides, the Soul Society likely called back all living world stationed Shinigami to Karakura Town or back to their city itself to prepare for the upcoming invasion."

"Who says we're invading anything?" Xavia demands. The so called unit leader looking a bit pale and nervous all of a sudden, breaking off from taking digs at Alvara to address the ex-ninja.

"Please, its not that hard to connect the dotes and from where I'm sitting, Lord Aizen has designs on Karakura Town. It's not as though Lord Aizen has officially sent Arrancar's out of Japan, you know." Naruto explains, he really misses Leon, even if the guy was having them hunt around for this mysterious Count of his, causing them to travel about the world while saying it was just to see if the Soul Society had retracted their stationed forces.

The man was brilliant in coming up with official sounding excuses for us to stretch out legs in the living world... I wonder if we'll ever receive those Gigai that he ordered from Szayel. Naruto wonders while rubbing the top of his skull mask; a mask that can be found hanging over his bare chest, the only upper body clothing that

Naruto is wearing is a simple white leather vest that's worn open and white cargo pants.

"You don't know that for sure. Master Aizen could be luring the Shinigami into a false sense of security so we can attack their city head on!" Xavia say, clearly defensive about how Naruto makes it sounds as though Aizen's overall objective is easy to see.

"Unlikely since there isn't nearly enough Arrancars for such a thing and that the Soul Society has large reserve of souls that can be hurried through Shinigami training to fend off their losses while the Hōgyoku seems to be hitting the end of its life. It's unlikely it'll be around long enough to transform any more Hollows into Arrancars." Chico remarks and most of the group murmur or grunt their agreement.

"Plus most of the active Shinigami have a few years experience under their belt, Xavia. We've only got a hand full of months experience of being Arrancar. We'd be slaughtered in an all out war with the Soul Society." Rafael adds and Naruto nods in agreement.

"We were Hollows! We fought for our very lives living in the Hueco Mundo while those damn Pluses just lazy about the number area outside of the headquarters of the Shinigami! We're battle harden!" Xavia screeches at them.

"And yet only Vasto Lorde remain the only Hollow that Shinigami flee before." Alvara points out. "And though we are more powerful then our previous existence as Hollows; we weren't that powerful." The woman Arrancar adds.

"We lack years of battle experience looking the way we do, too. Its not about power in the end, it's about how you weld that power and Shinigami know how to weld theirs while we don't. In some ways, we're just trying to reapply Hollow powers to our new Arrancar existence and it's not working out very well either simply because we're half Shinigami. It might not seem like it should matter but it does." Naruto says, glancing into Xavia's red eyes while saying it.

"None sense... We're better then those uppity Pluses, just you wait and see." Xavia says before gathering up her nail polish and heading for the only bathroom of the house they've broken into.

"So... are we still going to defect once the invasion is on?" Hernan asks and Chico snorts while answering, "Of course. I'm not going to be cannon folder in a Shinigami civil war. And that what this is and I don't have any plans to die so soon."

"If he wins, won't he hunt us, the deserters?" Hernan wonders and it's Rafael who answers, "I don't see him winning, he would have had a better chance if he had just outright killed his fellow captains before he arrived at Hueco Mundo."

"Can I be the one to kill Xavia before she tells anyone of rank about our dis-concerning views of this war?" Alvara asks eagerly, her eyes shining with delight at the idea.

"Knock yourself out." Cedonia says and adds, "Its not as though she's been training as much as we have. She won't even be a challenge for me if I fought her."

"Any idea if you can duplicate how Leon vanished, Naruto?" Rafael asks the spiky haired blond Arrancar.

"I think so, just need to work on my reserves before trying to create that portal... Though it would have been easier if Leon had at least left something behind so we could follow after... Anyone know if our order of Gigai are done yet?" Naruto asks and slowly, the nineteen Arrancar still in the living-room discuss their exit strategy before a large screen TV.

Before a Certain Stone

The Gigai drop to the ground having been the first things through the portal that Naruto had created. Then, slowly, the others land a few feet from the pile of artificial bodies as they had jumped into the portal instead of being shoved through like said Gigai.

Naruto is the last one to exit out of the portal that he himself had created. Once the spiky haired blond has touched the ground, the portal leading out of the Hueco Mundo closes. "Already, take it easy with those Gigai, they're the only ones we've got." Naruto tells the other Arrancar and their newest unit member, an ex-underling of one Szayel Aporro Granz, a red haired Arrancar woman named Izydora.

Naruto grins as he watches the previously faceless and almost formless Gigai morph until they resemble the Arrancar that were now inhabiting the fake body, only without their mask bits showing upon their heads, swords, and Hollow hole. With that, Naruto enters into the last experimental Gigai.

"Naruto?" Said Arrancar blinks and looks over to the staked logs to find an old friend standing by the middle one. Naruto's a bit stunned at the fact that the woman doesn't look all that old.

"Hinata? Aren't you dead yet?" The blond spiky hair Arrancar asks carelessly, after all, it's been over seven centuries since he had been killed and woke to find himself in the Hueco Mundo.

"It's only been three months since you..." Hinata says, trailing off as Hinata blushes bright red, likely from how little Naruto is currently wearing. "Who's your friends?" The almost twenty year old Hyuuga asks.

Naruto glances over at the rest of the unit to find them all looking bemused to bored to questioning. After all, it's not as though they ever discuss their previous lives, be it as Hollows or when they were alive. "Old girlfriend?" Chico asks, likely because he's the most unlikely to be killed by the ex-ninja.

"Not really... I never had much time to get one..." Naruto admits before introducing the members of his unit and the new deserter to Hinata. The blond Arrancar doesn't really know what to make of the fact that here in Hidden Leaf, he had only been dead for little over three months.

"Kind of interesting that you recall your previous existence before Hueco Mundo." Pipes in the scientist of the group, too new to the group to know that Naruto's one of the top fighters in the unit, taking second under a certain battle hungry Arrancar.

"Huh?" Hinata asks, clearly confused though Hernan answers, "Oh, it's just what usually happens when one dies and becomes a Hollow. It's pretty hard to keep your identity after consuming a few other Hollows. Too many voices in your head always chatting away... Not that we have to worry about that any more now that we're Arrancars."

"She didn't need to know that, Hernan." Naruto states in a flat voice. "Its not something anyone alive would understand. Not even the Shinigami or Pluses would understand; its the kind of thing one needs to experience to get." The spiky haired Arrancar points out.

"Hear hear." Cedonia, the unit's top fighter, cheers.

Hinata looks as though she's got more questions about this but seems a bit more interested in staring at right at Naruto, clearly enjoying the sight of Naruto's almost bare chest. Then Hinata straightens and says, "We got to inform Tsunade!"

Naruto blinks as he's about to say something to his fellow Arrancar only to get a puzzled frown upon his face on hearing that. "Wasn't she in a coma?" The spiky haired blond ex-ninja wonders.

"She woke up about two weeks ago." Hinata explains before adding, "She's devastated about what happened to you."

"I guess we could go visit her." Naruto admits before turning to stare at the peanut gallery to this little drama. "Ok you lot. We'll meet back here at sun down, until then, you guys can go off do anything but pick fights with the locals, loot from the shops during daylight hours, or kidnap people for experimentation, got it?"

"Got it!" Most of the unit say, though a few members look a bit rebellious about the restrictions he has told them. Within seconds, most of the unit Sonído away, leaving Naruto alone with Hinata.

Naruto glances over at Hinata and says, "Well, I'm ready when you are." The woman looks startled before nodding in a slightly stiff manner.

As they walk away from the stone, Hinata asks, "They wouldn't do any of that, would they?"

Naruto sighs and runs a hand through the spikes on the side of his head as he thinks of a way to answer that. "Let's just say that as Hollows, there isn't much of a demand or really any need for morals. They usually got in the way of survival." The ex-ninja tells the pearly eyed woman who's walking a bit before him.

"Must be harsh..." Hinata says softly and Naruto snorts softly before answering, "It's freeing in its own way, though not a place I had hoped to find myself in when I died."

They didn't say much of anything after that, though as they finally hit the streets, most of those about would stop what they're doing to stare at the Gigai being piloted by a dead man. Naruto paid little attention to that, not really caring about how the village will react now that he's seemingly back from the dead.

It's not like I'm ever going to be able to preform as a ninja. The spiky haired blond muses to himself as he feels minor exotic energy expelling, likely meaning that those ninja who saw him have teleported away to report to varying higher ups be they clan heads to the current Hokage, Kakashi.

On the plus side, I couldn't think of a better place for us to train and to find a limit to our new abilities as being half Hollow and half Shinigami. The blond muses, after all, Hidden Leaf does sport a good number of genius. *I just hope we don't attract local spirit attention.*

As Naruto slowly begins to plan for the future, the blond continues to follow Hinata until she stops before a place that's clearly seen better days. The ex-ninja glances up at the sign and shakes his head at the name. *The Broken... How... fitting a name.* The blond Arrancar muses to himself before moving to enter the dingy looking bar, Hinata following him in.

Naruto's eyes adjust to the near light-less atmosphere of the bar and resists wrinkling his nose at the smell. *I'm wishing I now wore something upon my feet...* Naruto thinks as he walks upon the stained floor, some he's sure is vomit and spilled drink, but the rest could be blood and piss.

The Arrancar spots the reason why they're there and slowly makes his way towards her. "You know, you could have found a better place to drink yourself to death, you hag." Naruto informs the wrinkled husk of a Hokage.

"You were Hokage, after all. They must have given you a better severance package then this place." The spiky haired Arrancar remarks once the shell of a woman turns to regard him.

Tsunade huffs and looks pass Naruto to look at Hinata. "Not a very believable Genjutsu. He's all wrong! He doesn't even have those marks upon his cheeks." The former Hokage says.

"I don't have them cause I don't have the Kyuubi anymore, you old bat. Last time I was before the cage, the whole back wall of the cage was gone even though the front of the cage was there." Naruto states with a frown.

"And if I were just an illusion, could I do this?" Naruto asks, taking Tsunade's pitcher and dumping it onto the old woman's head. The ex-Hokage aims a punch but Naruto catches it and holds it easily.

"Gee, I must be a really interactive illusion if I can do all of this." Naruto says, his voice oozing with contempt. "Are we done trying to

prove if I'm real or not?" Naruto asks after letting go of Tsunade's fist, crossing his arms over his chest.

"But you're suppose to be dead..." Tsunade says before glancing suspiciously over at Hinata.

"And I'm still dead. I'm a spirit currently possessing a fake body called a Gigai. In my natural state, you wouldn't even see me or hear me." The blond male explains before Tsunade could accuse Hinata of preforming an illegal jutsu. He didn't see any reason to bring up what kind of spirit he was either at this point in time.

"Still... Where's the orange?" The elderly woman asks.

"The prick wanted to us to dress in a color scheme opposite of a Shinigami. Since Shinigami wear black..." Naruto shrugs before adding, "I really didn't want to draw any more attention to myself by trying to get away with adding a bit of color to my 'uniform'. I'm just happy I wasn't confined to a lab for experimentation."

Naruto knows that a lot of people would draw the wrong conclusion to why he'd be a lab rat and was more then happy to let them, seeing as he's not going to explain what's going on with his afterlife at this moment in time. There's just too many unwanted witnesses about the bar and Naruto rather not get into a spiritual debate concerning what becomes of the spirits of the dead.

"Can we leave now? I rather hoped we could continue this discussion in better surroundings then these." Naruto says, waving his hand about the bar and its customers.

Wordlessly, Tsunade gets up off the stool and Naruto gives her a helping hand on seeing her almost fall back down upon the stool. With only a little help from the blond Arrancar, Tsunade walks away from her bar stool and out into the street, Hinata taking point and holding the door open for the both of them.

Tsunade lifts her free hand to block the sunlight for a few seconds before they continue on following Hinata. It had been centuries since Naruto had been alive and felt kind of lost about where they're head. It wasn't long before they arrive at this barbecue place and soon, they're sitting at one of the booths waiting for some drinks, coffee for the ex-Hokage to help keep her awake.

"So... what's the afterlife like, brat?" Tsunade asks Naruto.

"It pretty much depends on which afterlife you arrive at. Me, I ended up in a vast desert known as Hueco Mundo with no memories of being alive. Took me a few to arrive at a hot spot for fellow Hollows, a forest made up of petrified trees. Good hunting there, even though I did almost wind up a meal for someone else." Naruto admits and out of the corner of his eye notices a minor look of pity from Hinata.

"Hollow?" Tsunade asks, as if also tasting that word.

"Inhuman looking spirits with a hole clear through their body, often in the chest area, and a white skull like mask upon their faces." Naruto explains. "To get stronger and to state their hunger, you go around and consume your fellow Hollows. Once a Meno is ready, they're drawn to a Negación and combine to form a Gillian class Hollow. A brainless sort of class, foot soldiers really since they're pretty uniform in appearance."

"You were always brainless." Tsunade muses with a touch of humor to her tone.

"Not that brainless. Besides, I never went through that stage of existence. Even then, I didn't like the odds of coming out of that step as myself." The blond says and feeling a familiar presence, Naruto glances out onto the street to find an amused Chico following behind a certain woman wearing her hair in buns.

With a slight shake of the head, Naruto turns away, trusting that Chico wouldn't harm Tenten much if at all. The blond notes that Tsunade has a raised eyebrow. "Friend of yours?"

"Good enough." Naruto states calmly as their drink order arrives as does a plate of raw meat. A few seconds later, the waiter walks away with a clean plate, leaving them the task of flipping the meat when it's cooked on the one side.

"Met Chico back when we were Menos. We killed a particularly nasty Hollow who had attacked him and then disguised itself as part of the landscape to attract another Hollow, kind of a one stone two bird deal." Naruto explains. "We went our separate ways after-wards."

Neither of his tablemates seem to have anything to say about that. "What do you mean you skipped this Gillian step?" Hinata finally asks as they begin to turn the meat over upon the table barbecue.

"I ended up in a fight with an Adjuchas class Hollow, the fight ended up in the local living world. I was outclass but in the end, I still came out a head since instead of joining his horde of defeated enemies within his mind, I fought against said fate and won, thus becoming an Adjuchas class Hollow without going through the previously described step." Naruto explains. "The body underwent a transformation to suit its new boss, me."

"Local living world?" Tsunade asks and Naruto just shrugs.

"What more can I say? It's the world most Hollows travel to so that they can find 'easier' prey. I mean easier as in none Hollow spirits called Pluses since they got this chain hanging out of their chests and humans with a large amount of spiritual energy, killing the humans while they're alive and eating the spirit that's forced out of the body." Naruto explains, wrinkling his nose. "Nasty business, of course as it usually draws the attention of the Shinigami."

Naruto flips one of the strips of meat to see if its cooked on the other side. "When I say Shinigami, I'm not talking about a single entity either. I'm talking about this military group of spirits who have taken it upon themselves to herd lingering Pluses to the Soul Society and 'purifying' Hollows who hunt primarily in the local living world." The blond explains before eating the strip of cooked meat.

"You don't sound convinced that they're actually purifying these Hollows..." Tsunade remarks before she picks up one of the strips of meat.

"Never encountered a spirit claiming to have been a purified Hollow. I've seen the Gates of Hell appear to take the defeated sinner Hollow, Hollow who were very nasty in life I might add, but that's it. We've only got the word of the Shinigami, our natural enemy at that, about what happens to those not taken by the Gates of Hell." Naruto explains.

"So, you're an Adjuchas class Hollow then?" Tsunade asks after a few minutes of silence in which they devour the cooked strips of meat.

"I was an Adjuchas class Hollow. I'm now an Arrancar, a being that started out as a Hollow and is now half Shinigami and half Hollow. We lose our beastly appearance, our masks usually vanish with the exception of minor fragments, and we gain a Zanpakutō. A sword, for us, holds our previous, truer forms and powers." Naruto explains.

Tsunade snorts softly. "So you're demi-god now, eh?" The former Hokage muses.

"I'm no god, nor are the Shinigami, also called Soul Reapers. We can still die, its just that we lack frail, physical bodies. I mean, we're spirits as in entities of energy, we can take a lot of damage and I know that among the Shinigami is a medical division, an entire division who's primary job is to care for the injured." The spiky haired Arrancar explains.

"Really?" Hinata asks, likely a bit surprised to hear that. Naruto nods as he waves for the waiter to bring more meat.

"They also got a division for intelligence and assassination, one for science, and another dedicated to fighting with just their Zanpakutō..." Naruto tells them. "I know there is thirteen division headed by a single captain with seated officers under them and then

unseated members under them. The captains are the strongest fighters in the division with the seated ones taking rank under them. At least that's how Gin explained it when I asked him about how things worked in the Soul Society."

"Why would this Gin know?" Tsunade wonders and Naruto snorts softly.

"Well, the reason why Arrancars were on the raise is because of a traitorous Shinigami named Sōsuke Aizen decided to go to war with his fellow Shinigami. Aizen managed to convince two of his fellow captains to follow his lead and they were Kaname Tōsen and Gin Ichimaru. They waited until this artifact called Hōgyoku was in the Soul Society before showing their colors." Naruto explains.

"The Hōgyoku has the ability to weaken the inner barrier within a Shinigami or a Hollow, allowing them to become artificial hybrids. It's how I became an Arrancar, the man is looking among the Hollows to create his army. Not that I or the rest of the unit care to die in a Shinigami civil war after only being Arrancars for a few months..." Naruto explains.

"And here I thought you were loyal, that when you gave your word, you'd follow through with it." Tsunade remarks and he laughs.

"I never said I would join his army nor fight for his cause. Only the Espada are expected to take oaths of loyalty. Nobody directly asked Chico or myself if we want to serve 'Lord' Aizen, they asked if we were interested in becoming Arrancar, which we were, and that's it." Naruto answers with a grin.

"Wasn't it implied that you'd only become Arrancars to serve in the man's army?" Tsunade asks and Naruto just shrugs.

"Doesn't mean much without oaths." Naruto couldn't help say and he believes it too. "Besides, the man was like Madara and Orochimaru, do you really expect me to be loyal to somebody who doesn't plan to return that loyalty?"

"Sounds like you've gown up." Tsunade muses with a slight smile.

"I better have, I've been a Hollow for over several centuries already." Naruto says, staring down at the strips of meat upon the grill.

"When did you get your memories back?" Hinata asks and Naruto glances over to the woman before answering, "Got them back when I fought that Adjuchas. Likely why I managed to displace the guy in the mental battle."

"So, how did it feel looking like a fox?" Tsunade asks and Naruto gives her a sour look.

"Who says I looked like a fox in my true form? Why would I take the appearance of that furball after how hard I've struggled not to be seen as that fuzzball?" Naruto asks the elderly woman.

"A ferret then?" Tsunade asks and Naruto just shakes his head.

"I was more bird like at the beginning then mammal like. Over all, I looked like a raptor, as in the Dinosaur then the bird type." Naruto says before his 'granny' could come up with another animal. "Had yellow eyes and a short mane of blue."

"Must have been because you were wind natured." Hinata muses and Naruto nods in agreement with that.

"True and now I still look raptor like but now seems to be a mammal trying to be a raptor. Not sure how that works but its what I look like. Longer arms so I can sprint on all fours, bright yellow hair on my head and on a patch upon my tail while sporting thin white fur over most of my body but stopping before my tail. A minor dewclaw on my forehand and these orange tendrils with red stripes growing a bit above these ears." Naruto describes to the pair sitting at the table.

"I even got canine teeth in my mouth in that form." Naruto adds as an afterthought. "I've been called a peacock more then a few times because of how colorful I am."

"So, what do you plan to do now? Going to go back to being a ninja?" Tsunade asks Naruto after they flip the strips of meat.

"Can't be a ninja cause I don't have chakra." Naruto points out and adds, "Besides, I don't feel like rejoining, I've got other things to do, which is mainly organizing the other Arrancar while coming up with training excerises to help us get use to our dual status as Hollows and Shinigami. I want to see just what we're capable of, particularly I want to see if we're as capable of Kidō as the Shinigami."

"Well, brat, I'm just happy to have you back." Tsunade tells the blond Arrancar and Naruto chuckles.

"I wonder if you'll regret that statement in the coming months..." Naruto wonders and then a few seconds later, the spiky haired Arrancar sees smoke out of the corner of his eye.

I wonder how they'll explain that one... Naruto wonders, already having an idea that one of his fellow Arrancars are behind that fire.

The End

To Be Hunted: Danny Phantom

I don't own Danny Phantom!

Danny

Hunger is the first thing he knows and its what drives him to wake. Groaning softly, he curls to the left, hand closing into fists. With the hunger pressing the sleep out, he finally opens his eyes. He blinks a few times as his vision slowly comes too.

He sits up and glances around to find himself in a small cave. He runs a hand through his hair and hisses softly in pain as fingers move over a fresh cut and as his fingers move along the area, he finds it to be a rather long jagged thing. Matted hair gets yanked as he tries to untangle his hand from the tangle.

Strains of snow white hair come loose and he stares blankly at them. He closes his eyes, trying to think beyond the hunger he feels. Searching for, first an idea of where he is and then who is is when it becomes clear that he's drawing blanks in both.

He glances down at his cloths to find that they were barely holding themselves together. Jagged tears lined with barely scabbed cuts mar his chest, shoulders, arms, and a rather long, nasty looking along his belly. The slice that nearly gutted him looked puffy and white, likely infected.

His pants were in better shape but then, whoever attacked him seemed to be focusing on killing him, not crippling him. He glances down at the floor of this cave to find the spot stained with blood, his blood. He feels tears burning to be released and grief suddenly engulfs him.

In the end, its hunger that causes him to act once more. He stands up, leaning heavily on the wall as he slowly staggers towards the entrance. He stares blankly at the sight that greets him, he only felt that something is wrong with what he finds but brushes it off as he had food to find.

As he steps off the stone floor, he hovers in the air, not falling at all. Then, at a thought, he begins to drift forward, heading forward. He drifts among a landscape of purple doors hanging in green sky. He slowly gets pass this green sky to find black sky with lines of green swirling and some of the purple doors seem to become scare here and replaced by floating bits of buildings, islands, and green monsters with this strange glow.

It takes him a while before he realizes that he sports the same glow. Some time after passing by some kind of black castle, he could feel himself slowly falling asleep. When he woke, he found himself still drifting through the landscape, although this time, it seems as though he's about to impact into this huge, gigantic tree with leaves whose colors range through a rainbow of vibrant hues.

The smell from this tree causes him to raise up, heading for the branches. After a time, he then floats through the leafy canopy of the tree. He sighs as he spots a pool of water after moving deeper into the tree branches. He lands by the pool and carefully puts his hands into the water, cupping water in his hands, he lifts it up and he drinks.

He repeats this action at least five times. He then cups water and lets it drip over his stomach cut. He hisses and winces at the stinging the water provokes from the cut, but he keeps on doing it to try and wash away the dirt that's around it. He then does his chest, each of the cuts upon his chest sting as the water runs over them.

He looks down into the slowly stilling pool and takes a good look at his face. He touches his cheek, running it down, glowing green eyes staring back at him. He cups water and splashes it onto his face. A few seconds later, he dunks his head into the pool and jerks his head

out as the water causes the cut upon his head and a bunch of minor cuts he didn't know he had, to sting.

After a few minutes, the ebb of the pain fades and with a sigh, he walks into the pool. As he dunks his whole body under the water and holds his breath, his back begins to sting sharply compared to his chest and head cuts. After a while, he breaks the surface of the pool and shakes his head while exhaling.

He does this a few more times until none of his cuts sting and then gets out of the pool. As he sits by the pool once more, he finds that his hunger seems to have gone down. He yawns as he begins to feel tired once more.

He didn't fight it as he felt exhausted just by walking into the pool and keeping himself under. He lies down upon the ground, his arms under his head to cushion it. His breathing evens out and he gives way to the dreamless sleep that awaits.

He's startled awake by something cold poking his back. He wakes and glancing slowly to look behind him. As he stares to find a tall glowing man wearing a skull of a stag like a helmet, he knows it to be a stag because the antlers were still attached. The face of this man sports black face paint with a single red stripe on the left side of the face going from the bottom of the eye down to the jaw.

Pale glowing blue eyes stare down at him as he backs away from the man, only dimly noting the pale white horse that's standing behind the strange man. The whining of a hound causes him to look down to the man's feet to find at least six white hounds with short red socks about their paws, their eyes glowing either red or green.

"A bit young and scrawnier then my usual fair but you'll do. *You'll do* ." The man with the spear decides. The man moves to the glowing white horse and mounts onto the horse, the spear being placed within some place in the saddle.

"What...?" He finally asks, his voice crackling from disuse once he gets to his feet. He clears his throat as the hounds get to their feet. "What are you talking about? Who are you?"

"I have many names and those names are Gwydion, Gwynn ap Nudd, King Arthur, Nuada, King Herla, Woden, the Devil, and Herne the Hunter." The hunter states. "And this night, you are my prey."

He shivers as a cold wind blows, causing leaves to rattle upon the branches. "If I did anything to offend you, I'm sorry." He says as he keeps backing away from the hunter.

His foot almost slips as it is brought down upon ice. A quick look confirms that the pool he had dunk himself in has frozen over and as he stares, at the other side of the pool was a shimmering portal that featured a land that was achingly more familiar then the one he had woke to find himself in while in that cave.

"You have done nothing to offend me, lad. It's just your misfortune to partake of this tree's hospitality. If you survive this night, you will have paid the price the tree demands and may forever return to the tree to partake of its hospitality." The leather clad hunter upon the glowing horse informs him.

"That's if I survive the night..." He mutters, it's bad enough his whole identity is gone but now he's to included in a hunt as the item of the chase. *What did I do to offend those higher up then myself?*

"On this night of nights, doth the moon wax and wane." The hunter's voice can be heard once he's entered into the shimmering gate leading to some other land. **"Oh what doth my hounds flush out upon this mystical night?"**

He begins to jog through this forest, the voice of the huntsman echoing through the night. He swallows as he hears the bay of hounds. His heart begins to speed up as a dull sense of panic begins to set in.

Overhead, stars twinkle brightly without much cloud cover. There doesn't seem to be much in the way of wildlife either as the only sound that seems to reach his ears seems to be the whistling wind, baying of hounds, and the singing voice of the hunter.

"Be it a hare so filled with fright?"

His breath catches for a second before something out of the corner of his eye sprints away. Goose bumps raise up as he begins to pick up his pace.

"Long ears and legs, a beast that leaps with hopes of flight."

He tries to ignore the words as he weaves between bushes and trees, preferring the forest over the open fields.

"A little beast that darts and weave in search of it borrow dug hole of a home."

Light from the quickly waxing moon causes him to cast a shadow. He glances at to his side and finds a shadow of a small hare trying to push his own shadow out of the way. He snaps his head else where and swallows as best as he can while trying not to let his pace falter.

"A fine sport for the hounds, but trophy worthy its comes to be not!"

Something black darts away and out of the corner of his eye, his shadow is now alone.

"This beast's pace isn't that of a frighten hare, seeking refuge in its home."

The bay of hounds pause but he does not. He finally darts to cross the field to his right, hoping to cross it before the hounds and the hunter could catch a glimpse of him. Overhead the moon begins to wane and clouds begin to gather, blocking out the stars.

"Oh what a hunt this night doth bring as the bright loving moon doth wane. Darkness doth try to hide this prey from my sight."

His goose bumps raise up once more, they had calmed slightly before he had glimpsed that shadow hare trying to butt out his own shadow from following him.

"Oh what a sight this beast must be for darkness to veil it from my sight!"

On the horizon he spots something coming up.

"Perhaps a mighty antlered stag have my hounds flush out? Oh what a sight that stag must be!"

He feels as though something just butted him in the back, causing him to fall forward. He groans softly as something seems to try to trample him. Glancing behind, he finds a shadow, a shadow in the shape of a large stag.

He shakes his head and gets up despite the stag's attempts to overpower him. His head throbs and he tries to blast the stag away using green beam of energy that comes from a hand of his. The stag leaps out of the way and he takes off at full speed, trying to escape the shadow stag and its attacks.

"A full rack upon its brow, a healthy coat to fight the chill."

The stag hounds his every step.

"Is my prey a noble beast? Worthy to be a forest prince?"

He tries to fire off another green blast but it doesn't work. In the end, he just shakes his head and focuses on running without tripping over his own feet.

"Might this beast sport sturdy legs with cloven hooves? Capable of out racing an ancient foe?"

His lungs burn and numbness slowly seems to settle upon his legs. Then he cries out before falling down, his vision swims and for a moment, just a moment, he thought he saw fur sprout upon his legs and something itchy upon his head.

Get out of me! He thinks furiously and suddenly, he feels drain, but oddly satisfied. With a shake, he gets to his feet and continues towards the stream. The baying of hounds begin again as he makes it to the stream, he pause to take a breather.

"A good trophy this would be stag, but at last, the darkness yields it hold, allowing my sight to see, that this beast could not be such a prince."

He jerks and glances up to find that yes, the clouds were clearing to allow the moon and stars to look down upon the land. He shakes his head and walks into the stream to begin walking down it. His eyes glancing all about him as the distant baying of hounds seems to be getting louder.

"Open field my prey did go, charging out of the forest's emerald glow. Foolish trail this beast doth take or is this beast as clever as a fox?"

He feels a shiver go down his spine and he glances around for a shadow shaped fox. After all, for every beast this hunter lists, a shadow of the beast comes to him. He becomes worried since he hasn't spotted this one yet as he picks up his pace.

"Could this beast be the feet footed thief that stalk the field? The one who haunt the fowl huts?"

His jaws begins to hurt from the tension and he tries to force himself to relax. Then, something causes him to fall forward and he hurriedly raises himself out of the water using his hands and knees. He shakes his head before glancing at his back to find the shadow beast upon his back.

He tries to stand but the fox quickly nips his neck. He keeps trying to throw the beast but it only kept nipping his neck or, on a rare occasion an ear. He stops after a few seconds and glances off to his left, he hears the baying growing and begins to crawl forward on his hands and knees.

He hears the fox yip its approval, but he doesn't pay it much heed and in time, forgets that the little beast is even riding upon his back or that he should be standing on two legs. Within seconds, traveling upon all fours suddenly got easier as his legs seem to become the same length as his arms...

"The slyest of the sly, the fox doth be. The favored sport of hounds and hunters."

He shakes his head as he pauses, he felt uneasy. He jerks his head and glances backwards to find something familiar behind him. Something tells him to growl at this black thing to chase it away but the shape is so achingly familiar that he does not.

"Trickery be their trade and their specialty. Living by their wits and their feet, never confronting when they could run."

He stiffens with wide eyes as he recalls whose shadow it truly is that he's looking at. He closes his eyes and then pushes up, trying to stand up right. He feels the fury of the beast and is more then relieved when he stands upright feeling a little dazed.

He finds the shadow fox before him before it vanishes. He sighs and begins to run once more. He knew that was a close call.

"By the moon's lovely light I see, not a red coat upon thee. So with great sorrow I regret mistaking this beast for a sly thief."

The stream seems to be getting stronger but he keeps following it, although he does move to the opposite shore. The baying of hounds continues to draw closer.

"This mystery beast doth be a puzzle to me. Perhaps this beast doth be something more? Some unusual fair like a boar or bear?"

He feels the hairs on the back of his neck raise up at the thought of being assaulted by either shadow beasts.

"It's tracks seem canine..."

He pales at the thought of a wolf shadow coming after him.

"Its a toss this is, for only two come to mind. Perhaps this beast be tamed? Maybe a stray hound of mine?"

He shivers and falls to the ground on his right as something appears about his neck. He grabs it and begins to fiddle with it to get it off.

"A young pup who's lost his way, bullied by its brother till it raced from the pack. Perhaps a gentle pat upon its head would be its reward for when it return..."

He bites his lip at the offer, it sounds very tempting since its likely an option that won't lead to his death...

He shakes his head, a fierce and stubborn resolve took root. He finally gets rid of the collar, he watches as it vanishes before hitting the ground. He felt uplifted that he didn't give in but at the same time, exhaustion at fleeing before this huntsman.

"No, this beast be not a hound. Its untamed spirit burns brightly this night. A wolf of unusual might."

He groans but decides not to run from this coming shadow. He stands as the black shadow approaches seemingly out of nowhere. The wolf doesn't move towards him nor does he retreat before this shadow. He found it very unnerving to be staring at something that doesn't have any visible eyes.

Then, as the hunter's voice echos through the night, not that he actually heard what the voice is saying as the shadow suddenly pounces and he blacks out. His last thought was that he hopes to at least go down fighting...

Herne

"It seems you've found someone worthy of being your apprentice, Herne." Clockwork muses as he rides through the portal with the lad resting in his arms. The ghost of time's form becomes that of an old man.

"That I have, that I have, Clockwork." He says to the staff welding ghost. "But he's not in any shape to accept the honor. You are sure that Frostbite will teach him what he needs to know to defeat Undergrowth?"

"Danny's ice powers are in dire need of training and who other then those of the Far Frozen to train him in their powers?" Clockwork points out.

He nods as the young lad within his arms becomes surrounded by a green glow. "His memories will need to be restored." He couldn't help but remark as the body of one Danny Phantom moves towards the forever age cycling ghost.

"He will think this is just a dream when he wake." Clockwork promises and he nods. "He has much to do before returning to this place."

"And I shall be waiting until then." He states, his hounds slink out of the portal now that Clockwork and young Danny have vanished.

Until then.

The End

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 3

I don't own Buffy the Vampire Slayer! The Monster's Ring is owned by Bruce Coville!

The Monster's Ring .

Those were the words on the box of the last unbroken item in the bin. Slitting the tape keeping the dusty black box closed, he opens the box up to discover a copper ring holding a green token that features a face, a face similar to a lion's only with horns jetting out of the forehead.

Xander sighs as he looks from the ring to what remains of the bin. "Let's see what you cost." The teen murmurs as he closes the box, not noticing that within the box there was a sheet of paper.

"How much is this?" Xander asks the man behind the counter. The man picks up the box and raises an eye brow before answering without wondering where the box came from. "A dollar." The owner says.

Xander rummages about in his pocket and places a five on the counter. Few seconds later, Xander walks out of the store with the ring box in his jean's pocket.

Bedroom

Xander sighs as he lies on his bed, the teen had check out other stores but none of them had anything good in their discard bins. The feel of the black box pressing into his hip causes Xander to roll slightly onto his other side so he can take out the dusty black box. "Looks like you're all I've got..." The teenager muses with the box being held before him.

Opening the box, Xander couldn't help but spot some kind of sheet of paper from his current angle of sight. Using his index and middle finger, he manages nab the bit of paper. Pulling it free, Xander takes a second to wonder if he shouldn't be cautious since the ring might be magic before he just brushes that thought off since he doubts a costume store would possess a magical item.

((Ethan sneezes and wonders if he might be coming down with something))

Unfolding the crispy yellow sheet of paper, an image of a horned monster's face and out stretched arms with the title reading, How To Work The Monster's Ring. Xander blinks before setting the sheet down without reading the rest to check his small library. Within seconds, the teen pulls a thin, light blue book entitled the Monster's Ring by Bruce Coville.

"Let's see, chapter 3, page 19..." Xander mutters to himself as he reads what's written on said page. Heading back to the bed, the male member of the Scoobies picks up the other sheet and begins comparing the two.

"Ok... now this is a freaky co-ink-a-dick." Xander muses as he puts the book and the sheet down on his bed as he now considers if the ring really is magical. "Only one way to find out..." The teen says with a slight grin.

Once the ring is on his right hand, on the right most finger, the finger that isn't the pinky, Xander grips it and almost begins to repeat the chant until the teenager stops as he considers what he remembers from reading the magic shop book.

"Might be a good idea to change out of these cloths..." Xander says as he pinches the front of his shirt. *It wouldn't do for Will or Buff to see some random monster wearing their friend's cloths...*

Once Xander is wearing some old, faded jeans that belonged to his dad, the teen finally grips the top of the ring and begins to chant as

he gives the ring two twists. "Powers dark and powers bright, I call you now, as is my right. Unleash the magic of this ring and change me into a monstrous thing!"

An odd sort of numbing feel engulfs him while he begins to feel very chilly. Xander holds his arms out and watches as coarse black fur seem to sprout out of his skin with surprising speed. As the fur finishes growing, Xander begins to feel hot as muscles begin to ripple and expand as Xander checks to see if horns did grow out of his forehead.

As the numbing vanishes and he couldn't help feeling excited, horrified, and a sort of disbelief that it worked. Xander moves to stand before the only mirror in his bedroom and comes face to face with his new face. Pulling his lips back, Xander feels a slight shiver goes down his spine.

He snarls at his reflection and despite his encounters with the twon's resident demons, he almost leaps into the air. *Ok... I now know it works so I might as well go back to my regular look.* Xander thinks even though the night beckons him.

Xander almost gave into that feeling if he didn't recall just what happens in Sunnydale at night. "Definitely don't want to encounter Buffy like this..." Xander admits in a very gruff, throaty voice as he grips the ring with his thumb and index finger, care of his claws as he chants as he twists the ring, "Powers bright and powers dark, hark to one who bears your mark. Let now my shape return to me and make me as I used to be!"

"Well, at least I have a costume for Halloween." Xander says as he takes off the ring after studying it for a few minutes once he's back to being human.

Oct 31st

Xander couldn't help but feel as if something just washed over him as he pauses mid-step as he leads a group of trick-or-treaters. Xander growls as he feels his grip on himself loosen ever so slightly. Before Xander knows what's happening, he finds himself leaping into the air, grabbing hold of an overhead streetlight as the group of mini monsters rush the spot he had been standing just a heart beat ago.

Xander begins to swing his body back and forth until he's got enough momentum to swing his body up onto the top of the sturdy streetlight. A few of the midget monsters hound the bottom of the streetlight but Xander judges that none of them would be able to grip the metal that the streetlight is made out of.

"Definitely glad that I decided on only one twist of the ring." Xander murmurs as a part of him feels as if the mini monsters were trying to challenge his position as top 'dog'. Glancing away from the street to judge the distance to the next streetlight.

Xander smirks as he begins to rotate his shoulders and crack his neck a few times. As Xander once more begins to swing on the streetlight, he couldn't help but feel so alive. Sailing through the air, for a few seconds, Xander couldn't help but feel alive before gripping the metal of the second streetlight.

The kids those kids that have been turned monsters, devils, and demons had long since abandoned trying to get at Xander so the teen drops down onto the street and glances about the street as mini ninja, soldiers, wizards, rangers, animorphic animals, monsters, devils, demons, and heroes battle among themselves or flee.

"Ok... I do believe I'm going to head for the library and hope that Giles knows how to stop this before those kids kill each other." Xander mutters as he begins to jog towards the school since he's not sure if either Buff or Will will be much help.

Nov 1st

"Looks like he couldn't wait to leave." Xander muses as he glances around the empty shop. The teen had hoped to ask Ethan about where he got the Monster's Ring but it seems that he won't be getting any answers this time.

Taking the ring out of the pocket, Xander holds it before him as he wars with himself about what to do about the magical ring. *This is a Hellmouth and that pretty much attracts Murphy's Law like a magnet to a fridge, which means that I might find myself much like Russel Crannaker and abuse this ring by twisting it three times or using it during a full moon or worst yet, doing both at the same time.* Xander muses but he closes his eyes and lets out a sigh.

"On the other hand, just because I throw this away doesn't mean that somebody else won't find it and use it. At least with me, I'll know where it is and if it's being used..." He mutters to himself and for a second, he feels as if the ring's face is looking at him but the moment vanishes and with a sigh, he pockets the ring.

Who knows, maybe it'll come in handy in the coming years. After all, this is a Hellmouth and anything is possible, though it'll likely occur more like a nightmare then a pleasant dream...

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 4

I don't own Buffy or WarCraft!

Race: Orc

Job: Hunter

Game: World of WarCraft

Willow sighs as she studies the mask that goes along with the costume. *Maybe they got a sorceress...* Will muses before pushing the first out of the way to reveal a new costume, only instead of a green 'orc' there's a purple skinned elf with glowing white eyes.

Race: Night Elf

Job: Druid

Game: World of WarCraft

Willow blinks as she mentally puts that one under the maybe list within her mind as she continues pass that elf costume. The next costume seems to be a blue penguin with a large bag strapped to its front, the next appears to be a Hex Witch costume, and she finds another World of WarCraft costume.

Race: Draenei

Job: Paladin

Game: World of WarCraft

The next one

Race: Forsaken

Job: Rogue

Game: World of WarCraft

The next one

Race: Orc

Job: Shaman

Game: World of WarCraft

The next one

Race: Gnome

Job: Warrior

Game: World of WarCraft

The next one

Race: Troll

Job: Mage

Game: World of WarCraft

Willow pauses and takes the troll one off of the rack and then holds onto it before returning to finding another mage costume but, at last, she only kept finding various other jobs like priests and warlocks. Willow did find a few human costumes from the World of WarCraft costume line but they weren't mages though.

Willow pauses and glances to try and find her two friends, Buffy and Xander. Will shakes her head slightly at the sight of Buffy standing next to this lacy monstrosity and Xander going through the cheap bin. Willow bites down on her lower lip as she glances at the costume in her hand.

As Will brings it up to her neck once she steps before a mirror, she finds a sticker on the back of the paper displaying the image of a troll in a robe. "Buy one game costume and get the second for half price." Will muses and for a few seconds she smirks slightly at the idea of getting a costume from the same game series, but then she reasons that Xander wouldn't want her to go to any trouble over him.

It takes a few seconds before one side of her psyche to win out as the part saying go for it points out that it would be like old times where Xander and her use agree on a certain theme. *But which one to pick?* Willow wonders as she gazes at the rack she found her own costume in.

"Thanks for the costume Will!" Xander says to the usual shy member of the scooby gang as he holds up the orc warrior costume Willow picked out for her childhood friend to wear. Willow blushes slightly as she says, "You're welcome Xander."

"Too bad Buff got her costume before we could try and convince her to go for that tauren shaman costume or one of the others we picked out." Xander says with a sigh and Willow hums her agreement. "It would have been nice." Willow admits as they pause, Buffy had hurried home with her dress.

"Well, see you tomorrow at school." Xander says after a few seconds of silence as they're about to part ways. "Yea, see you Xander. Glad you liked my choice." Willow says with a wave, Willow begins to head off in the direction of her house while Xander heads off in the direction of his house.

Oct 31st

"What hit me?" Xander wonders as he finds himself sitting on his ass on the street. With a grunt, Xander picks himself up off the ground and pats down his leather armor.

It didn't take long before Xander glances around in puzzlement. "Spirits..." The orc mutters at the sight of the sleek, metal tanks and then at the homes surrounding him.

"Where on Azeroth am I?" The warrior wonders as little beings race about causing havoc. Taking his board sword from his belt, the orc warrior named Xander stalks off to find what sorcerer is responsible for this.

I wonder how Willow is taking this? Xander wonders as he recalls that he had been in the company of his troll friend, a surprisingly shy troll at that.

"This is very bad mojo..." Willow mutters as she glances about the alien land she finds herself in. Few tried to hamper the mage's progress through the chaos going on.

Willow couldn't properly identify many of the races that were racing about. *You'd think those humans wouldn't be so freaked out by this...* The mage muses as Willow passes by a pair of screaming adults being herded through the street as she follows the direction of the core chaos magic.

"Heh, wonder what this sign says. Must be important if they've got a human featured among the scriptures..." Willow mutters as she stops by this small shelter standing by the black part of the street. Scratching her red hair, Willow standers there for a few seconds and almost jumps as a very large and long metal tank stops just a few feet from where she's standing.

"What you waiting for? An open invitation?" The human male sitting in the driver seat demands as the troll mage moves towards the open doors.

"What kind of invitation will I be a needing?" Willow asks and the driver rolls his eyes as well as mutter something about teenagers. A few of the little kids push her out of the way and enter into the bus.

With a shrug, Willow walks away, leaving the adult humans to deal with the hyperactive children. *I wonder if Xander's here?*

"Alright Xander, what the heck is going on here?" A human dressed up in black cloths demands as he finishes driving away the kids that were trying to take bites out of the human female before him.

"Do I know you, human?" The orc asks as he studies the female with a hint of interest. "And why are you wearing such strange garments?" Xander adds as he glances at the cloth ears resting on top of the female's head.

"Hello! I'm Cordelia, what's wrong, is that mask on a bit too tight?" Xander grunts as he mutters softly to himself, "Should have just let the kids have their way with her..."

Not that Cordelia seems to have heard the warrior as the green teenager continues on his way, true, he hadn't the faintest idea of where he's heading but Xander preferred some kind of action to no action at all. Sadly though, it seems that the feeble female has decided to tag along with him while chatting his ear off.

Definitely one of those who talks just to listen to the sound of her own voice... Xander concludes. The buildings had long since changed from those strange houses with bits of grassland before them to what appears to be stores. The young warrior grunts every so often when it sounds as if she's asking him his opinion.

What's up with all of these signs? They can't be warnings can they? Xander after a while.

A scream up ahead causes Xander to enter into a jog while the human called Cordelia calls out, "Hey, wait! Where are you going?" A much louder scream echos through the night, signaling that he's either getting closer or who ever is screaming is coming to him.

Bellowing his battle cry, Xander leaps over the fallen human to stand before her and the young whelps chasing her. The little ones back up

a few steps while something looking like a human appears behind the group of whelps. "Buffy! I should have known Xander was leading me straight to you." The annoying female says while the blond human steps more into the light.

Having a clearer view of the blond's face, Xander growls, "You're not human are you?" Brown eyes meet feral yellow and the blond just smirks.

"No guards..." Willow muses softly to herself as the mage ignores the strange buildings and the looks the humans were giving her during the time it took for her to arrive at this shop. The troll mage couldn't help but notice more of the local human language written in the window.

"No hint of magical defenses..." The young mage mutters out loud once more and taking hold of her staff, Willow the troll blasts the door open using a simple fireball spell. Before walking into the shop, Willow casts frost armor on herself.

"You're not Ripper..." The human by the stone statue says in surprise. Willow raises an eyebrow at the human male and casts a simple polymorph spell on the man so he doesn't interfere with her examination of the very magical stone statue resting at the center of the room.

After a few minutes, Willow takes her staff and using the butt of the staff, pushes the statue off the table and it shatters as it hits the ground. Before she could brace herself, she is sent flying backwards into the wall and blacks out seconds later.

Xander couldn't help but cock his head to the side as his prospective on things changes slightly. The memories of Xander of the Frostwolf clan remain as memories of Xander Harris finally come forward. Blinking, he glances down at the pile of ash that had once been Spike the vampire.

"What just happened here? Xander just de-bulked! Is de-bulked even a word?" Cordelia wonders as Xander grips the mask and lifts it off of his face before turning to regard the whelps... little kids.

"Cordelia? Could you please shut it for a few seconds, I've got a giant of a headache." Buffy says and Xander smirks while feeling very relieved by Buffy's requests since the popular cheerleader hadn't stopped talking since he rescued her as an orc.

I wonder how long those memories will remain? Xander wonders as he goes through his new set of memories and couldn't help but be very relieved that no demon has yet to consider poisoning food supplies to gather an army of undead or that the various demons and vampires weren't co-operating in any meaningful way as to create a massive army to conquer the world.

Xander snaps out of his thoughts as the gang of kids begin to sniffle and complain about missing their mommies while Buffy seems to be talking with... Angel? *When did he get here?* Xander wonders briefly before taking charge of the kids since Cordelia wasn't.

Next Day

"Kind of weird, huh? Having a totally different set of memories within you..." Willow muses as they sit at a table in the library while Buffy is busy organizing the weapons case while Giles is out trying to find a home for a certain sheep name Ethan.

"Not like we're going to get confused about who we really are considering our surroundings..." Xander points out and Will nods in agreement. "Too true, too true..." Willow admits with a smile.

"They do provide plenty of warnings don't they? I mean, sure the Burning Legion is a very good example of what could happen if every demonic being gives up on their feuds to achieve a single goal... Or what happens if you make pacts with demons..." The teen trails off but Willow gets what Xander is saying.

"I think I'm going to be a lot more careful with any attempts with magic from now on. As they say, absolute power corrupts absolutely." Willow says and Xander full heartedly agrees.

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 5

Don't Own Gold Digger or Buffy!

Name : Brianna Diggers

Race : Clone

Profession : Mad Science

Series : Gold Digger

Willow bites her lower lip as the young witch considers the costume hanging on the rack before her as she holds a simple ghost costume, a package that contains a white sheet with black eyes. *I can't believe somebody made a costume based on that comic series! It's a hard comic series to buy...* Will thinks as the young shy high school student stares at the costume while recalling Brianna's history.

"Hey Will... Oh, I didn't know anybody made costume from that series..." Xander says as Will's childhood best friend glances at the costume on the rack. "You should go for it, Will! I mean, that's one costume you won't find anywhere else." Xander points out as young Mr Harris glances away from the costume to glance into Willow's face.

"I mean, you love that series when we were younger." Xander adds and finally, Will finally gives up trying to resists the allure of the costume on the rack, handing the ghost costume to her friend and fellow Scooby, the red head takes the costume off the rack. *Xander's right, what are the chances that I'd ever come across a costume based off of Gold Digger? I hope it fits though...*

With a shrug, Xander wanders away as Willow heads to where Buffy is standing before this lace monstrosity. *She's only looking at it*

because of Deadboy. The teenager think sourly before he turns away, once young Mr Harris has set down the ghost costume, Xander heads once more to the cheap bin in hopes off finding a few extra things, like a combat knife or even a temporary tattoo to act as a squad unit's mascot.

Halloween Night

Brianna couldn't help but groan softly as the young clone is suffering from something akin to a hangover headache. *Those screams aren't helping nor is that evil cackling...* The young half breed WereCheetah admits as she finally forces her eyes open.

"Great, it seems as if Peewee's latest experiment must have gotten and bred like a rabbit..." The younger sister of Gina and Brittany Diggers mutters to herself, although Brianna also wonder idly about how she got here in the first place since the last thing the young clone recalls was being in the shower after one of her Peebos exploded in a puddle of mud, causing the mud to cover much of the backyard.

Well, it looks like the cloths I'm wearing are clean... I wonder if I have my cell on me... Brianna Diggers wonders before she begins to pat herself down for said cell phone but can't seem to find it.

"Don't think I won't kick you where the sun don't shine." She snaps darkly after hearing a group chuckle behind her. A chorus of growls and snarls is hard to make out considering the chaos going on the street of where ever Brianna ended up at.

Rolling her eyes, the young clone twists the head face of her watch and within seconds, a total of four Peebos teleport in from Brianna's dimensional space pocket. While one part of her wonders why only four appeared, Brianna found it hard to care at this particular moment since she had other concerns at this point in time.

"Last warning, you really don't want to mess with me." Brianna says as she turns to stare at the group of experimental whatevers that Peewee had been cooking up in his lab. "Peebos go boom on bad guys!" One of the Peebos chants while the group spark a few lightning bolts in a threatening manner.

The little monster seem to have grown unnerved by this little display and finally, the group finally backs away before racing off to likely terrorize easier 'prey'. Brianna just sighs before glancing about for a pay phone. *Hopefully I'll get service where ever the hell I am...* Brianna Diggers muses as she picks a direction and heads in it in hopes of finding a pay phone since she doubts anybody is going to open their doors with these midget monsters running loose.

Brittany knocks on the door of the bathroom. "Come on Brianna! You've been in there for, like, two hours! It's time to get out of there, sis! You're using up all the hot water!" The Werecheetah yells but Brianna doesn't reply.

With a growl, Brittany Diggers kicks the door open and is about to lecture her sister only to find her sister laying on the floor of the bathroom, totally unconscious. "Brianna? Brianna! Come on girl, wake up." Brittany says after rushing to her sister's side and slowly, gently shakes her sister's body.

"Gina! We have a problem! Something has happened to Brianna!" The Werecheetah yells at the top of her lungs as Brittany picks up the unresponsive body of her sister in a bridal style and heads for the medical ward of their house. *I'm glad Stripe took Tiffany out on that father-daughter movie night. I really don't want Tiff to see one of her aunt like this.*

"What the hell do you mean the number isn't active?" Brianna growls into the phone but the voice recording only repeats the unable to connect, please try another number. Brianna slams the phone back onto its hook and collects the change that comes out. "I'm stuck here, in *Sunnydale* and I can't phone home! I also can't access more

of my gear and my senses feel tingly." She rants to herself since the Peebos seem to be watching tv on display before an electronic shop.

You know, I could probably create my own satellite phone using stuff from that shop... But the problem is, the store isn't open... Brianna muses but finally, glancing around at the chaos going on about her, she figures that nobody will think much about her breaking into this store, not with these various creatures causing all kinds of the havoc, which also includes destruction of store property and theft of merchandise.

Whistling an innocent tone, Brianna walks over to the door and punches through the wooden door. The alarm blares as Brianna unlocks the door. Once that's done, she heads into the simple gadget shop with her Peebos hot on her heels. It didn't take long before Brianna turns on the lights and summons what she can of her tool kit using her watch.

While the various Peebos watch various tvs, she's a bit busy constructing a phone. She did pause and says, "Turn it back to that news channel, please." Within a half a second, one of the Peebos do as she asked.

The news broadcast showed various clips of fictional characters like the Hulk, Superman, Spiderman, Sailor Moon, etc trying to control the chaos caused by the monsters and not succeeding due to numbers. The broadcast itself ended as the Joker and a couple of other villains appeared before the camera. A sense of dread fills her as her thoughts began to consider that maybe, just maybe, something magical in nature is behind this and that she, too, is just like those others, dragged from their homes to Sunnydale.

Leaving off the semi-built phone, Brianna turns on the computer and once she's hack through the password, she accesses the world wide web, once finding a search engine, she types her name before clicking search. Within minutes, a listing of various *Gold Digger* sites pop up and it didn't take her long to learn that in this world, she, too, is a fictional character.

That explains why I couldn't phone home, there isn't a home to phone! Brianna Diggers thinks and then she looks around for a memory card.

In the end, she creates one and then begins to hack and download as much information she can about this Gold Digger comic, if only to compare time lines between the comic and her home reality.

A soft groan echos through the room and within seconds both Gina and Brittany appear at either side of the bed where their sister is resting on. "Gina? Brittany! You won't believe where I've been!" Brianna says while trying to sit up but Brittany struggles to keep her younger sister laying down.

"Hey now, just stay down! Dad said to make sure you stay in bed when you come back from your travels. Something about motion sickness, I think." Gina says, causing Brianna to huff but she does stop trying to sit up.

Within seconds, Brianna summons a familiar memory card. "Here, just check it out, ok? You never know, it just might come in handy want's on there." Brianna says before exhaustion causes her to yawn.

"Sure, just get some rest, Brianna." Gina says as she takes the memory card from her sister.

"Ah, Will? What's up with those bots?" Buff asks Willow and Will glances behind her to the four Peebos that seem to have adopted her since she awoke up in that shop. They had likely gotten out of Willow's book bag that she dropped off by her chair once she entered into the library.

"Well, you know how last night we turned into our costumes? Well, I dressed up as Brianna Diggers and she summoned these guys from her dimensional pocket. Also, she forgot to re-pocket them before it ended." Willow explains while the four robotic explosives continue to check around the library.

"Go boom on bad guys!" One of the Peebos state proudly, causing Will to smile. "Go boom?" Buff asks her with a slightly raised eyebrow.

"Well, I might need to make a few adjustments to them." Will admits as ideas of future Peebos dance within her mind's eye.

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 6

I don't own Digimon or Buffy!

Just my luck... Xander thinks passively at the sight of a small group of five ten year olds making off to the counter to pay for most of the plastic guns and other military items that had been within the cheap bin. The white knight of the local Scoobies approaches the bin mournfully in hopes of finding something that could save his Halloween while he retains his title as the Two Dollar King.

Xander blinks at spotting something, he moves some of the stuff to find a white plastic thing that reminds him of a virtual pet. The back has a few spidery cracks upon it but the screen and the buttons the screen are fine.

"That looks like an original Digivice! You know, from season one." Some snot nose kid remarks and Xander gets an idea.

"Really? From what show?" The Zeppo asks the little girl.

"Digimon of course." The girl says and Xander grows thoughtful.

Looks like a little research is needed. Xander decides.

Oct 31st

"Let's see..." Xander mutters as he begins to search through his room for some stuffed animal or pillow to act as his Digimon partner. The white knight hums as he finally assembles his tiny collection of decorated pillows and stuffed animals.

"Well, looks like you're the only one in good shape." Xander says to a small oval black pillow with purple eyes and minor orange Mohawk. "And I dub thee, Gimon, fresh level Digimon."

'Gimon' doesn't say anything as Xander picks up the 'Digimon', tucking 'Gimon' under his arm as he leaves the room. Xander stops to make sure this pale blue goggles, something he found in the cheap bin along with the white plastic Digivice, were resting comfortably upon his forehead.

The plastic Digivice in his pocket while the homemade tag and crest hung under his shirt. The tag being black with lighter black being used to showing a simple shield and upon that shield is Willow's best efforts to draw the star designed used for the crest of light. Willow had presented him with it yesterday, proclaiming it the crest of protection since he's always been her protector.

Xander grins into the mirror before leaving the house as soon as he gets his runners on. It didn't take long to arrive at the Summer residence where he's to hook up with Buffy and Will. *I feel almost sorry for making that bet with Buffy, ah well, I'll think of a way to make it up to her at a later date.*

"Ah, Xander? Do you have something to eat? I'm starved!" Gimon says while Xander tries to make sense as to what's the hell is going on around them.

"Huh, don't seem too. I guess we can grab one of those candy filled pillow cases..." Xander says to his partner, who for some reason is in his fresh form.

Xander's grip upon the little Digimon doesn't keep the little black ball of fur from leaping out from under his arm. The fresh Digimon hops to the closest pillow case and gripping it, Gimon bounces up and down while shaking the pillow case violently about, causing candy to spill out before Xander could do more then take a few steps towards the fresh Digimon.

"At least let me unwrap it for you!" Xander says to his partner as Gimon begins to chew upon an apple. "Glutton." The goggle wearing Digidestine mutters with affection as he picks up some of the wrapped candy to unwrap it.

A few Ice Bubbles keep the monsters from attacking the little Digimon and his human partner. Xander is more then a little relieved when his Digivice begins to beep, signally that Gimon is ready to Digivolve up into his in-training level.

"Gimon Digivolves too...!" The energetic, high pitched voice of Gimon calls out as light engulfs him. "Gimumon!" A lightly deeper pitched voice says and as the light vanishes to reveal Gimumon.

Gimumon still lacks legs and remains black in color, although the orange Mohawk has been exchanged for a pair of pale orange feathered wings and a short tail sporting a white flame at the tip. Minor tusks jet out from Gimumon's mouth and eyes remaining purple.

A few flaps of his wings and Gimumon takes to the air. "So... where are we?" Gimumon asks his human partner and the goggle wearing teen sighs as he scratches the side of his head.

"Well, I think we're in America, although I'm at a lost to explain what those things are... I don't suppose their Digimon?" Xander asks his partner and the in-training Digimon frowns.

"They don't smell like Digimon..." Gimumon says and Xander nods. *They didn't appear as Digimon either but it's good to get that confirmed.*

"Xander! Xander, oh my god, it's good to see that you're not affected too!" A female voice says and the two partners glance around in confusion.

"Do we know you?" Xander couldn't help but ask this red head wearing some really provocative cloths. "She doesn't have a scent." Gimumon remarks with a hint of worry.

"It's me, Willow!" The teen says and Xander couldn't help but stare at her.

"But... you can't be my little sister! She's, like, ten years old!" Xander says as he realizes that this teen does indeed share certain characteristic with his younger half sibling.

"Sister?" This older look alike of his kid sister stutters out with a hint of despair. "This isn't good, not good at all!"

In the end, Willow just decided to leave that be for now as there are more pressing issues concerning her body and Buffy. Although Willow is glad that Xander had something to help fend off the fake little demons and other monstrosities that roam the streets of Sunnydale.

Gimumon's Frostburn seemed enough to keep the costumed monsters at bay as Xander carries her costumed body. Though as more powerful ones began to show up as they track down Buffy, it took more effort from Gimumon to send those attackers packing.

Upon fending off a group of eight, Gimumon finally began to glow while this beeping sound comes from Xander. "Gimumon Digivolve too..." Gimumon's voice says and a slightly different voice states, "Ishimon!"

The light vanishes, revealing a black hyena with a white flaming mane with orange spots along this beast's side. Ishimon is about the size of a Great Dane. Around the Digital hyena's paws are bands of metal.

This is taking forever! Willow couldn't help but groan but couldn't deny that Digimon were definitely becoming higher up on her list of likes as the hyena like monster takes out the attacking costumed people without really causing any injuries.

"Willow! Xander! Thank god you're here! Something's wrong with Buffy!" Cordelia Chase comes along while forcefully leading a protesting Buffy.

Then upon seeing Ishimon, Cordelia and Buffy scream.

How come Cordelia isn't some cat creature? Willow couldn't help but think for a second before thinking. *I think it's time to involve Giles.*

Few Days Later

"Frostbite!" Ishimon states, activating one of his special attacks. Glowing white teeth touch a vamp, causing the site to become covered in ice.

The Digital hyena dodges to the left as a vampire lands forcefully where Ishimon had been just moments ago. Xander moves and quickly stabs the vamp upon the ground while his partner tackles the bitten vamp to the ground, holding the animated corpse so he could stab it.

"Great job, buddy! You're really working off those three dozen donuts." Xander teases the Digimon, nobody really knows why when the Chaos spell was banished that Ishimon remained.

"And you're working off your dozen." Ishimon replies with laughing purple eyes as the black rookie turns to face Xander. "So, we done here or what?" Ishimon inquires.

"Think so. Want to catch up with Buffy and see if she needs a hand or paw?" Xander asks the rookie. *Not that I'm complaining about him, even if he'll eat me out house and home.* Xander muses fondly at the Digital Monster.

Ishimon snorts before glancing off to some point in the night before shaking. "I'm willing to call it a night." The rookie says before a glow erupts around the hyena's form and within seconds, Gimumon now hovers where Ishimon had been standing.

Xander just shrugs and behind to lead his partner away from the graveyard. He touches his goggles for a second before pocketing his hands into his jean's pockets. His new set of memories were

something he's still learning to manage and the goggles were just one of the changes to his over all appearance.

Let what is to come, come. I will stand by my girls and especially by my partner. I am a protector of man. I am a shield of this world. I am Digidestined. Xander thinks as he walks confidently through the night with Gimumon flying slightly behind him.

Looping Naruto: To Be A Cyber!

I don't own Cybersix or Naruto!

Naruto

"Cybersix?" He wonders as he stares down at the tattoo that's upon his arm as he sits upon the bed. He sighs as he realizes that this has to be some kind of partial fusion loop.

"Well, let's see if I can't find something that will tell me why the alarm clock buzzed so early..." He says, finally standing up. He begins to stretch his arms as he begins to explore the apartment.

He found something about a high school and a book list. He finds the books piled next to the door as well as a suit case. With a shrug, he heads for the bathroom to take a shower before getting dress.

For some odd reason, he doesn't feel hungry...

At the High School

"I'm teaching what?" He couldn't help but exclaim. "Sorry, it's, I haven't had enough coffee, you know? Still trying to fully wake up." He hurriedly apologies before the principal of the high school could react to his out burst.

"Well then, I'm sure that you'll be able to get your fix when I show you the staffroom." The man in the expensive suit says upon getting up from his seat. "Come along then, Mr Seidelman."

"Yes sir." He says as he gets up from his own chair. He couldn't help but follow the other man as his mind tries to wrap the thought of him teaching something that has nothing to do with physical conditioning or chakra. A part of him takes note of what the principal is saying to him while the rest of his mind is a bit consumed with mental ranting.

How am I going to teach literature? I'm no bookworm like Sakura! Just who did I offend this time to be stuck teaching literature of all things to high school students? He mentally wonders as he slowly comes to terms with the idea of him being a literature teacher for this loop.

Kami this is going to push the limit of my acting abilities, isn't it? He thinks with a soft sigh as he finally recovers from the shock by the time to drink a cup of coffee upon arriving to the staffroom. As he pours another cup, he glances around the kind of dingy room.

Upon finishing off the second cup, they continue upon the tour of the campus, he dimly recalls a classroom filled with laughing students and their teacher, he didn't really pause to look in the window of the class either. He breaths a sigh of relief when the tour ends at the classroom that he's to be teaching at. After a few seconds of minor chit chat, the principal leaves him to enter the class.

I'm so going to fail at being a teacher... He decides as he glances around the currently empty classroom.

During Class

Ok, she knows something. Now then, how to go about learning what she knows without making it look like I'm hitting on a student? He wonders as he studies a red haired teenager named Lori from his position at the dress as he has a student read out loud.

"You're Mr. Seidelman? Really?" Lori asks in alarm. He recalls when he introduced himself as such.

Lori

Where's Cybersix? And just who is this 'Mr. Seidelman' really? I wonder how Lucas will take this turn of events... She wonders as the blond man sitting at the desk watches a fellow classmate read from the book.

She's more then happy to leave when the bell rings. "Read the rest of this chapter. I'll be quizzing you all on it tomorrow." The imposer says as they pack up their stuff and leave.

"Lori, a moment please?" The imposer asks and she freezes. She waves her gang off before turning to find the highly handsome man studying her with his blue eyes.

"What's up teach?" She asks and the man seems to become bemused by her attitude. She wonders how she'll get out of this.

"I don't suppose you can tell me about this, could you?" The blond man asks, rolling back his sleeve to reveal a very familiar tattoo. She pales at the words upon the man's arm.

"How did you... There's only one and you're not her!" She says, too shocked to watch what she's saying.

"I replaced a woman? Kami, I'll never live this down... I can see Saotome now..." The man groan and she's shaken enough to parrot back Saotome in a curious tone.

"Never met him or her before? Usually fifteen years old, black hair done up in a pig tail, and can commonly being chased by a large number of women?" The blond asks her and she just shakes her head, although she couldn't help but wonder why this teen would be hounded by women.

Must see him to know it, I guess. She decides as she asks, "And just who are you really?"

"I? I'm Naruto Uzumaki, most often a Genin of the Village Hidden in the Leaves. I typically start out as a twelve year old and am about sixteen when the loop loops." The blond answers and she's a bit surprise to realize that he must be Japanese in origin with such a name.

"Anyway, what's up with the tattoo? You're reaction suggests that its fairly important." The newly revealed Naruto asks her.

"I'd talk with Mr. Amato if you want technical details. All I know is that as a Cyber, you aren't human and that you need this glowing green stuff to keep on living." She says. "Mind if I go?"

"Go ahead, although I think it's for the best if you avoid using my actual name. For this loop I am Adrian Seidelman, it just raises too many question if I answer to another one." Naruto says to her and she pauses before nodding.

"Will do Mrs S!" She says with a grin before leaving the room. *I wonder what a Genin is?*

Naruto

Cybersix must be the original anchor with Lori and Mr. Amato being recently awoken. He decides as he finishes packing his stuff into the suit case. He closes the door of the classroom and walks away.

Now to find out what a Cyber is. He thinks to himself, heading for the staffroom to subtly inquired about this Mr. Amato. *If they don't, I can always look through the phone book.*

"Mr. Seildelman I take it?" One of the woman teachers asks him upon him entering into the staffroom. He smiles slightly, nodding while wondering if he'd be able to retreat quickly if the situation goes... hot.

"I am, Mrs.?" He asks and the two brunets smile while their eyes slowly study him. It wouldn't surprise him if they were mentally undressing him.

"Please, call me Miss Armani. And this is Mrs. Paderau." Ms Armani says in way of introduction.

"A pleasure." He says, wondering if its fortunate that one of them is a married woman or not. "Are any of the other teachers around? I won't mind introducing myself to them."

"Don't know how many stick around here after school. Although I believe the science teacher, Lucas Amato is likely still in the building." Mrs Paderau says to him, much to Miss Armani's annoyance if he's to judge the look the one teacher gives the other.

"Ah, I heard of him from one of my students as they were leaving. I wouldn't mind meeting the fabled man himself." He says and after a few minor exchanges of chit chat, he gets directions to Lucas' classroom.

I wonder what kind of reaction I'll generate from this Lucas Amato? Just what kind of relationship did this Cybersix have with him? He wonders to himself as he arrives before the door.

He stands there for a moment before finally biting the bullet and knocking upon the door. "Where have you..." The beefy looking blond man says, trailing off at the sight of him.

"Lucas Amato I presume?" He asks. "Might I came in? I think we need to talk about somethings." He says after the man nods.

"Sure..." The clearly dazed man says, allowing him in.

Days Later

"So, you're Data 7." He muses as he studies the panther with slightly glowing yellow eyes. The feline is yet another looper of this world, the true Cybersix's 'brother' in a manner of speaking.

The panther growls, tail twitching back and forth. "Lucas says you're a looper too." He says and the panther rumbles softly, he takes it as a yes.

"Well, my name is Naruto Uzumaki and until this loop ends, my 'job' as it were is to play the role of Cybersix." He explains to Data 7. "She'll return here when this loop is over and done with. This is not the first time I've found myself in somebody else's place, acting out their life. Do you have any problems with that?" He asks.

The created feline growls before shaking his head. He sighs softly in relief. "That's good." He says, though now he's at a lost as to what they should do next.

An idea slowly begins to come together and he grins slowly at the thought. He might not be into books the same way most of the other loopers were but that doesn't mean he's not interested in learning new things. "Say, I don't suppose you know where I can find a computer that's already connected into Von Reichter's data base, would you?" He asks Data 7 and the panther cocks his head in a questioning manner, clearly uncertain about what he plans to do.

Month Later

"Just how did you get your hands of all of this equipment so quickly?" Lucas asks before adding, "Where did you get the money to buy it all?"

"Well, for one thing, most of this stuff was in my pocket dimension. It took a week to finally access it but so worth it. As for the other stuff? What can I say? When it comes to gambling, I can do it blindfolded with both arms behind my back and I'd win the largest pots on luck alone." He tells Lucas as he watches as a cup fills up with a modified version of the sustenance Data 7 and himself needed to live.

"Pocket dimension? That's a joke, right?" Lucas asks him and he sighs.

"It's something you'll be taught if you ever end up in another dimension. Fairly handy to have, even if it's often difficult to maintain." He says as the cup finishes filling up.

"Well, cheers!" He says to the native after picking up the cup of glowing green liquid. He gulps it down and then smacks his lips. "Tastes kind of like drinking raw limes." He admits.

"Thanks, by the way, for renting the space so I can set this stuff up." He says to Lucas. "I'll pay you back when I get a chance to hit the casino." He promises.

Lucas waves him off by saying, "Don't mention it. I've been meaning to talk with Six about trying to steal the recipe for a while now. I now have it memorized and if we do this right, we might be able to come up with a cheaper and easier way to create it." he finds the man reading one of the computer hacking guides.

He idly watches the computer screen. He had to admit that as loops go, this one seems fairly easy even if you have to deal with being something akin to a vampire and fending off attacks from fellow type of beings, trying to keep the city from being taken over or destroyed. *Definitely a vacation loop.*

New Loop

"So how was our friends in the Bleach universe?" Sakura asks him and he raises an eyebrow at the current pink hair twelve year old. "I mean, Ichigo ended up being you last loop."

"Ichigo played me? Then that means..." He begins to laugh at the thought of Ichigo's role being played by a certain cross-dressing woman. *Sure I ended up acting out her role in that loop but when has a woman played the part of Ichigo?*

To Readers:

How many have seen a Naruto and Cybersix crossover before? I know I haven't! Also, if you don't know what Cybersix is, do a search on Youtube, they should have all 13 episodes of that show. (My fav is episode 10)

Be Prepared: Digimon plus DnD

I don't own Digimon or Dungeon and Dragons!

Taichi

What the...?! He thinks as he finds himself upon a battlefield. As he surveys around him, beings with dragonic features get placed around him in various poses. Then odd humans appear along with strange, almost nightmarish things.

Color finally seems to bloom upon the white figures that surround him. He feels weight upon his arms and glances to find a shield and a western double edged blade that's fairly jagged. He barely has time to register the fact that his fingers appear to have dull reddish brown scales upon them when time seems to become active, causing the beings and things around him to move freely.

He jerks his head back as some kind of spear head gets swinged at his head. He glances to his right and his body moves to bring him to face the be-horned human dressed in dull black armor. He uses his sword to push the spear away and moves into the personal space to slam his shield into the guy's chest.

The be-horned man is sent flying into one of the nightmare things. The nightmare chimera easily grabs and uses the guy as a meat shield as a axe head is being swung at it by one of those dragonic men. He charges forward to attack the nightmare, his sword digging into the nightmare's left side while the axe is lodged in the spearman's body.

The nightmare's monkey head snaps in his direction after letting out a bellow of pain. The dragonic man pulls the axe out of the spearman's body, causing red blood to fly through the air as he

moves to stand behind the monster, flowing with his momentum while he tries slice through the thing's back spine. The mace like tail tip manages to hit him in the right shoulder before he could block it with his blade.

He hisses but doesn't retreat, although he did find another of the strange human coming to engage him. He tries to slice the mace tail tip before move to attack the incoming spearman, a man that sports minor tusks and completely red eyes. He uses his shield to redirect the spear thrust and tries to slice through the spear.

He feels something in the back of his throat and taking in a sharp breath, he opens his mouth and watches in startlement as his opponent gets a face full of green gas. *What the...?! Where did that come from?*

He doesn't have much time to think upon this as he's under-attack from another spearman, the spear head clinks again his armor shoulder. His sword manages to hook upon the spear's body and with a powerful yank, he snaps the spear. He slams his shield into this one's face before jabbing down with his sword's tip.

A minor blood fountain erupts as the tip enters into this one's chest and with that done, he moves to face off against one of the axe warriors that's close to his position. His right shoulder hurts but his blood is racing and adrenaline flowing through him dulls any pain he's experiencing. He stretches his arms widely and roars, he manages to grab the attention of more then a few of the black wearing fighters and a pair of the nightmarish things.

For some reason, he's never felt this alive before as battlelust overtake him.

Takato

"Hey, you ok?" He asks a fellow dragonic person since he's pretty sure a few of the fighters around him were woman. The slightly silver

colored hammer welder glances at him with slightly dull eyes and then in a few blinks, those dull brown eyes gain life.

"Battle's over. Come on, we better check in with somebody in camp to see to any of your injuries." He says and the silver tinted dragonic man slowly nods after glancing around the field.

A number of other dragonic people were either helping to bring other shell shocked warriors to their senses or gathering up the dead. He's not sure what kind of funeral their enemies will receive but he knows they will be given one.

"I don't think much of this blood is mine." The silver tinted dragonic warrior says. "But it became hazy after the first few..."

He nods in understanding. He almost felt into that sweet allure of battlelust himself. It had taken an old memory to bring him to his senses and to shy from it, not that it really helped since during the battle, it had been kill or be killed and he had killed many this day without falling into it.

"Be glad you don't, for I doubt you'd be sleeping well tonight if you recalled it all." *I know I won't.* He adds privately.

He had noted a medal hanging around this one's neck, which gives him a general idea of where to drop the guy off at. What sentries about the edge of the newly set up campsite just waved them passed after seeing the medal about the silver tinted guy's neck. He rubs the back of his head, it felt odd to feel something that wasn't hair resting there as he subtly guides the other to a certain section of the camp.

"Thank you for bringing our missing brother back to us." One of the be-robed dragonic people says, coming out of one of the silver tents. He couldn't help but stare at the wings upon this silver scaled being's back.

"May the Might of Bahamut strength your arm." The be-robe winged dragonic man says sincerely as he's about to leave.

"I'll likely need it in coming times." He informs the priestly dragonic man. The winged other just pats him upon his shoulder before putting an arm about the one he guided back.

He begins to walk through the camp once more. He has yet to learn which section of the camp he's assigned to, so he once more, heads back to the battlefield to lend a hand out there. He doesn't know what to make of his situation and he dreads the idea that one of his friends might be among the injured or the dead.

"You with the dual blades!" He stops walking to turn to stare at a grizzled dragonman with a massive scar over an eye-patched eye. He walks over to the veteran.

"Sir?" He inquires, nervously wondering what's to happen now. The one eyed dragonman gives him a calculating look.

"Round up a few others for a scouting party northeast of our position here." One-eye says to him and he nods sharply before One-eye says, "You ID scroll."

He checks his pouches and pulls out a black scroll with red iconic shield with a black dragon head upon it, this is ringed by the phrase 'To Defend Above All Else'. He hands it to One-eye and watches as the other reads what's written within it.

"Graveshield, eh? Hopefully you'll manage to follow your clan's motto, Takato." One-eye says to him and he nods stiffly as he is given the scroll back.

He rolls it up as he walks through the camp and puts the scroll back into his pouch. He stops a few times, asking for directions for the usual hang out so he can gather a few others for that scouting party, he dare not disobey that order, not when he gets this feeling that it's

really, really important for him to follow it. *Just hope I can find fresh people in this tavern area...*

He leaves the tent filled part of camp and crosses into the off duty section. After glancing around, he walks over to a pair of stunned dragonic people and ask, "Are either of you injured?"

The pair glance at him and shake their heads no. "Good, I need fresh soldiers for a scouting party. Consider yourselves drafted." He says to them, hoping that he took the right approach.

"Err..." The more golden of the two glances from him to the other. "When do we leave?" The more golden hued one asks.

"Now, unless you need to go use the... trenches." He says, trying to think of a more medieval word for toilet. Neither seemed incline and he says, "Takato Graveshield."

"Joe." The more golden hued one says, he couldn't help but give that one a startled look. "Izzy." The more rusted brown says and he just sighs ever so softly.

"You might want to check your ID scrolls for your last names. I get the feeling clan names are a bit more important then personal names." He tells the two as they get up from the table.

"ID scrolls?" The two chime in and he displays his own scroll before motioning for the two to follow. He hears the two fall in behind him. *Now to figure out which direction north is and we'd be set.*

Takuya

As he slowly comes to, he finds himself in a cloth tent. "When you feel ready, you may leave, Firerune." Somebody tells him and he stiffly sits up.

Firerune? He mentally wonders. A soft groan causes him to look to his left.

"Aim lower... next time... Agumon." His neighbor mutters softly while the one to his right mutters, "Agumon... Why can't you leave me any of those eggs..."

He scratches the side of his head as he glances bewilderingly between the two. "Oh... 'k." He mutters before sighing.

He grabs his gear that's next to his pillow and gets up to leave... only to hang back to remain by the two who mentioned Agumon. *I wonder if they're talking about a Digimon. The name Agumon sure sounds like one.* He thinks to himself.

He finds somebody staring at him in a questionable expression upon their face and he felt compelled to say, "Their my friends. I want to wait until they're awake before leaving."

The dragonman's eyes soften slightly before cleaning one of the beds. He glances at the two, he tries to think of other things like his best friends or about what kind of food they serve. Anything but the fact that he had killed a fair share of fellow beings.

TK

"Can't sleep?" A voice asks softly as he stares into a cup of whatever they're offering. He blinks and glances up to find another one of the dragon men sitting across from him with their own cup.

"The battle... It was my first." He finally says, he dimly recalls how he arrived at camp. He wondered where that particular dragon man is.

"Mine too." The dark bronze colored dragon man admits. "My name is Ken Silkweave."

"Ken?" He asks and focuses more at the other. "It's me, TK." He says and Ken looks as relieved as he felt that he wasn't here alone.

"What are the odds, huh?" Ken muses, tension in the other's shoulders seem to fade. "Although, if you're here, does that mean

that the others might...?"

He smiles slightly at Ken's tone and shrugs. "If they're around, I'm sure we'll hook up." He replies.

They then sat there in silence for a bit, two plates arrive and he ate what he could stomach. "Sorry to bother you but..." A small group of four dragon men stood around the table.

"Does the word Digimon mean anything to you?" The one with copper hued scales asks with brown eyes. The other three stared at that one.

"Digital Monsters?" He says and the three ease up on giving the copper hued one hard looks. "Name's TK, TK Frostlance." He says as way of introduction.

He notices the first speaker tense up and gives Ken a nervous look once his friend finishes his own introduction. "Tommy Clawstorm." The copper hued one says cheerfully.

"I'm Thomas Asktrail." The one directly behind Tommy says with the other previous silent one saying, "Koichi Moonhowl."

"Henry Glasswing." The last one says after recovering from his shock. He waves them to take a seat at the table.

"You seem surprised when we told you our names." Ken remarks observantly and most of the others turn to regard Henry. It's clear they want to know why that is too.

"Well... To put it bluntly, both TK and yourself, Ken, are considered cartoon characters where I originate from." Henry says and he couldn't help but stiffen while looking at Henry with widen eyes.

"When you say cartoon characters..." Koichi trails off and Henry sighs.

"The very first episode has seven children at summer camp. Taichi "Tai" Kamiya, Yamato "Matt" Ishida, Koushiro "Izzy" Izumi, Sora Takenouchi, Mimi Tachikawa, Joe Kido, and finally Takeru "T.K." Takaishi finding small white devices. Upon taking said devices, Digivices, a rift opens up and engulfs them, sending them into another world." Henry says and he dimly remembers that event.

"Wasn't Kari suppose to be Digidestined at that time?" Ken asks and he glances over at Ken, suddenly realizing that unlike the rest of the second group, Ken likely hasn't heard their tale before.

"We didn't know about Kari until Myotismon's ex'henchmon revealed to be Kari's partner." He admits and Henry nods.

"The first season ends when you are sent home for 'good'." Henry says. "Second season begins with you, TK. Your first day of school. It did show scenes of what's going on in the Digital world between your scenes." Henry says and he glances away, feeling oddly pleased about that.

"Wow... That's pretty cool, having your own cartoon show to star in." Tommy says.

At least Henry knows who to look out for... He muses. "What about you, Henry? You hoping to find any members of your team?" He asks.

"I'm pretty much expecting find Takato causing a scene. He's kind of... not very graceful." Henry admits before continuing, "Although I'm pretty sure the others with the likely exception of Ryo, would have drawn attention to themselves before now." Henry says with a sigh.

"Ryo?" Ken asks, his friend's body tense and Henry blinks. "Ryo Akiyama?" Ken asks and Henry nods.

"Ryo's alive?" Ken and him ask at the same time, startling Henry. "All this time..." Ken mutters.

Looks like there's more connecting our two worlds then just a cartoon... He thinks, its clear that they're not going to cover all of their histories in this one sitting.

Matt

"You know where the officer with the eye-patch is?" A voice asks and he turns to find a group of three standing before him. "We have something to report." The crimson eyed dragon man with two blade says to him.

"I think you're talking about Colonel Scalestone." The other sentry says. He could see his fellow sentry is frowning, likely not going to give them any help seeing as they didn't even know who they were looking for.

"Why don't I escort you three to see him?" He says, more then eager to leave this post, for a while at least. He's already leading them into the camp before Metalfan could say anything else.

"Not a very believable story, you know." He comments to the three.

"We're new." The spokesman admits. "My name is Takato Graveshield by the way." The crimson eyed dragon man adds.

"Matt Frostlance." He says and he pauses to glance back to find the yet to be named duo.

"Matt? How did you wind up becoming a sentry?" The golden hued one asks him. "It's Joe and Izzy." The same one adds and he couldn't help but feel as though something just got lifted from his shoulders.

"I wonder how many others are about..." Izzy muses as they continue into the camp. He couldn't help but agree with Izzy's sentiments.

Silence hangs between them as they finally enter into the tent area of the camp. At the center of the camp is where the more fancy tents, though the paladins and the other clerics could be found not far from the healing section of the camp.

"Colonel Scalestone, a scouting party lead by Takato Graveshield has come to report their findings." He says upon entering into the large teal tent. The one eyed Colonel glances at him before waving for him to allow the party to enter.

"Sir!" Takato says, saluting to the high ranking dragon man. The one-eyed warrior motions for Takato to continue.

"We located a siege workshop just as the enemy set it on fire. We found deep tracks suggesting whatever was created are on their way straight east. We engaged a counter scouting party upon our attempts to follow after." Takato reports. "We retreated upon the arrival of range support. They stop following a mile beyond the smoking ruins of the workshop."

"That supports what our oracles have managed to foresee." Colonel Scalestone's visitor states, drawing attention to themselves. "Have you brought anything back from the workshop, Graveshield?" The visitor asks.

Takato takes out a ruined chisel and the greenish brown dragonic warrior takes it from Takato's out stretched hand. "Well done, hopefully our mages will be able to use divination to reveal how many siege engines were built at the workshop." The stranger says, pocketing the tool.

"Get some rest, Graveshield. Noon tomorrow you shall report to me for your next assignment." Colonel Scalestone says and with that dismissal, they exit the tent.

"I better get back to my post. If I'm still awake come dawn, I'll be in the common area trying to stay awake." He says to the trio and his two old friends nod.

"Take care, Matt." Takato says before following after Joe and Izzy after glancing about in mild confusion.

Interesting guy. He decides, wondering how the crimson eyed, dual sword welding warrior managed to impress the Colonel enough to be entrusted with a commanding position since the dragon man hadn't addressed Joe or Izzy. *Wonder if I can't transfer to serve under him...*

Davis

"Why haven't you gone to bed yet?" He asks as he studies the six at the table. He left Cody, JP, and Kouji waiting a few feet away.

"Do you know where our tents are?" One of the six asks and he gives them a startled look. "Err..."

"Ken Silkweave." One of them says in a tired tone. He just stares dumbly at that one.

"Ken? Silkweave? Really? And here I thought JP's clan name was abnormal." He says and two of the six echo, "JP? You know where JP is?"

"Yea, he's over there with Kouji and Cody." He says, waving his hand over to the three. "So Ken, who are you're friends?" He asks before the two charge over to where Cody, JP, and Kouji were standing.

"Kouji!" "JP!" "Err?"

"Nice to see you, Davis." The silver tinted scaled warrior says and he gives that one a questioning look before glancing at Ken.

"I'm TK." And he opens and closes his mouth a few times, not really sure what to make of this.

"Who have you manage to find?" He asks as he glances around at the last two members of the six.

"I'm Thomas Asktrail." "Henry, Henry Glasswing."

"Asktrail?" He couldn't help but wonder as he stares at Thomas in slight bewilderment. Thomas gives him a blank look and he finally turns away feeling a tad intimidated.

Marcus

"You mind if we bunk in here?" Somebody asks and he glances at the entrance of the tent. He gets up out of his bed upon realizing that neither Tai and Takuya were awake.

"Depends on a few things." He says as he opens the tent door and finds a golden hued dragon person. "Like what's your name?"

"Joe Sunduster." He blinks slowly before opening the tent flaps some more. "Marcus Hawkeye."

"Thanks." Joe says and as the new arrive takes off his armor, the golden hued Joe asks, "You know of Digimon?"

"Partnered with an Agumon. So is Tai over there, too." He answers and Joe laughs softly.

"First I find Izzy, then Takato recruits us for a scouting party, found Matt on sentry duty..." Joe trails off and he chuckles softly along side of the new arrive.

"The other one is Takuya Firerune. It seems he's from a world where they become Legendary Digimon Warriors." He says to Joe.

"Takato claims to merge with his partner, Guilmon, to become a mega named Gallantmon." Joe muses and he stiffens upon hearing that name.

"Really? How... interesting." He muses, wondering what a certain Royal Knight would react at the thought of a Digimon and human partnership becoming something akin to a Royal Knight.

Tai

"Matt." He says cheerfully as they find the dead exhausted Matt sitting at a table, barely able to keep awake let alone keep his head from dropping down upon the plate of food. He pokes his exhausted friend while waiting for Takato, Takuya, and Izzy to bring plates of food.

"Tai... Keep that up and I'll cut off the finger." Matt growls and he can hear Marcus snicker.

"Ah, and here I thought you missed me." He teases his friend. Matt just glares at him before finally picking at the cold breakfast.

"So... what kind of mission do you think the Colonel plans to send Takato on?" Takuya wonders as the three come walking over with wooden trays filled with drink and food.

"Likely something related to those siege engines." Izzy muses as the three with trays arrive.

"What about those siege engines?" Takato asks Izzy while handing out the plates of food.

"Just guessing about what mission the Colonel will send you on." Marcus answers with a smirk. "Hope you remember to invite me when your ready to go."

"Don't know if I'll be allowed to conscript those to serve under me." Takato points out. "But if I could, I would take you all." The crimson eyed dragon man adds.

"We do need to stick together, don't we?" Takuya says and once more Takuya reminds him of Davis. *Wonder if they're the same age?*

"We should, although it does make you wonder, doesn't it? Did the girls get picked up along with us?" Joe muses. " After all, so far we've found other the guys." The golden hued dragon man points out.

"I wonder if that means that Henry, Kazu, Kenta, and Ryo are where, in this camp?" Takato wonders and he's not the only one to be startled at the name Ryo. "Though I get the feeling Rika's going to be upset missing out on this adventure."

"Your girlfriend?" Marcus asks and he's curious too as Takato gets embarrassed by the question.

"If she heard you say that..." Takato says, shaking his head.

"What? Giggle and blush?" Marcus asks and Takato stares at Marcus.

"Just be glad she isn't around to hear you imply that. I still recall what she did to Impmon and Terriermon when they started that rumor about our friendship." Takato shivers slightly with a haunted look in his crimson eyes.

If he were still human, he'd have goosebumps. *Just what kind of girl is this Rika to cause that kind of look?* He wonders.

"She can't be that tough." Marcus says in a dismissive manner. Takato just shakes his head and focuses on his plate.

"Anyway, Joe mentioned that you merge with your partner to become a mega Digimon. How did you manage that?" He asks, recalling that little detail.

"Huh? Oh, you mean Bio-Merging? Well the short version, I guess, would be we were in the Digital World to rescue Calumon and I wished to fight along Guilmon's side. We just became one in the form of a digital knight named Gallantmon." Takato explains.

"I'm guessing you were facing a powerful villain that forced you two to go mega." Takuya muses and Takato nods. "Who were you facing?"

"A biker dressed mega called Beelzemon." Takato answers. "In the end, Jeri wanted me to spare him and we did, even though he had just offed her partner and absorbed him." The crimson eyed Takato adds and he just stares at Takato as various emotions swirl within him.

"You just spared him?! Just like that?!" Various members at the table demand loudly.

Takato winces at their accusatory tones. "It was a favor to Jeri. And it was her partner that was..." Takato defends himself.

"That must have caused more problems down along the line then you needed." He muses and Takato sighs. "Big time." He adds.

"It's complicated, all I can say is that Impmon felt left behind and took an offer from Zhuqiaomon for power. Zhuqiaomon wanted us dead and thus is why Beelzemon was after us." Takato says. "I should also add that Zhuqiaomon is one of the four Digimon Sovereigns."

"So the big bad four?" Marcus asks and Takato shakes his head.

"I'm not sure if this means anything to you, Marcus, but Azulongmon is a member of this group where I'm from." Takato glances at him and then at the others.

"You're kidding, right? Why would one of the Harmonious Ones want a group of chosen dead?" Izzy asks.

"He really, really hated humans. He even planned to take over the real world." Takato says before adding, "Like I said, it's rather complicated story. One that likely needs to be heard from beginning to end."

While he wants to hear more about this, he had to admit that hearing Takato's adventures from beginning to end would likely answer most of his questions. He just returns to eating his breakfast as he tries to imagine what kind of adventures Takato had gone through.

Takato

"Ah yes, Graveshield, come in, come in." The one-eyed Colonel beacons him in. "Met Paladin Takeru Frostlance. He'll accompanying you on your mission to destroy those siege engines."

TK... He looks familiar... He thinks as he studies the silver scale tinted dragon man. "You seem... familiar." He admits out loud.

"You walked me back to my brothers and sisters within the camp after the battle yesterday." TK supplies and he blinks, finding it hard to recall that encounter after the more recent fight many hours from this spot. "Thank you for that."

"Glad that you two are acquainted." The Colonel says. "You have until sunset to finish your preparations. You may pick the members of your unit." Colonel Scalestone tells them.

"Yes sir." TK and him say at the same time. With that, they're dismissed and after getting away from center of the encampment, he says, "I know where your brother is."

"You've seen Matt?" TK asks and he nods. "What's your first name?"

"Takato." He replies and they continue to walk through the camp with TK by his side.

"I've met your friend Henry." TK admits. "Met a few others as well. I don't suppose you've met anyone else beside Matt?" TK asks.

"Let's see, I went scouting with Joe and Izzy. Upon returning to camp, we ran into your brother on sentry duty. Joe then bunked with Marcus, Tai, and Takuya." He says to TK. "Your brother headed off to get some sleep at the tent Tai and them had slept in."

"Mind showing me where that tent is?" TK asks.

"Why not, though after wards, we can gather up the others and recruit them for this mission." He says to the paladin.

"I'm sure they'll enjoy that." TK muses dryly.

Takuya

His axe digs into the naturally thick hide of this huge hell empowered boar. The boar bellows in outrage and tosses its head, the long tusks grazing across his shield as he moves to his left, following the boar's turning body. The monstrous boar is pierced in the side by Matt's spear.

He moves away from the fell beast, causing the boar to focus on him. Matt twists the spear while he blocks the foul yellow tusks. With the face of the boar too close, he takes a deep breath and breathes fire right in the fell boar's face, finally causing the boar to retreat from him.

The spear breaks as the boar crazily charges to his right, missing him by a good two feet. "You got anything else to use beyond that spear?" He asks Matt as they chase after the berserk boar.

"Just throwing daggers." The other says as one of those daggers is drawn from a certain large pouch hanging from Matt's belt.

The boar rams into friend and foe as it tries to flee from Matt and him. He manages to fend off incoming attack viva his shield and axe. Matt isn't so lucky but the other manages to evade most attack and when the boar moves to face right once more, Matt throws the dagger in his hand.

The boar bellows as the dagger enters into the throat. He turns away, leaving the fell boar for Matt to finish off, heading off to help Tai with a winged devil with a sinister black blade. The boar bellows a death knell, one that is picked up by the other fell boars who were trained to fight along side these Tieflings and summoned Devils.

"Takuya." Tai acknowledges. "Tai." He counters upon his axe grazing off of the thick hide of the nine foot devil.

The devil snorts in derangement at their exchange. The huge, obviously magical sword is raised into the air and a single word causes a ball of sickly orange flame to appear at the sword tip. Tai charges at the devil and he follows after, his shield ready to block the incoming spell.

He's not disappointed as fire erupts all around the devil. Tai's sword manages to gut the devil before the devil could try and fend off Tai's attack. His axe head ends up about the pelvic area of the devil, causes a small cut to appear.

The devil curses them in its native tongue, not that they cared as he brings his axe down upon the lower leg. He's more then pleased when his axe cuts deeply below the knee. He backs away from the devil to take a breath since the fire is still covering the area, eating up the oxygen to maintain itself.

He takes a few deep breaths before charging back in as soon as Tai is clear of the ring of fire. His axe rings as the magical sword comes down at him, the axe head remains relatively intact even though the sword seems to have bitten into the metal edge of the axe.

The devil snarls at him and he wishes he could bring his shield into play but the devil is still a few feet away. He takes hold of the axe handle with both hands to try and push the sword away.

Suddenly the head of the devil seems to explode and the body falls over, the fire finally gives away. He glances around to find TK glowing brightly and watches as spheres of light shot out from TK's open mouth to hit various devils. A few manage to evade the spheres, their eyes wide with fear.

Those that didn't react fast enough fall dead. The devils retreat, leaving only Tiefling soldiers and trained war beasts such as worgs and boars behind. It wasn't long before the Tieflings follow after the devils, leaving them to kill the war trained beasts.

"We must be getting close. That was the largest group yet." Kouji says and he nods in agreement before he begins to evaluate his armor and weapons.

He winces at the burn marks upon his leather armor, not to mention his burns upon his body despite him having some resistance against fire. He's trying to take off his armor but he finds his shoulders are aching painfully. He also found his hands to feel a bit numb too as he clumsily tries to undo the clasps keeping the armor on him.

"Here I'll help you out of that so I can apply this salve to help with the burns." Thomas says upon seeing his attempts. He clutches his jaws to keep from crying out in pain as the pants come off.

With his armor off, he suddenly gets a chill from the wind upon his naked body. He sighs as the salve is put on his raw hide. He can see Joe doing the same for Tai, not that it surprises him in the least since Tai and him had spent time in that flaming circle. The black circular patch is proof of that.

"I guess we'll camp here." Davis says, gathering up his armor, adding it to Tai's armor. "Looks like Takato got a nasty cut on his one shoulder." Davis adds, he follows Davis' gaze to see Henry and Izzy working on stitching the shoulder cut, Henry pressing down upon the large cut while Izzy sows the edges together.

"TK must be really drained if he's not magically healing that." He says as Davis walks away. Later they'll try and repair what they can on their armor, but for now, they'll just be piled off to the side as they address their injuries.

I wonder if Matt is the one taking care of TK. Whatever he did, it must have cost him a lot of energy to pull that attack on the devils. He thinks, glancing around to find the pair of brother.

"We're fortunate that TK's a paladin or else we'd have a harder time of it." Thomas says suddenly, as if reading his mind.

"Izzy, JP, and Henry's spell casting is coming along. They've managed to preform Light and Ghost Sound. Joe, Kouji, and Koichi are just beginning to get the hang of using Bless Weapon and Magic Weapon to pull it off during battle. It shouldn't be long before they're casting more useful spells." He says.

"They need more time to train in such things though. And time isn't something we have." Thomas points out and he wanted to argue about that, but deep down, knew that Thomas had the right of it.

I wonder if we'll even have enough time to rest... He wonders, glancing over to Henry, Izzy, and Takato. *I wonder how Takato's going to fight with a cut like that? Even if TK magically heals that, it'll be sore for at least a day...*

"It's funny how it feels like we've been here for years instead of little over a month..." He says as he holds his arms up at Thomas' request.

"They're using golem rhinos to pull the engines around and golems doesn't need to stop unless they've been order to stop." Thomas reminds him. "I'm more surprised they didn't have crafted giant mobile bases out of golems."

"Ah." Was all he could think to say.

TK

"It's like they're waiting for us..." He hears Izzy muse to his left. He just continues to stare at the large encampment, dread lodged in his gut at the sight of how many bodies they had to get through to get to the siege engines.

"Are we still going to go through with this? We won't come out of this alive if we go through with this." Koichi says farther to his left.

"As much as I want to, it doesn't feel right to leave without completing the mission." Takato says far to this right. "I don't know

about you guys but I want to at least die trying. I mean, we've come out of almost worst scraps then this."

"We had our partners with us at the time." Henry points out. "This? This is suicide."

He frowns, he can't help but feel as though Takato's got the right of it. The thought of backing away simply because of the odds against them just feels so cowardly. *I wonder if this is why I was chosen to be a paladin in this world...*

"I have to agree with Takato. Something in me wants to die trying. Like this is really, really important." Kouji says.

"I know what you mean." Takuya adds. "So... It's a good thing we got ourselves a couple of geniuses, right?"

"We're so going to die, it's not even funny." Joe bemoans.

"We better get pondering then." Tai remarks.

"I think I'm going to go meditate to bulk up on my spells." He says before slowly crawling backwards.

"Hopefully Bahamut will be generous enough to give a hint of our success." Cody says calmly and he grins a bit as he glances towards his DNA partner.

"It's in his talons." He points out. *Though it does seem as though I'm carrying his favor...* He mentally adds, glancing down at his silver hued scales that were beginning to take a metallic shine.

It takes a while before he found a spot where he feels confident in meditating. *I wonder how Kari and the other girls will react when they hear about this particular adventure...* He wonders before trying to clear his mind and open himself up to this dragon god.

Matt

"I didn't know you knew how to make gunpowder." Davis says as they help Henry and Izzy. Those that weren't helping Henry and Izzy were with Thomas, who in turn directs the others to rig up large slings to shoot the home-made bombs into the army below.

"Do we even want to know where you got the stuff to make these?" He asks as he uses wet leather straps to wrap two wooden halves of a bomb shell together. Marcus places a freshly carved half next to him before picking up another block to begin the process of carving it into a shell half.

"Not likely." Henry says as Izzy and him continue to stir the bowl that holds the leather straps. They didn't want to cause a mishap and decided to wait until they've had the shells of the bombs ready before mixing the ingredients together to create gunpowder.

"Makes you wonder if anyone down there know how to make gunpowder, doesn't it?" Ken muses while twisting some cloth to make fuses for the bombs.

"Unlikely or else we'd be confronted with gun fire." Izzy answers. "I believe they use oil firebomb."

"Isn't that called Greek Fire?" Tai asks, pausing in his carving. "A fire that burns upon water itself?"

"Gee, Tai, I didn't know you're so well read!" He teases his friend and Tai sends him a minor glare.

"Can it, Matt." Tai states calmly.

"What kind of meat is that?" TK asks upon his return to camp after a good two days of absence.

"It's not meat." He informs his little brother. "It's leather straps. As the wet straps dry out, they tighten and that's what we need to hold the shells together."

"So you guys came up with a plan then?" TK asks as the metallic scaled dragonic man comes to sit down next to him.

He tells his little brother after finding some field rations for TK to have.

Davis

He glances down at the pile of bombs that they spent a good three days creating, wondering if they'll have enough time to launch them all before a counterstrike is launched. Milling around the same hill are Cody, Joe, and Izzy, waiting for the signal from those creeping into the armed camp below.

I can't believe I did paper! I should have stuck it out with rock. He thinks to himself. *God how I hate waiting with nothing for entertainment.*

The sun had set hours ago and clouds seem to be aiding them by covering the night sky. No starlight or moonlight shone down. The only firelight they have come from hooded lamps that are facing them. They were also there to light the fuses of the wooden bombs they spent the last few days creating.

Wonder if TK blessing them will really make a difference when we use them... He wonders to himself as he glances to the glowing symbol upon the bomb that he's holding. He glances to one of the two slings they created, slings that needed at least two people manning them in order to launch the bombs into the air.

Suddenly, horns blare from down below, startling him. "Ready?" Izzy asks him and he nods.

Izzy pulls the sling down to the ground and once he's lit the fuse, he places the bomb in the sling. Izzy lets go and the bomb flies through the air, ascending high enough that he loses sight of it. As Izzy grabs the sling once more, he picks up another bomb.

Two explosions later and the next series of bombs are flying through the air. More horns blare in the background of the thunderous roar of battle that's currently going on below. The explosions cause screams to be added to the sounds of this particular night, likely from those that were standing where the bomb landed.

Plumes of smoke begin to stream upwards as the camp below begin to burn. The fire wasn't spreading very much but then, it's kind of a given that the enemy would set up enchantments to protect the tents from fire. After all, Devils have full immunity to it, thus prefer to fling it around.

It didn't take long before each pair to fall into a rhythm of pulling, placing, releasing, and repeating. Izzy and Cody would sometimes try and alter the direction by pulling the sling in different directions before releasing. Their peace is short lived as fliers finally arrive to attack them.

"You two keep working that sling! Davis and I will handle these guys." Izzy says as the other reaches for his sword.

He grins as he moves to take on the closest arrival. One of the devils points to the bombs while yelling something at the top of its lungs. He's a bit surprised to see those that had been charging up fire balls stop, which means that the devils didn't want the rest of the bombs to be lit.

Must mean that whatever blessing is on them, does cause damage to them when they explode. He decides before pushing that away. Now was the time for battle, not thinking.

A familiar haze engulfs his mind, his foes blur together as he blocks, parries, evade, duck, jab, slam, bash, and various other actions as he tries to protect himself while fending off attacks from the devils.

A pause between foes brings him to his senses long enough for him to glance around. Then, looking up, he finds a fresh wave coming.

He then pales as one of the fliers shoots off a ball of fire towards the pile of bombs.

"Hit the dirt!" He roars but it's too late as thunder seems to slam into his back. His last thought was of him hoping that it was large enough to get the bastard in the air too.

Marcus

With Cody, Davis, Izzy, Joe manning the slings in pairs, the rest of them divide once more with one unit being lead by Takato and the other by TK. *Lucky break with Davis picking paper in the final round. I thought for sure I'd be one of the four manning the slings...*

Takato breaks the neck of the tench user they have stumbled upon before beckoning them forward. They creep forward as Takato once more moves forward. While he wouldn't mind searching through the dead Tiefling's body, he kind of doubts that he'll live to see the dawn of the coming day.

They finally arrive as close as they could sneak to the siege engines. Takato holds up and glances at each of them before pulling out his wicked looking blades. "For our Nation!" Takato bellows and their leader leads the charge forward.

Sentries pause for a good full minute at them, clearly not believing the fact that they're under attack. Their hast cost that group their lives. "Tell the death god Marcus Hawkeye sent you!" He shouts as his broadsword behead one of the still dozy soldiers.

By the time he's killed at least five, a distant explosion rings out, drowning out the sound of alarm horns and shouts. Screams also sound out while his sword slightly down, cutting off an enemy's arm, the Tiefling drops to the ground and he engages a very good looking succubus carrying a whip of the nine-tails variety.

"My, aren't you a blood thirsty one?" The seemingly human looking devil muses as the whip hits his lower jaw. Not that being hit by the

tips of the whip cause him to stop his charge.

The succubus tries to block his blade edge viva using her free hand. He gets in close and within seconds, the devil woman gets a face full of lightning. Once the devil lets go of his blade, he cuts off her head.

Upon arriving at the site of a campfire, he picks up a piece of flaming wood and tosses it at one of the tents. He does this a few more times, although one seems to smash some pots but light suddenly erupts from that tent. *Must be filled with oil.*

He then glances around to get his barrings, defending his position next to the campfire. He spots other members less then half a mile away and decides to head in their direction. More explosions echo through the night and is accompanied by scream and sounds of panic. Upon reaching JP's side, they then begin to head towards the catapults.

He gets a few arrows find their way into his back but doesn't move to attack them as Tommy slams into their ranks from their left. He hears Takato further ahead and he moves in that direction.

More fires begin to erupt as more and more soldier come crawling out of the wood work. He does take note of a few devils taking to the air to get beyond their range. He puts the tip of his board sword down and takes his long bow from his shoulder. He manages to cause at least three of the flying devils fall to the ground, likely dead since his aim was true, getting them in their forehead.

He continues to use his bow until he runs out of arrows. Once that's done, he tosses his bow away and picks up his board sword once more. He moves to catch up to JP and Tommy, managing to kill those that move to attack the pair from behind.

The night is filled with blaring horns, cries for help, and the wooden bombs exploding in different parts of the camp. Suddenly a huge plume of smoke raise up far ahead of him. He cheers at the sight of one of the catapults ablaze. Sounds of smashing clay pots gets his

attention and as he gets closer, he finds Takato tossing around oil pots at the siege engine.

He then notices other members of the unit mimicking Takato and it doesn't take him long before he finds their source of pots. And so, more and more of the siege engines get oiled up and then set ablaze by careless fire flinging devils. Soldiers began to appear, more concerned with putting out the fire, causing them to fall prey to the unit's weapons.

An explosion thunders out close to them, momentarily stunning him as he watches as Devils and Tieflings get engulfed by white fire. Those that weren't killed instantly were on fire, the white colored flame proving to be impossible to put out.

Not a very nice way to die, but effective. He thinks as he returns to the task of keeping the Tieflings from putting out the flames. After a while, the explosions stop coming and then, suddenly, a distant rumble causes him to glance to the hill top that the four had been.

Smoke plumes signal that the bomb pile had been on the receiving end of a fire ball. He grunts as a few arrows find their way into his back. He turns around to find a much more organized resistance to their intrusion ready and willing to face off against them.

He grins, though exhaustion is finally beginning to affect his movement, he's more then satisfied that they, at least, completed their mission as none of the siege engines were spared from their attack upon the camp.

His last sight was that of a official looking Tiefling standing over him with a sword.

Nobody's

All throughout different dimensions, the male members of those chosen to save their respective Digital Worlds awake hours before the raise of dawn. Some would pick up their cell phone and call their

fellows, others would get out of bed and begin their day earlier then they normally would, and yet there were those that would lie in bed, trying to make sense of it all.

Each of the energy pools depicting their bedrooms slowly vanish and a figure sighs. Turning away from wall to stand near a large pool, one that depicts the aftermath at the Tiefling camp. Though the various bodies of Dragonborn were strung up in gruesome ways, the moral of the army had shrunk as the loses on their side were finally tallied up.

The cloaked figure nods at the sight and suddenly the pool's view displays two armies, on the left is the army of Arkhosia and to the right, the army of Bael Turath. Horns sound out from each side, signaling for the two sides to march towards each other. The battle plays out while the cloaked being watches.

"All that work just to destroy those siege engines? One would think you are losing your touch, Bahamut." A new arrive seemingly appears across from the cloaked figure.

"And yet with this small change, there are more survivors of Arkhosia." The cloaked god says and goes on to explain, "The moral of the Bael Turath isn't as high as it had been either, their eagerness for battle has dropped slightly. Those siege engines would have also sped up the Bael Turath conquest of various cities within miles of that army."

"And with more survivors, the more Dragonborn are present in this newly updated present." The other concludes with their tone sounding slightly impressed. "Of course this also increases my forces as well."

"That it does, Tiamat, that it does." Bahamut concludes and Tiamat snorts before vanishing.

Minutes pass and a new figure arrives.

"Azulongmon." The cloaked god says in way of greeting.

"Bahamut." The currently transformed mega Digimon says in way of greeting. "Was there any problems transferring them back to their true bodies?"

"A bit, but I had a few favors to help smooth out any problems that could have been risen." The disguised platinum dragon says. "I can not help but wonder what danger you fore-see that would cause you to agree with my suggestion."

"It hides itself well but it doesn't not keep its agents as protected as it does itself. While we can draw conclusion from observing its agents, we are still just grasping at straws." Azulongmon says.

"And so you prepare for the worst, trying to find a safe enough way to prepare your champion so they're not in too much danger." The cloaked dragon god summarize.

"Indeed." The transformed Digimon says. "Indeed."

The End

To Reader:

Don't take this too seriously. I just typed this out simply because ever since I purchased a certain Dragonborn roleplaying game supplement and I couldn't get this idea out of my head. The thought of most of the male half of the groups finding themselves in not just another world but in a whole different body just kind of planted itself in my mind and refused to leave.

This, like most of my random stories, are something I write for the hell of it. If there are errors or problems, I find it kind of hard to care about them simply because I'm writing them more for me then for you.

See ya!

To Be Uratha: Werewolf the Forsaken

I don't own Naruto, Bleach, Oh My Goddess, Harry Potter, Neon Genesis Evangelion, Ranma 1/2, and World of Darkness: Werewolf The Forsaken.

Ichigo

"This is so insane!" The currently very hairy looking anchor says while glancing at their arms. *"Hey, you smell that?"* The black haired feral looking teen asks in that hair raising language.

"Smells like rotten eggs? Yea, I smell it too." The other black haired feral looking older teen says.

"Why am I on all fours?" A huge golden furred canine wonders. *"Oh god... Is that a despair that I'm smelling?"*

Then, without warning, the canine darts into the abandoned manor. "Hey! Get back here, you!" He roars before running up to the doorway.

He pauses and glances at the four. "Well? You coming?"

"Might as well since I rather not get on the front page of the local newspaper looking like this." The second transformed anchor says. The guy enters into the beat up manor while calling out for the anchor that raced headlong into the building.

"I wonder why we've been dropped here though?" The first wonders as he enters in behind the transformed guy.

"At least we have some packs and food." Another anchor points out.

"This place... It's like something is..." He trails off as that feeling seems to subside.

"Felt it too." They walk more into the entrance and he jerks as the lights get turned on suddenly. *"Don't do that!"* /"Don't do that!" They shout at the certain beloved of a goddess of time who seemed to have turned on the lights.

"..." The often timid university student just stares at them while the rest of the group stand at the entrance way, giving them bemused looks.

"Hey? Hey! ***HEY*** *! Don't do that! No, put it down on the table! I don't mean recall saying throw it at my skull! Damn it! You guys better get in here! We've got some kind of ghost trying to bleed me!"* Shouts their sixth member.

He's charging up the stairs within seconds of the energetic member of their crew began to shout. The two already transformed members over take him though they hadn't moved until after the shout ended. *Crap their fast...*

When he does arrive at the scene, he finds the three cornering something that is pale gray in color while sporting at least three glowing blue eyes. The creature's long arms were up in the air and the talon looking fingers spread wide. The thing is hissing at them and since it lacks lips, the sharp dagger like teeth are very visible.

"That's not a Hollow." Was the first thing he says.

"No d'ah. What was your first clue? The maskless face?" The growling quadruped member of the group snaps.

The thing suddenly darts upwards and over the three that were cornering it. As it comes in his direction, something knocks it out of the air, the thing yowls, a sound calling forth the sound of a child's wail. The thing's fingers cut into the golden form that's biting its bony tail, not that the canine anchor seems incline to release the thing.

"Release me! I am not your Endim(toy, plaything)! I serve the true master of this place, you Iurhir(dogs, mongrels)!" The spirit tells them, speaking the same alien tongue that three of their number use.

"Then explain why you attack him with that knife!" The usually pig-tailed wearing anchor commands.

"Don't need any real reason to attack filthy Uratha(werewolves) like you! Pitiful things of meshed flesh and spirit! By what right do you have to keep us out of the gurihal(the physical world)?! None!" The spirit bellows at the top of its 'lungs', as if it had any...

The thing keep cursing at them as the two more human looking ones grab a hold of the arms. He stares at the thing, mind reeling at the implications of what it had just told them. *Werewolves. That pretty much explains Harry, Naruto, and Ranma's appearances...*

The wraith finally pauses in its struggles and speaking. Suddenly a really high pitched sound emanates from it. He flinches at the sound but Harry, Naruto, and Ranma's reactions were more extreme as they let go of the fiendish spirit. The quadruped anchor just howls, crying for the sound to stop.

Glad I haven't transformed. He thinks as he watches the three suffer for a few more minutes. The spirit has long since vanished from their clutches.

"I'm so tearing out that thing's throat when we encounter it again." A certain four legged person growls.

Shinji

I can't believe Naruto's right about how freeing this feels... He thinks to himself as he flat out runs through the field a few miles away from the run down manor. He can hear Ranma up ahead.

After the third attack by the local spirit life, they decided it would be a idea to use the buddy system and some how, he found himself partnered with Ranma more then he liked. The other 'pairs' were Ichigo and Naruto, leaving Keiichi and Harry together.

I wonder what it means to be a Rahu? He ponders as he follows in Ranma's wake of fleeing tiny spirits even though they only look like ordinary wolves. A few smell of morning dew while the rest smelt of lust, rot, oil, and various kinds of small animals.

There's an underlying smell of Naruto and Ichigo, likely cause they had run through these woods just two days ago. He wrinkles his nose as urine reaches his nose. He finds Ranma stopping to stand by the tree that's been marked by their fellow pack members.

He makes a sound of disbelief when Ranma gets into position to do the same. Ranma glances his way, not lowering the leg at all. Ranma's tail wags slightly while mirth shines in the other's blue eyes.

He growls and barks angrily at the idea of doing that, out here. Ranma just snorts and does his business, he glances sharply away from the sight and trots to stand a five feet away to wait for Ranma to be done. He ignores the desire to mimic Ranma's action as the sudden desire to piss comes upon him.

He sits down and scratches his left ear with a back paw. Ranma tackles him and they wrestle upon the ground for a few minutes until he's pinned to the ground. Ranma barks happily, his tail wagging before the black furred wolf lets him up off the ground.

Upon getting up onto his feet, he shakes his body. Ranma nudges him in the shoulder before racing a few feet away, barking excitedly. He grunts and appears to be thinking about it before suddenly surging at Ranma and butting shoulders with him. He races away as quickly as he can while Ranma is a bit stunned to react right away.

He manages to get to the driveway before Ranma manages to tackle him and he feels Ranma's teeth about the back of his neck. He turns

and tries to force Ranma off while snarling and snapping a few inches from Ranma's body.

"Break it up, you two! We're trying something there!" Naruto snaps and Ranma lets go to glance at the blond and orange haired team.

Within seconds, Ranma and himself take near human form to address the two. "What are you two doing?" He asks them.

"Well, you know how Ichigo is suppose to be an Ithaeur, right? Well, we're going to see if he can't summon a spirit and bind it to this metal soldier we found in the attic with a bunch of other kid stuff." Naruto explains while Ichigo seems busy doing something in regards to a note book and a toy soldier.

"Did it ever occur to you to tell us about this?" Ranma asks the blond Irraka. "It also wouldn't have hurt to have Harry help Ichigo out with this either. They share the same Auspice after all."

"Shh!" Is all that Naruto does while returning his attention to Ichigo. He just shrugs when Ranma looks to him.

The kneeling Ichigo shifts into the near human form before speaking in the alien tongue, one that contains hisses, growls, barks, yowls, and other sounds that should never be part of a human language. Ichigo uses a sharp claw to pierce the left thumb and then a few droplets of blood drop down to land upon the old metal toy.

Suddenly a bunch of fox spirit appear in the air. The group of some fifty odd individuals not only sport multiple tails but other features like antlers, horns, various spines, body parts covered in exoskeleton, heck, he swears that one not only sports three eyes but also have eyes upon stalks and those stalks cover their head. The air suddenly smells of blood and burnt flesh to water and fresh grass.

The mass of fox shaped spirits continue to argue as though they weren't even there and for some odd reason, he felt very offended by this. He scratches the side of his head after a few minutes, a minor

headache slowly coming on. Ichigo and Naruto remain before them, Naruto remains human and seems to find this to be a bit funny.

"Oh shut the f#ck up all of you! Can't you see where we are?!" One of the various fox themed spirit bellows, an echo of thunder seems to be hear in the bellow. The pause only lasts for about a few seconds before the mob continues with their arguments, once more ignoring the werewolves in their mist.

"That's it! I've had it with you lot! Leave now or I'll consume each and everyone of you!" Within seconds, all but one of the fox themed spirits vanish. *"Idiots..."* The fox with a charcoal body that's aflame in crimson fire with nine-tails not totally aflame like the body, only the tips of the tails were on fire.

"Yo, Kyuubi. Thought I heard you among the mass." Naruto says cheerfully at the five foot tall fire fox.

"So I was." The demon turned spirit says, live white fire points turn to study them in turn before glancing at Naruto once more with those unblinking white specks of flame. *"So then, why did you lot yank me out of that meet and greet?"*

"He wanted to see if I could summon a spirit. I am suppose to be some kind of shaman in this world." Ichigo explains, sending Naruto a minor look and the flaming fox just grins, which is kind of frightening since instead of flesh moving, the fire moves to give them a view of the teeth made out of obsidian stone.

"Well, what do you know, congrats on summoning me and that mass of idiots here." The flames of pale blue begin to light up between the crimson flames of the tail, finally covering the black charcoal tails. *"Let's see if I can't end this Loop right now!"*

The flaming fox charges at Naruto but Ichigo manages to pull the blond idiot out of the way while Ranma and himself charge forth to engage the beast. Not the smartest move he thought of as the

Kyuubi is covered in fire and fire burns. His claws go through the fox's fire covering and gazes off the stone underneath.

The hair on his hand and about his wrist burn. He cries out in pain from the flames touching his skin. He pulls away from the Kyuubi while Ranma doesn't seem to be very bothered by the fox's flames.

"Oi, fox! You got rocks for brains or something? If this Loop ends, you go back to your cage in me!" Naruto remarks.

That causes the fire fox to pause while Ranma continues to try and pound away at the Kyuubi's stony body. *"Damn it! I wanted so much to rim the flesh off of your bones! Damn it all!"* The fire fox snarls and the pale blue flames die down while Ranma shakes his hands, the older teen's wrists cracking ever so slightly.

"Why the heck didn't you think of that before you tried to attack then?" Ichigo demands and the crimson fire fox glances to the orange haired teen. He glances down at his hand for the first time since they passed through the Kyuubi's flaming coat of fur.

"Point. I guess being like this has altered my brain in more ways then one." The spirit admits in a grudging fashion.

"So the great fox is finally admitting that he can be affected by things beyond his control." Naruto pipes in and Ichigo smacks the blond upside the head, causing the fox to snort in amusement.

"Quiet you!" Ichigo hisses at Naruto while the blond rubs the back of his head. The fox's tails move up and down, the odds moving up when the evens moving down.

"So... what kind of meet and greet were you attending?" Ichigo asks upon returning to his human form. "They did look like a strange bunch after all."

"Just a big 'howdy' upon migrating to that part of the Shadow. Stupid f#ckers the who lot." The flaming fox explains while stepping up into

the air as though there was an invisible set of stairs and then sits down about three feet up.

"And for some bizarre reason they kept trying to name me. You should hear some of the names they came up with! I swear a five year old could think up better names then them! Fox-of-Burning-Coals. Nine-Tails-of-a-Volcano-Spirit. Forged-in-Lava. Fire-Fur! They've got to be altered in the head or something to keep coming up with descriptive names! Why should I be named after fire? I'm the Yoko no Kyuubi for crying out load!" The usually demon fox rants.

And that isn't a descriptive name? He thinks to himself while Naruto seems to snort in amusement. "Does this mean you prefer Obsidian-Fang? You're fangs seem to be made of the stuff." Naruto remarks, but then who else would have the nerve to continuously back talk to this particular being?

Well, Ranma did use to have that problem when talking to anyone. Though it seems that he fixed that particular problem some time ago. He admits while the spirit fox stares at Naruto with those unblinking specks of white fire.

"How about a compromise? The-Kyuubi-of-the-Obsidian-Blades? And for short, you can call me Kyuubi." The Kyuubi says and before Naruto could say anything, Ichigo and Ranma cry deal.

"But he's always the Kyuubi, its not a big change for him! It would be like calling me Sun-Touched or Flashing-Gold! Heck Ichigo could be called Soul-Reaper or even Raised-Spirit!" Naruto remarks.

"I would have thought Raise-the-Dead would be better since he sure finds old, supposedly dead problems that raise up just to be fixed by him." He remarks after returning to his human form, almost naked but for a pair of jeans although he's not wearing any runners or socks. *A bit more chilly then I would have guessed.* "For you? I'd go with Sun-Flash."

"Sun-Flash... Wasn't that a character in some animal book?" Ichigo wonders out loud, apparently trying to ignore answering to them discussing a new name for the Shinigami substitute.

"Yea, in the Redwall series, a badge lord with a blond stripe." He admits and the others suddenly glance his way. "In my defense, it got really, really boring doing, watching, and reading the same things loop after loop. So I was forced to widen my taste in literature."

"You mean you finally got bored of reading and watching porn." Naruto says in a blank tone. *This coming from somebody who was barely knew how to read and write before the loops began.*

"Oh, like any of you were any better." He snaps angrily while crossing his arms over his chest. Daring any of them to counter him.

"So, you going to become our ally for the duration of this loop?" Ranma asks.

"As long as you don't touch me, sure." The Kyuubi states. "Sounds good." Ichigo says.

Naruto

"Is there any reason why those twelve spirits are just floating there? I mean, shouldn't they be attacking us?" He asks upon sitting down at the table, pausing before filling up his plate. "I mean, that's what they're here to do, right?"

"They startled Keiichi when he came down to start breakfast, they came right at him but he just held up his arms to cover his face." Harry explains while Keiichi just looks a bit ashamed by his reaction, but then, Keiichi isn't much of a fighter.

"After a few minutes, I lowered my arms to find them glaring at him and making threatening gestured upon noticing that I'm looking at them. They then began insulting me and making threats but they didn't attack so I finally just hoped over the rail to get off the stair

case. They followed me and continued to harass me." Keiichi explains.

"I arrived to find them in the kitchen and they came at me, but Keiichi shouted for me not to engage them and so I didn't, although I was really, really close to doing so." Ranma admits and the spirit grumble about that while giving the pig-tailed anchor dirty looks, well he thinks they're giving Ranma dirty looks though it's hard to tell since they're already got foul expressions fixated upon their faces.

I wonder just what kind of plans they'll concoct to get us to attack them first... He muses privately to himself while trying to ignore the spirits as one of them knocks a glass of water over upon the table. Fortunately, none of the water ended up on one of the plates rests near the site.

The spirits did continue to be nuisances throughout breakfast and then throughout the morning, although they didn't follow Ichigo and him as they range throughout the woods. Upon finishing their tour of the actual grounds of the manor they're now living in, he frowns as he watches a small mutated insect spirit suddenly vanish.

"Where do you think they vanish to? When they just plain vanish from view?" He wonders, it wasn't the first time he's seen it happen. "That one spirit did the same when we held it captive too."

"Don't know, remember how Obsidian and that mob appeared out of no where? Some of these spirit are talking about a shadow realm." Ichigo answers.

"And yet I don't see any Duel Monster decks with us." He remarks with a bit of humor. "You think we can do that too? Vanish from plain sight like these guys." He muses, waving his hand as more of those mutated flying insects vanish.

"I'd love to see you disappear." Ichigo muses in a tone that suggest that he is joking. He couldn't resist sticking his tongue out at the

orange haired fifteen year old. "How mature." Ichigo states in a droll tone.

He sighs, kind of angry that he's the youngest member of the pack, even though Harry is also thirteen years old, although Harry will be turning fourteen a couple of months before him. Shinji is currently fourteen years of age. Ichigo and Ranma both are fifteen. Finally, Keiichi is the eldest by being about nineteen.

I wonder how if this is Keiichi's first fusion loop... I don't recall Harry or anyone else mentioning Keiichi when they're talking past loops. I wonder if this is a nice change for him? I know I've looked forward to fusion loops just to break away from the humdrum rhythm of my world. He considers before filing those thoughts away to ponder later.

With a soft sigh, he transforms into the huge ass wolf, the very shape he found himself in upon arriving within this world. Stretching a bit, he finally began to move about searching for spirit to question. As he walks pass this old fox den, something suddenly grabs him by the scruff of his neck and suddenly, everything changed.

He manages to sink his teeth into a rather huge finger as whatever has gripped him by the back of his neck brings its other hand into play. A screech echos throughout the metal and organic tree forest as the offending spirit lets go of his scruff. His forepaws move to dig those claws across the pebbly skin of this spirit.

As the spirit swings about, he gets blurred impressions of the world around him. The spirit grips his lower body and after a few tugs, he lets go and flies through the air, he lands on his side and wheezes while gasping for air. The tall black spirit snarls at him, its deformed mouth filled with glass, metal, and rock teeth. The three of the five eyes were positioned around the spirit's mouth.

Instead of legs, this spirit moves around upon wheels, some were made out of wood while the rest were of plastic. The spirit possess three arms, two smallish ones upon the right of its body and one

bulky arm upon the left, it also appeared as though fingers were trying to grow out of the elbow of the left arm too. Everything about this spirit seemed to be deformed and ugly.

"Master-of-Grounds wants you gone! Old-Manor-Road will make you gone!" The huge spirit shouts out while trying to slam its left fist down upon him.

He manages to roll out of the way before finally get up onto his four paws. *"Well, tell Master-of-Grounds that we're not looking to move away until we're good and ready! We'll not be scared off so easily!"* He snarls at the spirit.

The pebbly road spirit just continues its clumsy assault. It's clear that the spirit is along the lines of more muscle then brains, more strength then speed. As he moves about the forest, he comes to realize that the so called metal trees seem to be more like scrap piles fused together then actual trees.

Just touching those piles of metal scrap seem to cause them to moan and shake before quickly backing away from the on coming fist of the road spirit. Smaller spirits flee, most vanishing out of this Shadow Realm. The smell of rot is fairly strong when it comes to weaving around the more organic trees, he notices a few oozing like growths upon these trees.

He just ignores those oddities since they weren't going to help him fight the road spirit. *This would be so much easier if my space pocket was functional or I had a weapon of some kind.* He thinks as he hears Old-Manor-Road smash the ground behind him.

As he gets away from the mixed forest, he begins to come into open fields that seem to be filled with oat, wheat, rye, and other domesticated plants that are grown upon farms. Upon noticing eyes and mouths upon these plants, he realizes they're spirit of those plants. As he enters into those fields, the sudden sounds of pursuit seems to die.

He waits a bit before turning around to see what's the hold up and is a bit surprised to find the plant spirits seem to be swarming towards Old-Manor-Road. He couldn't help but feel bewildered at the sight but with a shake of his head, he glances around before heading for the manor house.

As he approaches, he's bewildered at how new the building looks although there does seem to be blotches of discoloration, likely representing the ruin of the building in the real world. What also catches his attention are the number of animal spirits that wander the front yard of the manor, the majority seem to be cat and chicken spirits while pigs and sheep were the next popular types.

More then a few dog spirit growl at him, their frames taking a stiff stance with raised tails. The dogs range from hounds to sheep dogs to lap dogs. The other animal spirit merely shy away from him but don't seem threaten by him like the dogs.

Suddenly, the animal type flee, the dog spirits pause before fleeing as well. He watches as emotional spirits come out of the manor. The spirits come right at him, the emotions that these spirits represent roll over him, arousing those emotions within him.

"Back off! If you don't, I'll make you regret it!" He tells the minor army of dark emotions.

All they do is giggle or laugh at his statement until he shifts into the true hybrid form of wolf and man. The emotional spirit seem to pause as he stands upon digitigrade legs while his muscular upper body stands slightly hunched. *"You want a piece of me now, you uthsu? I'll give as much as I take!"* He vows in a low, threatening tone.

"He's no Hirfathra Hissu! He's just a Thihirtha Numea!" A familiar spirit cries out.

"Does it look like I'm any less of a threat then a Hirfathra Hissu? I'm here now and here I stand as a Gauru! How more serious can I be in taking you with me when I go down?" He counters, wondering about

these Bone Shadows were about if they could inspire a moment's haste in this minor army of spirits.

"We are many! There is only one!" That same spirit of despair counters but already some are floating up into the air, clearly distancing themselves from the mob.

"It only takes one to go Kuruth." One of the hovering spirits point out. *"You're too young to seeing the last pack enter into that state against three packs of Ninna Farakh. You don't know what it's like to deal with the aftermath of a Kuruth."*

Predator Kings? Must be some story behind that one. He thinks, already shifting into that near human form and upon doing so, seem to cause the local spirit to relax just a tad.

"Nisuuf!" That spirit of despair bellows, pointing a finger at the elder spirit of abandonment. *"Just wait until I tell our lord of your actions this day! You won't be more then a snack to the master!"*

"Fool, who's to say that you'll live to report to Master-of-Grounds?" The demon turned fire spirit muses, suddenly appearing above their heads. *"As I see it, you're the nissuf here, you too scared to seek vengeance upon this one without others backing you. You've had plenty of time to act and yet you haven't, that makes you a nissuf in my eyes."*

The spirit back away as the fire covered charcoal fox comes to stand a few feet to his right. The nine tails continue to lack the pale blue flames between the flaming tips and the beginning of the tails, allowing the rocky surface to be seen as clear as day. Commonly known as the Yoko no Kyuubi, the ex-demon homes in on that despair spirit and the despair spirit become nervous under the fire fox's gaze.

"Seems you are in need of a name change, something like Cowardly-Despairing-Soul-Chewer or Coward-Sharp-Teeth-of-the-Despairing-Choir." The Kyuubi muses and the spirit flexes its hands,

clearly wishing to attack the fire fox. *"Either defend your honor or move along, little meal before I decide to turn you into a snack."*

The despair spirit glares one last time at him before fleeing back into the manor. Snickers sound even after the spirit vanishes into the building. The emotional spirit then begin to move off into the direction of town, likely to go gossip with their fellows living there.

Once the yard is clear of those spirits the Kyuubi glances at him, the burning white specks examine him before the fire spirit in fox shape humps softly. *"And here I thought it would be Ranma to learn how to access this realm."* The fire covered charcoal spirit muses.

"Got dragged in here by Old-Manor-Road." He answers before adding, *"Last I saw of that spirit, it was under attack by plant spirits like wheat, corn, and what not."*

"Sounds about right, those ones really don't like anything that covers the ground, preventing fellow plant spirits from growing." The fire covered fox shaped spirit muses. *"Lucky you, that one is one of the more powerful spirits around here since it's been around since the manor was built. Not the brainiest one around but then what can you expect when it's undergone so many changes?"*

Harry

Their prey, oozing rot spirit in the shape of a slug, hurries through the air, leaving a thing oozing trail of dark brown ooze as it goes. The spirit's name is Trail-of-Rot-in-Slug-Form and is one of the more powerful rot spirits that calls the property home. The reason why they're hunting the slug shaped spirit is because it's actively trying to keep them from fixing or replacing the wooden support beams.

Ichigo and himself had to bind the slug shaped spirit to transport it out of the basement of the manor. They set it free at the very edge of the property since the rot spirit will likely head straight back to its basement home. They had given the spirit a five minute head start before giving chase in their urshul form.

The slug shaped spirit keeps to the real world, likely due to the fact that unlike the Shadow of the property, this spirit doesn't have to worry about distance to the manor nor of fellow spirits witnessing its dilemma. *It's taken Ichigo and I a whole month to learn Slug's ban and a week learn to bind it successfully to that game board. Even if Slug's essence doesn't fill us, at least we got rid of the nuisance.*

Previous hunts had been focused upon hunting problem spirits outside of the manor, the most common of those prey spirits had been minor rot and scrap spirits. They have gotten into the habit of hunting down a spirit once a week after their first week in this world, making their kill count up to ten kills so far and when they get this one, it'll be eleven spirits they've killed viva capturing them and then releasing them, giving them a few minutes of a head start before giving chase.

Many of their previous prey flee right into the Hisil in hopes of loosing them but it never worked since they had plenty of time to get a good whiff of the captured spirit's scent and to learn its name. The Kyuubi isn't really interested in their hunts, so they don't have to share the essence with the fire fox spirit.

Naruto leaps up, using a tree as a spring board. The blond teen takes a chuck out of the spirit as well as pulls it down enough for Ranma to take another bite out of it. Within seconds, the eight foot long slug shaped rot spirit is on the ground and they all are taking bites out of it, although Keiichi does try and knock an over eager Naruto and Shinji from the head of the slug shaped spirit, Keiichi using his greater size to push them away along with snaps close to their muzzles.

Just tasting the spirit's essence causes them all to be eager for more, often causing them all to snap and bully each other while they're consuming their prey. He expects it would be different if there was a clear Alpha of their pack but there wasn't so it's usually chaos at the site of the kill.

As they come out of that state, they give each other apologetic looks with their tails hanging limply behind them. *"This is so embarrassing... I don't mean to and yet I keep..."* Keiichi bemoans and he sympathizes with the young man, after all, Keiichi rarely if ever been expected to be a being of violence and death.

"Well, we are Uratha and it seems we're expected to be violent. It's not as if the spirits are overly hospitable either." Ranma remarks.

"What can you expect when they're defined by a concept or an idea?" Ichigo points out. *"Hate spirits? Anger spirits? Murder spirits? They can't act against their natures since that is what's feeding them, giving them strength to exist in the first place."*

"I'm sure Belldandy and them will be willing to forgive you for your actions here in this loop. We can't change the nature of what we are simply because we're dissatisfied with what we're expected to do." He says and then adds, *"The Moon Tribes do try to police these two worlds, trying to make things better, kind of similar to what is expected of the Shinigami in Ichigo's world only with more empathize on violence and spiritual reflection."*

"This is one of the more violent worlds I've found myself on. Although the Kyuubi seems to be enjoying his freedom." Naruto muses thoughtfully. *"Besides, how often do we start out as non-humans right off the bat? I know Kiba's going to be so jealous that he missed out on visiting this world."*

"Any way, what are we going to do with the upcoming school year? I mean, most of us aren't old enough to stay out of school." Naruto says upon sensing that it would be best to change the subject.

"I was thinking of submitting the majority of us as being home schooled. Less problems that way since we rarely fit in normal society at the best of times." Ranma says.

"Sounds good to me. Just going into town for groceries causes me to get nervous. Not only is it a small town of barely three thousand but

they just give you pitying looks, like they expect you to be dead the next day." Shinji says and he nods in agreement as such looks seem to cause him to want to scream at the lot, demanding to know what their problem is.

"Does anyone not have trouble going into town?" Keiichi wonders and Naruto raises his hand with a rather impish grin upon his face.

"I don't, as long as they don't send any hateful look my way, I'm pretty confident that I can survive a few hours in their company." The bright haired blond says.

"Good, Ichigo and you are now on permanent grocery detail." Ranma says and the orange haired teen sends a look over to the blond teen.

"Also, does anyone know where our money is coming from and its limit?" Keiichi asks as they head through the forest. "We should find out so that we know when we need to begin looking for work to fund our stay here in this world."

"We could always submit a patent or two. I'm pretty sure we could make a titty fortune that way. Might even improve the reflection of the Shadow with the right one." Shinji muses.

"What invention are you thinking of submitting?" Ranma asks the fourteen year old anchor. "I'm thinking of creating a drug that cures one of the more dangerous types of cancer."

"I was thinking about submitting a patent for a personal shield generator." Shinji says, he begins to tune that discussion out as it seems as though the two will be discussing business ideas and likely inventions so they don't have to worry about money.

Seconds later, Keiichi joins in and he moves to walk with Ichigo and Naruto since they didn't seem to be interested in business. "Either of you interested in business?" He asks the pair and they glance back to the three since that half of the pack has slowed down.

"Never really bothered with that side of things. Heck, I've gone missing nin the few times I got drafted into the Fire Lord's house hold as a cook, tailor, blacksmith, carpenter, event planner..." Naruto trails off and he blinks.

"But I thought you can't cook!" He accuses the blond.

"Its not that I can't cook, it's that I refuse to cook. I stopped when the others slowly began to wake. Actually, I kind of stopped employing those skills when fusion loops began..." Naruto admits.

"I highly doubt you were that skilled in any of those professions." Ichigo remarks and the blond just grins.

"Nope, not going to fall for that. I know I'm one of the best tradesmen in Fire Country and that knowledge is enough to satisfy me, thank you very much." Naruto says and he frowns, wondering just what it would take for them to get Naruto to demonstrate his skills in those areas.

I wonder how much it'll cost to get the Kyuubi to help on this one... Or at least check to see if Naruto isn't just bragging. He thinks as he tries to think of what he can offer the nine tailed fire fox spirit that is their totem to get help with this little challenge.

Keiichi

"So who's idea was it to bind misfortune spirits and send those items to the neighboring packs?" Ranma asks as Ichigo, and Naruto stand before the table that consists of Harry, Shinji, Ranma, Kyuubi, and himself.

"Hey! We also invited and encourage good luck spirits to hang out in your drawing room." Naruto exclaims. "We also managed to bind content and sloth spirits and set those up in local gang hang outs to keep them out of trouble."

That could explain why teen violence has gone down and why those negative spirits types are having a hard time breeding in town. He thinks while Ichigo gives Naruto an annoyed expression. "Any other ideas you had and set in motion?" He inquires.

Naruto chuckles nervously while Ichigo presses his lips together, stubbornly refusing to met their gaze. "That kind of depends on what you mean by ready to be deployed or already deployed." Naruto tells them.

"Just tell us." Shinji says with a sigh. *This isn't going to end well.*

"Haven't you noticed how... quiet it is around here?" Naruto asks them and now that its been mentioned, he tries to recall the last time he encountered a mood spirit that wasn't promoting positive emotions.

"Ichigo was trying to make something... Researching what he can of that Greek myth concerning Pandora's Box." Harry says.

"And we created a few. It was hard but with so many luck spirits hanging around, our luck kicked in. We even managed to convince some powerful spirits concerning imprisonment to bless the boxes, although we can only capture a certain type of spirit per box like only murder spirits being contained in one while in another despair spirits get contained in another." Naruto explains and he whistles at that.

"I'm just glad the containment boxes don't have to be overly large to be turned into one of these." Ichigo admits and Naruto snorts softly but nods in agreement. "Had to create them by hand, no metal could be used, and decorated with a clam shell on each side of the box."

"Where are these boxes now?" Ranma asks with a hint of dread.

"Sent them right into the heart of Pure pack lands, when the empowered bindings fade, the spirits will be too enraged to think straight and shall, hopefully, cling to any werewolves in the area. We

sent along a memory confusion fetish to help these spirits forget about where they were captured." Naruto answers.

"Another fetish Ichigo created I take it." Shinji muses but Naruto glances over to Harry, Harry just rubs the back of his neck.

"I was curious to see if I couldn't replicate spells by binding spirits into stuff, thus creating a fetish." Harry says in his defense. "I guess I should have been more careful about where I leave my research notes."

"Don't you think they'd be able to trace these packages back to our territory?" Shinji asks while Ranma rubs his temples.

"Do the Pure tribes sound as if they're that smart to look at the postage on the box? From what little we've learned about those three, they really hate humans and human methods, preferring to trust spirits over the living." Naruto counters.

"They are rather hate driven, it's doubtful that even if they do, they'll think it was faked since they likely know that we're a pack of 'Ghost' wolves and believe we lack the right stuff to do something like this." Harry admits. "Kind of reminds me of why no wizard or witch ever tried to find me through 'muggle' methods."

"I thought we agreed that most witches and wizards never had common sense to begin with? I know 'muggle' born ones seem to lose this while attending Hogwarts." Shinji muses.

Never been there so I wouldn't know... But then, how often do I find myself outside of my home dimension? He muses privately to himself. It wasn't the first time he felt out of place within the pack as it's clear that the other five know each other fairly well.

"I guess this is why I've been asked to preform a Renown ritual." Harry muses after a bit of silence. "It's for the two of you it seems." Harry adds.

"Well, that explains why I've been having that dream." He muses as he considers the results of Ichigo and Naruto's actions. *Of each of the heads belonging to a three headed dog attacking the other two heads while fleas and ticks dance upon its back.*

"Guess it must be part of being of the Cahalith Auspice. Having dreams concerning the future that is." Ranma muses.

"Keiichi, I don't suppose in this dream you saw anything that suggests these three tribes coming after us?" Shinji asks.

"Not really, just a Cerberus fighting itself while fleas and ticks dance upon its back." He tells them. "I usually see all five phases of the moon looking down at the sight without any of their light touching the Cerberus."

"So our efforts will at least cause some damage to those three tribes. I had wondered if it would be worth it." Ichigo muses, finally breaking his silence.

"While I like the fact that they've help clear out the local shadow, I would have preferred for those spirit boxes to be here so we have a reserve of spirits to hunt." The fire spirit in a shape of a nine-tailed fox says. *"I hope that as punishment, they'll be expected to track down a suitable prey spirit for this week's hunt. I also expect to be supplied one for my own private hunt."*

"I say we force them to take care of the town's shadow on their lonesome for two weeks as well." Harry adds.

"So be it, they'll find us a suitable subject for our hunt this week and for next week, which include finding two spirits for the Kyuubi's own weekly hunts. They will also be expected to remain in the town starting this coming Sunday for two weeks to police the town's shadow for the duration of that time. To add to this, they can't assume human form during those two weeks in the town." Ranma decides, causing Naruto to pout at the ruling while Ichigo seems slightly relieved about their punishment.

With that, they turned to a few other topics and as they leave, he couldn't help but muse to his partner, "I wonder what those two have in storage that are just waiting to be used?"

"Sun-Flash pretty much said as much, didn't he?" Harry muses. "Guess we'll be addressing those when they get used." The emerald eyed werewolf muses while pushing up his glasses.

The End . . .?

To Readers:

Here's The-Kyuubi-of-the-Obsidian-Blade's ban: To attack anything, pale blue tail flames must be be bare for all to see. It also means that when those pale blue flames are aflame, the Kyuubi must attack something before getting rid of them.

Deed names I came up with for those character listed were Ranma - Chaos-Eye, Keiichi - Heartcalls, Harry - Hunter-of-All-Things-Scaly, Shinji - Doom-Seeker. I already listed Naruto and Ichigo's and they were, Naruto - Sun-Flash and Ichigo - Raise-the-Dead.

Auspices for the characters are Ithaeur: Harry and Ichigo, Irraka: Naruto, Rahu: Shinji, Cahalith: Keiichi, and Elodoth: Ranma

Portal Maddness: Naruto

I don't own Naruto, Dragon Riders of Pern, Changling the Lost, or Danny Phantom!

The heat the sand under foot radiates makes it fairly hard for the candidates to stand still. The hum of dragons seem to encourage the clutch to rock back and forth. A large number of girls keep drifting towards the golden egg that's far from the rest of the clutch.

Twenty-two of the candidates are girls ranging between fourteen to nineteen turns of age. The remaining twenty-seven candidates were boys ranging from twelve to nineteen turns old. All candidates sport white tunics and wear sandals for protection.

Suddenly one of the eggs rocks rapidly and suddenly the sound of eggshell breaking rings out, though not loud enough to for everyone to hear as the adult dragons hum. A brown head breaks free and then the dragon tumble out onto the sand. The young brown dragonet's piteous cries as the hatchling begins to look around for a partner.

The boys closest to the little brown approach the little brown carefully as a pair of eggs break open to reveal a blue and a green. As the brown begins to coo upon falling down at the feet of a sixteen year old blond. As the brown and future rider walk off to the side, the golden egg breaks open and the little queen seems to leap out of the broken shell of her egg.

All too soon all of the twenty-six eggs have hatched and the young dragonets have partnered up. Already experienced riders are moving to go forth to comfort those that hadn't manage to Impress a dragon. The crowd moves away, leaving a blond standing next to their golden partner.

'Hard to believe it's been six years since we partnered up, huh?' The blond thinks to the queen. *'I still don't get why you picked me instead of one of those girls... I'm a guy, I should have been chosen by a male.'*

'I do not regret my choice. You needed me and I needed you. We are now together and nobody can separate us.' Hiroeth says to Naruto, cooing verbally the sentiment.

The twenty year old demon container just smiles and pats Hiroeth. "I can't argue against that sentiment." Naruto admits to his dragon and then says, "Considering this is your first clutch? I think everything went pretty well."

'Enjoy the festivities.' Hiroeth says after a few seconds before the gold moves to go to their weyr. Naruto just sighs and after straightening his jacket, the blond heads to where the festivities are.

The male golden rider encounters the senior weyrwoman, Nakia studies Naruto for a few seconds before dragging the blond off to high table. The blond dragon rider knew he couldn't escape being reviewed by the visiting Holders and Crafters.

They really didn't expect Hiroeth to raise to mate. Naruto thinks and sends a look over to B'yan, rider of bronze Soleth. Soleth is the 'proud' father of the newly hatched clutch as the bronze had flown Hiroeth, although B'yan and Naruto had other partners when Hiroeth rose to mate.

None of the bronze riders were interested in beding the blond ninja and Naruto wasn't interested in beding them in return. *It's still hard to believe that portal dropped me off here.* Naruto muses as the blond slowly fills up his plate.

I wonder where Sasuke and Sakura ended up? The blond queen rider wonders before pushing it out of his mind as it comes time for Naruto to add his two cent into the current conversation.

The sound of hooves behind them causes the group of Changlings to push themselves to their limits. One of the Changlings just grinds their teeth, trying to fight the urge to turn around to stand and fight against the incoming hunting party. The baying of hounds sends chills throughout the group of escaping Changlings.

"I see it! I see the Hedge!" Cries a elemental of the waterblood cries out.

The simple cry causes hope to rekindle within the party of eight. The sound of a hunting horn can be heard over the baying of the incoming hounds. Hound who themselves might also might be captured humans transformed by these Fae for their amusement and to aid in hunting down whatever takes their Fae master's fancy.

"They're piecing through my skin! How can that be? My skin is like bark!" A woodblood shouts and the rest of the group discovers this for themselves as well, although they don't stop moving deeper into the thorny bush.

After a few seconds, the cries of frustrated hounds fill the air and were soon followed by yelps of pain, signaling that the Fae leading the hunt has caught up to the hounds. The sounds continue to become dim for the group of eight and then, slowly, each member of the group seems to vanish from each others' sight.

With a grunt, a pink and red haired Ogre lands upon a dirt path. Sakura huffs softly and stands up before glancing around, taking in her surroundings. Talon tipped fingers run through the dual colored hair while Sakura sighs in relief.

"This... isn't home..." Sakura mutters. *And it seems as though I'm never going to look like myself ever again.* The fourteen year old goblin looking Sakura thinks as she touches her large and folded pointed ears.

Helplessness and despair quickly turn into rage within the teen for a few seconds before Sakura manages to force herself to calm down.

Sakura then begins to walk down the trail, not caring about where this dirt path leads, only that standing around wasn't going to help her in her quest of locating her team-mates.

Although, Sakura couldn't help but wonder if she really did want to locate Sasuke and Naruto. The formerly pink haired girl tries unsuccessfully to push out thoughts of not wanting to find them if they've been captured by the Fae as well. *I don't want Sasuke to see me like this... I'm so ugly...*

"Welcome to Nasty Burger." Sasuke drones out as the previous costumer leaves to go stand else where to wait for their order to be done. The Uchiha tries not to glare at the three younger teens, particularly at the Fenton kid.

Screams echo from outside of the fast food joint, likely caused by a ghost as some blue mist escapes out of the Fenton kid's mouth. *I am in hell.* The nineteen year old thinks, not bothering to duck down behind the counter.

It had taken the Uchiha a good year to learn to speak the local language, English. The Uchiha couldn't help but resent the fact that he has yet to mastered the written format of it even after living in this America place for five years. *This is all the Dobe's fault for angering Sakura, causing her to throw that stupid antic vase at him.* Sasuke thinks while beginning to play with a plastic knife, waiting for the manager or assistant manager to close this fast food joint so they can begin clearing up the mess caused by panicking people.

Wandering Leaf: Naruto

I don't own **Naruto** or **Pern**

Yuuki chirps softly as the brown little flying creature upon his chest sends impressions of hunger. He sighs and Yuuki leaps into the air, hovering over his chest and before raising higher up in the air so that he can sit up. Yuuki's eyes swirl red with hunger.

He walks to the entrance upon getting some cloths on, the chilly morning air caresses his bare spots of skin as he retrieves a wooden bucket that contains slightly chilled bits of rabbit meat that he set aside for Yuuki's morning breakfast. He feels Yuuki's hungry thoughts awaken his own hunger as he opens the lid of the bucket. Yuuki greedily bolts down the bits of rabbit meat while perched on his fur leather jacket with padded shoulders to protect him from Yuuki's sharp claws.

As soon as the bucket is cleared of meat, Yuuki chirps in satisfaction and glides over to rest upon his bed of furs, likely waiting for the sun to raise before lazying about outside. He just ignores the strange creature's antics, having grown use to Yuuki's antics over the three years they've been together.

He places a few fresh logs into the fire pit before opening the smoke hole of the large tepee. One hand sign later and a fire is lighting up the tepee. He does some stretches while a shadow clone swings last nights left over stew near the fire before the clone sits down to pick up where he left off last night.

After stretching, he puts on his leather boots and heads out to go take care of business out in the bush. After finishing his business, he glances around the hill top, looking for signs of any furry late night visitors prowling around, attracted by the pail of meat. He enters

back into his tepee, ready to eat breakfast before going to check on his traps.

The stew warms him up fairly quickly and before leaving once more, he grabs his weapons resting by the door of the tepee and the dimensional device he found when he turned nine, he has gotten into the habit of carrying it around wherever he goes when not in Hidden Leaf. With two pouches containing throwing weapons, he takes two spears tipped with iron heads, straps one to his back while uses the other as a kind of walking stick.

He reaches out to Yuuki to see if the brown flier wishes to join him this morning on his rounds of trap checking but Yuuki seems to have fallen asleep. With a shrug, he leaves the tepee. The sun has yet to chase away the chill in the air, not that it surprises him since this world seems to be a bit more chilly then his birth dimension.

Traveling down the hill, bird song greet him. Birds flutter about the tree tops as he enters into the forest that exists a few feet from the bottom of the hill he camps upon. Some bushes rattle, likely due to ground dwelling fowl or some small mammal moving about. He catches sight of a brushy tail with a white tip.

He finds a few ground fowl in his cage traps and at least three rabbits in his snare traps, although four snare traps show signs of being poached by other predators like foxes or something larger like a lynx. He creates a shadow clone to begin creating replacement traps while he carries his catch back to his camp.

Yuuki joins him as the temperature warms up enough for his to discard his jacket to reveal a simple dark green long sleeve shirt. Yuuki perches upon the make shift hen house, a place he stores the ground fowl he catches. He glances around the wooden panels to see if any of them were loose before opening an empty cage to insert one of the caged fowl.

Once they're all in, he heads outside to fill up a bucket with water and then returns inside to change their water dishes. He lowers the

sack of grain and fills up their food dishes. The fowl begin pecking at the grain within the dishes when he's far enough away from them. With the fowl fed and watered, he raises the bag of grain back up before leaving with the dead rabbits and the empty cages.

With his chores down, he head off to begin practicing his taijutsu in a meadow a mile or two away from his chosen campsite. Yuuki pops in, chirping happily before finding a perch to watch from.

Noon arrives and the clone he had tasked with trap setting arrives with lunch and a jar of oil, reminding him that Yuuki's hide needs attention. Yuuki projects wanting to go swimming and they head off to find a pond of ice melt so Yuuki can clean up before getting oiled, something that Yuuki always enjoys as the little brown always coos and hums as the oil is applied.

With lunch consumed and Yuuki oiled, he heads to the rocky ridge three miles from his campsite to begin practicing his jutsus, those that he learned from the academe, from forgotten scrolls found in various training fields, scrolls he managed to get other students to borrow from the academe library in exchange for favors, and finally those books and scrolls he had stole along with the forbidden scroll.

He reviews the student scrolls in hopes of making sense of the higher level books and scrolls. Already he's finding sealing to be fairly tricky and after the first two explosions, he decided to have shadow clones practice that branch of ninja arts since he won't be suffering from burns or regrowing hair from having it burnt away. It helps that whatever his clones know, he inherits upon their destruction.

His trap making clone dispels and he glances up at the sky to find the sun beginning to set. Upon arriving home, he summons Yuuki before beginning supper. The brown arrives and chirps happily, sending him images of Yuuki's own successful hunt of a squirrel for a snack.

He glances over to the still reading clone and then at the note books laying about open with fresh new notes. As he waits for the rabbit to roast over the fire, he activates a holo-TV and puts on a movie, the speakers move around the tepee to give him surround sound.

"We should consider heading home when autumn arrives." His clone says as he checks on the rabbit. He glances over to his shadow clone, giving the clone a raised eyebrow.

"Any particular reason?" He inquires to his clone, true he could dispel the clone and review its memories, but he did enjoy having somebody to talk to, even if it's a clone of himself.

"We're in a rut." The clone states frankly and he winces. "We've been spending the last decade on these books and making only a little head way in understanding them. We should have raided all of the ninja libraries before we left that dimension. We're clearly missing steps, we already plan to copy the lot before returning."

Upon seeing his frowning expression, the clone dispels and he gets the whole plan. He grins as he reviews it, wishing he had thought of it before. Yuuki chirps questioningly at him and he just reaches out to stroke the little guy's eye ridge.

With Yuuki playing sentry, his clones and himself work on storing the whole collection of the academe library into storage scrolls. He checks the time on the inter-dimensional device and within seconds, he types in the world destination.

The world that is typed in is a technological utopia that provides free services to those under twenty years of age. Twenty and up are expected to pick a profession and to begin to earn a living. It's where he got most of his amazing doodads like that holo-TV and portable ki pocket that consists of a thin wire that wraps around the entrance of a bag or pocket, allowing it to carry tons and tons of things, pretty much limitless in what he can fit in that space.

Within seconds, Yuuki arrives, having been summoned through a mental command. With Yuuki resting about his shoulders, he activates the device. It takes a good six hours for the whole collection to be copied, allowing him to spend time hanging around with local kids his age.

He's a bit stunned to find how popular splicing had become among the teens as they sport eyes of purple, red, spring green, other such unbelievable eye colors. A few had hair done up as pelts of animals like tigers and leopards. He even saw this one who had the beginning of a horn in the middle of her forehead with blond hair almost as bright as his own and pale blue eyes.

Once he has his copies and a bit of a rest, he returns back to the library with two minutes after he had left. Yuuki moves back to take up sentry duty as he creates clones to help in putting the collection back onto the shelves. On finishing, Yuuki and he return to his apartment for a rest before he's expected to get his picture taken for his file.

He couldn't help but be bored as they wait for their jonin instructor. Yuuki is resting in a sun spot upon the table, something that just causes his two 'team-mates' to roll their eyes at. It's clear that even after all this time, they continue to believe that Yuuki is just a stuff animal.

But then, I haven't any reason to have Yuuki do anything other then rest on my shoulders when other people are around. He admits to himself. He feels that Yuuki is fast asleep.

I wish I could listen to my MP3 player... He thinks with a sigh as he continues to stare up at the ceiling. *I wonder if I could get away with heading to the washroom and switch out with a clone? They wouldn't notice the difference.*

Sakura had for the first hour anyway, tried to engage Sasuke in conversation. *For a smart girl, she can be pretty dumb. But then, she*

is only thirteen...

Sasuke hadn't moved a muscle from that spot since Iruka had left, leaving them alone in the classroom. The brat of an Uchiha clearly couldn't come up with a creative thought to save his life from what he's seen of the other guy's performance. He's less then impressed with Sasuke being awarded the title of Rookie of the Year as Yuuki had seen teachers slip the boy advanced material more then a few times since he began bringing Yuuki to the academe.

He's so lazy or should I say broody? He muses privately. *I wonder if he still has that material? It should give me a better idea of what he knows and what to expect from him.*

He hears somebody get up and assumes that it's Sakura. "You really shouldn't lay on the desk like that." Pinkie says to him.

"Do I look like I care? You're no teacher so I don't have to listen to you." He points out.

"This coming from a guy who still carries around a stuff toy!" Sakura snaps and he feels Yuuki stir, likely out of feeling Sakura's irritation. "Geeze! Can you be any more pathetic?" He can hear pinkie sneer at him.

"This coming from a girl who couldn't do more then five push ups? It's one of the reasons why your chakra reserve is so tiny, you know." He counters and Sakura growls at his counter point. "I bet you don't even know any jutsus beyond the ones taught here at school." He says, returning the favor.

"Like that stupid naked girl one counts!" Sakura counters after a few minutes of silence. He feels Yuuki getting restless, confirming that Sakura's growing fairly frustrated about how well he's countering her supposed tongue lashing.

"And yet it's become quite unbeatable. Heck, I even came up with a new variation of it." He remarks and he feels Yuuki fully wake up. He

feels Yuuki's concern and agitation.

"You pervert!" Sakura screams and Yuuki screams as he hadn't order Yuuki not to. "What the?!" Sakura shouts as Yuuki pops between Sakura and him.

"Yuuki..." He says calmly as he gets up onto his elbows to look over to his irritated little friend. The little brown chirps doubtfully, he feels Yuuki's emotions as if he's the one experiencing them.

Yuuki scolds Sakura for a few seconds before landing next to him. He sits up and picks up Yuuki, bringing the little creature onto his lap and rubbing the little brown's eye ridges to calm Yuuki down. He ignores their looks as Yuuki finally gives in and begins to coo under his affection.

"Where did you get that, Dobe?" Sasuke asks in a tone that makes it seem as if its an order. He doesn't say anything even though he's fairly sure that Sakura will be screeching at him for ignoring 'Sasuke-kun!'

Before Sakura explodes on him, the door of the classroom opens and a guy with one eye sporting silver hair pokes his head into the room. "My first thoughts of you are... childish." The man says before adding, "Meet me up on the roof in five minutes."

The man poofs away and with ease, he places Yuuki onto his shoulders before getting off the desk. He ignores the looks the two were giving him, although they do cause Yuuki to become agitated...

To Be Continued... Maybe...

Homeless Naruto

I don't own **Naruto** !

Moving his bushy tail, a black furred fox blinks sleepily upon raising his head. The fox yawns mightily before beginning to stretch. With a shake of his body, the black fox leaves his den.

He glances out of the entrance for a few minutes before finally exiting out of the tunnel. Once fully outside, the black fox explodes and when the smoke clears, Naruto sighs softly while staring up at the dawning sky. The young genin frowns while pulling at his shirt.

With a simple puff of smoke, his outfit changes to that of a orange jumper. *I really do need new cloths...* Naruto thinks to himself as a bunch of shadow clones puff into existence.

Wordlessly, the clones leap away, many altering their appearance as they head off to their destinations. Naruto stretches for a while before his stomach finally begins to rumble and ache. The blond reaches into a hole in the tree and takes out his money purse, the one shaped like a frog.

Pocketing the wallet, Naruto then moves to the tree opposite and searches around for strand of ninja wire that will lead him to his clone made breakfast as one of his clones had taken a job in a restaurant, giving him a surprisingly steady source of meals. Naruto makes a simple seal and the earth opens up after he follows the ninja wire to the hiding spot.

The blond genin takes the box from the hole and the walls of dirt collapses, filling the hole. Naruto unties the wire from the box and pockets it as he walks over to the first training ground his team had trained at. Upon sitting upon one of the logs, he opens the box and begins to eat the cold meal a clone of his packed last night.

I can't believe it's been two months since I was thrown out of my apartment... He thinks as he counts how many weeks its been since he managed to graduate from the academe. *Still haven't learned who stole my rent either... I'll never find them it seems, even if I make a clone for every grown man and woman.*

Naruto pulls away from such thoughts as he doesn't want to follow a certain Uchiha's example on dealing with the past. *Need to take it day by day and look to the future.* The blond tells himself, trying to ignore the more sarcastic voice whispering, *Like having a sh#tload of money will get us a new apartment or nice stuff. Still don't see why we just don't use Henge to look like somebody else and rent a house or something instead of living under a tree like a forest creature...*

Finished with the breakfast bento, Naruto closes the lid before dropping off the top of the log. Without really thinking about it, Naruto begins to head for the meeting point while to distract himself, Naruto reviews the latest memories of his clones, particularly the one one working as a clerk at one of the bookstores in town. The owner doesn't seem to mind if their employees read while manning the counter, so that clone has been reading a wide array of things and has over heard a lot of gossip.

Sasuke grunts out a greeting as the blond genin arrives. Naruto just grins and waves merrily at his usual brooding team-mate before glancing around for Sakura. Not seeing their pink haired team-mate, Naruto allows the grin to fade and his shoulder to sag slightly before sitting down a few feet from Sasuke, trying to recall what he had been thinking about before Sasuke's greeting.

A few minutes pass and the sun has driven the last of the night away, Sakura finally show up. Naruto shouts out his greeting, which Sakura ignores to coo out a greeting to Sasuke. The blond acts disappointed but over the weeks of being part of team seven, Naruto's crush on Sakura has faded.

It's amazing what Naruto's new life style has done to his perception on the world around him, but then the blond genin likely never

imagined that he would find himself hunting in the forest for supper every night nor consuming what he caught raw, even though he usually ate it while in the form of whatever predator he shape-shifted into, mainly a fox although Naruto has taken the form of a cat to catch squirrels or that of a weasel to hunt rabbits down in their holes.

Such a life style is beginning to leave its mark upon the young container, physically and mentally. Naruto's muscles have become toned and skin more tanned. The blond has also began to take note of the fitness level of his team and has found Sakura lacking in this. It only frustrates him that she's not even trying to correct this either, nor does it help that the pink haired genin is on a diet, meaning she's starving herself even though she's got a kitchen full of food, something that Naruto would love to have.

Stupid pride... We could have found a place to rent if you'd just Henge so we don't look like ourselves... How is Henging into animals any different then Henging to look like a different person? At least then we wouldn't be living out in the surrounding training fields... Hunting and eating mice and ground squirrels for our supper. A certain voice pipes in and Naruto continues to ignore it.

Kakashi arrives an hour before noon, Sakura shouts that the man is late while he just gets up off the ground. As the blond genin brushes off his pants, the silver haired jonin announces that they'll be eating lunch before heading to the tower to pick up missions after getting cut off upon trying to explain why he's so late with Sakura declaring the man a liar.

Naruto didn't care as his stomach seems fairly happy with this announcement. It didn't take long for him to fall into his usual act of begging/pledging for them to eat at his favorite restaurant. It has been three days since the blond had eaten at that Ramen bar, he has taken to avoiding the place since Iruka-sensei has been subtly inquiring about any changes in his life.

Naruto didn't want his old teacher's pity for when Iruka learns of his situation. The blond also doesn't want to be a burden on his older

brother/father figure nor get Iruka targeted by the villagers for harboring the 'Kyuubi'. Naruto knows its only a matter of time before people discover his situation and has come to both dread when it is made known and relief for not having to keep it a secret.

Hinata sighs as yet again, Naruto doesn't arrive to his apartment building now that it's suppertime. The young heiress has grown to worry about her crush as she has come to discover that Naruto can't be found anywhere in the village and not for a lack of searching on her part either.

True, for the first month of becoming a genin, Hinata has found herself busy doing things with her team and on matter concerning her personal life. When she began to get free time to try and visit with her crush, she had hung around the rather infamous Ramen bar on and off for the first week of the new month.

Then about two weeks ago, Naruto stopped visiting the bar all together during the evening. Hinata hadn't thought much of it, just assuming that her crush has taken to doing more nighttime training and thus began to sometimes hang around Naruto's apartment building, telling herself that she's only doing so to be there encase Naruto needed some medical attention.

Maybe I should take a closer look of his apartment? Hinata wonders timidly, although her imagination decides to play out what if Naruto arrives to catch her doing so...

Hinata shakes her head and frowns more deeply, after all, if Naruto is consistent then the blond preteen wouldn't be arriving tonight either. Finally forming a resolve, Hinata walks up the wall of the apartment building and looks into Naruto's apartment window to discover it barren as there wasn't even any furniture within it.

So startled by this, Hinata activates her bloodline limit to examine the apartment in depth and discovers nothing in the fridge, the cupboards, bathroom, or in the dressers. *Naruto moved?* Hinata

wonders but frowns as she thinks over that idea, after all, the village really hates Naruto and its unlikely Naruto would be able to move out of this apartment building without earning chuunin or maybe jonin pay.

As Hinata lands upon the ground, the young Hyuuga thinks about what her next course of actions should be and in the end, decides to speak with Kurenai-sensei, hoping her jonin instructor will know how best to proceed.

"Can I help you?" The manager of the apartment building Naruto has been living in for years asks the jonin, chuunin, and genin, also known as Kurenai Yuhi, Iruka Umino, and Hinata Hyuuga.

"We would like to know if you possess a change in address for one of your former tenants." Iruka asks the balding owner of the building. "It seems I've lost the slip containing their new address."

The building manager frowns, trying to think of who has moved out of the apartment complex recently. "A name would help me remember." The man says politely, after all, it's best not to irritate ninja as they are fully capable to destroying buildings as easily as one rips cardboard.

"Naruto Uzumaki." Iruka says and narrows his eyes as the man suddenly straightens. It seems that his former student's name did jog something loose.

"Why do you want to know about that... thing? I was fully in my rights!" The building owner declares rather loudly and angrily. "He didn't pay his rent on time!"

"Why should he be paying you rent at all? I'm fairly sure that the Hokage would love to know what's become of the monthly payments he makes to you in regards to Naruto's rent." Kurenai says frostily.

Hinata despairs at the idea of Naruto being homeless while Iruka suddenly sports a minor aura of killing intent at the thought of this... this man taking not just the Hokage's money but a portion of Naruto's orphanage fund as well.

"I believe our leader would love to speak with him. Perhaps we should escort him in ourselves?" Iruka asks Kurenai.

"I believe it's only proper." The jonin agrees and the man pales while beginning to look like he's torn between fainting and having a stroke.

"Ah, Kakashi. Come, have a seat." Hiruzen Sarutobi, more commonly known as the Third Hokage, says to the current instructor of team seven.

The silver haired jonin enters and closes the door behind him while still holding a certain orange book. Kakashi couldn't help but find alarms going off within his mind as the jonin studies his superior officer. *This likely won't end well.*

"How is team seven coming along?" Hiruzen inquires while cleaning his pipe. "Has any of your students' behavior changed much since you've had them?"

Somehow, Kakashi gets the feeling that he had better give this his full attention or else there will be dire consequences.

"Rumor has it you got kicked out of your apartment! What did you do? Slip dye into the manager's shampoo one too many times?" Kiba asks while coming to stand by their table while they wait for their orders.

Naruto just stares at Kiba, he hadn't expect Kiba to be the one to breach the topic. Oddly enough, the blond genin had always pictured Iruka or the old man Hokage to be the first ones to bring it up before it circulates through the village.

"Where did you hear that?" Naruto asks Kiba after Sakura screeches about how he's homeless and why he never told them. The blond genin could only guess that ignoring pinkie will likely come bite him at a later date but he rather deal with Kiba's inquiry now then to get into an argument with his team-mates. *Wonder when Kakashi will get back?*

"Kurenai was telling Asuma about it while we were doing joint training with them." Kiba answers while Sakura is steaming from him not answering her questions. "Although Ino seemed to go pale upon hearing about it while Shikamaru mutters how troublesome."

As Sakura begin to speak at Naruto, the blond finds himself puzzled as to why the news would affect Ino since they weren't that close. But couldn't ponder it long Ino arrives at the table with an older blond guy who Naruto decides muse be her father cause of the resemblance, causing Sakura to leave off. It also seems as though they've suddenly become the center of attention of the restaurant.

"Uzumaki, my daughter has something to say to you." The blond jonin who's it seems is Ino's father says to him after Kiba retreats from his position at their table, making room for the two newly arrived blond ninja. "Don't you, princess?"

Do all fathers call their daughters princess? Naruto wonders briefly as he turns to look at Ino. "Huh?" Naruto says.

"I took muffle muffle." Ino says, making sounds after the word took. Ino's dad gives her a stern look and Ino just grumbles a bit before saying, "Fine! I headed to your apartment after Asuma dismissed us to talk with you but I slipped on your rug and fell on your potted plant. I wasn't thinking and decided to take some of your money to pay for dry cleaning, I didn't think you'd miss a few bills since there were so many in the envelop."

"So you didn't take the whole rent?" Naruto asks and Ino nods. "But then, what happened to the rest of it?" The blond wonders and Ino couldn't help but shrug and shake her head.

Ino's father suddenly gets a dark look and after father and daughter stare at each other, the temperature goes down as Ino gives her father a bewildered look. "Ino, tell your mother I'll be working late, ok honey?" The man says before leaving.

"..." Nobody at the table seems to know what to say. *I thought somebody stole it all... That creep still accepted that money!* Naruto thinks and despite everything, the blond still felt something at this betrayal from his previous landlord.

Although Naruto couldn't help but feel baffled and a bit hurt by Ino's thief of a few bills, he could, kind of, understand why Ino hadn't thought much of taking a few bills when it appears as though he wouldn't miss a few. *Stupid villagers... It's their attitude and treatment that's Ino and most of my classmates follow the example of.* The blond genin thinks as Ino sits down next to Sakura.

- T -T

Naruto glances around the edge of the forest where his current den is located. It had taken him about two weeks to perfect an earth jutsu so that he wouldn't have to spend hours upon hours of digging out a new den whenever he woke to find a team training within a mile or two of his den.

The sun is setting and he had thought of sticking around the village to buy super but Naruto just didn't feel like being stared at and hearing whispered conversation about the latest scandal concerning him. The blond genin just wanted to return to his den where its quiet.

Even now, outside of the village does he feel as if somebody is watching him. With a sly grin, Naruto creates thirty-one shadow clones and uses the puff of smoke to take the form of a weasel. The clones dart off and after a few minutes, a very dirty yellow furred weasel uncurls himself.

With a body shake, the weasel bounds forward, heading off in the direction of his den. Naruto the weasel waits a few feet before taking

the form of a black fox and trots right to his tree and enters into his den.

Hinata hadn't chased off after the shadow clones like the rest of the genin assigned to track down where Naruto is living as she had seen something happen that lead her to believe that Naruto had tricked them.

After a few minutes, a mountain weasel darts off and she only pauses a few seconds before following after. The shy Hyuuga felt glad she had as that weasel suddenly becomes a black fox that continues to move through the forest. Hinata's a bit baffled about a few things as she follows the fox through the forest.

Then, the fox disappears under some roots. She waits a few minutes before taking a look at the spot to discover a tunnel. Activating her bloodline limit, the heiress discovers the fox resting in a a den that seems to be a circle with a diameter of four feet and is about three feet down under the tree. The den allows for a good three feet in height. Not much seems to be within the den but the fox that might be her crush.

Allowing her bloodline limit to fade, Hinata then begins to look around this section of forest, looking for signs that would prove that Naruto was indeed the black furred fox. She found a wire by the base of the tree that the entrance of the den is facing, activating her bloodline limit once again, she traces the wire to a bento box hidden about a foot under ground.

"Hinata! What are you doing here?" Sakura asks her after she memorizes the area. "Can you believe it? I followed one of his clones! Where is the idiot anyway? When I find him, I'm so giving him a piece of my mind for making me look for him!" The pink haired genin continues within seconds, not even waiting for her to answer the question.

Hinata doesn't say anything as they begin to leave the site of the bento box. It also seems that Sakura was in the mood to vent so her

crush's crush soon stops talking about Naruto to lamenting about Sasuke's continuous rejections and declaring that one day she'll be the Uchiha's wife, something the pink haired genin couldn't wait to hold over Ino's head.

Hinata only listened with half an ear as she's trying to figure out how Naruto could get into such a tight space while wearing a Henge. After all, a Henge is an illusion one casts upon themselves to make them appear as though they were somebody else. It doesn't cause any real changes to the body, so it should be impossible for Naruto as a fox to fit into that tunnel since it's only a foot wide.

Naruto woke and stretches. He even sat down and used a back paw to scratch an ear before walking down through the tunnel leading up and out. The black fox pauses once more by the entrance and glances around outside of the den, his ears perked up.

A sharp snap of a twig causes Naruto to lay down to try and glance in the direction of the noise. The black fox thinks about it and decides to retreat into his den. He decides to wait a while before trying to leave once more.

Hinata sighs as the fox retreats back into the main den. The young heiress glances over to where Ino is standing. The blond girl gives her a look that clearly says, 'what did I do?'

Hinata just shakes her head and tries to get more comfortable as it seems it's going to be a while before the fox tries to come out from under the tree.

"Is he coming out?" Ino asks using the radio.

"He heard you stepping on that twig and retreated back in." Hinata answers softly. She hears Ino curse softly.

About an hour later, the black fox that might be Naruto finally comes to the entrance once more and after a few heart wrenching minutes,

the fox finally comes out, allowing them to have a good view of him. Smoke engulfs the spot and suddenly Naruto is standing there.

Naruto stretches a bit and then reaches into the tree, pulling out his frog wallet. Naruto pockets the wallet and then glances around the forest while walking up to that tree that has that wire. As Hinata and Ino watch, Naruto pulls the wire, following it to the bento box.

Once Naruto's out of sight upon picking up that bento box, Ino and Hinata move from their hiding spots to check the tunnel. They touch the tunnel entrance to find it very much solid. Even using the genjutsu cancel doesn't alter at all.

"Let's see if this works..." Ino says and with a single hand sign, Ino's form become that of a cute blond fox. Ino curses after trying to enter into the tunnel, the Henge gets canceled while Ino rubs her head.

"Ok, there's got to be more to this then that..." Ino says and Hinata just sighs as she tries to think some other reason for Naruto to move through solid ground but just keeps coming back to the idea that Naruto really does shape-shift when he does Henge.

"Maybe we should ask Naruto to demonstrate how he did that?" The shy Hyuuga wonders out loud in a soft tone, but it seems as though Ino's ears were sharper then what Hinata had expected.

"Sounds good to me! Let's go!" Ino says and Hinata soon follows after the mind walker.

They found Naruto sitting not far from the MIA tribute. "Are you a kitsune?" Ino asks as soon as they arrive within sight of the other blond genin, Ino stomps up to the log that Naruto is sitting on.

"Wha'? What makes you ask that?" Naruto asks upon swallowing what's in his mouth as the preteen boy looks at Ino like a deer caught in the beam of a flashlight.

"You're living under a tree, you came out in the form of a black fox, and most of the adults don't like you, some have been known to call you the Kyuubi brat!" Ino tells Naruto much to Hinata's chain grin.

"I knew they called me that but they shouldn't... I mean, the law!" Naruto mutters out dumbly as the blond boy tries to wrap his head around the idea that Ino and Hinata has seen him go from fox to human.

"Law? What law?" Ino demands.

Naruto manages to close his mouth and glance off to the side, mind racing about in panic, trying to think of how to defuse this without revealing about his burden. "If you know what it's about then you'll be subjected to the law. If you speak of it, you'll either be jailed or killed, so do you really want to know more?" Naruto asks his fellow blond genin.

Ino didn't believe it for a moment but Hinata touches her shoulder and shakes her head. "Don't, he's right. It's S-ranked in nature and it's safer for you not to know." The typically shy girl tells Ino.

Ino swallows, while she might not have believed Naruto on this, but that look Hinata gave her made her believe that there is a law. *I'm going to get to the bottom of this, just not now and preferably from my parents.* Ino thinks.

"You know?" Naruto asks Hinata and Hinata suddenly realizes who had been around to hear her. The shy girl had been more intent on calming Ino down that she totally forgot about her crush's presence.

Hinata nods woodenly, her face totally flushed. Naruto just kind of stares down into his breakfast bento. "Ah..." Was all Naruto could think of saying.

Ino glances between the two, her arms crossed and shaking her head at the pair's antics. *I wonder if I shouldn't... I mean, they would be good for each other, won't they?* The blond girl thinks.

"Anyway, if you're not a kitsune, how is it you can fit into such a small hole? And don't say Henging into a fox cause I tried that!" Ino asks after a few minutes of awkward silence.

Naruto gives Ino a confused look. "But that's all I do to get into the den. It should have worked." The blond demon container thinks. "I mean, I'm beginning to get why Henging into birds don't allow one to fly, who knew it was tiring always flapping your arms? I'm also pretty good at transforming into a kunai. I'm working on transforming into reptiles and into larger creatures like rhinos and elephants."

Ino and Hinata kind of stare up at Naruto, each wondering if the blond boy attended the same classes on that jutsu as they had. "Ah, Naruto? Henge jutsu is an illusion that surrounds your body. It's not an actual transformation." Ino explains and Naruto gives them a bewilder look.

"Eh? When have did they teach that?" Naruto wonders before biting into what's between his chop sticks.

"When they introduced the three basic jutsus." Ino says.

"I think I was sent out of class during that one. I only learnt about them from watching you guys perform them." Naruto admits, using his free hand to rub the back of his head.

"Didn't you read the scroll on them?" Ino asks and Naruto says, "There's a scroll? All I ever got were these note sheets summarizing what the jutsus do."

"What a minute... You learnt the Replacement jutsu, Clone jutsu, and the Henge jutsu from watching us preform them? With no help or advice at all?" Ino asks, suddenly wondering if Naruto really was as stupid as he acts since if he did then...

"I never really perfected the Clone one, I'm better at Shadow Clones then I ever was with that one." Naruto admits, not very comfortable about discussing their academe days. "I began skipping class cause

the teachers would only allow me to attend the boring lessons like history, math, and once time I was eleven, taijutsu."

If they would go that far to keep Naruto down by kicking him out of those kinds of lessons, then what did they sabotage during the main lessons when they couldn't avoid teaching us when he's in the class? Ino wonders after a few minutes of trying to wrap her mind around the idea that not only was Naruto's education been sabotaged, but Sasuke's and her own as well.

I can't believe this is my new apartment... Naruto thinks as the blond boy just stands at the open door. *I can't believe I don't have to pay rent either... I wonder how the old man pulled that one off?* He wonders as he enters into the apartment, the large window providing light for the apartment.

The kitchen table seems covered in gifts and upon approaching the table, Naruto discovers that the majority of the gifts come from ninja with only two coming from the owners of his favorite restaurant. Even though the young boy had long ago promised to never cry again, Naruto gets slightly choked up while tears well up at the gifts as he's never had this many before.

"Best day ever!" Naruto declares after wiping his face in his sleeve.

The End -- Hope you enjoyed reading this!

Pokeball Rip off: Naruto

I don't own **Naruto** ! Pokeballs are owned by people who are not me.

This... better work. Naruto thinks as he stares across the training field at his fellow male team-mate. Sasuke's Sharingan is fully active and there's a minor smirk upon Sasuke's face, one that really irked the blond genin.

Naruto had a plan and for that plan to work, Sasuke needed to be... indisposed of so he can take the other's place for a while. He didn't know if he'll impersonate Sasuke personally or have a shadow clone do so. Thus Naruto needed the true Sasuke to be on vacation or something, which is why the blond if fingering a carved wooden ball that is the pinnacle of Naruto's experiments with storage scrolls seals.

"Here it comes!" Naruto shouts and with that, the blond throws the wooden ball at Sasuke. His body tense as the ball sails through the air.

Sasuke back hands the ball and as the ball drops down to the ground, the ball opens up and as it closes, Sasuke vanishes. Naruto stood there for a few minutes, totally stunned that it worked as the ball didn't even shake within seconds of Sasuke vanishing. Naruto walks over and picks up the wooden ball his team of clones created based off of some manga they found.

"Ok... so maybe it can be called a Nin-Ball." Naruto muses as he turns the painted ball around, his thumb going over the wire hing of the ball. Around the middle of the wooden Nin-Ball was a gray band. The top half of the ball has an orange cute chibi fox on purple with the bottom half being yellow with the leaf symbol of Hidden Leaf village upon it in green.

Naruto puts the ball back into its clay case and then put that into his pouch. *I wonder which genjutsu this ball will put Sasuke under until I release him?* Naruto wonders briefly but doesn't really care since Sasuke did have his Sharingan out so he doubts whatever genjutsu the ball is 'programed' with will work.

In the Ball

"Repeat after me, 'I am a Ninjamon, my owner is Naruto Uzumaki.' Say this fifty times and you will be rewarded." A cheery voice tells him and Sasuke just growls.

About ten of this 'world's' minutes pass and suddenly, once mroe, Sasuke double overs in pain as something seems to fry his being. That cheery tone repeats itself for the seventh time since Sasuke arrived in this world. "I'm going to kill that idiot for sending me here!" He snaps.

"No, no, no! Bad Ninjamon! Naruto is your owner! You never attack your owner! Attacking your owner is bad!" That voice tells him and he experiences a larger amount of pain.

"Repeat after me, 'I am a Ninjamon, my owner is Naruto Uzumaki.' Say this fifty times and you will be rewarded." A cheery voice tells him and Sasuke just groans softly, mentally vowing to get vengeance upon Naruto for doing this to him.

(I so believe that some kind of brainwashing goes on inside of a Poke-Ball.)

Outside of the Ball

After having one of his shadow clones practice being Sasuke out in the training fields for about an hour, Naruto finally decide its time to proceed to step 2 of his plan, switch is to have 'Sasuke' speak with Kakashi about seduction training as he did want to woo Sakura but doesn't really know where to begin.

After all, following Sakura, Ino, and the other girls' example was working as well as it did for them went it came to courting Sasuke. Naruto felt it was time to pursue a different course of action and hence why he decided to approach Kakashi but doubted that the jonin would be willing to teach him one on one and he just knew that Sasuke wouldn't go for it either.

Which is why Naruto needed the real Sasuke to disappear for a few days, hopefully it will only take a few days to learn everything in regards to this whole seduction business.

Kakashi Found

Hope this works... Naruto thinks nervously while his disguised clone keeps a mask of indifference on. Today was a free day so it took a bit of doing to track down his instructor.

"Kakashi-sensei!" He calls out as he picks up his pace, 'Sasuke' doesn't though. The silver haired masked jonin turns to face them as they approach.

"We," He gestures from himself and 'Sasuke', "want to learn more about seduction. Not that the bastard would admit it." He says in a stage whisper while 'Sasuke' makes a typical Sasuke sound.

Kakashi does this eye smile. "I see... Have either of you been given... The Talk?" The be-masked jonin asks them and the blond genin gives Kakashi a startled look while he hopes 'Sasuke' keeps a calm, confident that some how also looks a bit confused. He didn't dare glance at 'Sasuke' to see 'Sasuke's' reaction.

"Talk?" Naruto wonders out loud. "What kind of Talk are we talking about? Is it the one about perverts? If it is, then I've heard it."

He hears 'Sasuke' snort and he gives 'Sasuke' a glare. "Bet you don't know what he's talking about either, bastard!" He accuses 'Sasuke' who just "tsk" in reply.

"I see. I don't suppose I can send you to your old academe teacher for this?" Kakashi asks and Naruto just scowls at the man.

Finally Kakashi closes his book and motions for them to sit or something. After glancing at 'Sasuke', he sits down on the ground while Kakashi seems to summon a log to sit upon.

Inside the Ball

The real Sasuke couldn't find the energy to 'sit up' in this 'world'. Despite his thoughts of his nerves going to be too fried by the last shock, he keeps feeling them as though they're the very first shock he got. The Uchiha jerks as yet again he's shocked now that allotted time expires.

"Repeat after me, 'I am a Ninjamon, my owner is Naruto Uzumaki.' Say this fifty times and you will be rewarded." A cheery voice tells him.

Damn him! Sasuke privately curses but has grown too tired of getting shock that he finally repeats the phase, trying to say it quickly enough even though it left a foul taste in his mouth. "I am a Ninjamon, my owner is Naruto Uzumaki. I am a Ninjamon, my owner is Naruto Uzumaki..."

He stops after saying it fifty times and after a few seconds, he's rewarded by being engulfed in this smoothing, comforting feeling that also seems to calm his nerves. *"He can be taught! Congratulations! To be rewarded once more, please repeat the phase 'I am a Ninjamon' or 'My owner is Naruto Uzumaki' ten times!"* The cheerful tone and Sasuke growls as that nice, comforting feeling fades by the end of the voice speaking.

In the end, Sasuke decides upon saying 'I am a Ninjamon' ten times as he sees it as the lesser of two evils and it will bring about a reward faster then the other one. "I am a Ninjamon. I am a Ninjamon..."

He quits at the tenth and that comforting feeling returns. Sasuke baths in the feeling for the next few minutes before that cheery voice begins speaking once more. *"Good boy! Say it another ten times!"* The hated voice says, the feelings vanish. Sasuke groans but after a minute, does as commanded. The pleasure of the reward seems to last longer and longer.

After doing this for what felt like two hours, the voice has a new task for him. *"Good boy! Now it is time for you to work on the phase 'my owner is Naruto Uzumaki' ten times to get the reward!"* He just groans, that one was so much harder to swallow...

Outside of the Ball

Naruto felt ill now that they were finished listening to Kakashi give them the Talk about intercourse and going into so much detail about jutsus that one can use in the bedroom to help increase the pleasure of this activity.

Neither 'Sasuke' or Naruto noticed Kakashi shrugging, getting up off the log, and walking away. 'Sasuke' recovers more quickly and moves to shake Naruto until the blond snaps out of it. 'Sasuke' slaps Naruto's face and upon seeing 'Sasuke', the blond growls out, "Why you...!"

'Sasuke' doesn't move, only smirks as the fist hit, causing 'Sasuke' to vanish in a puff of smoke. Naruto blinks as the clone's memories and sighs at feeling the clone's smugness before being dispelled. The blond sighs while wondering if he should continue to pursue this plan of seducing Sakura before his female team-mate some how manages to wear Sasuke down so that he'll go on a date with her.

With a sigh, Naruto creates another shadow clone that looks like Sasuke. The two then head off in different directions, 'Sasuke' going off to mimic the usual routine the real Sasuke does while Naruto heads off to think by training til he drops.

Inside the Ball

The reward fades, which informs Sasuke that another set of instructions will be given. *What more does this voice want?* He wonders while 'laying' on his back.

"Quiz time!" The voice declares and Sasuke flinches, remembering the last quizzes and he had failed them since they require the questions expected him to answer quickly, not giving one time to think of the answers or haste.

In other words, they tested to see how deeply he believes the concepts that this world if 'teaching' him. He knows he's being brainwashed but he so grown use to the pleasure and sense of fulfillment that the reward gives him. *"Who's a Ninjamon?"*

"I am!" Sasuke says.

"Who's your owner?"

"Naruto Uzumaki is!"

"Does a good Ninjamon attack their owners?"

"No!"

"You are a?"

"Ninjamon!"

"Good boy! You answered all questions correctly! Enjoy your reward!" The chipper voice says.

Suddenly Sasuke is a washed with triple the usual levels of pleasure and whispering voices begin to say and repeat in a softly and a smoothing tone, 'I am a Ninjamon, my owner is Naruto Uzumaki. I obey my owner in all things.' The soft whispers become a soft hum and lulls him into sleep.

Outside of the Ball

Half way through his shower, Naruto's disguised clone pops, reminding Naruto to create a fresh clone to take Sasuke's place. He creates one outside of his bathroom before picking up the soap to scrub his body with it.

It has been two days since the dreaded Talk with Kakashi and Naruto's trying to gather up the courage to speak with the man about those lessons. 'Sasuke' and him just hadn't had a chance to speak with Kakashi without Sakura around since he rather not have Sakura know about his pursue at the fine art of seduction.

Well, maybe I should have 'Sasuke' approach somebody about it... I mean, there's got to be plenty of people willing to teach Sasuke about this, right? And while 'Sasuke' is doing that, I can ask Iruka-sensei! The blond genin thinks, nodding at that course of action since it almost means that he doesn't have to worry about Kakashi accidentally spilling the beans to Sakura.

Once done in the shower, Naruto takes a towel and wrap it about his waist before exiting the bathroom. It doesn't take long before he's dressed in a white shirt and a pair orange pants since its laundry day, thus his jumpers were all in the wash.

Once his weapon pouches were on his person, Naruto heads to the fridge to get the milk before getting his cereal, bowl, and spoon. Siting at his table, Naruto suddenly gets up to get his headband and puts it on with a sheepish look even though nobody was around to witness his forgetfulness.

Once he's eaten his breakfast, he creates a single shadow to attend to his laundry. With that done, Naruto leaves to hook up with his team.

"Hey Sakura!" He calls out a greeting to his pink haired team-mate. Sakura just waves weakly at him, it seems that Sakura is distracted about something which causes Naruto to give 'Sasuke' a look, but 'Sasuke' just ignores him.

Naruto sighs, those clones that take over Sasuke's place seem to very much enjoy their roles, which kind of means he enjoys it as well since those clones were him... Naruto just shakes his head, trying to dismiss that train of thought. *Guess I'll learn what he did come either supper or tomorrow morning.*

"Why do we even bother to show up on time when we know he'll be two to three hours late?" Naruto wonders out loud as he distracts himself as he's really, really bore with waiting for Kakashi-sensei. "I mean, we can get some training in during the hours we spend waiting for him to show up."

"Naruto..." Sakura growls at him and he winces at the girl's tone. It seems that whatever thoughts were circling around in that girl's head had turned into frustration and Sakura was looking for someone to take it out on.

'Sasuke' grunts softly and begins to walk from the spot, leaving him a bit confused by this course of action. Sakura hurries to walk along side of 'Sasuke' and with a shrug, Naruto follows after, kind of curious as to what 'Sasuke' has planned.

"Sasuke!" Ino's voice cries and within seconds, a blond girl has lashed herself onto 'Sasuke' from the right. Sakura growls while holding a fist and a fiery aura sprout around her like a cloak.

"Get your hooves off my Sasuke!" Sakura snaps at Ino. Naruto just knows that this wasn't going to end well as 'Sasuke' explodes into smoke with a few twigs falling to the ground.

"You chased him off, forehead-girl!" Ino accuses Sakura, thus the two girls got into a rather loud argument while he's just glad that 'Sasuke' hadn't been dispelled.

"Brothersome." Naruto hears Shikamaru say and he glances away from the two girls to see the rest of Ino's team coming from the right. "Naruto." The lazy genin says.

"Hey yourself, Shikamaru." Naruto says before addressing Choji. "Hi Choji." The rather large genin nods in reply while eating chips.

"Seen Kakashi today?" The smoking jonin instructor asks them and Naruto just shakes his head. "Well, we were on our way to collect you since we have a mission together." The jonin explains and Naruto brightens at that.

"Mission? What kind of mission? Is it protecting a merchant caravan? Or tracking down a spy?" Naruto asks, hoping against hope that it's something that will take them out of the village.

"Not exactly..." The jonin says.

Day before First Chuunin Examine

I can't help but feel as though I'm forgetting something... Something important... Naruto thinks while sitting on his bed with a frown fixated upon his face.

Let's see... Clone is still functional, I've finished reading those books that Iruka suggested, 'Sasuke' managed to get a few lessons from a few specialists on the art of seduction, and pushed back plans to seduce Sakura cause of the examines... He thinks but can't seem to think of anything he's missing.

In the end, the blond gets up and moves to check on those Nin-Balls his clones had created, there is suppose to be six in total. He found five of them in the hidden bottom of his closet and suddenly he remembers what it is he forgot. "Sasuke!"

It takes him a good halve hour before finding the wooden ball hidden in this spot by the window. Naruto takes the ball out of the case and tosses it to the ground, saying the phrase that will release the captured ninja, "Go time!"

The ball opens up and suddenly his actual team-mate is standing in the room with this dazed look upon his face. Then Sasuke blinks a

few times and then glances around the room. "Sasuke?" Naruto asks and Sasuke doesn't seem to pay him any mind.

Naruto moves and grabs Sasuke's shoulder, causing the other to look at him. "Sasuke? Are you alright?" Naruto asks and Sasuke gives him a puzzled look.

"Sasuke?" Sasuke asks and he nods his head slowly. "Yea, you're Sasuke, remember? Sasuke's your name." Naruto stresses.

"I am a Ninjamon, my name is Sasuke. My owner is Naruto Uzumaki." Sasuke says and Naruto would laugh, if this wasn't so serious.

"Do you know who I am?" Naruto asks and Sasuke responds promptly, "My owner."

"Ok... I guess being in that ball for three weeks was long enough for you to finally give into the genjutsu. Sharingan or no Sharingan..." He muses as he moves away from Sasuke.

Naruto picks up the ball and after thinking about it, the blond holds it out and says, "Rest time, Sasuke!" Within seconds, Sasuke vanishes and Naruto stares down at the ball in his hand, his mind slowly going over his opinions.

"Ok, now what do I do with him?" He wonders to himself as he rotates the ball around in his hand.

Forest of Death

Naruto fingers the blank ball as he watches this freaky snake like ninja move about the clearing. *Well, I'm sure as hell ain't strong enough to defeat this guy...* He thinks and then with a snort, throws the ball while the more experienced Grass ninja is ready to throw a pair of kunai at 'Sasuke' and Sakura.

The ball flies through the air and the ninja snorts as the Grass nin easily back hands the Nin-Ball. The ball opens up and suddenly, the Grass nin vanishes before the ball closes. He's already leaping down to the ground as the Nin-Ball drops down onto the ground.

He waits a few minutes before walking over and picking the wooden ball up. He's more then a little stunned at the fact that it had been a successful capture. "What are these things? Master Balls?" Naruto wonders as he stares at the blue chibi fox on the ball.

As he tries to think of what kind of genjutsu is tied to this ball, Sakura seems to be suffering from having a minor mental break down. 'Sasuke' just seems to be glad that he hadn't dispelled, which would likely only add to Sakura's confusion.

I'll let Sasuke out and see how much of his ninja skills he has. Naruto decides.

Inside the Blue Fox Nin-Ball

Orchimaru was not having a very nice day as not only did Sasuke no preform as expected but the annoying blond had somehow placed a genjutsu upon him! One that he can't seem to be able to break!

The worst think about being in this white space seems to be the shocks of pain for whenever he discuses his plans of payback out loud! Which is accompanied by this cheery voice that has the never to call him. Him, Orochimaru, S-ranked missing nin to be a bad girl!

It unnerves the snake sage that the blond child somehow discovered that the body he inhabits was originally a woman. Too few people knew of that and the snake sage already plans to first investigate them before killing them to see if there were any other leaks among his ranks.

Suddenly pain goes throughout his being, a pain that seems to hit the nerves directly before that irritating voice begins again. *"Remember, you must repeat the phrase 'I am a Ninjamon, I belong*

to Naruto Uzumaki' fifty times to receive a reward!" The cheery voice tells Orochimaru.

"Skinning is too mild for the brat!" Orochimaru growls to himself and receives that shock with that voice reproaching him, *"Bad girl! No attacking your owner! As a Ninjamon, your job is to obey your owner."*

"His head will hang from my fireplace!" Orochimaru counters only to be shocked once more. *"Bad girl! No attacking your owner! As a Ninjamon, your job is to obey your owner."* The cheery voice reproaches.

"Bleed him dry!"

"Bad girl! No attacking your owner! As a Ninjamon, your job is to obey your owner."

"Nail him to the..."

"Bad girl! No attacking your owner! As a Ninjamon, your job is to obey your owner."

(Like none of you saw this coming.)

Night

Sasuke glances around the forest, looking for the reason why his owner would allow him out of... whatever that black space was. "Sasuke, we're going to see just how much of your ninja skill you retain from before I... ah, became your owner." Naruto says and Sasuke nods, acknowledging his owner.

Naruto watches as Sasuke uses a trunk of one of the huge trees that grow in this forest. The blond watches as various weapons hit the trunk before a log puffs into existence where Sasuke had been standing before the Uchiha comes running down from the trunk of said tree.

Clones poof into exist on either side of Sasuke before Sasuke doesn't some aerial manoeuvrings before launching another two kunai at the trunk. Then the clones move to attack Sasuke, he watches as fists, kicks, and other physical actions seem to go right through the clones before they vanish.

Suddenly that log rises into the air with wires wrapped upon it. Then he watches as fire speeds down the wires and engulfs the log. *I've never seen that move before...* He thinks and stares at Sasuke's face to see if Sasuke has the Sharingan active but its not.

A few more jutsus later and he calls a halt as Naruto notices how deeply breathing Sasuke was. "Well, it seems you haven't lost much of your skill but it seems as though we're going to have to work on your stamina." Naruto muses before asking, "You're hungry, aren't you?"

Sasuke seems sheepish about nodding and Naruto felt a bit stupid for not thinking of it before. *Although, this is only the third time he's been out since I...* Naruto felt a wave of guilt at what he did but didn't the Sharingan see through genjutsu? Naruto tosses a ration bar over to Sasuke, who promptly eat it after unwrapping it.

After Sasuke eats the bar, Naruto uses the ball to dismiss Sasuke back into that storage space that is connected to the ball.

I hope I don't get too use to doing that... Naruto thinks as he returns to where 'Sasuke' and Sakura were.

Preliminary Matches

Naruto's already regretting not having a clone stand in as Sasuke but it's not like he can do anything about it now, not when the old man and out of town ninja were around. The blond could feel people looking at him as Sasuke stands to his right and a bit behind.

Sasuke stood a bit behind Naruto, tense at being around so many people. Some he remembers from the before time while others are

new to him. Sasuke found it hard to follow Naruto's command about acting like he did before he became owned by the blond.

Sasuke just found it hard since all he had done back then had been brood about... ah, what did he brood about again? Oh yea, his brother killing his family... But that wasn't right cause he arrived too late to witness that. The massacre was over when he entered into the compound.

Oh yea, he caught me in a genjutsu. Sasuke tells himself. *So... how do I know he's the one that actually killed?* Sasuke thinks as he watches some guy from Sand get wrapped up by a Leaf nin.

That thought floored him and suddenly new questions erupt following that thought. So Sasuke became so distracted by these new thoughts that if it weren't for Naruto saying his name, he wouldn't have snapped out of that line of thinking and likely would have been touched by somebody who wasn't his owner.

"Yes?" Sasuke asks him and Naruto motions to the board featuring Sasuke's name and that of Lee. The green wearing genin has already leaped down off the catwalk and seems to very excited about being chosen.

"You can do it Sasuke!" Ino says while Naruto gives Sasuke a little shove to go down the stairs since it seems as though Sasuke wasn't going unless he gave him an order of some kind, which was what the shove was.

"You didn't, I don't know, replace the actual Sasuke with a shadow clone before you two arrived here, Naruto?" Kakashi asks and Naruto glances over at his jonin instructor.

"I can honestly say, I have not, sensei. Besides, shouldn't Sasuke be able to escape before his match?" Naruto counters and after a few tense seconds, Kakashi just smiles that odd one eye smile.

"Just checking. We are ninja after all." Kakashi says and Naruto couldn't help but wonder what that means...

With a shake, Naruto focuses on the match going on below. Naruto had managed to stop Lee from challenging 'Sasuke' that day of the first exam but it seems that Lee's making up for that failure pretty well.

"That or he's not focusing on the match..." Naruto murmurs to himself out loud as he watches as Sasuke manages to use a pair of kunai and wire to trip Lee up slightly, allowing Sasuke to create a small cluster of regular clones. Lee seems to sprout a fiery aura before charging the cluster of Sasukes, most of whom dart off and spread out, not that it seems to cause Lee to lose that aura of his.

As Sasuke finally engages in combat with Lee, Naruto watches as Sasuke seems to be absorbing some maneuvers of Lee's while using his clan style. And yet, no Sharingan was active, which caused the blond genin to wonder just how badly that Nin-Ball had screwed with Sasuke.

Although, sadly, Lee won by simply outlasting Sasuke. The Medics arrive and escort Sasuke off. Naruto would hurry after but gets this feeling that it would only be proof that he had something to do with how odd Sasuke has been acting. *Should have left a few clones in the building so they can go where I can't...*

Sasuke felt very uncomfortable about Naruto being out of his sight but wasn't going to say anything about it. He knew that Naruto didn't want anyone knowing that Naruto is his owner since the village does hate his blond owner for some, yet explained reason.

Three Days After the Chuunin Exam Preliminaries

Naruto watches as Kakashi dismisses Sakura while pinning him with a look. Naruto shifts uncomfortably under Kakashi's gaze. "Do you want to explain why you've had a clone impersonate your team-mate?" Kakashi asks him after a few minutes.

"Well... you see, ever since that mission to Wave, I've had my clones work on storage seals. And well, this is what they came up with." Naruto says and he takes out the Nin-Ball containing Sasuke.

Kakashi takes it from him while giving him a skeptical look, as if not really believing that he, Naruto Uzumaki, had managed to come up with something using seals. "Go Time!" He says after Kakashi returns the ball upon studying it for a few minutes, even opening it and finding nothing in there.

The Nin-Ball feels warm in his hand as suddenly, Sasuke appears before him. Sasuke blinks and seems a bit surprised to see Kakashi standing there. Sasuke gives him a baffled look.

Kakashi moves his headband and looks at Sasuke with his Sharingan. Their jonin instructor then glances at the Nin-Ball before falling over with a vacant expression. "That's... unexpected." Naruto muses as he stares down at Kakashi.

"Should I begin my training?" Sasuke asks Naruto and he glances over at Sasuke before taking out a storage scroll.

"You know how to used a storage scroll?" Naruto asks and Sasuke seems to think about it for a few seconds before nodding. The blond tosses the scroll over to Sasuke and says as he bends down to pick up Kakashi, "Good! In that scroll is lunch, supper, and drinks. Eat the lunch before beginning your training and if I'm not back by sun set, eat the supper. The drinks are for when you are thirsty."

Before leaving, Naruto makes a clone to help carry the fallen jonin to the hospital.

Two Months After Invasion

Naruto takes out the Nin-Ball with a blue chibi fox upon it. It has been a good three months since he captured that snake like ninja and caused Kakashi to enter into a coma that he has yet to come out of.

Naruto then takes out the two other Nin-Balls, neither of which were Sasuke is already out of the ball and going about his training. The blond still didn't understand Sasuke's reasoning concerning the fact that Sasuke is a Ninjamon but he himself wasn't a Ninjamon even though he fights other ninja.

With a sigh, Naruto allows his chin to touch the table top as he slouches, staring at the ball featuring a purple chibi fox upon it before glancing at the green chibi fox ball. The purple contains some blue skin swordsman while the green contains Sasuke's look-a-like.

I can't believe I've filled four balls. Granted three of them are filled with insanely powerful ninja, but... Oh damn it all, if my luck keeps going on like this, I'll need more Nin-Balls. Naruto thinks, the last two empty Nin-Balls feature a white chibi fox and yellow chibi fox.

"Playing with balls, eh?" A voice says, breaking his concentration. He glances over to find a certain purple haired woman holding the Nin-Ball with a blue fox upon it.

"..." Naruto watches as the woman tosses the ball up into the air and catch it. He rests himself up on his chair, he manages to put the other two balls away as he regards the woman across from him.

"Show Time." He says just as the ball is tossed up into the air and the ball opens up slightly before closing once more. He turns his head to the right to finds that the Grass nin glancing around with a very out of it expression.

"Hahaha, nice prank kid." The purple haired woman says as she slams the ball a bit on the table, not that it caused the ball any hurt, just cause it to make a bit of noise.

"Why don't you tell the lady what you are?" Naruto asks the brainwashed Grass nin.

"I am a Ninjamon, I belong to Naruto Uzumaki." Comes the answer.

"What was your name before I became your owner?" Naruto asks the still out of it Grass nin.

"Orochimaru." Came the response.

"What is your name now?" He asks.

"Whatever you decide." The Grass nin replies.

"What the hell?!" Is the woman's abrupt response.

"Home." He says and within second of saying that, Orochimaru vanishes back into the storage space.

Naruto then begins to roll the ball back and forth on top of the table. "Who's have thought using a storage seal and a genjutsu anchor could be so effective, huh?" He says to the purple haired woman.

He glances up at her and finds the purple haired woman just staring at him with a bit of alarm and some other emotion that he could only describes as 'Mine!'

"How many of those balls do you have?" The woman asks with this smile that really, really, REALLY creeps him out.

"My clones created six but only two are empty." Naruto admits slowly. "Whatever you do, don't touch those two as they'll react to anyone other then me touching them by capturing them." He adds, trying not to fidget as that smile just grew half an inch.

"And how much will it cost for you to create one of those balls for me? Also, how much for that one there?" The woman asks.

He glances down at the ball and moves it so he can look at the blue fox. "I'd have to reprogram the genjutsu on this one, something I really don't know where to begin since my clones copied these seal anchors from some discarded scroll I found behind Ino's family's Greenhouse." Naruto says and within two breathes, he's being dragged away from the table by the wrist.

"I know the perfect genjutsu mistress to help with that." The purple haired woman says.

It took them two hours to find Kurenai and, strangely enough, Asuma out on a training field. Out on the field, Ino and Hinata seem to be sparring, only Hinata is just defending while Ino is attacking, it also seems as though Ino's angry about something.

"I need you to teach him what he need to know so he can reprogram the genjutsu on this ball!" The crazy, energetic purple haired woman says while holding said ball.

"What is that?" Kiba asks, it seems as though the guys were all hanging around a game board. "Is that a fox painted on it?" The dog trainer asks.

"I call it a Nin-Ball, well, that's what my clones dubbed them to be." Naruto admits while Kurenai takes the ball from the purple haired woman. Kiba snorts, clearly finding the name to be funny.

"What does it do?" Choji asks and he sighs.

"Show Time." Naruto says after taking the ball from the ruby eyed woman, he makes sure to point it at a clear spot. Orochimaru suddenly appears out of no where with that same look upon the Grass nin's face.

"That's part of what it does." The blond boy says to his crowd at large. "I say the phrase that causes whoever I captured to appear and then I say another phrase to cause them to go back to the storage space." He adds.

"Why would you need my help with this?" Kurenai wonders and he rubs the back of his neck.

"Well, while they're in there, there is this genjtutsu that's designed to brainwash them into obeying a specific person, namely me." He explains and its clear that nobody really believes that.

"Orochimaru! Bring me the blond girl over there! Alive!" He orders and within seconds, Ino is tossed before him under a minute. "Thank you."

"Ok... That's pretty... just wow." Kiba says while Ino is still trying to recover from the blow to the head that Orochimaru had delivered.

"Home." He says and Orochimaru vanishes back into that space.

"It's it just the greatest?" The purple haired woman says with a sigh. Most of the genin turn to stare at said chuunin examiner of the second part of the test that happened little over three months ago.

"Do you have, ah, more of those?" Asuma asks and he sighs.

"My clones made six and at this moment, only two of them are empty. I captured some blue skinned swordsman and a Sasuke look-a-like who was with him." Naruto says.

"And the fourth?" Shino asks and he glances over at the bug user, wondering if Shino already has an idea of who the fourth is.

He sighs in defeat before stating out loud, "Sasuke." Ino stirs while Kiba lets out a laugh.

"Did Kakashi know?" Kurenai asks him sternly and he nods since before the jonin entered into that coma, Kakashi did witness Sasuke coming out of that Nin-Ball. It seems that only caused Kiba to laugh harder while Choji seems to be choking upon something.

He glances down at Ino to find her coughing too, although she does send a glare up at him. "That's why Sasuke's been acting weird!" Ino finally manages to croak out between whizzes.

"He kind of ended up inside his Nin-Ball for about two weeks while I had a shadow clone pose as him. I was trying to get Kakashi to give us seduction lessons but I knew Sasuke won't agree to help me get Kakashi to teach us, so I needed him out of the picture for a while."

He says before adding in his defense, "He had his Sharingan out when I threw the ball at him! I thought it would mean that the genjutsu wouldn't have any effect on him!"

"But it did, didn't it?" Their examiner asks with a smirk and he just sighs before nodding.

"He wasn't as out of it as Orochimaru though. His eyes only possessed a touch of daze to them. He also seemed interested in his surroundings too." He reports while the two jonin instructors shake their collective heads at him. One sported a slightly amuzed grin while the other looked fairly angry about this.

"Is he in his ball now?" Kurenai asks and he shakes his head.

"I've taken to letting him out a noon. I give him a storage scroll with food and drink before leaving him to his training. The when evening comes, I..." He trails off before the blond says in his defence, "Well, he's not as broody as he use to be, so that's something, isn't it?"

"He's your pet!" Kiba manages to say between laughs and he just rolls his eyes while shaking his head, his shoulders slacken. "You tamed the Ice Prince!" Kiba adds giggling.

"Keep this up and I'll tame you!" Ino snaps as the blond girl finally gets up off the ground, Naruto helps her as the young girl tries to regain her balance.

"Sounds fun!" Kiba replies impishly, causing Ino to growl at the dog trainer.

And here I thought I would have freaked her out enough for her to go away. Naruto thinks while Ino lunges at Kiba, causing Shikamaru to mutter 'Troublesome' as the lazy genin gets up out of his seat to wander off to find a nice spot to watch the clouds over head.

So it ends without any real ending... Scary, no?

Nin-Balls:

Orange Fox - Sasuke

Blue Fox - Orochimaru

Purple Fox - Kisame

Green Fox - Itachi

White Fox - Empty

Yellow Fox - Empty

Worlds Apart: Naruto Chapter 1

I don't own Naruto and Cyantian Chronicles.

"Hey Enfys. How did you get out?" He asks as the female Shivae butts her head to his chest. He scratches behind the 'ear' for a minute before gripping Enfys' collar.

"Come on, let's go home." He says, tugging at the collar to get the Shivae to follow his lead. Enfys doesn't need much prompting and walking next to him. Enfys seems to enjoy continuing to press her body against him as they walk down the dirt road.

"Enfys! Where are you girl?" He hears Kaelin call out.

"Kaelin! I've got her!" He shouts and his guardian comes to the gate as they near it. Enfys waits a pace before trying to hide behind him, it seems as though the Shivae doesn't particularly like the look upon Kaelin's face.

"Enfys..." Kaelin says in a firm voice and said Shivae nudges him in the back while Ifor comes to the gate to see what the fuss is all about. His guardian crosses his arms over his chest while Ifor calls out a greeting to the wayward Shivae.

He tries to move out of the way but Enfys keeps following him, remaining behind him until he finally turns sideways to allow Enfys clear view of Kaelin. The beautiful Shivae known as Enfys gives Kaelin a meek chirp. "Enfys..." Kaelin sighs causing the female Shivae to look up at Kaelin.

Minutes pass and finally Enfys approaches Kaelin, he moves to the gate and upon Ifor nudging his out stretched palm. He begins to stroke Ifor's muzzle and then under his jaw. He climbs over the gate

instead of opening it and pats the teal Shivae on the neck before dropping off the gate.

"Your homework comes first, Kirit." Kaelin reminds him and he feels his ears kind of go back as he feels a flash of guilt about his hope do something physical before doing something mental work. He just nods and drags his paws to the house to begin just that.

As he makes himself a snack, the phone rings. "Hello, Maemi residents." He says into the phone.

"Hey Kirit! Is Kaelin free?" Jadine Maemi asks.

"He's currently dealing with Enfys. She managed to slip out off the property again." He informs Kaelin's second cousin. "Did you want to leave a message for him?" He adds.

"It's nothing too pressing, just a reminder about the family luncheon coming up." Jadine tells him. "I'll phone back later, Kirit, so you can get back to doing your homework. Later." Jadine adds before hanging up.

With a sigh, he hangs up the phone and then leaves the kitchen, only to return a few seconds later to grab his snack and drink. *Wonder if that's the weekend where my class is heading into Mounty Country for that field trip?* He wonders as he doesn't recall Kaelin mentioning a family luncheon.

"I pick... Tacy." He says after his credit manages to land in the middle of the small plate that had held a small collection of cup cakes. The jaguar type Mounty growls mockingly at him before taking a sip out of the cup of bitter tea.

"I pick Eavan." Oke, one of the foxes living within the area, a silver Fox at that. The white furred vixen just rolls her eyes but drinks from her cup.

"Ok, go!" Tacy says and once more credits are bounced off the table top as they try and slam the coins with enough force and accuracy for them to land upon the plate. He couldn't help but grin smugly as, yet again, his credit lands upon the plate.

"That's the seventh time Elsu's manage to get a credit upon the plate... Maybe we should try a different drinking game." Oke suggests while Tacy nods in agreement.

"I can't help it if I'm skilled at this game." He defends himself and his table-mate give him bemused looks. He picks up a cookie off his plate near his tea and eats is, after all, he needs more food then the average Cyantian.

"You're skill at everything you try, Elsu, which is kind of scary and fairly intimating too. You just show up one day out of the blue without a single memory of who you are and yet you were allowed into military classes; which is understandable since it didn't take you long to take the top position." Tacy points out.

He sighs, he guesses Tacy has a point. "Not like I meant to make you guys look bad..." He says but Oke just waves it away. Oke says, "We know, we know, it just clicks for you Mr Perfect Solider." *I'm not as prefect as you think I am.*

"You're a little too good." Eavan adds. "And combined with the fact that nobody has been able to find any records of you... It's simply amazing that you're still taking classes and not move into a patrol or guard unit."

"I don't think I'm going to be moving out of class until my memories surface. I think they're allowing me into class in hopes of the training exercises will cause something to surface since its clear I've received this kind of training before." He tells his fellow students. "So far... Nothing."

"Guess it really sucks not knowing who your parents are or if you have any siblings." Tacy says, after all, the pair of foxes at the table

also lack knowing who their parents were as either they were abandoned or their parents were killed seeking sanctuary for their kits.

Might be why I enjoy their company so much. He concludes to himself. He glances over to the clock. "I got a bit of time left before I'm needed back at the training fields for clean up duty. You guys want to hit the court for a game?" He asks his table-mates.

"Kirit! Balin and Mahon are here!" Kaelin says upon knocking upon his door.

"Thank you, Kaelin." He says as he turns off his data pad upon saving his essay. He had hoped that they'd show up tonight so they can go out.

He makes sure to grab his credits before leaving his room. He takes the stairs two by two and then enters into the living room to find his two friends, the young chocolate brown Otter is Balin and the Wolverine is Mahon. "Great! You guys finished your chores early?" He asks the two as they get up off the couch.

"Not exactly, it just so happens that the twins have my chores added to their list of punishment for causing that stampede the other day." Balin tells him with a bemused grin. "Of course I was just so disappointed about it but what can I do?" Balin adds causing Mahon and he to chuckle.

"My sister is still out so if I return home at a decent hour, I should be able to finish my chores up before she comes home." Mahon explains. "Phoned around and found that most of the gang can make it, although they want to hook up in town instead of at somebody's house."

"Who couldn't make it?" He asks as he shoos Ifor from the outside door. Ifor keeps trying to get him to give him chin scratches, it seems

as though Enfys' punishment is to be within the barn for the night, so Ifor is likely lonely without her around.

"Most of the girls can't make it, it seems that they're planning a girls night and are busy with that." Mahon says. "Although Misha is coming since you're coming." Mahon adds and if it weren't for his golden fur, the pair would see his blush.

"Ah, how cute. A pair of star-cross lovers." Balin says and his ears go flat out of embarrassment then anger. "Who would have thought you, a Golden Fox, would have fallen for a Blue Fox?" Balin adds and he just rolls his eyes, but did kind of get why it seems so impossible since Fox society is a caste system. Gold Foxes are a caste higher then Orange/Blue Foxes, which is the source of much jokes among his circle of friends.

"It's not that much of a gap between Misha and mine caste." He reminds Balin. *Too bad Foxes and Wolves are currently so hostile to each other. I wouldn't mind learning more about who my parents are and if I have any relatives. All I know about my culture comes from what Wolves know about them.* He thinks to himself.

"Just makes it all that more interesting, no? The forbidden does have its allure after all." Mahon points out while Balin nods in agreement.

"I wonder if her parents are protesting your involvement with their daughter?" Balin wonders as they walk through the gate. He makes sure that Ifor remains within the walls and makes a point of checking the gate after closing it to make sure its closed.

"See you later, buddy." He says to Ifor before walking away from the gate. Neither of the two remark about his saying good bye to Ifor.

"You're so lucky to have not just one Shivae, but two of them for pets. All I'm allowed to have is either a flurry gryphon or a miniwhip." Balin says, its not the first time Enfys and Ifor invoke feelings of envy among his friends.

"My sister's latest boyfriend has a miniwhip." Mahon says. "I think I'm close to wearing her down so that I can get a Pygmy Shivae as a pet." The Wolverine adds with a hint of smugness.

"Oh! Lucky! Those are so female magnets!" Balin says. "And expensive to boot." The Otter adds.

"Our landlord has an uncle breeding them. So we might be able to get a discount on one from him." Mahon explains.

"I guess you would need all the help you can get since you lack my charm, eh?" He says in a sly tone with a mischievous grin. "Maybe if you hang around me long enough you'll pick up some of my charm."

"Since when did you possess charm?" Balin wonders and he just huffs as he crosses his arms over his chest as they head for the local gate pad.

He arrives as the stragglers leave the field, dragging themselves off to see a doctor to get checked over or home to rest. He and his fellow students assigned to clean up duty have two units(2 and half hours), to go around and collect discarded dummy ammo and their shells, to use a hose to wash off paint splatter, and to set up the sword practice dummies for tomorrow's class.

He deals with the larger equipment since out of the group, he's the oldest and strongest one of the group since clean up duty is typically done by students who are ten Rots old(130 months old). He does gather odd looks from those who share clean up duty because he's not only older then them, but has odd coloring.

They finish early but they wait for one of their teachers to arrive to take a tour. If their satisfy the instructor, they'll be dismissed and if not, then they have to work a bit more to meet the teacher's standards of clean. He found that its usually pressed upon groups that prove to be more then a little lazy or upon individuals who the

group believed weren't carrying their weight to help clean up the field.

Upon being dismissed, he heads home. He finds a note upon the table informing him that Wajid has left for a long term patrol and should be back in one Set(26 days). Since the note hasn't mentioned Cait, he just assumes that she hasn't left on a long term assignment so he can expect to see her around.

He heads for the kitchen, dropping the his wooden sword and bag by the door as he enters. It takes a bit of effort but he has supper underway while snacking upon some fruit. *Might need to get groceries later. Hope Cait will be up to help with that.*

Cait comes wandering into the kitchen, looking less then perfectly groomed so he assumes that she just woke and hasn't had a chance to hit the shower yet. Cait wrinkles her nose as she pauses in grabbing a glass. "Dad left on patrol?"

"Yea, the note says he'll be gone for a Set." He answers while stirring the sauce. "You working tonight?" He asks his primary care giver's daughter.

"Yea, I plan to go visit my mom tonight though, likely by gate since it's quicker. Her ship should still be in orbit since she hasn't left a vid message saying goodbye." Cait informs him.

"It's been about a few Sets since she's come planet side, right?" He asks and Cait nods as best as she can while drinking her glass of water. "Well, say hi for me, will you?" He asks Cait who just waves it away.

After having a second glass of water, Cait leaves the kitchen and soon he can hear the shower going. It wasn't long after Cait began her shower does he find himself busy with his dishes. He sets aside something for Cait's... breakfast before eating his supper.

By the time Cait comes down looking for something to eat, he's busy loading up the dish washer with dirty dishes. "Thanks." Cait says as she finds what he set aside for her.

"No problem." He says as he sets the dish washer's settings. He presses the door and it locks before beginning to run through its cycles. With that done, he picks up his stuff and heads for his room.

After changing his cloths, he heads for the living room to find something to watch. He'll wait a bit before having his own shower.

God Sight: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2 .

He never asked for this power and yet because of a stupid accident when he was six. Ranma did place blame on his father for how the garden hose ended up in that temple that day three years ago. It didn't help that his pops continues to think he's delusional and about five months after that accident, pops had given him a very through beating.

Ranma had learnt his lesson, he never mentioned his new found sight again to his pops nor ever mentioned he had discovered using it. *I wonder if I should tell him about the curses he picked up? Or that his attempts on using that ritual to pass on his bad karma no longer works on me? Ah well, he'll learn in due time.* The nine year old thinks with a slightly savage smirk as he continues to practice his first love.

"Stupid furball...." Genma Saotome grumbles as the fat father of Ranma Saotome presses his hand over the latest scratches from his latest catch. "This technique had better be all it promised it could be..."

I can't believe he's still on about that Neko-Fu even after I unstuck the pages so he can read the negative effect of it. If he thinks I'm going through that technique, he's taken one too many lumps on the head. I'm not going to risk losing my mind for a forbidden technique that drives the victim insane. Ranma thinks.

Ranma glances up at the sky as a symbol glowing teal flares with other symbols twinkling and rotating around the central teal symbol of storm, at least that's what his altered sight translates the middle symbol to be. *Huh... I wonder what brought this on? Ah well, I'll just have to remember to bundle up tonight before going to bed.* The boy

concludes as he finally brings his practice to an end since if he plans to eat something that wasn't rice, he should head into town before the stores closes up.

"I'm going into town! Be back before midnight!" Ranma says while his pops is already hitting the bottles of sake without it even being evening. *But then, some of his true fortune is rearing its head. I'm so glad that I'm not pops, I don't know what I'd do under all that bad karma.* He thinks as he mentally evaluates his pops' current karma with a parting glance at the man.

Ranma found he can't find it within himself to trust his father and couldn't wait for the day that he'll find the right opportunity to slip away from the man, particularly just as the man beings to reap what he has sown. Ranma knows that it's only a matter of time before Genma's problems finally catch up to him and occupy the man's focus. So much so that the man wouldn't notice him gone until he's put at least a few countries between them.

"Head start is a must." He mutters out loud. "I also have to start on legal leg work too." Genma had left a very detailed paper trail throughout their travels and it shouldn't be hard for Ranma to become a legal adult, specially if he makes use of his mystical abilities to speed things along.

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"Who'd have thought it would take two years to push this through? Especially after everything pops has done..." The eleven year old muses out loud after reading through the legal document that officially makes him an adult.

Ranma opens the envelop that he's been waiting to send for over a year now. The papers contained within that one is to get his name off the Saotome family register while also changing his name to something more common then Ranma and Saotome. He knew that Ranma was a very unusual name and as long as he kept it, there's a good chance that a certain fatty will be quicker to find him if pops

ever got a chance to run away from his troubles once they catch up to him.

Also, it would make it harder for those arrangements that pops made to find me as well. Ranma thinks. *The problem will be picking out my new name. I'm sure I can pass Ranma as a nickname if pressed.*

Ranma taps a pen on the pad of paper, racking his mind for names. After writing down at least five last names and at least thirty first names, a symbol of warning appears within his sight. It flickers red and black with hoof prints circling around the red and black symbol. The warning swirls to take the form of an ox, which stands for the direction Genma wishes to head in.

Ranma begins to gather his papers and places the lot into a shoe box that his pops can't see. It is just one of the experiments he's carried out that's keyed to keep the man that is his father from noticing it. The door of the apartment opens to reveal Genma Saotome.

"Pack it up, boy! We're leaving!" Ranma's father says as the fat martial artist begins to grab cloths out of the dirty basket and stuff it into a pack. Ranma doesn't say anything as he grabs his pack and put it onto the table.

By the time twenty minutes have passed, Genma has already packed up what dry goods they had purchased during their time in this city after a sudden snow storm. It had been too dangerous for them to camp outside, so Genma had to fork over his sake money to rent the apartment for three months.

Ranma takes one last look around the apartment, it was the first time that the pig-tailed child could remember his father actually being forced to pay for lodging instead of camping or freeloading. Ranma had enjoyed having the apartment since it gave the illusion of normalcy and stability, something which is very much in lacking in his life.

I wonder what pops has done now? We still had two weeks left in there. Ranma thinks but since Genma has committed so many crimes, he'll likely never know the truth, only the man's spin on things.

Soon, soon I'll be rid of you and the hell you carry around with you. Ranma thinks to himself as he stares at his pops' back.

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I wonder if I can copy and apply that transformation scheme? I know I can alter it, but can I duplicate it? The fifteen year old wonders while staring at the beast that was his father.

Ranma watches as the bull continues to try to stand upright and falls back into the spring. The green clad guide is trying to find planks long enough to reach the spring his father had fallen in. *So glad I didn't get too close to those springs, I could only shudder to think of what curse I'd pick up if he had fallen into one of the edge ones instead of that one.* The pig-tailed teen thinks with a slight smirk.

As he continues to watch, the bull that is his father finally snorts and begins to try and move onto the thin dirt ridges surrounding the pools. Ranma snorts, he already has an inkling of what would happen when, not if, his father touches those other springs. *He'll finally look like the monster his actions warrant.*

Sure enough, less then a minute of trying to balance upon the ridge caused the bull to fall into the next spring. Ranma's mystical sight shows how the curse begins to take on the new spring's characteristics. A second set of horns, ram type this time, grow a inch below the first set. The muzzle gets drawn out and more pointed while his father shrinks a bit while the coat coloring alters a tiny bit. *Goat or ram, hard to say really.*

The altered beast bellows out in pain as soon as his father raises himself out of the spring. The hybrid beast turns to give Ranma a dirty look before trying once more to balance upon the dirt ridge. He

couldn't keep a bemused look off his face at his father's struggles. "Baka! You should wait for the guide to get those planks!" The teen shouts but his cursed father snaps in his direction before glancing around.

He's going to try jumping it, isn't he? Oh, this will be fun. Ranma thinks as he crouches down before sitting down upon the ground. The teen just knew this was going to be very entertaining.

Sure enough, Genma tenses upon finding a suitable spot to land upon. It didn't bother the cursed man in the least that he couldn't see it very well. Nor did it matter that it sports a bamboo pole. Genma glances right and then left at the chunk of ground seconds before leaping with all of his might.

Ranma watches as Genma over shoots the medium size island of earth. Once more Genma's curse opens up to receive new characteristic of the new spring, one that ironically, seems to be that of a hare or rabbit. Genma's ears grow longer, muzzle doesn't change much other then to accommodate longer whiskers, the tail shortens, and the hind legs grow at least a foot in length as well as sports new set of muscles.

Genma once more bellows out in rage over his failure. Ranma watches as the beast that is his father rears up and then slams his front hooves down into the spring, causing minor waves to raise over the land ridge between springs, causing small amount of this spring to enter into the surrounding springs.

The guide comes racing towards the very edge of the springs, shouting out how Genma is only enraging the spirits of springs. That Genma should stop and wait until the guide can offer up prayers to calm the spirits of the springs. This doesn't do anything but increase the triple cursed man's rage.

Genma jumps towards the guide, intent on giving the man a good thrashing since it's clear to Genma's mind that the guide should have done more to warn him about the springs. Nevermind that the elder

Saotome would have stopped and listen even if the guide had thrown himself around Genma's leg to try and keep the fat martial artist from approaching the springs.

Genma lands in the spring of drown boar and the spring of drown crane-with-fish-in-beak. The boar gives Genma a short pair of tusks and smaller beady eyes and the drown crane-with-fish-in-beak gives the man scales along the back, short broad feathered wing and a longer, more serpentine neck, and a tail covered in feathers instead of fur.

Such an ugly beast. Ranma thinks as the guide gets chased around by Genma, the wings allow for longer jumps but not for true flight. The teen wonders how many demon hunters will be after them as soon as they arrive in a modern city.

But at least I have an idea of how to get rid of such a curse. Ranma muses to himself.

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Stupid old man. Ranma thinks, despite everything, the man had manage to get him cursed. Thankfully Ranma knew how to cure it but couldn't for risk of being forced to cure Genma's own.

At least I didn't land in something embarrassing like drowned girl or drowned squirrel. Drowned Fu Dog is pretty cool actually. The transformed teen thinks to himself while following the transformed guide, that guy landed in spring of drowned tiger-fighting-eagle-and-monkey. The guide sports orange and black pelt of a tiger plus the size and bulk of one, the head and nice large wings, also sporting the tiger pattern, of an eagle, and the over all body structure of a monkey.

Bringing up the rear is the source of the reason that the guide and Ranma's curses, Genma. Genma hadn't picked up any new curses since landing in the spring of drowned crane-with-fish-in-beak, sadly

enough. *Not that its such a bad thing since it just means that he avoided landing in any of those 'cooler' springs.* Ranma muses.

Finally, they arrive at a gate of a walled village. There weren't any guards so they just walked right in. Ranma spots the table filled with food but the symbols of prize flare up and dance around in yellow and light blue so he doesn't move to touch it. Ranma's not concerned that Genma would touch the food since the cursed man can't consume most of what's on the table as most of the beasts that make up Genma's curse form are herbivores. Also, the few times Genma had tried to eat cooked vegetables caused Ranma's father to develop stomach problems.

Ranma watches the pair of girl fighters upon the hanging log. Sitting down, Ranma considers the two and decides the smaller one will win. Ranma shakes his head, his tightly curled mane shakes as well. The transformed teen's fluffy tail curls up next to his right, back leg. His noses twitches at the various scents of village life comes to reach his nose as the wind gently blows.

Ranma hears the guide move else where and glances to see where the guide is stalking towards. Within seconds, the guide had over turned a tea pot over his head and becomes human once more, a very naked one at that. The short, portly guide quickly digs through his pack for cloths.

Before Ranma glances back at the hanging log, the teen feels his father begin to approach the guide, likely to demand the shorter man to get water so that Genma can transform back. He snarls at Genma before the man gets within six feet of their guide. Genma pauses and glances in his direction.

Before anything can get out of hand, one of the girl fighters lands between the guide and Genma. The girl with purple hair seems to threaten Genma while saying something in the local dialect. The guide hurriedly translates the girl's words.

Symbols subtlety flare up, they were warnings informing him to tread lightly in his dealings with this village. Ranma glances slowly around, studying which types of warnings apply to which crowd members. Finally, as Genma gets annoyed at the girl, clearly wanting to transform back to partake of the meal upon the table.

With a bellow, Genma rears up but before Genma could do anything, Ranma watches as a staff whacks his father with enough power to daze the monstrous beast that his father is cursed to become upon coming into contact with cold water. The warnings were worst around the 'mummy' monkey that owns said staff.

The very short woman address the guide, its clear that the guide is being really respectful towards the short, wrinkly 'mummy'. The 'mummy' glances at Ranma after the guide finished answering the 'mummy's' question. The young teen also glances in his direction and upon seeing him, her eyes widen before glancing over at the 'mummy'.

Ranma thinks fast and constructs a hasty scheme that causes interest in him to die down. It helps that Genma choose this moment to recover and to charge the two villagers. Ranma continues to enforce the scheme around him while slowly adding bits that would cause them to find Genma to be annoying and want to get rid of the cursed man.

Ranma does this ever so gently since he's not sure if anyone within this village sports the same mystical ability as him. A pot of hot water finally hits Genma in the forehead during the fight the cursed man has picked with the 'mummy' and teenager. A single jab of the staff and the metal pot explodes and hot water hits Ranma's father, causing the man to transform out of his cursed form.

It's clear that the two didn't particularly like Genma's natural appearance and the 'mummy' speaks sharply to the guide, who translates it. Ranma's glad that they're being asked to leave the village, although the teen could had done without the threats of locking them in their curse forms, Genma, reluctantly, motioned for

them to leave. Ranma could imagine that they're leaving because more of those 'mummies' had appeared and the often greedy man didn't want to mess with them.

Ranma adds in a desire not to see Genma or Ranma himself ever again into the village's natural symbol scheme while adding encouragements to forget about the unpleasantness their presence had caused to the over all nice day. The changes will fade in a few years, which should be long enough to cause the details of this to become highly unclear even if anyone tries to remember them.

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Ranma glances over to the sleeping figure of his father. Ranma then glances pass his father to the door of their room. With a slight upturn of his lips, the teen completes the scheme upon the room, a scheme he's been building up since they were given the guest room.

The scheme had been carefully constructed in the three months they have been guests of the Tendos. It had been slow because Ranma didn't want to accidentally miss an important aspect of this particular scheme for it would not only help those living here at this house to forget that he's suppose to be living here, but it serves to tie Genma to this ward, to this room.

Even if he does leave to drag me back here, it won't matter since as long as Genma wants to keep returning to his human state, the man will have to sleep in this room once every forty-eight hours. Ranma grabs the pack he had hidden from everyone's sight but his own and checks to be sure it contains everything important.

With a nod, Ranma moves out of the open window. Before leaving, the pig-tail teen stops by the windows of the Tendos to leave parting gifts that won't activate until they fully realize they hadn't seen him in four months. Ranma had thought long and hard about what kind of gifts to leave, it helps with how they treated him since it gives what he's about to do a greater chance of sticking.

Guess the Christians were right about doing onto others as you would have do unto you. Ranma thinks as he stops before Akane's window. These schemes will be easier then what he had been constructing in the guest room.

And so, Akane would transform into a boy whenever she lost her temper and wouldn't return to normal until she apologized for losing her temper. Upon Nabiki, Ranma granted the girl with luck in gathering money, how she'll keep it when she gets is... it wasn't his problem since the girl needed to learn that money makes a poor substitute for a human companionship. Ranma comes to Genma's 'good' buddy and the other partner in trying to push their combine bad karma onto him.

It hadn't been easy to think of what gift to leave his host but Ranma had found it. *He needs to pick himself up and be the father these three need.* Ranma thinks. *Or perhaps be the mother they lost.* Ranma adds as he constructs the scheme upon the resting owner of the dojo and house.

Mr Tendo will switch genders, not just based on the cycle of the day but when the girls need a responsible adult. If the man doesn't come to his senses concerning how much this daughters require a stable parental figure in their lives, the man will be a woman at all times but one night a year, when Mr Tendo will shed that role to remember who he truly is and how much he truly lost while seeing what's going on while a woman, but unable to influence the mother persona. This gift will remain even when the man's daughters move out of the house.

Only way for the scheme to be destroyed is when the man steps up and takes the role of father more seriously. It'll help if the girls prefer the man over the woman too.

Ranma drops to the ground and then enters into the house viva the ground floor since that's where Kasumi's room is. Ranma admits that the elder daughter had been nothing but kind to him since living here, but Ranma had become frustrated that the girl wouldn't truly

step in and discipline her sisters. *She needs to snap out of her role as 'mother'.* Ranma thinks.

It wasn't as quick as Akane or Nabiki's gifts but it didn't take as long as Mr Tendo's gift either. In the end, the gift would 'awaken' every full and new moon. The young woman will forget about all of her responsibilities and motherly duties, to be free to act her age during that twenty-four hour period from the evening of the full or new moon to the evening of the next day. The gift will fade when the woman becomes pregnant.

Hopefully that won't happen for a few years yet. Ranma thinks before leaving the house. A single leap and the teen vanishes over the wall.

And so Ranma Saotome dies. The teen thinks as he is cured from that curse Genma had caused as well as an illusion scheme engulfs him, making him appear older then he actually is. The illusion will remain until he's left the city, which will be in a few weeks since the teen wants to settle a few things before hitting the road.

The End . . . ?

Ver 2 Magical Catalog: Naruto

I don't own Naruto!

"Beastly teas?" Naruto muses as he walks down the street. The catalog is rather old as the year on it shows it's at least three years old and yet it looks as though it's never been read. The title of the catalog is Lady Moriko's Mail Order Magical Business, not that the new genin believes that the stuff in the catalog were real magical items.

"H'Otter Orange? Leaping Lavender? Aping Apple? Chimera Cherry? Meowing Mint? Draconian Durian?" He reads out loud just some of the flavors. The blond scratches the side of his head before shrugging and adding a sample pack to the order form that he is filling out.

The other items he's written upon the order form is one pack size bag of holding, one medium size bag of holding, one true flight dirk, a dozen of demon suppressing paper wards, a dozen shield paper wards, one white ever fitting shirt, one orange ever fitting shirt, one blue ever fitting shirt, three ever fitting cargo pants, a dozen ever return kunai with own pouch, a sample package of Jusenkyo spring water, and that sample pack of Beastly Teas.

Naruto wondered if he should just total it all up or keep reading through the catalog. The blond arrives at his favorite ramen stand, setting the open catalog onto the counter before sitting down upon one of the seats. The blond taps the pencil's eraser upon the order form that allows up to thirty items to be ordered at any one time.

"What you got there, Naruto?" Ayame asks after coming out of the kitchen area. The blond glances up at her before replying, "This? Some kind of mail order catalog."

"What kind of catalog is it?" Ayame asks as she peers down at the open page that's now featuring candies, like Shrinking Sours or Fish Gummies. "Those look pretty good." The waitress muses at the sight of Faerie Sparkle Toadstools.

"Supposedly, everything in this catalog is magical in nature." Naruto answers. "Don't know if any of this stuff is still continued since the catalog seems to be three years old."

"Magical? Really?" Ayame asks the new genin and Naruto just nods.

"Lady Moriko's Mail Order Magical Business." Naruto says. "They offer ever fitting cloths, adventuring kits, paper spirit wards, heck, there was this one page that sported one-time summoning contracts." The blond adds.

"Mind if I see your order form?" Ayame asks and with a shrug, Naruto hands it over, after all, it's not like there's anything on there that he's ashamed of or don't want anyone to see. "Demon suppressing wards? I didn't know there was a lot of demons around for you to fight." Ayame muses and he flushes.

"You never know, it's better to have it on hand when you need it then not having them when you need them." He explains and Ayame's father, Teuchi, nods in agreement. "That's some forethought you got there, Naruto." Teuchi says, causing Naruto to flush even more, although he's glad that is all Teuchi has to say before calling out that his order is ready.

"But I didn't even order anything!" Naruto points out but the owner says in response, "I would like to think I've got a rather good feel of what you like on any given day, Naruto. You are our best customer after all."

"You got a point there." The blond genin admits as he moves the catalog to the side to make room for his bowl of ramen. Naruto then digs into his bowl of ramen while Ayame places the order form onto the open catalog.

After having another bowl of ramen, the blond pays for the bowls before heading to his apartment with the catalog and order form. It wasn't until around midnight that Naruto finished going through the catalog, adding a few more items to his order and they were a pack of English language hard candies, a pack of French language hard candies, a dozen food summon scrolls, two dozen water pure stones, six anti-venom potions, and a subscription to a comic book series centering around the adventures of a rune magic using gryphon named Scythe, Naruto found he liked that story out of the seventeen sample comics that the catalog had at the back.

Before Naruto could get around to calculating total of the order form, it just appears at the bottom. The blond is just too tired to care and after raiding his cash for emergencies purposes, he has enough money to cover the order total, especially since he had to check the exchange rate for his ryo to gold and silver.

Handy thing, that. Looks like I'm not going to be spending my pay on ramen like I had planned. Naruto thinks as he finishes putting everything into a large envelop. The blond figures he'll mail it in the morning as he gets out of his cloths and into his PJs.

The only reason Naruto was giving this a try order form thing a try was because he was just bored and didn't care to give local merchants his money. He's still a tad angry at the villagers at large for thinking he's the fox demon that the Four had given his life to seal inside of him.

Four Days Later

"What the hell?!" Naruto exclaims at the sight of a brown package outside of his door. The blond genin scratches the side of his head as he crouches down to look at who sent it.

His eyes wide in astonishment at the fact that his order had arrived from that mail order business. "But I don't send it in, did I?" Naruto wonders as he picks up the box and brings it into his apartment.

Using a kunai, the blond slices through the tape of the box. The blond slides the kunai back into its hostler while his other hand opens the box. Wind rushes out and something clicks and clanks within the box. It wasn't long before Naruto takes out the top shirt, which happens to be be blue and feels the fabric of it. Putting the shirt down, he pulls out the next two shirt to find various boxes on top of brown bags.

Naruto takes hold of what appears to be the mouse brown hilt of dirk and unsheathes it. Upon the metal of the blade is a design of feathered wings done up in a stylish way. After tossing it up in the air and catching it, the blond then re-sheathes the dirk and sets it down upon the table next to the box.

The next item Naruto takes out is that sample pack for Beastly Teas. With a shrug, the blond sets it down and pulls out those language hard candies. He sets those down next to the tea to pull out the rest of the boxed items such as those water curing stones, food summoning scrolls, and potions vials.

As he pulls out a weapon pouch that contain the kunai he ordered, Naruto found a note explaining that the pack size bag of holding contains his dozen random samples of Jusenkyo water in vials. The note also explains how to increase his reserve of this magical cursed water. On the back it lists the samples he received, which are waters from spring of drowned bat, spring of drowned boar, spring of drowned child, spring of drowned horse, spring of drowned gaot-man statue, spring of drowned panda, spring of drowned sparrow, spring of drowned twins, spring of drowned spider demon, spring of drowned monster cat, spring of drowned metal-demon-being, and spring of drowned man-who-likes-to-dress-up-as-women-but-beats-other-guys-up-for-trying-to-date-him.

Ok... How... odd. Naruto thinks but decides to leave the vials of water within the pack sized bag of holding since he really didn't know where to put those. Naruto pulls out the two bags of holding out to find the three pants under there. And then, upon moving the pants finds this month's release of that comic he subscribed to.

Naruto glances at the clock at on the wall and creates two clones to put the stuff away while he leaves to hook up with his team-mates. He manages to grab that dirk before leaving the apartment in a hurry.

"Sorry I'm late! I just received my order from a mailing business!" Naruto says as he gets with seven feet of his waiting team-mates.

"Lair!" Sakura shouts at him and then there's this strange, awkward period between Naruto and his pink haired team-mate. The blond felt kind of hurt at the accusation since he didn't have any reason to lie.

The feeling remained until Kakashi shows up, although Naruto doesn't feel like joining Sakura in shouting "Lair!" when the jonin musters up his excuse. Naruto did note that Kakashi's gaze settle upon him for a few seconds before the silver haired jonin outlines what's on today's agenda.

Wave Mission

Naruto takes out a balloon filled with cursed water of drowned horse and flings it at the incoming ninja. Three days ago, Naruto decided to put create water balloon filled with cursed water, which meant that Naruto had to increase his reserve of one of the waters to fill up a hundred or so balloons. It had taken the blond some time to pick which of the water would help in a ninja battle.

The magical curse takes effect a second after the water balloon bursts open upon the incoming ninja. A confusing nicker rings out as where there had been a ninja now stands a black stallion that's leaping towards him, the metal gauntlet falls off the one front hoof while ruin cloths hang upon the stallion. The transformed ninja lands before him and grunts questioningly while examining themselves.

The one heading for the client also seems to pause, allowing Naruto to bring out another one and to throw it. The other ninja slices through the balloon and gets splashed with the water. Thus as

Kakashi appears, there were two black stallions standing around, clearly confused about how it happened.

"What the hell?!" Sasuke exclaims, totally out of character at him while Kakashi uses some wire to tie up the two stallions. The blond glances over to Sakura to find the pink haired girl speechless concerning what happened.

Naruto hears the Uchiha growl slightly after some time since he hasn't answered the question. "What? You saw what happened! What more do you want?" The blond genin asks.

"What jutsu did you use?" Sasuke demands while the two ninja turned stallions finally get their mental barrings to try and lung towards their client, the wires digging into their muzzles and necks. The two whinny in surprise and try to snap the wire that ties them to the tree.

"Is there a way to cancel the jutsu?" Kakashi asks and Naruto hums, before asking, "Why? I mean, it's not like they can do anything as horses, right?"

"The village will need to interrogate them and they can't answer questions as they are." Kakashi explains while the two transformed ninja try to use their hooves upon the wire that's around the tree.

"Warm water will turn them human again and cold water will turn them back into horses. It's kind of a permanent curse." Naruto explains. "I have, like, a hundred of these water balloons with me." The blond adds, not even patting his medium size bag of holding that's hanging from his belt.

His team-mate glance at each other while their client gulps down some sake. The two transformed enemies had paused to glance at the blond, their ears kind of going backwards. "Maybe you should hand them over." Kakashi says gently and Naruto gives the man a look.

"I don't think that's a good idea cause of this warning saying that only the buyer can safely handle the Jusenkyo water. That's what this note says anyway." He says and hands over the note detailing Jusenkyo spring water.

Kakashi takes it and begins to read it while Sasuke just begins to brood once more. Sakura seems to be staring at the transformed pair of ninja, Naruto did notice how pale Sakura seems to be but didn't know why she was so pale as he wouldn't use it on them. Well, maybe he would buy that powered instant stuff to use on them but not the permanent one that he just used on their attackers.

Kakashi turns the note over and reads it before handing it back. "And where did you purchase this... water from?" Kakashi asks.

"From a mail order business." Naruto explains. "I bought a few other items from the catalog along with the sample pack of Jusenkyo spring water. Like this dirk." The blond says, patting the spot where the dagger is upon his belt.

This cause the others to give the item in question a wary look. It wasn't long until they're moving away, Kakashi had knocked the two captive stallions out and then hobbled them while leaving a note about pouring hot water upon the pair before interrogating them.

In Wave

The dirk flies and as the enemy jonin leaps, the dirk alters its flight to enter into the knee cap. The so called demon of the mist withdraws his hand from the water prison to take the dirk out of his leg, thus Kakashi escapes while Naruto puts on his headband. Zabuza tosses the dirk towards the shore of the lake and the blond genin moves to retrieve it before somebody else nabs it.

"Didn't he dodge out of the flight path of that dagger?" Sakura wonders and Naruto just grins in reply while backing away from the water clone that's not standing far from their location. "How could it alter its path in mid-flight?"

Naruto wasn't going to say anything, after all, the enemy is right there and can still get away. Zabuza's water clone charges towards them while Kakashi deals with the bleeding Zabuza, who favors that injured leg. The blond reaches into that pouch with the returning kunai and tosses them at the clone, Naruto didn't want to use the dirk just yet, although it could dispel the clone with one throw.

The clone bats the kunai with the water created sword. As Sasuke and Naruto fight with the water clone, Sakura sticks close to their client. As they finally do deal with the clone, they soon find themselves caught up in a sudden surge of water.

As the water recedes, Naruto finds Sasuke had grabbed his legs to keep from being washed away. As Sasuke hurriedly lets go of his legs, Naruto lets go of the tree and stands. The young genin checks his stuff and if more then a little relieved that his new items seem to have held up against the surging wave better then the rest of his stuff.

As Naruto runs a hand through his wet hair, something happens to Zabuza. The blond frowns as he watches as some kid appears next to the body. He doesn't hear what Kakashi and the new comer are saying but in the end, the kid vanishes with Zabuza's body and a few minutes later, Kakashi faints.

I wonder if I should have just used a water balloon on Zabuza when he appeared on his sword hilt? The blond wonders as he reties his headband. Naruto walks over to where the rest of his team is. "So... is he dead?" He wonders and Sakura gives him a glare.

"He's just suffering chakra exhaustion." Pinky informs him, the look she gives Naruto causes the blond to look away guiltily since the look was very accusatory in nature.

"My house isn't far from here." The old man says and thus, Naruto found himself carrying Sasuke's pack while Sasuke carries Kakashi.

Next Day

Naruto sucks on one of those English candies while sitting at the window. The candy causes his tongue and throat to vibrate slightly, at first Naruto had taken the candy out and the vibrating stopped only to start up again upon popping it back in. The candy tasted like ramen, of a ramen he's never tasted before, so despite the oddness of what's going on with his tongue and throat, Naruto keeps sucking upon the candy.

The blond can feel Sakura and Sasuke giving him looks, it seems as though the pair thought the world was ending since he's not wearing his orange jumpsuit. Naruto hadn't brought another jumpsuit and is wearing the orange ever fitting shirt and one of the ever fitting cargo pants. Naruto's headband is hanging around his neck while his weapon pouches remain in with his pack with the exception of the dirk and the medium size bag of holding.

Just how many copies of those outfits do they own? Naruto wonders after the blond had spared a look at his team-mate's clean outfits, they were of the same style as what they usually wear. *Come to think of it, they wore those same style of cloths back when we were in the academy. Are these outfits all they ever wear or own?* Naruto wonders, true, he had plenty of orange jumpsuits, but that's because he found the lot in the garbage in the back of a thrift store.

Creepy. I mean, Kakashi has worn a few other colored under shirts in the time that I know him. Sure, he seems to prefer a single color but then, most jonin seems to prefer that color. As to why Kakashi or Iruka use to wear the same style, it was their rank typical uniforms. The blond genin thinks to himself. *Are they wearing the same style to train themselves for the day they're to wear an actual uniform?*

With a sigh, Naruto takes out the latest edition of his comic book subscription to read. While Naruto hasn't read the comic from the first issue, it doesn't stop the blond from enjoying the any of the issues he's received since he placed that order.

"Ok! Who are you and what have you done with the real Naruto!" Sakura says upon drawing a kunai out.

"Huh? Oh for the love of..." Naruto grumbles upon looking up from his comic to his team-mate and then just rolling his eyes before finding his place upon the page. This comic reads from left to right instead of right to left, which is just crazy really.

"Naruto would never be seen without that orange monstrosity. Nor does he sit around reading anything." Pinky explains and the blond just rolls his eyes. Naruto just didn't feel like dignifying anything that's coming out of them with a response.

"Start talking." Sasuke snaps but he just continues to ignores them, it's not as if they spent a lot of time around each other outside of school and missions. Sasuke throws a kunai just an inch from his head.

"Oh, bugger off you two! I'm trying to enjoy this comic book! Just because you lack something to entertain yourselves doesn't mean you can take pot shots at me!" Naruto snaps, although he's a bit confused as to why he said bugger off instead of something else. "If you really want to keep this up, we can take it outside where I'll kick both of your asses, believe it!"

"That kind of sounds like something Naruto would say..." Sakura admit but before Sasuke could do anything, Kakashi wakes. "Kakashi-sensei! You're wake!"

"Glad to see you too." The silver haired jonin says. Kakashi then asks, "I only see two of my cute students, so where's the third?"

"We might have a spy who did something to him." Sakura explains and Naruto growls as he pockets the comic before getting up from the window.

"You two are idiots. I wear cloths that aren't that orange jumpsuit and try to read a comic and you two automatically suspect I'm an impostor!" Naruto snaps as he adds, "Just because you two lack different cloths then that, doesn't mean I don't! Do you know how hard it is to go cloth shopping when people are watching you like a

hawk? Especially in the changing rooms? You know how many perverts own shops in Hidden Leaf? Tons! Pretty much every store is run by a pervert!"

"So excuse me for hording away over three dozen orange jumpsuits!" Naruto says, crossing his arms after a few seconds of Sakura going red and then pale, and red once more. Sakura can't seem to form a complete sentence.

Oddly enough, Sasuke seems unusually alert and seems to be remembering something since the Uchiha's grip upon the kunai tightens. *Ok... Maybe I broke broke him? Or maybe I just reminded him of his own shopping experiences.* Naruto thinks to himself.

"Yes, well, how are things beyond that issue?" Their teacher asks. Naruto just gives the man a blank look.

"Maybe you should get back to that one after they recover their voices?" Naruto muses. "So, what kind of training are you going to give us to do while you recover? Are we going to be learning some super cool jutsu?" The blond asks his teacher.

The mask wearing jonin smiles at Naruto after raise up upon his elbows. "I'll think of something for you to do after breakfast." Kakashi explains and Naruto couldn't help but correct, "After lunch you mean."

"That late, huh?" Kakashi muses out loud and Naruto just nods. The blond genin then goes down the stairs to inform their hosts that Kakashi has woken since it seems as though Sakura and Sasuke seem content to remain in their spots. Naruto could only imagine what else the two wish to speak with Kakashi about without him out of the room.

Leaving Wave

Haku's grip upon Zabuza's collar tightens as the man turned child strains to wring the neck of Sakura who just cooed about how cute

Zabuza's new cloths were. Naruto grabs the kunai from the six year old Zabuza when the missing nin produces it since he is trying to help some of Haku's burden concerning Zabuza.

At least Kakashi seems to be taking turning into a six year old a bit better then Zabuza is. At least Sasuke hasn't snapped and killed anyone yet. Naruto thinks as he glances to his right at the six year old Uchiha. *Serves the bastard right, going through my stuff.*

Kakashi and Sasuke hadn't complained much about their new cloths, but then, he had been sent to purchase their cloths while Haku had purchased Zabuza's. Haku had suggested mini kimonos for the pair but he had a limited amount of cash to make purchases so he couldn't afford to buy even a one kimono, so he just stuck to buying simple shirts and pants, although Haku and him did pool their money together to buy underwear and sandals.

Kakashi is wearing a bandanna to cover his lower face and is walking while keeping his Sharingan eye closed since the jonin's headband is acting as the silver jonin's belt since there had been only one belt and Sasuke is wearing it. The six year old Kakashi is still reading that perverted book as they walk over the bridge that their client had built.

Sasuke had refused to wear any shirts since they lack the Uchiha fan upon them, but quickly changed his mind when Sakura blushed at looking at his bare chest. It seems that it dawned on the rookie of the year that if he didn't wear anything to cover his upper body, then when warm water hits him, he'll transform into his true age with his upper body bare. Something that Sakura had likely linked together when she saw Sasuke refusing to wear a shirt.

I'm just glad he only got into that set of water balloons instead of the first set. I shutter to think how Hidden Leaf will treat me when they learn that I'm responsible for their ice prince becoming a beast. Naruto thinks. *Which reminds me...* The blond takes out the bottle that contains chilled tea.

I never got a chance to give this a taste... Just bottled it up really. Naruto thinks, oh, he knows that the tea as magical but he's never seen anyone drink it or tried it himself, so he's not sure what Beastly Tea really does. Its not as though there was any real warnings beyond not drinking too much and mixing the flavors.

"Thirsty?" Haku asks him as they come to walk upon solid ground. "Huh? Oh, just thinking about something. Not sure if I should try this or not." Naruto admits to the girly ninja who had posed as a hunter nin to carry Zabuza away.

"Any reason not to drink it?" Haku asks Naruto. "It's safe enough, it's just that, well, I don't know if it'll taste good and what not. The blond explains.

"What kind of tea is it?" The ice user asks. "This? Draconian Durian." The blond Leaf genin answers.

"Durian flavored tea? I didn't know they make it." Haku says politely.

"Well, it's part of this collection." Naruto admits. "Anyway, I guess I should be the one to sample it since I did buy it." The blond explains.

Kakashi asks him to wait but it's too late as he's already unscrewed the lid and swallows a mouthful before lowering it. Naruto makes a face at the taste while screwing the cap back on. "Naruto... Tell me, was that tea part of *That* order?" The jonin turned kid asks him.

"Yea, the collection is called Beastly Teas." Naruto admits after he has handed the bottle over to Haku, who kind of seems puzzled by something.

Sasuke suddenly decides to give Naruto a lot of space while Haku untwists the lid and takes a small sip before handing the bottle back. "Not bad." Haku agrees as while Naruto puts the bottle back into his bag of holding that's on his belt.

"And you just drank something **That** has that in it's title?" Sakura shouts. "Oh god, we're all going to die!" The pink haired genin exclaims.

"What's..." Naruto says before something seems to kick him in the stomach. "Arg..." The blond exclaims while holding his stomach.

"Are you alright?" Haku asks and isn't quick enough to keep Sakura from dragging Zabuza away from Haku and Naruto. The blond tries to say something but other then breathing, everything seems to be painful.

Naruto falls to his knees as his balance suddenly leaves him. With a grunt, Naruto's head lunges forward. Naruto's mouth is open, giving everyone a good view of the changes going on within the genin's mouth as the teeth suddenly grow larger and pointed.

As Naruto's skin begins to darken to a deep brown, Haku suddenly begins to become affected by the tea's effects as well. Naruto opens his eyes to glance at Haku, the blond's glowing blue eyes finally flicker away to glance over to where Sakura is standing with her hand upon Zabuza's shirt.

Narut's upper body suddenly straightens as a tail grows out of the blond's pants. Scales begin to become more pronounce as Naruto's head alters to mimic a lizard's head. Horns grow from Naruto's temples and Naruto's frame suddenly grows half an inch and then another ten seconds later. Slowly, Naruto's frame expands and muscles begin to ripple below the leathery scales.

As Naruto's blond hair become honey brown scaly strands. After reaching six feet, Naruto's glowing eyes fade to reveal blue reptilian eyes. Naruto's toes have gone from five small toes to three thick toes sporting claws. Without any pain racking his senses, Naruto gets up off the ground and tries to examine himself. *(Think DragonBorn!)*

Haku's transformation hadn't been as long as Naruto's even though Haku had started later then Naruto. The only changes Haku sports are scales empathizing Haku's jaw, nose, and eye ridge. Tiny scales band Haku's fingers while the nails upon each finger and thumb look sharper then they usually do. Haku's pupils had taken a more reptilian look but again, Naruto's eyes were the most changed when somebody compares the two.

"Why couldn't I have found that tea?" Sasuke wonders with jealousy coloring his tone. Naruto just shakes his head after a snort.

"Ah... We should continue on our way." Kakashi suggests and Naruto just shrugs, just glad that his cloths still fit and nothing seem to have broken, although he did have to adjust his pack and his belt before following after.

Well, this proved to be our more interesting mission yet. Naruto thinks to himself as they continue walking to Hidden Leaf.

Ending it Here

Wilder: Naruto

I Don't Own Naruto!

Naruto

Naruto couldn't help but bite his lower lip as he waits in the waiting room of the lab. At seventeen, the blond young man is a legal adult and more then capable of deciding what he wants to do with his life. *I'm not sure if I'm making the right decision... But...* The young adult sighs as he recalled the latest disaster that had come about since he reached legal maturity.

First Sakura breaks up with me after graduation, she's leaving the ward to take an apprenticeship to become a medic. Naruto's eyes stare out of the window across from him. *Then I don't hear from any of my old classmates since I was moping around after the break. Not a single one of them bothering to leave a message or forwarding addresses or numbers so I can get into contact with them...*

That had hurt more then the break up since they had been friends for *years* and yet they just broke off contact without a word. *I find out I lack the right grades in the right classes to get into that flight academy. Why the hell didn't they send a memo before the day classes begin? I could have gotten retested before the academy started up last month!* The young blond thinks with a hint of anger coloring his mental tone.

That, of course, lead to dad hedging me to find something to do in the mean while. Finding and forwarding job listings, picked over job listings at that. Naruto thinks, although the blond had been tempted to accept that assistant job at his god-father's company. *Until I recall what that entailed...*

It has been two weeks since his seventeenth birthday and the pressure from without and within finally drove Naruto to decide he needed time away from civilization, which is what have brought him to this bioengineering station. *It'll only be for ten years... The money is good too, but then, to risk your sanity and humanity, they got to offer a really, really big carrot.*

The door opens and Naruto glances away from the window to look over at the doctor. The blond gets to his feet and bows politely towards the glass wearing twenty something year old. "Greetings Doctor Kabuto." Naruto says with a faint smile.

"Greetings, Mr Namikaze. Come this way, if you will." The silver haired man in a white lab coat says before turning and walking back into the doorway.

Naruto hurries to follow after, afraid that if he wasn't quick enough, he'll lose his nerve and resolve. "I believe you would be surprise how many people are willing to go through with this opportunity to become closer to nature. We generally have two dozen a year coming to us. Of course for every third person we send out, we receive one person who return to us."

"I didn't know the survival rate was that low." Naruto says as they walk through a hallway with various people in lab coats and wearing nursing outfits moving briskly about. *I wonder what else they do here... I know that fashion splicing is coming back but not this quickly...*

"The trouble isn't from people dying, actually. It's from people going... feral if you will." The good doctor explains.

"Isn't that 'going native'?" Naruto asks as they wait for the hall to clear. The blond watches as the Wilder, a popular name for those who leave the confides of civilization in bio-engineered altered bodies, huffs in annoyance as their guide seems to have stopped to flirt by a station.

"Going native is usually used when one adopts another culture." The doctor explains as finally somebody arrives to guide the Wilder to a tank to begin the process of reverting the transformation. *That will be me in ten years.*

They arrived in a room with a number of screens. "Take a seat here. A minor scan will begin to record your DNA and other statistics." Doctor Kabuto says as the room lights up.

Naruto does so and within seconds, the various screens fire up and the scans begin. The young man watches as his name, his parents' names, and other bits of information appear upon one of the screens. Where it said he was unemployed, it now read that he's employed and that his position within the company was environmentalist.

The scans stop and the information vanishes, leaving only an image of Naruto's naked body. "Did you have any specified 'critter' or beasties you would like to be included in for your Wilder career?" Doctor Kabuto asks him.

"Are there a basic form or something that we can start with?" Naruto asks and the doctor's eyes flash. Seconds later, at least three chimera beasts appear with the man explaining the difference between them.

This is going to take a while, isn't it? Damn, I hope to get into a tank before dad finds out where I 'applied' to... I just know he'd kick up a fuss about wasting ten years of my life away from school or civilization in general. Naruto thinks while doing his best to follow along with what the doctor is saying.

Minato

"Excuse me. Excuse me!" Minato says as he tries to grab the attention of the woman behind the glass of the information desk.

As Minato taps a finger upon the counter on his side, waiting for the woman to finish with the phone, Jiraiya and Kakashi catch up. The blond man couldn't help but feel impatient since every second spent wasted waiting means the less likely he'll arrive to drag his son out of this place. *What was Naruto thinking, becoming a Wilder? Doesn't he know of the risks involved?*

"Calm down, Minato. I'm sure the boy's senses returned to him and he left as soon as they began to display the changes they plan to do to his body." Jiraiya says, trying to calm Minato down, patting the blond father's shoulder.

"He shouldn't have come here in the first place!" Minato snaps. "What was he thinking?! There are plenty of jobs that he can do without coming here!"

"You do remember that he is of legal age, eh?" Kakashi points out and Minato glances at his assistant. "That you can't just drag him out just because you don't want him to spend ten years as an 'environmentalist' for the science division."

Minato sends his assistant a glare. "On the other hand, you are the head of city military and somebody could hold a transformed Naruto as a hostage to blackmail you." Kakashi manages to add hastily and Minato nods.

"That is exactly what I'm trying to prevent." Minato agrees and finally, the woman manning the information desk finally finishes on the phone. The woman walks up to the glass.

"Yes, how can I help you today?" The woman asks them. "My son, I want to know where he is." Minato demands, slamming the palm of his hand upon the counter on his side of the glass.

"Your son's name?" The woman asks in a tone that clearly states that she's experienced this before. Minato snaps, "Naruto Namikaze!"

The woman types it into the computer and replies, "Congratulations, Mr Namikaze, you son is now listed as one of our newest members of our environmental research sector."

"Wha?!" He exclaims and the woman presses a few keys before replying, "He's been in the tank for three hours already. By morning the process shall be complete and he will be escorted to the out going gate."

"Well halt it and reverse it!" Minato orders and the woman just sighs. "I'm sorry sir but your son is a legal adult and thus, you have no authority to cancel your son's current contract. Now, if you try to force the issue, I will be calling security." The woman states forcefully.

Minato takes out his badge and holds it to the glass. "I'm General Minato Namikaze! I am ordering you to release my son from his contract!" The blond says and the woman just shakes her head before buzzing for the security detail that's assigned to this work place.

Within twenty minutes, Minato finds himself outside of the bio station, trying to piece together how he arrived outside.

Naruto

"Welcome to Wilder training camp, pup!" Naruto turns to look at the welcoming community, which consists of a canine/feline body plan while sporting a spiky mane of white. *"Name's Genma Shiranui."*

"Did I just hear him say something?" Naruto wonders and then he heard hearty laughter with underlying feelings of bemusement. *"How weird..."*

"Yes you did hear me say something. It's called telepathy and it's my job to help you get a grip on it along with giving you the basics so you can. So try and watch what your thoughts." Genma explains to Naruto.

"Watch your thoughts? How do you do that?" Naruto wonders with head cocked with ears done up in a questioning way while following the larger and more experienced Wilder. The young Wilder's build is lighter then Genma and sports orange/red basic fur with chocolate colored spots and lighter hued belly fur that lack markings.

"Hn, know how you mean. It's only been five years since I was in your 'paws' as it were. Don't worry, when evening arrives, your mind be stable enough that your broadcasting will die down. Until then, just try and stay as calm as you can since at this point, you can even broadcast memories if you get too emotional." Genma explains while they continue to walk away from the gate, Naruto had no choice but to trust that Genma knew where he's going.

"This isn't what I thought it would be..." Naruto thinks while glancing towards the tree tops at the sound of bird chirping. Their antics within the tree tops is so much loader then the spotted Wilder had expected. New smells also assault his nose while his short whiskers pick up wind currents.

"It's like I'm really, really sensitive..." Naruto thinks and then flushes as Genma chuckles, reminding the in-experience Wilder that he's still broadcasting his thoughts. *"This is going to be a very long day..."*

Week Before Contract Ends

Wind bushes through Naruto's orange/red fur, paws making soft thuds upon the grass. The rest of the pack trying to encircle the stag, Hokuto's strides increase and the cheetah/gray hound built Wilder over takes Naruto and Ittetsu.

"Be careful of his hooves, Hokuto!" Naruto reminds newest addition to the pack.

"You're build is too delicate to wrestle him to the ground!" Idata adds as the dun colored Wilder begins to charge in from the left.

The stag gets too close to Mifune and the more powerful built Wilder leaps and manages to get his paws about the stag's neck. Naruto and the rest suddenly increase their pace to rush to help fall the stag before the antler backed beast slips through Mifune's grip. Hokuto manages to reach the pair and after a few second haste, Hokuto bites down on the stag's underbelly.

Idata arrives and goes for the throat while Ittetsu, Natori, and Naruto slow down to allow the other three time to kill the stag. Naruto stops about a foot from the stag, he studies the scene before him, trying to file this hunt away within his mind as in less then six days, he'll be returning to the city, leaving this life behind. *This is an ok life, but I can't see myself giving up my family and friends for it. Not that I wouldn't mind getting hired again...*

Then, with a flick of his, Naruto charges in with a snarl to claim a portion of the organs. After all, he's the co-leader of the pack with Mifune and it seems that Mifune is already chasing the others away from the belly. Ittetsu looks like he wants to try and challenge either Mifune or Naruto but doesn't.

Mifune snarls a bit as Naruto moves to helps himself to the open cavity. Mifune's broadcasting irritation but doesn't try to drive him away. *"So, when will you be heading to the gate?"* Mifune asks Naruto on a private 'channel'.

"I think the day after tomorrow." Naruto replies on the same 'channel'. *"Not sure how well Hokuto will take my leaving..."*

"What about Idata? Not concerned about how he'll react when you're gone?" Mifune asks, the 'old timer' moves to allow Naruto at the liver while Mifune consumes the kidneys.

"Idata shouldn't have any problem with it. He's cuffing at being under my shadow. Not unlike Ittetsu with yours." Naruto points down and the feral Wilder chuckles. *"How about you? You going to miss me, gramps?"* Naruto asks as he pulls away with the liver in his mouth.

"Like a thorn in my side." Mifune replies. Naruto turns an ear towards Mifune but that's all since the others were impatient to eat.

"Can we eat now?" Natori asks before Ittetsu pushes Natori to the right with a growl. *"Wait your turn!"* Ittetsu snaps at Idata's student.

"Leave off, Ittetsu! They've been out here less then four months!" Idata snaps.

"No fighting, you two!" Mifune growls at the two Wilders. *"This will be the last time we will dine with Naruto. Be respectful!"* Minfune informs the rest of the pack and that causes them to stare at Naruto, their surprise reaches his nose after their emotions reach his mind.

"I thought there was more time before you had to go!" Hokuto says on a private channel while Idata says on another private channel, *"When are you leaving?"*

I'm so going to have a headache later... Naruto thinks before engaging in two private conversations at once.

Minato

"Naruto!" Minato says as his son comes out of the tank room. His son's movements are halted and it's clear that Naruto's still trying to get his balance back.

"Dad? What are you going here?" Naruto asks in a crackly voice as Naruto glances up at him. Minato surges forward to hug Naruto, it takes a few seconds before Naruto's arms wrap around him in return.

It always surprises Minato that those that return from the Wilder program seemingly don't appear to age even though a decade had passed. "I've been so worried about you." Minato says.

"I missed you, too." Naruto admits softly. "Can we separate now? I have this overwhelming urge to snap at you for being in my personal

space a little too long." Minato laughs but does so and Naruto shakes himself, sending him a sheepish smile.

"This isn't the first time I've had to deal with someone returning from out there." Minato assures his son while privately adding that when he does, it's usually when they're involved in displaying violence out in public domains. *How is it I manage to keep Kakashi from becoming one and yet not my own flesh and blood?*

Before they left, Naruto retrieved his stuff and also a memory stick showing his transformation into his Wilder state and out of it. Minato knew he's to have a rough time concerning his son's adjusting to city life once more. He hopes that he won't have to see his son imprisoned within a cell while experiencing an 'episode'.

Naruto

Naruto walks through the green house of the security building. It has been a whole month since he had returned from the wild and Naruto found it hard to feel complete living with his father. It wasn't that he missed the fur or killing for a meal, it's that he missed out the mental abilities, the ability to feel another mental presence, to share emotions without trying to put it into words.

Then there's the fact that the science division hasn't arranged for therapy to help with the arrangement. Naruto thinks and then the blond spotted a familiar person. Naruto squints at the person, trying to recall who the guy was.

"Hn, long time no see, dobe." The black haired man says and Naruto bristles at the nickname. *Sasuke Uchiha.* Naruto thinks.

"What do you want, Uchiha." Naruto asks calmly, the two have never been friends. Sasuke's always snubbing people, which really rubbed Naruto the wrong way. After the fifth rebuff of Naruto trying to befriend the Uchiha, Naruto gave up since there were plenty of others in their age group that seem to enjoy his companionship but

by then, Sasuke had come to view Naruto as somebody to insult and never quit, which is why they share a rather lengthy fight record.

"I heard you entered the Wilder program not long after graduation. I wasn't surprised, really, you were always basic." The older looking Uchiha muses and Naruto felt like pouncing upon the bastard and pinning him to the floor.

Naruto stares into the Uchiha's face before smiling coldly at Sasuke as he recalls something that he learnt about the Uchiha family during his time as a Wilder. "At least I know my father never planned a coup, causing civil war that lasted thirty years. I'm stunned that they even allowed you to join the military, Uchiha, since it's only been twenty-five years since the end of that war. I guess you whored your way in." Naruto remarks with a sneer, arms crossed over his chest.

Naruto truly relished the red, furious look that erupted upon the bastard's face. "So why don't you be a good whore and go please your latest sponsor? I'm sure he can use you to help relieve some pint up urges with how much stress he's going through concerning keeping people from booting you off the force." The blond adds after a minute of not getting a reply from the frigid bastard.

Sasuke punches Naruto in the cheek since the blond managed to see it coming and turn his head to save his nose. Naruto's breathe hisses as he releases it and before Naruto could do anything, the Uchiha punches his stomach and then moves to punch him in the face. Naruto's vision is blurred as Sasuke suddenly jerks and falls to the left.

"Naruto! Are you alright?" Naruto hears Anko asks him.

"Not really... I feel like I shouldn't have been so stunned that he throw the first punch that I didn't retaliate quick enough." Naruto admits as Anko bends down and picks him up.

Naruto can't find it in him to voice a protest since he really, really wants to sleep but Anko's pace keeps causing his injuries to jar.

"What happened?" Naruto hears Kakashi ask.

"Uchiha picked a fight with the head honcho's son. Funny thing is, considering he's fresh from being a Wilder, he didn't throw the first punch." Anko explains and Naruto bets that Kakashi is more then a little relieved about that.

Minato

Minato didn't know whether to be proud of his son or disappointed at how his son defended himself from an old classmate as he replays the recordings form the green house and the vocal recordings from the Uchiha's com-unit. *I wonder where he learnt about that... He never seemed interested in history before.*

Jiraiya asks, "So what is it, per say, are you worried about? This proves that Naruto wasn't the aggressor so he won't be needing to be sent to a prison."

"I'm more concerned about why the Uchiha was in the green house in the first place, Jiraiya. It's not the kind of place he prefers to take a break in." Minato explains. "Somebody wanted to provoke Naruto and it was common knowledge that put the Uchiha and Naruto in the same room alone and they'll get into a fight. I want to know who and why."

"Huh..." Jiraiya muses and Minato could only guess at what's going through his old teacher's mind. *I wonder how long it'll be before somebody leaks this to the media... It'll be a change from all previous news castings concerning Wilders.*

Naruto

"Dad? Can I speak with you? I, ah, I think it could be relevant concerning... Well, everything." Naruto says to his dad.

Minato glances up from the virtual data pad to look up at him as he comes to sit in the living room. It's been two weeks since Naruto's

encounter of that bastard in the green house. Naruto rubs the side of his face gently as he tries to think of how to put this.

"Has any of those previous Wilders mention anything? About their experiences out in the wild?" Naruto asks and Minato studies him for a few seconds.

"Nothing that made sense. They complained about the smells, about how they felt crowd, how nobody understands them. We've tried to get them councilling but..." Minato shakes his head.

Naruto sighs, he's felt like that too but mostly he dwells upon how he can't really connect to those around him. "Did you know that Wilders are telepathic when we're out in the wild?" Naruto asks.

"No... no I did not." Minato admits. "You do know what telepathic is, right?" Minato asks and he smiles slightly.

"Yea, it's when you have conversations with other people with your mind alone. Exchanging, sensing another's emotions. Sensing where your fellow pack members are on the hunt." Naruto says, he wraps those experiences around him for comfort.

"It's hard to adjust... I felt so alone..." Naruto adds after a few seconds as he glances down at the table. "I miss it..."

"So it's not the fur you miss..." Minato muses and Naruto nods. "Why don't you tell me about this pack that you joined?" The elder blond asks and Naruto swallows as he glances up into his father's face, the tension at the thought of Minato dismissing what he's saying kind of vanishes, allowing tears to fall as Naruto realizes that his father was open to the idea.

It wasn't long before his father comes to put a comforting arm around him as Naruto cries in relief that his father was willing to hear him out. Naruto forces himself to relax in his father's arms. *I thought he'd still be mad about me taking off for ten years in the Wilder program...*

It took a while but he found his voice and began to fill his dad in on the adventures he had over a cup of hot chocolate.

Spooky, eh? So... Cliff hangy!

To Readers:

I believe this is the first time I've written something where Minato is a on screen character. Not sure if I portrait him right... I hope I captured the father-son relationship too.

1 Year, Cold and Kanga Go To Hogwarts

I don't own Harry Potter nor do I own Dimars! Dimars are (c) to Dee Dreslough!

It was such a little thing really. It appeared to have been made out of obsidian. The statue of a muggle idea of what a dragon is and it stands about as tall as his thumb. The serpentine neck in bowed along with the horned head. The wings were folded upon the statue's back and the tail is curled twice about the legs of the statue.

"Are you sure you don't want it?" He asks his elder twin and Colin just rolls his eyes while continuing to read one of the gifted books they got early this morning for their birthday. *I wouldn't be surprise to see him in Ravenclaw.*

For once, his family decided to stick around the UK for their birthday, not that he ever really attended it once he grew fascinated with the forests that is surrounding their primary property and tended to vanish within its greenery during the summer.

But then, this is our eleventh birthday... He thinks, not the least discourage that most of the presents have Colin's name upon them as he picks up the statue with his left hand. The leather enchanted bracelets move backwards while doing so.

He turns the statue this way and that before walking over to his shelf and set the statue upon it. His shelf is fairly barren compared to Colin's but then, the bulk of his stuff is out in the yurt he enjoys living in. He'll have to remember to take the little statue out there after the party.

With that done, he wanders over to his bed and lies down upon it. "Shouldn't you change into something more appropriate?" Colin asks

him and out of the corner of his eye he watches Colin push his glasses up.

He just grins, more then a little thankful that his rune scheme continues to function as well as it had when he created the bracelet at age five as it keeps him from needing glasses like his twin. Another one of his leather bracelets consists of a rune scheme designed to keep the temperature about an inch above his skin at a constant comfortable temperature.

In other words, he's never too hot or too cold, although if he were to be outside in a snow storm as he is dressed, the drain upon his magic would be very great as the rune schismatic draws upon his magical reserves. Otherwise the drain upon his reserves wasn't that much if he wore the appropriate cloths in said fictional snow storm.

"I don't see why I have to get fancied up, it's not as though they're here to see me." He points out. "Still can't believe our parents caved under the pressure Dumblies pressed upon them to invite those Corpse Eaters and their families."

"It's Professor Dumbledore, Harry, not Dumblies." Colin snaps and he grins at getting a rise out of his elder brother.

"And it's Kanga, not Harry. Besides, I don't see why you are defending the man, Cold, he's done nothing but butt in on how our parents raise you." He points out.

"Raise us, you mean." Colin corrects and he snorts. *They got tired of tracking me down by the time I was six.* He mentally counters, he relishes his semi-independence after all.

"What ever you say Cold, what ever you say." He retorts out loud. Colin cuffs at being called Cold once again but that's all of a reaction he gets.

After some minutes he gets up off his bed and looks out of the window. He sits down upon the chest that's under the window and

watches as a few miles from the house, a tent has been erected and tables floating into it. His mom convinced his dad to hire a caterer for the party, it kind of goes without saying that the caterers were muggles as wizards don't supply said service as they rely upon their house elf servants to do such things.

Wish electronic things work in the manor, watching a bit of TV right now would be great. Glad my yurt and the outer rim of the property isn't warded enough to interfere with TV signals. He thinks, he had become really interested in TV during a trip to Japan. He even managed to purchased a TV set and stereo built by Japanese wizards, it wasn't the most advance piece of equipment they had but it was better then nothing.

I know Flare enjoys watching it, especially those late night horrors. Just glad Flare does something to keep the light and sound from reaching my bed when he pops in to watch those movies. He thinks, grinning as he recalls the young house elf's reaction to him giving Flare permission to watch late night TV as long as Flare doesn't have it so it would keep him up at night.

Wonder what Flare is doing now? I mean, with the caterer, Flare doesn't really have much to do today... He thinks, Flare was hired a week after Colin and himself survive that Halloween night. Their parents had left behind very convincing duplicates, a pair of rabbits transfigured to appear as their parents as well as under the Imperio curse(it wasn't illegal to use against animals, only against humans) to protect them after uncle Wormtail had left a note suggesting they take a night off.

Uncle Wormtail hasn't contacted them since the Dork Lord attacked them that Halloween night. His parents were torn between wanting to hunt for uncle Wormtail to find out why the man betrayed them to wanting to thank the man for alerting them to the incoming attack. *Nobody ever explained why Hagrid showed up within minutes after the house started on fire... Why didn't reinforcements arrive when the Dork Lord showed up?*

"Don't you have homework to do?" Colin asks him. He glances lazily over to his elder brother to give him a look before returning to watching what's going on below.

His parents were transfiguring piles of leaves and twigs into chairs. Uncle Padfoot and Moony would then summon them into the tent. *Why don't they let us help? It would be good practice.* He muses to himself as he takes a few items out of his pockets.

Through concentration, he manages to cause the wooden hoops to float. The little pebbles he had been practicing transfiguration on stubbornly refused to take to the air and even when they did, they didn't go as high up as the wooden hoops. After a while, he repockets the pebbles to focus upon the wooden hoops.

After a few seconds, hovering the wooden hoops proved fair easier without also trying to float the pebbles. In time he causes the wooden hoops to form patterns and to even cause them to play follow the leader. He always found manipulating smaller items to be far harder then larger ones since the smaller items can easily be crushed with ease.

His practice with these wooden hoops is to help with his control. *I don't see why wandless magic is so hard to practice. Magic doesn't just suddenly exist when you get your wand. Accidental magic happens and can be channeled without a wand.* He thinks as he causes the thirty hoops to snake around his outstretched arm.

"Masters James and Lilly wish for young masters to journey down before guests arrive." Flare says as the house elf pops. The hoops gently fall into his open palm as he glances over to the house elf wearing a pair of old patchy, leather pants that use to belong to him.

"It's that time already?" Colin asks and he snorts softly as he pockets the hoops. He gets up off the chest and heads for the door after Flare pops out of the room.

"Mom and dad aren't going to be pleased to see that you haven't changed into something more appropriate." Colin calls after him as he walks out of the room. He just waves his hand at his brother as he passes through the doorway.

He chuckles softly as he hears his brother curse. *The joys of having twenty-five times hearing.* He muses to himself, more then a little proud at piecing his elder brother's defenses.

Funny how we're suppose to be identical twins. Guess we are a prime example of different life styles even under the same roof. He muses, he already had an idea of what to expect from the other 'light' families' kids and a somewhat educated guess of what to expect from the 'dark' families' kids. His parents did associate more with 'light' families then with those who had supported the Dork Lord, the so called 'dark' families.

Wonder if Neville is going to be in attendance? Neville Longbottom was pretty the closest person he had to a human friend. He counted Flare to be a friend even though Flare is only a house elf.

- [T] -

"Colin Potter!" Dumblies' deputy calls out and a hush falls all over the hall. He watches as his elder brother walks up to the stool and puts the hat on.

Within seconds later, the sorting hat declares, "Gryffindor!" The whole of the student population cheers as his elder brother walks away from the stool to sit with the lions.

"Harry Potter!" The katty deputy says after the cheers die down. He snorts softly to himself as people have whispered conversations concerning his current attire and the usual rumors that circulate about him.

He wasn't wearing the assigned uniform because he had been in the process of winning a bet with the Weasley twins and a few other

upperclassmen. *Easy money.* He thinks as he walks up to the stool to put the likely centuries old hat that hadn't been washed in centuries as well.

"Well, well, well, who'd have thought there would be such a bright mind within a 'class clown' such as yourself? You'd fit well in three of the four houses here at Hogwarts. You are too much of a handful for Hufflepuff. Too sly for Slytherin and more of a doer then a thinker for Ravenclaw." The sorting hat tells him privately before declaring, "Gryffindor!"

Polite clapping follows this for a few seconds but dies down as he walks towards his assigned table. He makes a beeline for Neville who smiles a bit too slyly for his liking. "Kanga."

"Leander." He says in greeting and Neville just sighs. He pats Neville upon the shoulder. "Always knew you were one." He adds and his friend flushes while finding the table very interesting.

"Leander? I thought your name was Neville." A boy he never met asks in a puzzled tone.

"It's his nickname for me. He did also give himself his own nicknamed, Kanga." Neville replies and he just nods.

"What do those even mean?" Another new face wonders and a bushy haired girl responds before he could answer, "Leander is Greek for Lion Man and Kanga means Raven."

Most of the others at the table fidget while a few mutter know it all under their breaths. The sorting continues while he studies the girl who had introduced herself to Colin ask Hermione Granger. He's not that offended that she hadn't introduced herself to him, after all, he likely had trouble written all over him considering his current attire.

She's going to have a really unpleasant time here. He decides as he glances towards the stool where students sit to be sorted. *Wonder how long it'll take for people to realize I'm not sleeping in the dorms...*

I like my privacy after all. Although I guess I could make an ofter for Neville to join me in the yurt. He muses, he's really touched that Flare had gotten him a yurt as a birthday gift, one that is not just spacier then his previous one but also sports all kind of enchantments, ones he didn't even know house elves could do let alone set up.

His old yurt was still set up at home and he had left his old TV set there for Flare. He plans to buy a new one set come Feburary as he had a good idea of how to earn the money for such an advance piece of technology. *Acromantula supposedly live in the forest. Their venom is worth a minor fortune and silken threads they create should fetch a pretty bit of gold too. Be a good way to practice my archery too.* He muses as he mentally reviews what kind of runes he'll be placing upon the arrows to make them very lethal to Acromantula.

"Here's your money, Kanga." Fred Weasley says and a small pouch sails over to him as Dumblies begins talking. "Can't believe you actually did it." George pipes in as he begins to count his winnings.

"What did you do?" Hermione demands in a demanding tone. "Just make a bet with a few upperclassmen concerning the temperature upon the top of one of the express cars." He replies in a smug tone as he finds all of his winnings within the pouch.

The twins all nod in agreement with his answer, although they're smiling a bit too wide. Hermione frowns when she realizes she had missed out upon hearing the rest of Dumblies' speech. He ties the pouch to his belt as the food appears.

He waits until everyone around him has filled their plates before filling his own. He's a bit disappointed at the piss poor selection of greens and fruits. *No wonder mom gave us those expanded boxes with that anti-withering charm on them that contain a good five months supply of fruit and veggies. All they serve is grease!* He thinks and he can tell that Colin looks a bit ill at ease with the selection as well.

They might not like eating a lot of fruit and veggies during meals, as they usually are forced to consume them as snacks in-between meals cause that's all Flare's allowed to give them for snacks. It was a rule their mother laid down and their father helps enforce.

Both Colin and him pick what they wanted from the serving plates. They likely appeared picky but they just wasn't use to the selection nor to the amount of meat and meat filled pies. *No pickled anything either. I hope this isn't want they serve every single dinner, it'd grow boring quickly. I wonder how it would go over if I talk a house elf into making personal meals for Colin and me?* He muses, he's certain his mother would be willing to send him cook books to give to said house elf.

Hermione seems to be a bit surprised to see Colin and him seem to be picky eaters. It also likely highlighted the fact they were twin, identical twins at that despite their manner of dress and behavior. "You think they'll be serving all of this every meal?" Ron wonders after swallowing but before re-stuffing his mouth with food.

- [T] -

"That was surprisingly easy to set up." He muses as he studies the set up yurt, the one his good friend Flare had given him. "Must be the magic hanging about this place." He decides as he walks into it.

Hanging Fae lights come to life, softly illuminating the yurt. With a yawn, he shakes himself and begins to dig through his pockets for his shrunken luggage and furniture. It takes about an hour to set everything up, which includes a bathroom cabinet that fits easily five feet to the right of the door.

He enters into the cabinet to have a quick shower before hitting the hay. *Who ever invented this cabinet was a bloody genius. You would think it was a recent innovation considering that it is still on the 'testing' list of items that the European countries have.* He thinks while in the shower.

Not that it stopped mom from purchasing one for each of us for when we go camping. Heck, she not only purchased one of each of the items upon that stupid list and things that haven't been shared with the European countries since the majority of the world has given up on modernizing European communities. He muses, his mom and dad have books that would likely be found on European black lists. It's those modern types of books that he had used as references for his various runes, after all, runes didn't require much in the way of magic if done right and like potion making, wasn't monitored around muggles.

"Runes for Dummies, the greatest help book that a wizard can own. Kanji for Dummies is a second best too, very helpful when married with Runes." He muses before banishing such thoughts as he puts on a fresh pair of boxers and his PJs.

Once he's lying in his bed, he waves his hand while willing for darkness. The Fae lights go out and he sighs softly, waiting for sleep to claim him.

- [T] -

"Your not living in the dorms, are you?" His brother asks him while they were in the library. He glances up from his pros and cons list concerning him starting a business concerning his enchanted leather bracelets featuring rune schematics since he's still waiting for his order of unbreakable glass vials to show up so he can start collecting Acromantula venom.

"You're just noticing this now?" He asks his elder brother and Colin frowns as his brother sits down at his table. He doesn't hear Ron nor the usually circle of people that cling to Colin, so he concludes that his brother managed to shake them.

"This isn't like home! You're safer in the castle." Colin says and he snorts before chuckling softly.

"Cold, Cold, Cold. We have a supposed ex-Corpse Eater for a professor." He points out before adding in harsher tones, "If you don't care about that then look into the Chamber of Secrets. They never found that beast, Cold and they stopped looking decades ago since the Basilisk hasn't been seen since about fifty years."

Colin frowns and asks, "If they never found the beast, how do you know it's a Basilisk?" He sighs and sums it up, "What was language did a certain member of the founder four speak that is considered dark?"

Colin's eyes flash and he glares when it looks like Colin is about to comment upon that. Colin sighs before saying, "Dumbledore could have taken care of it, he does have a phoenix. He could have taken care of the beast on the sly."

"I doubt that. And if you want to continue this conversation, can we take it outside where we won't be overheard?" He asks.

"It's mid-October!" Colin snaps. "Why go outside when its warm in here?" His brother asks.

"Ever heard of a little spell called a heating charm? No? I'm sure it'll be worth learning for our future potion classes." He remarks scratchingly and Colin gives him a dirty look.

"You'd think you were the one who got the extra lessons." Colin remarks and he chuckles. "I'm just imaginative, Cold. I was allowed to learn at my own pace while our parents and uncles kept your nose in a book."

"Has dad been..." Colin trails off after a few minutes of silence between them. He raises an eyebrow at his brother, he's a bit puzzled about what their dad would be bugging them about.

"Panks?" Colin states, looking a bit smug at his confusion. "Ah... No, nor our uncles." He answers with a shrug.

"Really? I mean... You're the rebel!" Colin exclaims with a hint of disbelief and he laughs as he reaches over and ruffles his brother's hair in an affectionate manner.

"Never bothered to read up on the subject, Cold. I figured you'd be eager to follow in that set of hoof prints. I mean, when was the last time you cut loose?" He asks Colin and his brother flushes slightly while stuttering denials concerning being a true heir to that group.

"Hey Kanga. Colin." Neville says as their fellow Gryffindor wanders over to their table. He grins a greeting while Colin says a short hey.

"Did I interrupt a family meeting or something?" Neville asks after studying Colin and him. He shakes his head and motions for Neville to join them.

"Nothing really, just some chit chat." He tells his friend and Colin just nods, he could tell that his brother is a bit alarmed as Colin glances around the library, half expecting his hangers on to arrive behind Neville.

"I saw Ron and them down in the courtyard. They seem to be trying to get a game of catch going on." Neville informs Colin and his elder brother seems to sigh in relief while Neville gives Colin a pitying look.

"Reading up on potions?" Colin asks Neville as his brother reads the top book of Neville's pile. "Don't see why you just don't ask for grandmother to send you a tutor, Leander. Or you can get her to send you a ton of potion ingredients and we can set up our own potion lab in one of the old classrooms for practice." He muses.

"Wouldn't the last one be more dangerous?" Neville asks. "No more dangerous then Ex breathing down your neck." He pipes in and Colin nods in agreement.

"He's not a good teacher. I don't see why you gave him such a cool nickname though." Colin says and Neville answers, "Ex is short for Ex-Death Eater or, as Kanga calls them, Ex-Corpse Eater."

"More of a title then anything." He admits. "If I go into specifics he is Ex-Corpse Eater Number One." He adds and Colin rolls his eyes. "I've number coded all of the ex-Corpse Eaters." He states smugly while his table-mates roll their eyes.

"You're so loopy." Colin mutters and he just smirks in reply, after all, he found it funny since he, in his mind at least, uses common sense married to logic with a hint of magic to work through his problems.

"Better loopy then bitter." He remarks and Colin sighs. "Any who, I think I'm going to head off now. I want to have a shower before supper." He says after a few minutes.

"Weren't you working on your homework?" Neville asks as he takes his list, rolls it, and tucks it into his wide sleeve of his robe.

"Finished it last month." He pauses before explaining, "Funny thing, if you're willing to pay a bit of silver, you can get old homework plans from upperclassmen in Ravenclaw. The far-sighted members take careful notes of what assignments, what's on exams, and class lesson they got during their previous years of schooling to sell to younger students. Get enough of a range of them and you can have all your homework done for the whole year."

"Really? That's fairly cunning of them." Colin muses, empathizing the word cunning. "I don't suppose...?" Colin asks and Neville, too, looks interested in this.

"Depends if my shipment of vials shows up before Friday night. If it doesn't show... I'll let you know my price for the whole first year package this Saturday." He says and the two sigh, but likely figure its better then nothing.

- [T] -

The arrow nicks the dog size Acromantula on one of its legs. The spider jerks before collapsing like the first seventeen he's encountered within two hours of walking through the forest. Not that

he has much time to do anything as he quickly focuses in on another charging Acromantula coming after him.

This arrow enters into the underbelly when the horse size Acromantula leaps at him. Another five arrows and he's got a total of seven dead Acromantula varying from cat size to horse size spiders. He glances around the forest before putting the arrow back into the quiver hanging from his belt and then shouldering his bow.

Walking up to the largest spider, he takes out a few glass vials. He takes the stopper from the vial and kneels down to place the vial under a fang. He moves a index finger to the back of the fang and with a bit of magic, the venom flows out of the gland, through the fang, and into the vial.

Upon filling that one, the magic stops pumping the venom out and he puts the stopper back in before taking an empty one and resumes the milking from that fang. And once that gland was empty, he milks the next gland in the other fang.

Once the venom has been milked and he walks out to the butt of the spider while holding a simple polished rune covered stick that shall be covered in spider silk soon. He finds the spinnerets and holds the stick to them while placing his hand upon the slightly hairy back quarters of the dead Acromantula. A bit of magic and the glands begin to ooze towards the spinnerets and then through them out onto the waiting stick.

Slowly he rotates the stick around, drawing more of the silk out of the spinnerets. Magic keeps pushing the silk out of the gland until nothing more came out. With a sigh, he takes out a paper bag and covers the stick and its bundle of silk before putting it into the knapsack with an expansion charm upon it.

He repeated the process another six time before he decides to leave, he's pretty much filled his quota of venom gathering since he doesn't have more then nine empty vials left and since it seems that Acromantula like to swarm their target with others of its kind, he

would likely end up killing a number that he couldn't harvest from since he would be lacking empty vials to hold the venom. He had plenty of sticks to gather spider silk though, but then, they were easier to get then the unbreakable glass vials.

He didn't need to collect the arrows used to kill these Acromantula as they became ashes within seconds of coming into contact with their targeted species they were meant to kill.

He frowns as he feels an old scar hidden by his hair throb even though he is wearing his mental protection ring, something uncle Padfoot had gotten Colin and him when they turned nine. He hadn't thought to wear it until he started to get these odd aches coming from this hidden scar during defense class.

The ache subsides and he continues on to his yurt. *Maybe I should look into getting something stronger...* He muses as he glances at the jade stone ring of white gold. *More make something more superior.* He adds after a few seconds of thought.

"Wonder what he's doing out in the forest?" He wonders after arriving at his yurt. The six ward staffs that he set up wash over him before the yurt came into view.

"Whatever it is, it's going to be troublesome." He answers his own question as he reaches the door with a frown. He could only imagine what would drive that stuttering mess of a man out into the woods filled with Centaurs and Acromantula.

- [T] -

"Troll! Troll in the dungeon!" The supposed defense teacher shouts before adding, "Thought you should know."

And then the man collapses forward, onto his face. His eyes narrow at the fallen man. It hadn't been more then a week ago that he felt this man enter the forest and he seems to recall something about him being good with trolls.

"We should go!" He hears Neville say at his elbow as the mass of students are sent out of the Great Hall. He glances over at Neville and asks, "You trust me, don't you?"

Neville blinks before slowly nodding. "Good because I believe tonight, we'll be hunting a fraud." He informs Neville as he casts an illusion charm around them without using a wand and just whispering the spells since there were two of them.

As the students and other teachers leave, he slips a prototype upon Neville's hand. After a few minutes, the collapsed professor gets up with a smirk. "Better then I could hope for." The defense teacher muses without stuttering at all.

They wait until the man has left the Great Hall before following after. He takes his wand and casts a silencing charm upon their feet before they left the Great Hall altogether. They silently walked after the turban wearing man with about twenty feet between them.

They arrive at the third floor and witness the confrontation between Ex and the stuttering man. The three headed dog lunges towards the two men and without thinking, he silently stuns the defense professor and watches with a bit of horror as one of the heads bites the stunned man's head off.

His horror deepens as some kind of wraith exits out of the body and begins to drift towards Ex. His old scar throbs like nothing before but he grinds his teeth together as he takes out another prototype, only this one was meant to do something to ghosts, stun them he had hoped not that he had a chance to test it as he tosses it at the wraith and as it sails through it to land upon the floor, the little box suddenly explodes.

Ex and the wraith cry out in pain when the light touches them. The three headed dog doesn't pause and bites Ex upon the shoulder. The light dies and the wraith glares about before fading through the floor while Ex is shaken about until the arm comes right off of Ex.

He uses his wand and casts a powerful sleeping charm upon the canine. Neville charges forth to attend to Ex. He takes out the alarm coin and activates it before tossing it upon the ground. Seconds later, his dad and Padfoot arrive.

"Harry! You ok?" His dad asks, it seems that the illusion charm vanished when Neville broke from him.

"I'm kind of ok... I think I caused somebody to die tonight and another to be crippled for life." He says numbly and his father pulls him in and strokes his back while uncle Padfoot moves to stabilize Ex.

What happened when his other uncle and mother arrived became a blur as he somehow ended up tearing up. He dimly recalls his mother screeching at the arriving headmaster about something while comforting Neville, who sports blood upon his robes. He kind of recalls both Neville and him answering questions, particularly about what came out of the dead teacher's body and how it was driven off, although he doesn't know if he ever mentioned that he created that little box or that he stunned the defense professor...

All he became aware of was finding himself in the medical wing with Hermione to his left and Neville to his right. It also seems to be morning. He sits up and glances around in confusion before he recalls what happened and manages to vomit upon the floor instead upon the bed.

"Harry?" He hears Moony asks and he glances up to find his uncle sitting upon a chair at the end of his bed. He flushes while Moony smiles a sad knowing smile. It didn't take long before his uncle vanishes the vomit.

"Have some chocolate, Harry." Moony says, taking out what appears to be a box of M&Ms. "Thank you." He says in a raspy voice and he can still taste the vomit. Wordlessly, his uncle also motions to the water pitcher resting next to his bed.

He pours himself a glass of water and drinks it, it helps wash away the foul taste. "How is Ex... Professor Snape." He asks after eating three handfuls of the chocolate pieces.

"Going as well as to be expected. We managed to recover his arms and they're working to reconnect it. He won't be able to teach for a real long time but I'm sure that the student body will be happy to have a different teacher pick up the class." Uncle Moony says and then asks, "Ex?"

"Short for Ex-Corpse Eater." He admits shyly and his uncle chuckles softly, not wanting to wake the other two. "Why is Hermione here?" He asks after finishing the M&Ms. "She wasn't with us when we..." His jaw clutches down as the urge to vomit returns.

"The troll wasn't in the dungeon." His uncle sums up and he decides not to push it. "Why didn't Dumblies follow regulations? We weren't meant to leave the Great Hall. We were safer staying put behind its doors then not." He asks and his uncle's eyes flash.

"Really? Where did you learn that?" Moony asks and he answers, "It's in Hogwarts Emergency Protocols manual. You can find it on the same shelf as the book listing point earning of the current and previous years, the detention book, and on the thin book that contains the charter and the primary rules that the school was founded on. There's another book there detailing the state of Hogwarts wards but it's charmed locked so you can't read it."

"Are you sure you were sorted correctly? It sounds as though Ravenclaw would have suited you more." Uncle Moony muses with a smile and he snorts, before frowning as he realized that he didn't get a suitable answer concerning Hermione.

"I wanted to know what to expect during an emergency. I pointed Cold to said books too." He explains. "And what do you mean the troll wasn't in the dungeon? If it weren't, then why aren't there more students injured from the troll?" He asks.

"Hermione didn't attend the feast. It seems that some of your house-mates drove her to lock herself in the girls bathroom." Moony explains and he just ohs.

"I didn't know. I thought she was late because she was in the library. She does spends a lot of time in there and following Cold." He tells his uncle before adding, "She's a tab of a stickler for the rules and doesn't seem to know how to 'play' with others."

He hears Hermione roll over, confirming that she has been awake likely from the very beginning. He glances over to stare at her back for a few seconds. "At least you didn't see..." He couldn't finish it as what happened last night suddenly gets replayed within his mind. He swallows hard as he glances down at his hands, he knew logically that it was a good thing that the defense professor wasn't alive to be possessed by that wraith but it doesn't change the fact that he is the reason the man was dead and another maimed.

"What is hidden on that floor? Why is it there, Moony, in this school?" He finally asks after he hears Neville begin to wake.

"We don't know. The headmaster is being very tight lip about it." His uncle admits.

"Then involve the ICW! Whatever it is, it cause that stupid wraith to possess that teacher, thus endangering us, the students!" He exclaims, his self-pity turning into out rage at the idea that Dumblies was playing some game. One that had caused Neville and him to witness what they did last night.

"Dumblies is suppose to put our safety before all else! He didn't and because of that, somebody was killed, another crippled, and students traumatized!" He says and Moony nods in agreement.

"Sadly, Dumblies, as you call him, has a lot of political clot. He will likely receive a slap upon the wrists and only coming out a tiny bit tarnished." Moony explains and he knew his uncle was right.

"But the board of directors!" Hermione butts in and Neville softly snorts. "Shouldn't they be able to do something?" The muggle raised witch asks.

"I really don't want to think of who they would replace. There are ex-Corpse Eaters upon the board after all. Better the devil you know then the devil you don't." He informs Hermione firmly and the girl gives Moony a pleading look, begging for his uncle to say that wasn't so.

"For somebody who skips out on our political studies, you're very well informed." His uncle muses and he replies, "Cold doesn't put locking charms on his drawers. So it's not that hard to read through his notes and homework."

He glances over to find Hermione very pale and clearly ill looking. "But... this is Hogwarts! It's suppose to be..." Hermione trails off, it looks as though she's about to cry.

"Authority figures in the Wizarding world aren't like those in the muggle one, Ms Granger. They have no incentive to fix the corruption that rewarded them with their high ranking positions." His uncle explains in an apologetic tone. "The Wizengamot seats are typically inherit and has a lot to do concerning the selection of the Minster of Magic."

"This body is made up of pure-bloods I take it?" Hermione asks and he nods while Moony says, "Yes it is."

"But... but... but!" Hermione stutter out and he sighs. He really hated to break it to her but she really needs to hear it, if only to begin looking into researching this herself if only to provide him wrong.

"Whatever picture the professor painted for you and your family... It won't happen, Hermione. The pure-bloods are in decline so Hogwarts has become dependent upon muggle raised wizards and witches getting enrolled here. It's to the point where all promising muggled raised graduates automatically leave the UK, leave Europe

all together, to get promising jobs. Only those marrying into old families can expect to raise up from the typical jobs the muggle raised are forced into." He tells her.

"Like your mother." Hermione states as an example and he nods. "But that's discrimination!"

"Our world is filled with it." Neville replies. "And it'll remain like that until it breaks under it."

"You make it sound as if the Wizarding world is dying!" Hermione exclaims and he grins. "Here in the UK? Most definitely." Neville says with a sigh.

"Then why isn't anyone doing anything?" Hermione asks and Moony replies, "Because most wizards and witches prefer to do what's easy instead of what's right."

Silence hangs in the room until the doors open and the rest of his family, with the exception of Colin, comes to visit him and Neville. Hermione returns to laying down upon the bed, more then likely brooding over what she has heard.

- [T] -

"How did I get involve in this again?" Hermione wonders as they walk on top of the snow. He managed to convince his two uncles to part, temporarily, with their ice skimmers so that Neville and Hermione can join him on finding the cave in which the Acromantula spend the winter in.

"Cause you followed Neville, who was following my brother." Colin explains. He really didn't know how Colin discovered his plans but it seems that for once, Colin wasn't going to ruin them by telling an adult.

"And we're..." "Here to..." "Supervise!" The Weasley twins say while riding upon brooms.

"I thought it was because of the money you can get from helping to harvest Acromantula venom." Neville pipes in, his best friend is carrying two wooden spears, each tipped with flint and covered in Acromantula killing runes. Hermione carries another while Cold has his spare bow and quiver of Acromantula killing arrows. The older twins didn't bring anything other then larger packs, their own empty vials, wands, and the brooms.

"Hey look! Unicorns!" He says as he pauses to watch as a small family unit walk through the meadow to his far right. They seemingly appearing out of nowhere and doesn't seem to mind the party of students trailing through the forest. The others pause to watch the herd, he hears Hermione sighing at the sight.

They resume trekking through the forest, he uses his wand to help locate the nest. It was around noon did they finally locate a cave entrance. He touches the block to find that the webbing is firm, very firm.

"Trap door spiders do something similar." Hermione says and he nods while studying the 'cork'. "What now?" The only witch in the party asks.

"We burn a good size hole into it. It should be made up of webbing, branches, and leaves." He muses. "Forge, Gred? You think you can handle this?" He asks the twins hovering over the snow covered ground.

"But of course!" The two say at the same time. He moves back to give the pair more room. Within seconds a good size hole is made and he takes out a few muggle flares, breaking them before tossing them into the hole.

He doesn't hear anything from within the cave in regards to the flares. He moves forward after readying his bow and an arrow. His ice skimmers clicking upon the rocky floor after he drops about four feet down from the hole.

"Don't see any." He says to the group as he rummages through his pack for one of those hovering Fae lights, a spare from when he was setting up his yurt. The fist size crystal slowly comes to life as the rest of the party enters into the cave.

Once fully lit, the Fae light takes to hovering above his head. "Fae light. Flare gave me a few extra ones when he gifted that yurt to me." He explains on seeing the others looks towards the light.

"I didn't know he could fashion them." Colin muses and he gives his twin a bemused grin. "You'd be surprise at what Flare can do."

"Who's Flare?" Hermione asks and Neville replies, "Flare is the house elf the Potters hired a few weeks after what happened that one Halloween. I think muggles call them Brownies."

He takes point and glances at the Weasley twins. "Just stay on those brooms, gentlemen. Carrying those brooms will only cause you to be clumsy." He informs them and they get back onto the brooms.

They slowly walk through the cave, Neville and Colin walk a bit behind him and to either side of him, causing a V like formation to form. They come upon a chasm that seems to feature a firm dome of webbing. It takes him a few seconds to realize that there were Acromantula upon the dome.

"We need to build a blind so that when they swarm, they don't get us from above or from the sides." He says after considering the best way to handle this. "They haven't been hibernating long so they would be easy to wake as soon as an alarm rings out." He adds.

"You act like this is an everyday occurrence for you." Hermione says dryly and he replies, "No, I've just been reading hunters journals, be they muggle or otherwise."

He takes out a box and after setting it down, taps his wand to activate the enlarging charms. Within seconds, it has become glued to one side of the wall and expands a good ten feet wide and six feet

in height. There are arrow slits along the sides and the runes of shielding slowly begin to glow as he touches the blind.

It takes a few seconds before a door opens to allow them in. "Sweet!" The Weasley twins sum up as they enter. Once everyone else was in it, he enters it and the door closes behind him.

He waits as everyone gets as comfortable as they can, Neville offering his second spear to one of the twins, Fred he believes. "I didn't know you were profound with runes." Colin muses and he shrugs.

"Why else do you think I don't require glasses like you do?" He points out and Colin looks startled. He holds up his left wrist that has all of his enchanted leather bracelets upon it. "Created a scheme to correct it. I even made one to improve your night vision, although it does cause your eyes to be a little too light sensitive though."

"Wick!" "Impressive." Seems to be the general census.

"We're so going to have a long talk about what other innovations you've created, brother." Colin says as he takes a position at the front.

"Just as long as we have it outside of Hogwarts, I'll be happy to have it. I also have a few extra mind protecting bracelets that I should give you guys before we're done with this adventure." He says before adding, "And no taking them apart to discover the rune schematic either." He directs this towards the twins.

"Wouldn't..." "Dream..." "Of it!" The two red heads say with grins. He just sighs and watches as the others take up positions, although George doesn't really have anything other then his wand to use as a weapon.

He aims high and watches as the arrow soars towards the middle of the massive collection of spiders. A screech is heard and its followed

by clicking and hissing. As predicted, the mass of spiders wake and begin to swarm all over the place, looking for the source of the arrow.

He fires three arrows at three massive draft horse size spiders, they died with a screech. He figured that its their size that has allowed them to make death knells. It wasn't long before the blind is covered in spiders and the others get their chance to kill the Acromantula.

They spent hours within the protective box with only spider blood being able to enter into the box through the arrow slits. The spiders do try and move the box but it's firmly planted in the ground and to the wall. Death threats also stream from the spiders and he even gets a chance to kill the likely father of all of the spiders.

During brief pauses, he would use his wand to check and see if there were still Acromantula. It wasn't until close to midnight that there wasn't a living one within the space beyond the blind. They nap a bit for a few hours before leaving the box.

"This is going to take a while." He muses as he glances around the thick lay of dead spiders. None of the others argued and thus, they started upon their gruesome task of gathering venom and gathering their silk from their spinnerets.

He doubts they killed the whole population of these magical spiders, just culled the larger, more aggressive members of the colony. *It'll take a few years before they are exterminated. Still can't believe Hagrid was allowed to let loose the first pair of Acromantula in this forest, especially so close to the only totally wizard town in the UK.*

He's thankful for the general anti-poison potions they brought with them as more then a few other ended up getting nicked and having some venom entering into their systems. But then, what could he expect? They were all worn out from having so much adrenaline pumping through them for over ten hours, thus they weren't as careful as they could be since their arms would sometimes shake or their fingers cram up on them.

- [T] -

"I need to give you a nickname." He informs Hermione as they wait for the train to arrive to take them home. They were fairly much alone since his elder brother is currently in the middle of his fans, Neville is talking 'shop' with some Hufflepuffs about plants, and the twins weren't here since their parents and sister left to visit their brother Charlie, the dragon handler.

"I'm not getting a say in this, do I?" The girl asks and he snorts. "Thought so." Hermione sighs.

"Hmmm, Wei got a ring to it. Then again so does Farsiris." He says, grinning as Hermione flushes. "But you're as fiery enough to go by Kaida but then with the spiders... Kainda would be so much more descriptive."

"Kyden." He decides after a few minutes. "It follows my own nickname since both of our names start with H. It means Narrow little fire, which fits since you can be so narrow minded and very passionate too."

"Do this means for friends whom's names begin with C you'll be sticking to C nicknames and for M you'll be looking for nicknames beginning with L." Hermione sums up and he shrugs. The train whistles loudly and suddenly out of the snow storm, the train can be seen as it comes down the track.

"My lade?" He says with a wide smirk as he waves Hermione forward. Hermione huffs softly, he couldn't see her face cause of the scarf but he's certain that she's blushing slightly as she moves to step up onto the steps.

I wonder what her reaction will be when she discovers that for her Christmas gift, I set up an Inheritance test? He wonders, his mother had gone through one when he was seven and it turned out have a great-grandmother who was a Squib from an half-blood family who was killed during the 70s.

Which means that his mother brought in a reasonable size vault to be added to the Potter fortune, no property since that had been liquidated by the Ministry. He's not sure why his mom even went through with the test but he's sure she had her reasons, even if she hasn't revealed them.

- [T] -

"How did you time in that room go?" Colin asks him as he walks into their shared hotel room. He sighs as he flops down upon his bed after walking to it.

"Tiring." He replies and Colin sighs. "But I won the trust of two. Managed to get my head to fully transform before I left the room. It's not your four, but I'm satisfied with them."

"Must be some two." His brother muses and he gives his brother a wide grin. "They are, oh boy, they are." He tells his brother.

"Better then a jackal or a owl or a seal or even a snow leopard?" Colin asks and he props himself up upon his elbows. He studies his brother for a few seconds.

"How does a hyena and one of the North American breeds of dimar(search DeviantArt for images) sound?" He asks his brother and Colin's eyes bug out when he mentioned the dimar then the hyena. "Not bad, eh? One normal form with the second being a magical one."

"How big a dimar? A Central? Or an East Coast?" Colin asks, listing the two of the smaller types of Northern dimar,they stand about a foot at the shoulder and is two feet from the tip of the muzzle to the butt.

"West Coast one." He says, the West Coast type dimars stood three and half foot to the shoulder and length of five foot long to the base of the butt instead of the tail tip. The dimars could be considered

fuzzy dragons of the muggle type since they had six limbs, two were wings and the other four are legs.

Dimars were an odd intelligent, naturally telepathic species that can also learn to speak human languages. They also rarely interact with humans, thus they don't really know much about the race as a whole. The dimar species range all over the Americas with the Northern breeds sporting fur all year round and the Southern breeds lose their fur during certain parts of the year and growing scales for that part of the year. The mountain regions of the Americas sport dimar that stand at least six feet at the shoulder and eleven feet to the butt.

"You get all the luck." Colin summarizes and he sighs. "You have four forms that you can show off, I only got one that can be publicly shown. You have a wider selection to chose your 'official' Animagus form from, I don't. I have to go with the hyena." He points out and his brother just rolls his eyes.

"I'm going with the owl." Colin admits. "But still, a dimar? Those creatures are just so interest! Nobody knows why they have those second 'wings' so close to their butts. Or why they're color is so diverse even within their typical breed! Their horn styles, some having those branches while others sport slender twisting horns or ram ones..." His brother tries off and he sighs, recalling what that 'spirit' dimar had said.

"We have been watching you since your birthday. We witness your ability to keep secrets, watched as you prove your ability to do what's needed instead of freezing up or begin to study the situation and see how you can benefit from it. You proved your ability to still empathize with others even when you yourself weren't emotionally well." The dimar tells him. "We have need of an ambassador in the coming times."

He looks away from his brother, he didn't really know what to feel concerning that bit of information as it pretty much told him that all of his attempts to slip pass the detection of others has failed. He

considers himself to be a very private individual, after all, and is very selective about who he lets close to him, although sometimes, those people just insert themselves there.

He trusts Neville more then he trusts Colin, but then, it's likely because people overlook his friend most of the time, not bothering to look beyond the timid demeanor and flimsy spell casting. He contributes Neville's shyness and general nervousness towards people from his family continuously outrageous attempts at bring out his friend's magic. Their actions screamed 'better dead then a Squib!'

Next, he trusted his brother a tad more then he trusted Hermione since Hermione is still new and is still struggling over her need of approval from people in authority. The girl is socially awkward, but then, her book smarts likely, at first, drove kids away and in time, her growing authoritativeness, commonly known as bossiness, drove them further away. And so the cycle developed, without friends to hang out with, Hermione spent more time reading books and the knowledge learned from those books drove a wedge between Hermione and kids her age, and repeat. In the end, Hermione wasn't a genius, just very well read.

The Weasley twins... Well, he's known them, again, longer then Hermione, but they had a tendency to use everything they know to create pranks. They have a flare for it, he admits, and he could see why they would want to go into business selling said prank items too. He just didn't want the stuff he developed to fall into hands of strangers and he's sure that will happen if he shares his research notes with the older set of twins.

So Hermione and the twins were, for now, equal concerning the trust he plans to give them.

I wonder where I would place Flare? He wonders as he allows himself to rest upon his bed, upon his back, staring up at the ceiling.

- [T] -

"I don't see why anyone even tries to study for their OWLs and their NEWTs." He says to Neville while skipping flat stones across the flat surface of the lake. "Both Cold and I could take them now and pass fairly well." He muses.

"Why don't you?" Neville asks as their stones finally sink into the lake. "I know you'd ace your rune tests." Neville adds.

"Dad and mom seem to be of the opinion that we're safer being minors. For now, anyway." He explains. "No that they don't have the paperwork done up for us to become adults if anything happens to them and our uncles."

"How safely put away are these papers?" Neville asks and he replies, "Well, let's just say that Cold and I are citizens of Canada, the US, Mexico, Japan, and for some odd reason, Ireland. Although Cold is pretty much an honorary citizens of the rest of the countries in the world. It's amazing how popular he is outside of the UK. It's likely one of the reasons we've been able to purchase various items and travel so much."

"Just how many languages do you speak?" Neville asks as they set sailing another stone each. "Far too many." He answers. "I read more languages then what I speak though, Cold's the same." He adds.

Neville whistles, clearly impressed. He didn't see why, those language bundles were damn expensive and causes massive headaches. It's amazing what the rest of the world uses magic for, it's one of the reasons he kind of hopes that his parents will pull them out of school. The UK and Europe at large were like country bums compared to the magical communities of technological magics of Japan and magic empowered floating cities of New Zealand.

He wonders which of the other countries will be the first to colonize the Moon and Mars through magic. "There are extra-ordinary wonders beyond Europe, Leander. Magic is used in different ways then what they teach here at Hogwarts and at its sister schools." He

says. "There are people out there more powerful then Dumblies who's minds are sharper, more brilliant in though their age is over the upper-levels you find in the UK. There are times when I wonder why we keep returning to Britain after vacationing in those countries. Seems so wasteful since most of what we bring back would likely be blacklisted simply because they haven't been 'tested' here in the UK and in Europe."

"How come vacationing families or wandering wizards don't report such things?" Neville asks and he snorts as he gets ready to throw another stone.

"They don't have any respect for European magi, Leander since they won't get pass the Victorian era and seem so happy to mucking around in their ignorance." He explains. "And it's not as though European magi are expecting anything but a similar state of what they got at home. The other countries set aside certain place for European magi to visit, shepherding them to keep them from visiting the real hot spots of their country and what they're really capable of. It was a major hassle for our parents and uncles to earn the trust of one of those countries." He continues.

"But earn the trust of one and you, get trail runs in the others." He adds. "Get minimum of four countries to vouch for you and you get a really nifty passport and the option of becoming a citizen so you have a place for political refuge if things don't work out too well back home." He says.

"Sounds like a lot of work, Kanga." Neville remarks and he smiles a bit. "You don't give trust, Leander, you earn it." He informs his friend.

"You must trust me a great deal then." Neville admits and he flashes his best friend a smile. "I do, I really do. You're a great guy, it's just that nobody is willing to look pass your timidness or your apparent clumsiness to find that out." He says.

"You're a great guy too, Kanga." Neville offers with a slightly flushed face. He hums thoughtfully.

"I wonder what our coming summer will bring..." He muses after they run out of stone and begin to transfigure tiny pebbles into appropriate skipping stones.

"Only time will tell, Kanga. Only time will tell."

End of First Year - End of the Story. . . Don't Know

Captain Naruto: Bleach

I don't own Bleach or Naruto!

"Excuse me..." Naruto trails off as he enters a room filled with seven people. They were all wearing white jackets over black kimonos(although one of the men seems to favor pink coat), range from various ages, genders, and species, since there seems to be some kind of dog man sitting behind the long desk.

"Congratulations! Pick a number and you will be promoted to captain." The very stressed out old man with a cane says while looking up at the blond with craziness shining in his eyes. Those eye promise pain, lots and lots of pain if he doesn't do as asked.

"Seven?" He blurts out, really confused as to what's going on. Naruto had only entered into this room cause he was directed here by people wearing black kimonos.

Within seconds a white jacket is tossed his way while the elderly man saying, "Congratulation of being promoted to captain of the fifth division, boy. I'm sure you'll do a splendid job! That or you'll have a splendid execution."

The majority of the six of the seven congratulate Naruto on his promotion while the young blond ninja just stands stiffly holding the white jacket. "What just happened?" The blond genin wonders out loud to himself within an empty room.

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Before Naruto entered . . .

"At this rate, I'm willing to promote the next one who walks through that door and be done with it." Growls captain of the first division, Genryusai Yamamoto while rubbing his temples. This day had not

gone as well as he had expected as they interviewed various candidates to fill the three empty slot of captain.

"You know, we can always execute them if they don't preform suitably." The second division captain Soifon points out.

It really shows how bad the day had gone when neither captain Hitsugaya or captain Kyoraku as the two either try and counter that using reason or cries about such a waste of beauty dying so young as the pink wearing captain continues to envision a young pretty woman getting promoted.

"Get them to pick a number to see which division they become captain of." Captain Unohana of fourth suggests dully. It seems she has yet to recover enough energy from the last fight that broke out within the room. She was a doctor after all, she saw it as her duty to heal everyone before they were none too easily shoved out of the room.

"Fine." The oldest captain states and so they waited about eight minutes before some scrawny teen enters wearing bright orange saying, "Excuse me..."

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With Naruto . . .

"So you don't possess a Zanpakuto? You also don't seem to be a student from the academy..." The man who introduced himself as sixth seat officier Daiki. "How in the hell did you even get pass the gate guardians?" The pony tail wearing man wonders.

"I showed up in the roof, I got down and was directed to that room after witnessing this huge group of arguing people walk out." Naruto explains. "That's the last time I asks Kakashi to demonstrate how powerful his Sharingan eye is..." The blond grumbles from behind the captain desk.

Naruto's wearing the white jacket while watching Daiki pace before the desk. It's clear that the man is really frustrated about his lack of sword, kimono, and not being dead. And so as Daiki paces, he finds himself slowly taking in his office.

I wonder where all the paper work is... I mean, being the boss equals paper work. Does this mean I won't have to deal with that? That would be so.., COOL! The blond thinks with a grin.

"Do you think I can fit a couch in here?" He asks Daiki as Naruto begins to think of items he wouldn't mind adding to his office. "A bit of color wouldn't hurt in here either..." Naruto muses as he notices the lack of pictures that show previous holders of this office.

"Unless you manage to not just summon your Zanpakuto within an hour, miraculously learn its name within minutes, and then master both Shikai and Bankai by the official ceremony naming you captain, I really don't see you keeping your post!" Daiki snaps and Naruto raises a minor eyebrow at that.

"I'll have you know I mastered an S-rank jutsu within hours! How hard can all that be?" The blond Jinchuriki says and the Soul Reaper gives him a bland look while standing still.

"You are an idiot." Naruto's new subordinate remarks.

"Yea, yea, yea, I've heard that all before." The blond retorts, waving the insult away. "Now then, tell me how do I summon this sword so I can get started on that last bit."

Daiki stares at the blond teenager for a few minutes before picking a book off of a book shelf, dropping it upon the desk and walking out. "Geeze, some subordinate." Naruto mutters as he picks up the book, called Hypothetical Theories of The Zanpakuto, and opens the cover to begin reading it.

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Naruto keeps shouldering the twin shoulder straps that holds the sheath of his five and a half long with two foot wide flat bladed Zanpakuto, who's name is Aozora no Kemono(Beast of the Blue Sky), the hilt guard seems to be chain links circling it. Aozora, Naruto's nickname for his Zanpakuto, would be scraping along the ground if it weren't for the blond reversing the tree climbing exercise to hold the huge sword to his back.

The blond walks off the platform now that the ceremony was over and done with. Naruto felt as though his speech went over fairly good considering it was his first and that he's never done something like that before. Aozora had helped the blond come up with it a few hours before the ceremony was to begin.

The crowd that had gathered for the ceremony seemed to have mixed reactions to the blond's appointment.

"I can't believe they picked that guy over one of us" Lieutenant Renji grumbles as the young blond new captain walks down the steps while wearing an huge Zanpakuto that could rival Ichigo's own before it became stuck in its release state. "I've never met him before! How hard would be to miss somebody that small with such a huge Zanpakuto? And how good can a captain named 'fishcake' be?"

"Was he even a Soul Reaper before becoming a captain?" Lieutenant Rangiku wonders. "They never did mention which division he belong too before his promotion either. Maybe we was an academy student?"

"Maybe he's a spy? Or an avenger like what's his name? The one who became captain of third division." Renji muses.

"He won't last the month." Izuru declares and the other two nod in agreement.

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Two Months Later . . .

"Weren't you... I mean, if your here then who's...?" Naruto glances over to a red head who's a lieutenant to this really, really snobby guy with hair things.

Naruto pauses his hand holding chop sticks over his bowl of ramen to look over at the guy. "Huh? Oh! I usually leave a few clones back at the office whenever I leave for lunch or when I need to stretch my legs." The blond says before continuing to eat his sixth ramen.

"Is that even possible? Or legal?" Renji wonders and Naruto shrugs. "Wouldn't know, haven't been in office long." The blond Jinchuriki answers after swallowing the noodles within his mouth.

"Hey, that reminds me, where's my own lieutenant? I've met with pretty much all of my seated officers but her and all anyone is willing to tell me is that she is on sick leave. I even had a clone check through the other files and Momo has been on sick leave for over six months." Naruto says to Renji after the lieutenant of sixth division sits down.

"What does she have? Will she recover from it or should I start looking for a replacement?" The blond asks Renji.

The red head shifts a bit, this particular topic wasn't something he felt comfortable with. *What to say... What to say...* Renji thinks while drinking his newly arrived drink, eyeing the bowls that were neatly stacked to the blond captain's left.

"Lieutenant Momo had a minor metal break down after the previous captain became a traitor." Renji finally informs the young captain. "She's still having problems accepting that he's gone." The red head adds.

"I take it nobody told her that he's been replaced?" Naruto asks with a slight frown. The young Jinchuriki hadn't lived in the Soul Society for long but he found they seem to be faintly detached from their

emotions. Heck, there seems to be a small number of them that make Sasuke look almost well adjusted.

Must be a lot of denial going on if she's still not over it. Naruto muses while Renji simply drinks his drink. "She's not going to try and kill me when she finds out, right? I mean, if she's still a whack job now, after six months of therapy, she would give it a try, right?" The blond muses while the red head thinks it over.

Silence just hangs between them and Naruto sighs. *Ok... That's such a huge reassurance, isn't it?* The ex-prankster muses.

"Hey! Guess what? I found this bag of goodies by this shop and I thought we'd do something with them, Naru-chan!" It wasn't long before a pink haired child is clinging to Naruto's neck. The bag is pressed up against Naruto's back.

"What's in the bag, Chi-chan?" Naruto asks as he helps Yachiru onto the free stool to his left. The blond didn't bother to ask the child lieutenant if the bag belonged to somebody by the door, which could be why Yachiru likes the Jinchuriki captain so much as Naruto doesn't seem overly upset over Yachiru's idea of 'borrowing' things from people.

"I see you've already met Lieutenant Yachiru." Renji says dryly while the pink haired lieutenant begins to dig through the bag. The blond haired captain watches as three jars of black ink are set upon the counter before what appears to be rubber gloves, rolls of tape, and paper clips.

"I think I got an idea of how best to use this stuff." Naruto says to Yachiru with his foxy grin. *After all, these guys have loads of security holes and better harmless pranks reveal them so they can be fix then something disastrous points them out.* The blond captain rationalizes, it really helps that as long as he sends out memos about beware of pranks, it pretty much seems to cover his ass as all divisions have been warned, weekly, of on going pranks.

Renji watches as the blond captain and pink lieutenant vanish after the captain absently slaps a few coins upon the counter. "I wonder who's corrupting who between them?" The red haired lieutenant wonders out loud.

Then it dawns on Renji and he spits out his drink as he exclaims out loud, "Oh, sh#t! No wonder nobody ever linked him to those pranks! But neither of them match the description of the culprits!"

And as lieutenant Renji tries to think how captain Uzumaki and lieutenant Yachiru are connected to the series of pranks going on throughout the Soul Society with a pair of adults seen doing preforming said pranks, the lieutenant finds himself drinking a lot of sake. It wasn't long before Renji found other things to ponder instead of the pair of ninja elves pranking the Soul Society.

The pair of pranksters appear to be adults, typically in their twenties and their genders were undetermined. It is known that one of the adults sports royal purple hair, red eyes, and practically dark red colored skin. The second sports spring green hair, brown eyes, and lightly tanned skin. The two sport elven ears, don't sport any weapons, and prefer to wear classic black ninja attire with a part that covers their lower part of their faces. Their calling card seems to be a picture of a circle with a wavy thick line through it, like a bandit mask.

All anyone knows is that they began pulling their pranks three days after the latest captain's ceremony and that there's a weekly memo sent out reminding people to be on their guard for the pairs' dastardly pranks.

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Captain Naruto meets lieutenant Yachiru . . .

"You know, that's way too visible and thus anyone but the really distracted will not fall for that simple trap." The blond captain known as Naruto Uzumaki remarks after watching a pink haired child in a

Soul Reaper uniform setting up a simple door prank involving a board and a bucket filled with something unpleasant.

Lieutenant of the eleventh division blinks while looking at the young captain. Yachiru knew he was a captain cause of the jacket, although the young pink haired Soul Reaper couldn't place where she met him before. "How would you set this up, Whisker?" She asks the blond, caught flat footed by the fact that the blond wasn't reacting like most people who have caught her setting up something like this.

Naruto gives pinkie his trademark grin and as the youngest captain of the Soul Society begins to explain how he'd set it up, the beginnings of a rather odd legend begins to bloom.

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Twenty-Eight Days Since Kakashi's Banishing - In Hidden Leaf . . .

"I can't believe it took a week to even prepare this scroll." Tsunade, the current Hokage, mutters. "Let's get this over with."

The other participants of the summoning step up to the summoning diagram that Jiraiya had created. Kakashi wasn't present to help as the man is out on a mission guarding a very 'valuable' spring in Wind Country about a week after they discovered that the maverick blond genin wasn't anywhere in Fire Country. Nor were the rest of the members of team seven sent with the silver hair jonin, just put to work to help rebuild Hidden Leaf from the recent invasion.

Beyond Tsunade and Jiraiya, there were seven jonin aiding in summoning Naruto Uzumaki from where ever it was that Kakashi had banished him. As the final hand sign has been form and chakra from the nine pours into the summoning diagram while the scroll Tsunade had been holding is slammed down upon the ground.

With a slight wet pop, a fifteen year old Naruto wearing what appears to be a black kimono and jacket combo and sporting a rather large sword upon his back appears at the center of the summoning

diagram. The blond captain glances around the chamber to find at least two very familiar faces.

"Yo!" The blond says with a grin. "It's been a while, eh? I can't believe how young you both still look fairly good considering its been close to thirty years since I last laid eyes on either of ya." The captain Jinchuriki says glancing between Tsunade and Jiraiya.

"Brat! It's barely been a month since that incident!" Tsunade snaps upon recovering a bit from the shock of the changes her favorite genin has gone through. "And where's your headband?" The elderly blond asks.

"Eh? Really? That's kind of odd cause I just celebrated my twenty-eight year as captain of the fifth division... Got a pretty nice pair of bookends as a gift during that party too." The young Fourth look a like muses, the tan that Naruto sports makes it hard to spy the whisker marks upon either cheek while holding his chin thoughtfully.

"Who in their right minds would put in in command of a group of people, let alone a division?" Tsunade asks while Jiraiya seems to be sporting a calculating look and the rest of the jonin privately agreeing with their Hokage.

"Well... To be truthful, I kind of got the position as a fluke as none of the previous candidates behaved well enough to earn it. Heck, I hadn't even been in the Soul Society for long and I was given the position as soon as I entered the room. Heck, they didn't even seem to care that I wasn't a member of their forces, they asked me something, I answered, and I got the position." Naruto admits, recalling his first day within the Soul Society.

"Although they did threaten that if I didn't do a good job, I would be splendidly executed. Must be doing something right, cause I haven't yet, eh?" Naruto adds with a grin.

About half a second later, twin wet pops occur, signaling the arrival of lieutenant Yachiru and lieutenant Nemu. "Naru-chan! Are you

alright?" Yachiru asks while lieutenant Nemu studies the blond captain for a few seconds before eyeing the group of nine.

"I'm fine Chi-chan!" Naruto says as Yachiru tackles him a bit. "Nice to see you, lieutenant Nemu."

"My apologies, captain Uzumaki for our delay. One of us kept going the wrong way." Lieutenant Nemu states. "Shall I take care of them? I believe that is the saying I am looking for."

"I appreciate the sentiment but please don't. I'm pretty sure I know why they summoned me." The blond Jinchuriki explains, not that it causes the tension among the jonin to subside, especially considering the way the non-pink haired girl eyes them, those eyes were very emotionless.

"Lieutenant Nemu, lieutenant Yachiru, met the fifth Hokage Tsunade Senji and Jiraiya. Tsunade, Jiraiya met lieutenant Nemu of twelfth division and lieutenant Yachiru of eleventh division." Naruto introduces the four.

"How about them? Aren't you going to introduce them?" Yachiru asks the blond, who replies, "Well, for starters, I don't think I ever got introduced to them. I was only a genin for about six months before I ended up becoming the captain of fifth division."

"So this is your home dimension." Lieutenant Nemu states, it wasn't a question as such but Naruto nods while Yachiru says excitedly, "So you'll get to give me that tour of your old home after all!"

"I could, couldn't I?" Naruto muses as he regards his younger looking friend.

I Shall End it Here

Wandering Leaf 2: Naruto

I don't own **Naruto** or **Pern**

Thank you Yuuki. He thinks to the little brown, scratching the strange beast's eyebrow. Yuuki hums softly with half closed eyes, the bell the brown had snatched for him is in his other hand.

Suddenly the alarm rings out, startling Yuuki and him. The little brown colored flier lets out a squawk while the red and yellow swirl rapidly about within Yuuki's eyes. Yuuki takes to the air, allowing him to get off of his branch. He drops to the ground and sprints towards the three logs while Yuuki follows after instead of popping to the site.

He arrives to find Kakashi waiting for him. He manages to display his bell and the silver haired man checks his belt before sighing and studying pinkie and broody. He sits on one of the logs, Yuuki comes gliding towards him and landing upon his left shoulder.

"What?" He asks the three as they continue to stare at him. "Yea, Yuuki flies, why else would he have wings? And, yea, he's a he." He adds, those labs had check to make sure for him on that one technological utopia. He didn't have a copy of their findings concerning his little friend, but he's sure that if he asked, he could review it.

He hadn't spent all that time in their libraries for nothing after all. He might not know as much as those that attend those schools upon that world but he tries to at least have a general understanding of every subject they sport. He's pretty sure that the device that he uses to travel from world to world could have been created upon that particular world if not for the fact that he couldn't find any reports of them making contact with another dimension; the most he found had to with some probes exploring the nearest star systems or experiments on terraforming experiments being carried out on a few

worlds that were just starting to cradle life or whom's atmosphere was decaying.

Finally the tension is broken when Kakashi pounces upon Sasuke and ties broody to the second log, causing Yuuki chirp in surprise. He feels his little friend relax, it seems that Yuuki isn't fond of the Uchiha. He just watches as Sakura exclaims at this particular action, demanding that the jonin untie broody, which causes Yuuki to tense up once more while Yuuki makes scolding sounds and fans out his wings.

"Could you please control yourself? You're setting Yuuki off. He reacts most strongly to the emotions of others." He states at Sakura while trying to calm Yuuki down and succeeds in stopping his verbalization. He gathers the small creature in his arms, trying to get Yuuki to perch upon his shoulders as Sasuke tries to struggle out of the ropes that bind him to the log.

"Well, you all... failed!" Kakashi says and this so-called team-mate's reaction cause Yuuki to squawk, thus causing him to reinforce calm, smoothing feelings within Yuuki's mind, trying to counter whatever emotions the other two were experiencing. Kakashi seems to linger a look at him but he just rolls his eyes.

"But... but... What about Naruto? He got a bell, don't that mean he passed?" Sakura asks, clearly grasping at straws if she's involving him in her argument.

"Oh please, like I really expected to be placed upon a genin team when my entire generation has been told to have nothing to do with me. Genin teams are expected to have some teamwork skills and cause of their parents and pretty much ever adult hates me, they pick up on it and mimic their treatment of me, which is worst then dirt." He says, noticing how Kakashi winces slightly. "Which is why I already had the Third sing this!" He adds and takes out a slightly worn scroll.

"The old man and me made a deal when I failed my first time. This document here allows me to by pass as it places me in the list of reserves automatically upon graduation. Not sure if the old man recalls our deal or not..." He muses, not that it matters as he's got plenty of copies of this scroll.

"May I?" Kakashi asks and he tosses it to the man. Broody seems to recover from his shock, within seconds, Sasuke scowls and glares in his direction.

"How did a Dobe like get the Hokage to sign something like that?" Broody asks and he sends a bemused look towards the other boy, one that says, 'like I'd tell you.' This causes the Uchiha to narrow his eyes at him before glancing away.

"This seems to be in order." Kakashi admits and the jonin begins to re-roll the scroll. "You know this means you could have just by passed this exercise." The man adds.

"I could but, well, to be truthful, I was hoping to end up with some other kids, like Hinata or Shikamaru since they seem rather open minded to getting to know me as a person then just follow along with other people's views concerning me. Just ill luck that I got paired with these two narrow minded brats who can't seem to see beyond their noses." He explains as he catches the scroll.

Sakura seems to chose that time to remind everyone that she's there by shouting, "Naruto you... you baka!" Yuuki let's out a surprised cry while Sakura charges at him but as she tries to leap to punch him, falls forward and bangs her head upon the log, falling onto her back in a daze.

"She was never good at the practical." He says to Kakashi. "She likely skipped out on dinner last night too for that 'diet' of her's." He scoffs, he didn't see why any of their female counter parts would diet when just training beyond the academy would help keep themselves in good shape.

Kakashi seems to sigh and shake his head. "Well, congratulations upon being on the reserve list then, Naruto. The bentos are over by the monument stone there. Just cut Sasuke loose after you've eaten one." The jonin says and then poofs away, leaving Yuuki and him alone with broody and Pinkie.

"So... you want the second one, Yuuki?" He asks the little brown as he stands up. Yuuki's eyes begin to whirl a bit and he feels Yuuki grow a bit hungry, he just chuckles before leap frogging upon the other two logs to get to the bentos.

After all, if pinkie doesn't care about her own well being, why the heck should he?

"How come you are still a genin when Saskue-kun isn't?" Ino demands as he gets ready to throw a kunai at this falling leaf. He glances at his fellow genin and is very glad that Yuuki is resting back at his apartment since he just knew the sensitive brown flier would be reacting to Ino's annoyance and likely 'righteous' anger.

"Haven't you spoken with Sakrua about this? I mean, she was right there when I explained it all." He says, pocketing the kunai he is holding. "I get why you wouldn't ask Sasuke, it's a very sore subject for him after all. It wasn't as though fighting me would have allowed him to keep the rank, but I'm sure it would have help smooth his battered ego." He adds as he turns towards the fuming blond girl.

He spots a few of the others who graduated walking out onto the meadow where he's killing time by practicing his aim. He was just trying to decide on how to celebrate him pulling a fast one on the whole village by finding a way around their block on him becoming a genin. *I wonder what kind of rumors they heard concerning my pass.*

"You haven't answered the question!" The mind walker snaps at him. He glances over at the other blond, noting the placement of her hands upon her hips. He gives the fan girl a bemused look.

"I really don't see how this is any of your business, Ino. It's something the old man and I set up back when I first failed to pass the genin exam." He informs Ino after returning his attention to her. "So, please, don't bug me endlessly about it."

With that said, he turns to greet the incoming group. He did wonder if Ino will let it die, but figures that it doesn't matter since come evening, Yuuki and him will be spending time in another dimension. He still had a lot of jutsus to learn and to prefect, he hadn't spent any real time reading his newly acquired ninja library.

It wasn't as though he had any real need to read all of it before the secret, second genin exam. Not with that deal the old man and him made. After all, those pranks he pulled after failing that one time still seem to linger about the villages. The hot springs are finally open during the evening now that they found that hidden tunnel that had been loaded with a hundred and seven-one unused stink bombs connected to a timer.

Still not sure if giving up on pulling pranks was worth getting automatically onto the reserve list upon become a genin... Ah well, time will tell. He thinks as the other five return his greeting. *Might be a good idea to spend more then five or six days in Hidden Leaf between spending a few decades in another dimension...* He adds, it always feels surreal being back in Hidden Leaf after spending so much time else where.

With Yuuki perched upon his shoulder, he begins to walk through the jungle with the sun slowly breaking the horizon. He feels Yuuki's tail tighten around his neck and feels how alert the little brown as the little guy's emotions insert themselves within his mind, causing him to feel on edge as well. They haven't visited this world before so they didn't know what to expect.

There are five worlds that he had listed as too dangerous to visit, seven worlds they visit regularly, and eleven worlds that were safe

enough but just don't sport the same appeal as those they typically visit; the world where he befriended Yuuki falls into that group.

He jumps as he steps upon something that moves. He manages to watch as something sporting feathers darts into a fern. Yuuki coos into his ear, he feels the little brown's head rubbing against his cheek as he takes a series of deep, calming breaths.

He carefully crouches down and examines the ground a bit, particularly the trail of fresh tracks that remind him slightly of a bird's. He found a few older set of tracks that might belong to something the size of a medium size dog. He assumes that whatever made those walked upon four legs as well.

He straightens and decides to have Yuuki scout around. He feels Yuuki grow excited at this and with a happy chirp, Yuuki takes to the air. The little brown circles overhead before shooting off to his left.

With a shrug, he continues forward after unbuttoning his weapon pouch strapped to his right hip. He didn't want to be struggling with it while under attack. His clones were busy setting up camp upon that hill they arrived upon. He plans to spend the minimum of a week here, upon this world. He had samples to gather and species to document, he plans to use a camera for the latter and maybe even use a recorder to capture feeding habits, be they grazing or hunting.

He glances up just in time to watch a squirrel like creature sail through the space between tree trunks. A large thick green stripe seems to be upon the four armed creature's back and tail. The beast gets its claws into the bark and begins to climb up the trunk. A few more appear in the wake of the first and soon, up in the branches of that tree, the troop of small alien creatures begin to eat the seed pads that were hanging there.

He walks pass the tree, there were likely more impressive beasts to encounter upon the ground. *Although, it's good to know that it's not like any of the previous worlds Yuuki and I have visited.* He admits as he pauses a few feet from that tree to take a sample of a

flowering bush sporting royal purple flowers and dark red spine leaves.

Once that's collected, he continues on his way. He continues to take samples of local vegetation and fungi. Yuuki comes chirping towards him while carrying something in his claws. The little brown radiates satisfaction and self importance while flying towards him.

When Yuuki comes into view, he finds that Yuuki is carrying what appears to be an amphibian, like a salamander only with six extra limbs, he uses the term limbs since the front pair seem to be really thin and sporting webbing between the four fingers. The wiggling, slimy amphibian is about two inches long from snout to tail tip.

He takes out a small carrying tank and drops the brightly colored amphibian into it. Yuuki had already vanished upon dropping off the small critter. "Let's see if I can't find you some native water..." He muses softly at the neon pink amphibian with bright green spots.

He carries the container using the handle, he rather not put the tank away since out of sight is out of mind. Not that it stops him from stopping every so often to continue to gather samples. He finally finds a pond under a rather large, flat rock. He spots a few other amphibians within the pond, three at least seems to share the pink one's body shape and front arms.

He tilts the small tank a bit after opening the vent. He closes the vent after an inch of water is within the tank. He pulls the small tank and watches as the critter swims a bit in the water, the little beastie doesn't seem to be in any discomfort and he then wipes the tank down before putting it back into his bag.

After making it to a open field of ferns, he changes his direction so that he won't have far to go to return to camp. Although before leaving the edge of the field, he stops for a snack. After becoming still, the native wildlife finally come out of their hiding spots to feed about the field. He had noticed the lack of flowering plants during his wanderings and thought about it while eating a bland ration bar since

he didn't want to attract anything by eating smoked fish or meat jerky.

He scratches the side of his head as he stares down at a file concerning creating a large research base and ranch as it were, to do in depth studies of the various life forms that were native to this island. From what little Yuuki, his clones, and himself have found, this island use to sport a gene lab, the building is now an over grown ruin, and that there is an energy shield surrounding this island and a few kilomiles of water.

All of the creatures and plant life had most likely been genetic experiments that got loose in someway. He could only assume that whatever drove the scientists off have either died off or went underground as he found few large land predators and loads of underground tunnels, likely been a sewer system and private escape tunnels at one point.

He sighs, he didn't feel up to requesting or stealing the needed tech to create such a research base. He'll take his samples and drop them off at his favorite technological world so they can enjoy studying the altered genes and speculate what those long gone researchers had been trying to create.

And maybe, before heading back to Leaf, we'll visit Yuuki's homeworld. He thinks as he puts the sheets into a file as he swirls a glass of soda before drinking from it. *Either that or spend a few decades on vacation...*

To Be Continued... Maybe...

The Escape: Naruto

I don't own Naruto!

He hurried back to the apartment, dawn still just an hour away. His crimson bangs fall over his emerald eyes when he stops by the fence. He pushes his long bangs from his face, he's tenses, expecting to be catch any minute now.

But yet again, his new moon walk about goes undiscovered. He pushes a fence board and enters upon the grounds of the apartment building. He can feel his current body wish to release itself and re-entered into the well crafted mask, a shell constructed to hide the fact that he was up and about the town.

He sighs, he wants to enjoy these nights of freedom. He loves the fact that nobody bothers him, nobody knows him, most importantly nobody is judging him by what they've heard, only by his actions. He glances mournfully off into the distance, almost wishing that this night wouldn't end, that the sun won't raise, bringing a new day along with it.

Well, until next month. He thinks as he touches a faded symbol and suddenly, he's rushing upwards and then into the chakra shell. As his body reforms, the shell breaks apart and falls away, his appearance once more that of his birth form.

He sighs as he sits up and without thinking, creates a clone to pick up those discarded cloths that he had worn during his night wanders. He heads for his bathroom to have a shower. *Nice to have a clone pick up those discarded cloths instead of doing it myself.* He muses.

"I wonder what missions we're going to do today?" He wonders out loud as steps into the show.

Wave

As he walks down the silent streets, passing over or by the occasional drunk, he finally finds the bar from where these mercenaries wandered away from. He isn't concerned about being questioned about his age since tonight, he looks more then a decade older then he actually is. Nobody looks over to the door upon him entering the bar, likely cause these guys already had such a head start in getting themselves plastered.

Kind of surprising that there aren't more bars in town considering how crowded this place seems to be. He thinks as he moves to the counter looking for a free seat. *I wonder what kind of deal the owner has with Gato considering how much liquor this place must go through at night.*

He finds a nice enough spot in a corner, the problem is that it seems as though there is a patch of dry something upon the ground. His nose wrinkles at the smell upon his approach. Taking a few seconds to study the site, he decides he's better off trying to enter into one of the on going games then sitting upon that stool or in that area.

As he finds a table that has a few free seats, he becomes aware of somebody moving to that previously mentioned spot and... well, enough said.

"You got cash?" Burn-face asks him and he takes out a few bills, more then a little glad that he managed to get a few bills from other countries. The 'banker' takes the small wad of bills and after counting it, gives him his chips.

As the game begins, a glass seemingly appears out of no-where by his right hand. He takes a small sip from the glass, he resists the urge to make a face, so instead, he pushes strains of his currently black hair behind his slightly notched ear. He studies the cards as he sips from the glass once more before lowering it; his eyes remain blue, just a different shade.

None of the current players at this table seem to be a talkative bunch, much to his relief since it means he won't have to worry overly about keeping track of his lies. Not that he expects anyone to try pumping him for information, after all, these were mercenaries and each have something that they're hiding. *Just a step up from bandits really.*

Over the course of about three hours, he drank three glasses of questionable liquor and won small pots, making sure to lose the majority of the major ones. He rather not be accused of cheating.

"Alright, it's closing time! Get out or I'll alert your boss." A rather threatening one arm man, the owner more then likely, snaps.

Minutes later he's out on the streets with a bit fuller wallet. He follows the swarm of mercenaries, curious as to where they're all bunking. He listens to what little snips of conversation the wind carries to him, which isn't much as most of them were tired and more then willing to fall asleep walking through the streets.

Strangely, nobody seems to check to see if he's even employed by Gato as he enters the barrack. Most guards seem to be busy napping, drinking or gambling with dice.

"You'd think somebody would be watching the warehouses. After all, didn't that bridge builder hire ninja?" He muses after joining one of those dice games.

This was met with snorts and dismissals. "Who'd be stupid enough to steal from the boss? He's got connections and can always hire ninja to kill the thieves. You should have been here when Spider got found out. Nasty business, that." One of the players states and he couldn't help but wonder what kind of connections this Gato had.

He mills around the barrack, slowly probing for more information. By the time he's heading back to his shell, he's got a roughly good idea of why he should clean out those warehouses. *The problem is what to do with the stuff after I steal it.* He decides, although he loathes

that he used his free night in such away, it seems as though there wasn't much of a night life here in Wave.

Makes sense though. Hidden Leaf is a ninja village so we get all kinds of people living it up at odd hours of the day and night. Guess I'll have to remember that for other missions to other cities. He muses before finding a spot close enough to the client's place.

Two Days Later . . .

"Gato's warehouses have vanished!" Sakura exclaims upon recovering from her dash from the village to where Sasuke and him were training. "So have all the ships still anchored by the harbor." The pink haired genin adds.

"Really?" He asks in alarm. He hadn't expected his clones to go that far...

"Hn." Is all Sasuke says before the typically brooding heir of the Uchiha clan continues on with the tree exercise. He notices how Sakura becomes disappointed by the Uchiha's reaction.

"I wonder what Kakashi-sensei has to say about this disappearance..." He wonders in a thinking pose. "Hey! Maybe we can go investigate!" He says has he gently punches his left hand using his right.

"Naruto! You haven't even finished this training! How can yo even think you're capable of investigating this?" Sakura bellows loudly as he's sent flying through the air upon pinkie punching him in the face.

Well, I offered. Who knew that duplicating that storage seal on one of Sasuke's scrolls would be powerful enough to capture whole ship or warehouse... Must be the strings the clones attached between the target and the seal. He thinks as he hits a tree trunk.

"God, Naruto! You're so useless!" Sakura snaps as she stomps away as he sits up. He watches as the weakest member of the team

vanishes from his sight.

Is it so surprising that Sasuke prefers to remain single? Girls are so violent outside of combat. He thinks as he rubs the spot where Sakura had punched him.

Wonder how long she'll cling to that delusion... He muses as he gets up off the ground. He knows why he's having so much trouble with this training and why Sakura had mastered it within seconds.

She's got so little chakra, is it any wonder that she has such control over it? She'd be better off as a medic or behind a desk then out in the field. She's just doesn't do any training without having to be asked to do it. He thinks as his healing factor kicks in, causing the aches of his body to vanish so he can get up off the ground.

"She wouldn't last a second in a fight with me." He mutters softly as he glances over towards Sasuke. "Him on the other hand..." He muses, grinning as he imagines how stunned the heir of the Uchiha's would be if he ever took their spars seriously.

With a soft snort, he walks over and picks up his kunai from the ground before continuing with his training. It really surprises him that so many people are dumb enough to think he's physically weak, its not like he has anything to do in his spare time to do much else other then pranking or training. *And now that I'm a genin...*

He smirks, he knows that everyone thinks he's stopped pulling pranks but he's still pulling a major one once a night each month. *I wonder if I can successfully fake my death? It shouldn't be too hard considering that one jutsu I preform monthly.*

Tanzaku Town

I wonder if Jiraiya has noticed anything odd with my shell... He thinks as he walks through the crowded casino. He's not sure if he'll encounter Tsunade in this place but he's confident that if he does, the old hag wouldn't recognize his current appearance.

His appearance is about seventeen maybe nineteen years of age. Long crimson hair and silvery blue eyes. More then a few eyes seem to linger upon him, likely due to how nice looking he appears.

And yet I never try to appear good looking when I preform this jutsu, it's just how it happens. I wonder if its a side affect of that jutsu? Only way to find out would be to teach it to somebody else. He thinks as he moves his bangs from his forehead. He scowls at the very idea of sharing that jutsu with anyone.

He finally just stops at a machine and begins to insert a few coins before pulling the arm. He blinks as the machine pays out. He just stares down at the pay out for a few seconds before clearing out the pay out and inserting more coins into the machine.

Minutes later, it seems as though he hit the mega jackpot upon the machine. "Move it along. We are here to check the machine for tampering." A pair of security guards inform him upon him taking the jackpot.

He just shrugs and walks away from the machine. He comes to a more colorful machine and inserts a few coins into it. About his third time playing the machine, he hits the mega jackpot. "This is pretty easy." He muses as he collects his winnings before moving away from the machine.

By the fifth machine, a group of security guards advised him to try one of the poker tables or dice games. He just shrugs and wanders towards one of the blackjack tables upon switching to chips. He hadn't even spend an hour before he was approached and asked to vacate the building.

He walks out of that first casino with all of his winnings in cash. "Are they allowed to do that?" He wonders as he walks away from the building with a slight frown.

"Excuse me, but my friend wants to know if you wouldn't mind joining us for a drink or two." A sandy haired blond says to him after making

a slight throat sound. He glances beyond the blond to her brunet friend who waves slightly at him.

"Why not. Just as long as I'm back by dawn nobody should notice my absence." He tells the blond, the young woman smiles in relief at his answer.

"Great! We know just the place!" The blond says and he follows after her.

Next Day

He finally just sighs and sits down, he found himself unable to concentrate on mastering the Rasengan. *I can't believe those two and I... Damn it!* He feels his face heat up as memories of last night's activities mentally play out.

"This just isn't going to go away, is it?" He groans as he sighs. He really wanted to master this attack if simply because it'll help him out in battle.

And if Tsunade doesn't take the position, I know a certain blond who's going to die a fiery death. He thinks to himself. He's kind of confident that he can find another line of work upon faking his death, after all, he is still young enough to learn a different trade and he does know how to create shadow clones too.

But still, I was hoping to have some time to get things in order... He thinks to himself. *The sooner I disappear, the longer it will take for anyone to find me.* He adds.

With that group after the fox, its only a matter of time before the council of Hidden Leaf betrays me thinking they're saving their own skin when they're just giving their enemy what they want, the power of a demon. He thinks, he gets that the Third had tried to protect him but that there was only so much the old man could do when the whole village wants an scapegoat.

If I'm going to kill myself, I might as well do it beyond the village as in, that way I have a greater chance at escaping. He thinks, although thoughts of his friends float up to his mind's eye. He frowns as he wonders why he'll miss the other rookies, after all, they have had years to be friend him and now that he has proven himself to be strong, they seem to be friendly with him, which causes him to wonder if they were fair weather friends.

He'll regret not getting to know Lee better, after all, that teen's drive wasn't all that different then his own. *Funny, I can count on a single hand how many people I'll truly miss seeing.* He thinks to himself.

But I won't live in a village ruled by somebody who hates my guts or wants to use me as a weapon. I have a right to live my life as I see fit, the only reason I became a ninja was to learn how to protect myself and maybe win the respect of the villagers. He thinks. *But that won't happen, after all, the majority of the village knows how seals work but if they're willing to be idiots in that regard, then they'll always be idiots because they want to be idiots.*

"Naruto, can I speak with you about something?" Tsunade's aid asks him, causing him to snap out of his thoughts. He's glad that he's long since gotten out of the habit of talking out loud concerning his thoughts.

"Sure!" He chirps happily as he stands up with a wide grin.

Hidden Leaf

He watches as his apartment building burns, his shell should be found bound with wire about its wrists. He can only hope that those investigating will believe that he died in that fire. *And, of course, nobody is really trying to put it out.*

Just hours ago it was confirmed that Tsunade was in a coma. He didn't care to know the details or to learn who's to replace her. He just knew that the time had come to put his plan into action.

I wonder how long it'll take for the Akatsuki to hear about this? I mean, they must still have spies in this village. He thinks to himself as another person offers up a toast concerning the death of the fox brat.

He mingles with the crowd for a bit before leaving, heading for a bar. It wouldn't surprise him to find the bars of Hidden Leaf overflowing with people celebrating his apparent demise. He wonders if the group of traders he's leaving with will be allowed to leave tomorrow or that they'll have to wait a few days until the investigation is closed.

Either way, I'm leaving this village far, far behind. It's time these people wake up and face the world without having a scapegoat to rag on when the world deals them with a bad hand. He thinks to himself.

The End

Alternate Memory Blank: Danny Phantom

I don't own Danny Phantom!

"Some trickster you're turning out to be." Taiyou muses as the silver furred, four tailed humanoid fox walks around the shallow pit he had first dug and filled with tar. A few feathers continue to snow down from the hidden perch.

"Well excuse me for not being a Kitsune." Young teenager who's name is Akio. Within seconds, the tar and feathers fall from Akio and the intangible child steps out of the shallow pit before returning to normal.

The child runs a hand through his black hair while the other hand adjust the simple light blue vest. Akio taps the tip of his sandals in turn before glancing at Taiyou. Blue eyes glare over at the grinning Kitsune.

"Anyway, it's time for weapon training." The four tailed Kitune informs the young teen. "Which you really need considering you're not a ghost."

"I thought Riko was off hunting for a boyfriend." Akio responds with a frown. "So she's back early and is likely in a bad mood." The human boy says with a sigh and Taiyou doesn't respond, only adds teeth to his grin.

"Great, I'm so going to be sore tomorrow..." Akio mutters as he heads for the closest concealed entrance that will lead him into the underground caverns, thus the underground city that the Kitsune have created. "I'll just have to get back to you sometime next week." The teen adds as he walks pass Taiyou.

Sam

She glances down the hallway pass Tucker, expecting Danny to show up any minute. "Hey Tucker, seen Danny anywhere?" She asks upon approaching the teenage boy who seems to be trying out a new look.

"Eh? Danny? Who's Danny?" Tucker asks as her friend closes his locker after putting books into a green book bag.

"Who's Danny? You know, Danny Fenton, the third member of our group." She says to the hippie looking techno geek sporting a tie dye long sleeve shirt, cargo pants, and runners.

"Fenton? As in the ghost hunters?" Tucker asks her and she nods. "Is he a visiting cousin of Jazz's?" Tucker asks.

"No, I mean as in Jazz's younger brother." She replies. "You really don't know who I'm talking about." She says after a few seconds up staring at her friend and Tucker just nods.

Suddenly something happens next a few lockers down concerning a group of nerds and jocks. Desiree appears out of the vents and suddenly, one of those nerds within the locker gets hit by a beam of energy from the wish granting ghost. The nerd becomes a wolf like ghost being and shoves the jocks into the now vacated locker, the door of the locker gets slammed shut and the nerd returns to normal.

"I see you're boyfriend isn't around. Must have been that wish you made." Desiree says after looking about for Danny and floating towards Tucker and her, although Tucker seems to have fainted standing upright.

"He's not my boyfriend." She says automatically as Tucker seems to fall upon her after a few seconds. Gravity seems to finally deals with the fainted techno-geek.

"Well, this is certainly better then what I had hoped for when I granted your wish. I'll be seeing you around." Desiree says before vanishing in a cloud of green mist.

"Wish? What wish?" She wonders as she rolls Tucker off of her. "Wait... Oh no!" She exclaims as it dawns on her what wish the ghost was talking about. She's rather pale when her remaining friend comes too.

Oh no, what did I do? And more importantly, what has happened to Danny? She wonders as she moves to stand up as teachers and students slowly come out onto the hallway.

Her mind still can't grasp the idea that because of her stupid wish, a friend of her's might not exist.

At The Party

"I'm not too sure about this..." Jazz says as the newly ghostly teen hovers while Desiree continues to grant wishes from the party below. It hadn't been her intent to have Jazz go through the portal to gain ghost powers but they had needed to convince Jazz to let them into the house since without Danny around, there wasn't any reason for kids younger then Jazz to be in the house.

She watches as Jazz tries to fire off an energy beam at the giant Desiree, only it for it to erupt from her glowing teal eyes. "That works too." She muses while Tucker races by her while being chased by an advance looking motorbike, she's fairly confident that it likely came from some game.

At least is wasn't one of those SUVs. She thinks as she struggles a bit more upon sighting various monsters suddenly popping into existence all around them. "I wish I never fought with Danny..." She mutters softly as Jazz continues to fight Desiree with growing ease.

"She's good, but she doesn't have Danny's experience." She reflects before something occurs to her. "I really hope this works..."

She takes a deep breath and shouts as loud as she can, "I wish Danny, Jazz's brother was here, ready to combat you!" Desiree

waves her hand, granting that wish, only to realize what she had wish.

Within seconds, a soft pop happens and a few feet from her stands somebody who seems the right age to be Danny but also clearly wasn't. The ponytail teen glances around in alarm, giving her a glimpse of his face.

"What's going on? How did I get here?" The teen says in what appears to be gibberish, the ghostly sword about Danny's waist is drawn.

"Danny?" Jazz exclaims, momentarily distracted. This allows Desiree to swat the distracted young woman aside while the ghost laughs.

"Oh this is priceless!" Desiree says, pointing a finger at the sword welding teen who's wearing blue vest, white pants, and wooden sandals. Each bit seems to glow with ghostly power, just not as strongly as the sword.

"I don't know where I am or who you are, but I won't run away from a fight!" Danny shouts, she watches as the teen that seems to be her vanished friend grips the hilt of the sword with both hands. Danny then charges forward.

"Danny! Wait! Damn it, I wish Desiree would just go back to the Ghost Zone!" She shouts and Desiree seems to pale before vanishing.

Ah crap, why didn't I think to wish she'd reverse all of the wishes she granted before? She thinks as Danny seems to get into a fight with another bunch of evil plants.

Akio

He watches passively as more of the ghostly beings vanish into this metal gadget that is welded by a young woman with pale blue hair, teal eyes, and wearing a black suit with white bands, boots, and

gloves. He glances up at the sky, he's heard of stars but haven't had the privilege of witnessing them.

His few excursions out into the human world had always been during the day and only for a few hours at a time. And always, ALWAYS in the company of a Kitsune, who's usually disguised to appear human. He also usually wore a set of human cloths instead of what he typically wears.

Considering Kitsune don't need to wear cloths, he tends to wear as little as he can get away with. It's why he's usually wearing a vest instead of a shirt and sandals instead of socks and boots or runners. The only reason he doesn't wear shorts is that he thought he looked rather like a doofus when he does.

How did they manage to defeat that giantess? All that girl did was shout at that ghost. He thinks to himself as he studies the black wearing girl as the girl moves to the still remaining ghost's side. Then, suddenly, the ghost develops this ring that seems to transform the ghost into a human woman.

"You'd think I'd be use to seeing something like that." He muses out loud. He tries his hardest to pick up the subtle clues that show the young woman's true nature.

"Danny? Are you ok?" The girl in black asks him. He frowns, it seems that where ever he was, he wasn't in the part of the world that speaks the language he was raised to understand.

Thus why he gave the other teen a blank look. *"So this is the famous Danny you've been talking about? No wonder you'd want him back."* The colorfully dressed boy says.

"I wasn't expecting him to be like this!" The black wearing teen says while the red head seems to be tearing up just by looking at him while the two that appear his age seem to bicker between themselves.

The red head approaches him carefully and he rubs the back of his neck, not sure what the young woman want's of him. All he could think about as the red head stands about a foot from him was, *Why does it feel like I'm missing something here? Got to be really important concerning the look in her eyes.*

Week Later

He silently curses how none of the Kitsune have yet to show up to collect him. He knows how possessive they were and it shouldn't take them this long to collect him. So not only has he spent close to six days in a land that does a really good job at butchering his language, but then, he's likely butchering their language in turn as the three of them try and teach him their Engish.

He watches as his blood sister, Jazz, reads from a book that seems to be an Engish to Japanese dictionary. He's kind of curious as to what she wants to talk about if she's brought that book out while he's watching anime DVDs that Tucker lent so he wouldn't be bored.

"Eat... fishcake... noontide?" He thinks Jazz asks. He frowns as he considers this.

"Lunch?" He asks and sounds it out a few times as Jazz flips through the book while repeating lunch under her breath.

Jazz nods enthusiastically. " *Yes!* Lunch!" Jazz says.

"Take-out?" He asks, he thinks that's what food delivery is called here. Jazz seems to consider this before nodding.

Then as Jazz is about to get up, blue mist escapes out of Jazz's mouth, signaling that there is a ghost around. "Akio!" He snaps his head toward the front door just in time to watch as a very hyperactive Uta suddenly appears and tackles him.

"Uta!" He cries out in surprise, happy to see the young Kitsune. "Where did you come from?" He asks the young child Kitsune who's

tail is still just a small stub.

"Uta? *You know her?* " Jazz asks, although his blood sister is talking a bit too quickly, he can guess what she said.

"Of course he does! He's my elder brother! *"* Uta says and he perks upon hearing Uta speak Engish.

"You know Engish?" He asks the young kit and Uta nods. "Of course! And it's English." His adopted sister says.

"I'm more your younger brother then elder." He reminds the fifty year old Kitsune. "I'm only fifteen."

"But you're a human teen! I'm still a kit, a child." Uta points out and he just sighs, it doesn't help to make his point when he is physically taller and closer to human adult hood then Uta is to Kitsune teenage years, which are usually come about at a hundred years.

"Elder brother?" Jazz asks and Uta nods. *"He's my adopted brother. I'm Kitsune Uta by the way. Or should that be Uta Spirit Fox?"* Uta says as the young kit remains upon his lap while speaking with Jazz.

"Ghosts adopted Danny?" Jazz states. Jazz seems more then a little stunned by Uta or by the fact that Kitsune raised him.

"Danny? Oh, I take it that's his name before he was adopted. I think I prefer Akio better." Uta says. *"And if you don't mind, what's your name? I did introduce myself, it's only fair you do the same."*

"Jazmine Fenton. Most people call me Jazz." Jazz says and he decides that Jazz just introduced herself since he heard the name Jazz and Fenton in that statement.

At least now there's somebody to act as translator for us. He thinks brightly as he returns to watching the DVD while his two sister chat in English.

Jazz

It had taken a full two months to track down Desiree, the wish granting ghost, so they can at least try to return things to normal, although she wouldn't mind staying half-ghost. As much as it annoys her, she has grown into the role of protector of Amity Park.

And so upon finding Desiree the following wish is made by, surprisingly enough, Uta. "I wish that Sam's wish concerning Danny will be reverse and that we five and the Kitsune race will be the only ones to keep our memories and any new skills learnt because of the wish!"

"And so you have wished it, so it shall be." Desiree says and the world around them seem to be engulfed in light.

When her sight returns, she finds herself in the living room with Danny, Sam, and Tucker. Uta didn't seem to be around, which was kind of nice since the young Kitsune did enjoy pranking a little too much but also found she missed Uta since the little brat had grown on her.

"It's like I was hit over the head with a shovel." Danny complains in perfect English. She does sympathize with that statement as she also feels like she was hit, hit hard, with something.

Before any of them know it, they were engaging in a group hug. "It's good to have you back, little brother." She says.

"It's nice to be back. Although I am going to miss having an excuse to not go to school." Danny replies.

"So, who's up for Nasty Burger?" Tucker asks. "Although before we go, I really need to change my cloths. I can't believe I was dressing as a hippie from the seventies... Talk about uncool."

The End

Animorphs with Anime Characters

I don't own Animorphs or assorted anime character that appear!

Cassie

Daze finally lets up and with surprising familiarity, she glances up at the sky just in time to spot Elfangor's ship comes down to earth. "And so it begins!" She hears Rachel say before her best friend takes off running towards the crash site.

Within seconds, she's following Rachel at a slow run. *Nothing ever changes...* She thinks they enter into the construction site.

Ranma

He glances around the group to find two very familiar faces, Ichigo and Naruto. Naruto looks bewildered while Ichigo seems to be curious about where they are. Before either of three of them could say anything to each other, one of the girls they are with says before running off into what looks to be an old construction site, "And so it begins!"

The second one soon follows after the first and with a grin, Naruto takes off after the two. Ichigo sighs and together they follow the hyperactive blond who's following the two girls. He's a bit surprised to see an alien space ship landing within the site and feels a sense of dread mounting up within him.

"Wow, a real live space ship. How cool is that, Cassie?" The first girl declares loudly and he can tell that the girl is faking it, but it seems that it works well enough cause this causes somebody within the ship to respond.

The space ship comes to rest not that far from them within seconds of them entering into this site. "Look at that, it looks like a tail." Ichigo

says very softly, it seems that neither of the two strange girls.

"Hello?" The seemingly bolder girl exclaims at the ship. They continue towards the ship, although when the two girls stop, Ichigo and Naruto stop as well, although he moves to stand a bit before those two.

Don't be afraid. I will not harm you. Is said within his head after a few seconds of landing.

"Wow." Naruto mutters and seems to startle the two girls as they glance their way. "Yo!" The bright haired blond says with a wide grin.

"What... But... Huh?" The yet to be named girl stutters out, clearly not knowing what to say concerning their appearance in the group instead of their usually member.

"How about we discuss this later, ok? I think we got something more important to do now." He says smoothly.

"Agreed." Cassie says quickly and sends a look to the not so brightly colored blond girl. The first blinks before finally nodding.

"Hey in there! Is this encounter going to be broadcasted or what?" The loud blond calls out and he resists the urge to palm his face at how blunt Naruto is.

I'm afraid that this meeting will not be broadcast. It would cause you and your friends to become captured before the night is out I'm afraid. The alien explains and then a door appears to reveal a blue furred centaur alien.

"You're worst then Marco." The still unnamed girl hisses as they approach the ship. *I seriously doubt that.* He thinks before the alien collapses by the end of the ramp.

"You ok?" Naruto asks in alarm, it seems as though the blond hadn't realize just how injured the alien was. "You're not dying on us, are

you?"

I'm afraid that I can't deny that statement. The alien admits, the voice was rather softly and filled with sorrow. He tries to access his Ki and found that, for now, his usual abilities seem to be unavailable.

He sends a questioning look over to Ichigo and the vizard shakes his head. Naruto's already kneeling by the alien's side, he can only imagine the look upon the blond's face. *We've been here for barely an half hour and he's already emotionally attached to the new arrival.* He reflects.

Rachel

She couldn't help but glance between the three strangers with Cassie and herself. The bright blond has to be a bottle blond since she's has yet to met somebody with such bright colored hair, to the orange haired guy who might be another dye job, and finally upon the slightly cute one sporting a pigtail.

I wonder what the Crayak has something to do with their appearance? She thinks. *I should have guessed something was wrong when Tobais didn't do his usually line when the ship landed...*

While she's thinking death threats concerning the Crayak, especially if the three guys were being tormented. *It's bad enough dealing with time loops, now we get to deal with a bunch of strangers trying to take over their roles? Brings to mind those few loops where we weren't the Animorphs... Those always crashed rather spectacularly.* She thinks while Elfangor explains about the invasion.

Cassie then heads into the ship to get the blue cube, sure they know the other names of it but they've grown use to their name for it. "What does this thing do?" The orange hair guy asks, speaking for the first time when Cassie gives the cube to Ax's brother.

This will allow you to become any species that you touch, to morph into them. You will acquire their DNA pattern, enabling you to

become that beast for only two hours at a time. Elfangor explains. We much hurry, they are coming.

As they place their hands upon the cube, she notices a frown upon the bottle blond's face. "Can you morph?" The blond asks suddenly as Elfangor gets them to leave.

I have that ability... Elfangor says and she glances over at Cassie with wide eyes, as if this was the first they heard of this.

"Does morphing heal damage?" The pigtail asks and Elfangor admit that it does. "Then what's stopping you from morphing and coming with us?" The black haired guy asks.

Huh... You know, why didn't we wonder about it before? I mean, we know morphing heals even fatal injuries, regrowing limbs, sometimes even whole bodies. She thinks, she then flushes as she recalls that they usually had other things to worry about.

I might be able to. Elfangor admits hastily.

"Think about it this way, if we're to deal with these Yeerks, would we be more successful with an expert leading us? Or for us to stumble along with a very vague clue as to what's what?" The blond remarks.

We did a fairly good job stumbling along. She thinks with a growl, kind of offended by the blond's remarks. *Although, I'm sure Tobias would have enjoyed spending more time with his father...*

Then I shall try. Elfangor says while Ranma quotes Yoda, "Do or do not, there is no try."

Elfangor smiles and slowly, the Andalite begins to shrink while limbs later. In time, the famous war-prince becomes some kind of multi-winged bird like creature. We must hurry! Elfangor says and before Elfangor could take to the air, the blond quickly tucks the alien bird under arm and just takes off.

She doesn't have time to wonder as she follows after the three guys. Cassie follows a half a second after-wards. Nobody says anything, they just run and run. Finally the guys slow down to a quick walk.

"There we go. Sorry about that, but thought it better if you didn't fly off since they might be able to detect that." The bottle blond says while moving Elfangor from under his arm.

You have a good point but a little warning would have been nice. Elfangor says perched upon the bottle blond's arm.

"I'll remember that for next time." The blond says sincerely. "By the way, we didn't get around to doing introductions. I'm Naruto."

I am Elfangor-Sirinial-Shamtul. Elfangor says while she's a bit puzzled about the name since it didn't seem like something you usually name a kid. At least not in America.

"I'm Ranma and this is Ichigo." The pigtail guy says and Cassie's eyes seem to light up, it seems that her best friend knows at least one of those names.

"I'm Rachel and this is Cassie." She says when the morphed Elfangor glances towards her. She found this whole thing to be rather surreal.

"We should split up and head home before whoever they are begins to search the streets." Ichigo suggests.

"Agreed." She says before asking Elfangor, "Will you be leaving us now or will you be going home with one of us?"

I think it would be better if I left you. I'm sure we'll met again, once I've acquired a human morph. The war-prince says and with that, Elfangor takes to the air, leaving them very much alone.

"I wonder if he wants this back?" Ranma muses and she finds the guy holding the blue cube. "Likely later." Ichigo muses, although it

seems as thought the loud Naruto was already heading off.

As Cassie and her head off in the same direction, she asks, "What do you know of one of them? I saw your eyes light up when Ranma introduced himself and Ichigo."

"Ranma's name is the one I recognized. He looks so much like the Ranma from Ranma 1/2." Cassie explains and adds, "In the show, Ranma's cursed to become a young girl when splashed with cold water and returns to being a guy with warm to hot water. He's also an expert martial artist and engaged to at least three girls. The show is an action comedy."

"So we're dealing with a cartoon character?" She asks and Cassie replies, "It seems that way."

Naruto

"You weren't kidding about your dad being a vet, huh?" He says as he moves to study a fox in one of the lower cages. *You know, this is likely the closest I've never gotten to an actual fox without it being dead.*

"You know, that might be a good starter for you guys' first morph." Cassie muses and he glances over at Ichigo and Ranma. He grins a bit before standing up and leaning on one of the poles.

"Have any of us done a fox before?" Rachel wonders while Cassie seems to be studying the various animals within the cages with a critical eye. "You guys got any particular animal you want to try?"

"You got anything with wings?" He couldn't help but ask, his chakra was wind elementa so he wouldn't mind something that reminded him of it. For some odd reason, both Cassie and Rachel gave him a hard look.

"Is it something I said?" He asks and the two girls just glance at each other.

"Well, you see... The member you are filling in for, Tobias, he typically ends up trapped in a morph whenever he picks up a bird morph. It's like one of those fated things." Cassie explains and he rubs the back of his neck.

"I see." Ranma muses before the pigtailed anchor moves towards a cage containing something that might be a weasel or a stoat, he can never tell the difference, although a stoat is the one that changes their coat color. "You mind if I give this one a try?" Ranma asks, according to the two natives, Ranma is filling in for Jake, their usual leader which leaves Ichigo as Marco.

How do they know this? The pair called their houses since it seems to become a rather typical routine for the Animorphs when they begin a new loop. They had talked a bit about various rumors over the phone and other nonsense before they were asked to help out at Cassie's farm concerning some minor act of labor.

They gave him directions to Cassie farm cause he's never visited it before. Ichigo and Ranma had came with Rachel since Ranma and Rachel were cousins and Ichigo was Ranma's best friend. The police officer had shown up while they were doing some work and once the guy was gone, but not before recognizing Ranma as Tom's younger brother and suggesting they come to a Sharing meeting.

"Short-tailed weasel, commonly known as a stoat or ermine." Cassie says. "A little high strung though."

"I'm sure I can handle it." Ranma says and he couldn't help but laugh while Ichigo mutters, "Famous last words."

Ranma sends them a minor glare before steeling himself as he opens the cage and snatches the stoat before it backed away. He watches as the stoat bites down upon Ranma's hand and stays there before it finally relaxes.

Ranma withdraws his hand and lets go of the stoat after the little beastie shakes off the effects of acquiring the critter's DNA. Ranma

moves into a stall with Cassie repeating the instructions upon drawing out the DNA, not that Cassie likely need to, they all have had plenty of experience becoming Animagi while attending Hogwarts.

The first thing that happens to Ranma is fur growing and body shrinking while it begins to alter the limbs, causing the arms and legs to shorten. Within seconds, Ranma is about the size of a house cat before Ranma's skull begins to alter, lengthening.

Then, upon reaching the right size, Ranma the stoat squeaks and moves out from under the shirt as Ranma managed to get the bottom part of his cloths which includes socks and runners. He had heard Rachel exclaim softly when that had occurred, but nothing came from Cassie.

The stoat scowls and natters as it begins to move about the stall, avoiding the door since that's where they're standing. Surround! Ranma howls, the mental voice sounding bother enraged and fearful.

Then the stoat tenses up and charges at the closest person. You won't take me without a fight! Ranma shouts and begins to climb up Ichigo's leg.

He couldn't help but laugh as Ichigo tries unsuccessfully to get Ranma the stoat off of him. Finally, upon Ichigo's shoulder, Ranma seems to control himself. He he he, sorry Ichigo. Ranma says before launching himself off of Ichigo's shoulder and managing to perch upon the wooden door swung inwards.

What a rush! Ranma says as they watch the anchor climb up a post and before crawling down again. Then Ranma leaps into the stall by his shirt and rapidly becomes human.

"So, who's up next?" Ranma asks while picking up his shirt off the floor and Ichigo glances at him. "Rock, paper, scissors?" Ichigo asks, "Loser goes next."

"Fine." He says and he picks paper while Ichigo picks rock. He grins as Ichigo curses softly while moving to inspect the various animals. He wondered if Ichigo's inner Hollow was acting up but dismisses it since that's unlikely until they can access their powers once more.

"I'll try coyote." Ichigo says upon crouching next to the coyote cage. The blond canine seems to wake and its ear's perk up at Ichigo.

"Try touching the fur, you don't need to make contact with the whole body." Cassie suggests and Ichigo's left hand moves to where the tail seems to be poking out. The coyote seems to blink and moves its tail up and down but Ichigo manages to pinch a few strands.

The coyote seems to doze a bit before shaking itself and raising its head. Ichigo withdraws his left hand and moves over to the stall Ranma had vacated a few minutes ago. Ichigo does some stretches and what not, nobody is looking his way as he moves to acquire the poisoned bobcat who seems very much asleep.

He returns to the group in time to watch Ichigo grow a tail and fall onto all fours. Ichigo manages to keep his shirt but his pants and whatnot were coming off. He notes that Ichigo's taking a bit longer then Ranma to morph but still, after a total of four minutes, within the stall stands a growling coyote who's tail is tucked firmly under him.

"Guess we'll have to wait sixty minutes for him to take control of himself." He muses and that causes the coyote to glance his way. The growling becomes a whine of confusion before Ichigo finally begins to shake his head but till Ichigo says, Damn it! Stop bringing that up! I'd like to see how long it would take you to tame your Hollow, if you ever generate one that is...

"What's a Hollow?" Rachel asks as she glances over at him. He glances over to Ranma but its Ichigo who answers, Think of a Hollow as an empty spirit that eats other spirits to try to fill the space where its heart was.

"Spirits? As in dead spirits? Ghosts?" Rachel asks in alarm.

"You haven't been in many fusion loops before, have ya?" He muses with a grin. "So, who was the first among you to be awake?" He asks while Ichigo moves around the stall, sniffing the ground while doing so.

"First? Nobody, we were all aware from the beginning of the loop begun." Cassie says.

"That's odd... Usually it's only one person that's aware at first when the loops being, not the whole group." Ranma muses and the girls turn away as Ichigo begins to grow larger.

"Must have driven them crazy to be the only one aware." Cassie admits and he glances down at his hands, he really didn't like recalling the things he had gone through during those first loops. Living in a ninja village meant that there were a lot of people who knew of various ways to kill you when they believe you become a threat.

"I'm still trying to sort through those early memories, most of which I had suppressed." Ranma admits. "I would leave them be but they could be used against me if I don't face them."

"I died very frequently until I learnt to keep my mouth shut." He admits. "Not something I liked but it was a learning experience." He adds and from the looks upon the two native's faces, it seems as though they're more then a little alarmed by his confession.

"How about you, Ichigo? Were you..." Rachel asks and glances over to find Ichigo putting on his socks.

"Yea, I was the first out of my world to become aware. But I didn't have it as rough as the originals, among which Ranma and Naruto are said to be among." Ichigo says and walks out of the stall with runners in his hands.

"So, what will be your choice?" Cassie asks and he just grins.

He walks into the stall after Ichigo was out, admitting, "I already picked one while you guys were watching Ichigo." He's already got a picture of the bobcat in his mind.

"Crap..." Ichigo says but he's already willing the changes to take place, particularly his head first before his back. He imagines a bubble covering his cloths, causing them to vanish while fur sprouts and his limbs shift into the limbs of a cat.

"He did the bobcat? He did the bobcat!" He hears Rachel cry out, it seems the changes to his face were complete enough for them to ID his species of his morph.

The world shrinks and suddenly he becomes away of something just beyond the edge of his conscious mind. He becomes away of a lot more sounds, smells, and other, minor things. He feels that something at the edge try and rush him but he mentally anchors himself to the ground.

He feels his claws extend physically and his body tense. Ears flatten against his skull as he glances around the stall. He then begins to shake his head, trying to shake off the rush of instincts not unlike those he's homed as a ninja.

He growls softly and sits down in the stall. Those really hit hard, don't they? Geeze, I'm just glad they were so unfocused. He sends to the really tense group who seems to be arranged to deal with him if he became out of control.

"Geeze, make us seems like amateurs why don't ya." Ichigo says. "Not only did you get all of your cloths but you didn't freak out like we did."

Oh please, it's not as if those instincts were new, just energized. I mean, you relied upon your gut when you first became a Soul Reaper. He sends to the group.

Just so you know, try imagining your cloths inside of a bubble and vanishing when fur or something begins to sprout. He sends to Cassie and Rachel, he wanted to see if he can exclude people from the conversation.

His nose registers their surprise but he's not that interested as he gets up to move around the stall. He can smell both Ichigo and Ranma's human scents and then pick up their animal ones, he also picked up on their animal genders as well, he did wonder if he should tease Ichigo about crossdressing but decides to stay quiet about it.

He moves about a bit more before leaping into the air, straight up cause he wanted to see how high he can go. Landing upon all fours, he twitches his tail and, while feeling those instincts, begins to picture himself as a human, naked at first and when the changes begin, he imagines his cloths appearing when he reaches a certain size.

Once fully human, he picks himself up and stretches a bit, the instincts had retreated and weren't pressing themselves upon him as they had when he had been fully morphed as a bobcat. "So... What's up next?" He asks as he moves to lean upon the inward swung door.

"Well, I believe we'll all acquire a few more animals before trying for the Garden tonight." Cassie says. "We use to use seagulls as aerial spies, though recently we've switched to crows and sparrows. Owls are a must for night missions and then, usually, we pick out a unique day time Bird of Prey."

"We save insects for next month." Rachel says with a grin, clearly hoping to gross them out at the idea of morphing bugs. It kind of did, but he's been around Shino a good long while, so he does know they care be useful.

"What animals are generally used as battle morphs?" Ranma asks curiously.

"Well, Jake classically to go with a tiger, Marco goes with a gorilla, Cassie a wolf, and I go with an elephant or a grizzly bear." Rachel explains.

"Huh, I guess I get to pick out something new for mine." He says with a grin and the other two guys just rolled their eyes at him.

"Might as well finish up here and then we'll have the afternoon to do whatever before hooking up around midnight at the Gardens." Ranma says and he glances over at the fox, he just knows it'll bite him in the ass but he'll acquire the black furred beastie if only cause it reminds him of his renter.

Ichigo

He lands upon a post belonging to another fence that encircles another habitat while facing the grizzly bears. Rachel lands first upon the fence before flying up to the bear's enclosure. He watches as the blond girl becomes human and then slowly walks over to the sleeping bears.

Upon finishing, Rachel morphs into a barn owl and flies away from the bears. Picked anything out yet? Rachel asks him.

Yea, I'm going for a jaguar. He tells her before taking to the air. Mind showing me where they are? He asks.

Follow me then. Rachel says and darts off towards the habitat. He follows a few feet behind her, slowly catching up on her since he's kind of diving.

It didn't take him long to acquire the jaguar and leave. I do believe that's everything then. He says to Rachel and his fellow barn owl nods in agreement.

We got dolphin, cheetah, rhino, snake, bat, and now our battle morphs. I do believe that's everything. Rachel muses.

With that, they raise into the air and begin to travel back into the city. Hey you guys! Guess who we found! Naruto calls out and they turn in flight to find the others coming towards them while accompanied by a tiny owl.

Elfangor? Rachel asks, a bit stunned.

Greetings once more. The alien says warmly. I take it you visited this place to acquire a few of its residences?

Yea, we did. Ah, was there anything at the Gardens that you needed? Ranma says.

If you won't mind, I am rather unfamiliar with these beasts. Elfangor admits. Do you have any suggestions of what I should acquire?

And so, they returned to the Gardens, this time, playing guard to allow Elfangor time to acquire the previously mentioned beasties. More then a few had Elfangor using his tail blade to be the part touching the animals.

Although, before leaving, Elfangor did acquire a Northern Goshawk and a better owl morph, a Great Grey Owl. They traveled in a very loose group as Elfangor inquire if they have had any troubles concerning what had happened the previous night. Naruto chats endlessly about their previous experiments and about the visiting cop.

Is he always like this? Rachel asks him, mentally startling him.

As much as he acts the fool, he is good at what he does. He admits, making sure to focus his thoughts to Rachel and only to Rachel.

What does he do? Rachel asks.

Pretty much anything. He's a ninja, one of the most surprising ones you'll met. He tells Rachel.

Ninja, right... Rachel says sceptically and he mentally shakes his head.

He's as much a ninja as I am a Soul Reaper or Ranma a practice of martial arts. He says.

Isn't Ranma suppose to be a cartoon character? The blond asks him, he's not that surprise about the question as Ranma's world does get written and animated about rather regularly.

Ranma 1/2, right? Yea, that's kind of a documentary of Ranma's cannon's life, either the manga and the anime. Both Naruto and I do get written about but not always animated across the vast array of worlds. He explains.

What anime are you from? Rachel asks and he replies, Bleach and Naruto is from Naruto, as in Naruto Uzumaki.

You're saying Naruto's the title character? But... why? I mean, he's not what you expect in a title character, he's more like a side-kick. Rachel says.

Naruto does have depth, as surprising as it sounds. He's capable of great empathy, he works hard, and has the knack at pulling a win out of his ass in hopeless situations. He explains. If I were to chose who out of his team I would want at my back, I'd pick him. *If it was out of his group... It's never really come up before.*

I still don't see it. He just seems to be the class clown. Rachel admits and he doesn't pursue it as he knows that Rachel will change her mind in time, so in the meantime, he plans to enjoy the thrill of flight before they split up to head home. They'll be hooking up with Elfangor tomorrow night.

Next Day

He watches as Naruto in fox morph sniffs by a tree's trunk. Naruto's ears scan around while Naruto's head raises up to look up into the

tree he's perched in. He ruffle his feathers and stares down at the black fur canine that is Naruto.

Ichigo! See any of the others yet? The blond boy asks him.

He's currently morphed as a Swallow-tailed Kite. Nobody but you as of yet. He tells Naruto while scratching his head with a taloned foot.

I wonder what's keeping Ranma... He's usually the first to be anywhere. Naruto muses, the blond had arrived in the morph of a crow before transforming into a fox.

He watches as the black fox swishes his tail and begins to sniff around the clearing as a whole. He preens his feathers with his beak. He would stop whenever he heard the sound of flapping wings.

I think I see Rachel coming in. He sends to Naruto as he watches as a Bald Eagle comes dropping out of the sky. He's sure that it's Rachel since she's the only one with an eagle morph.

Hey Rachel! Naruto says as the Bald Eagle lands upon the ground. Seen Cassie or Ranma on your way here? The ninja asks as the fox trots to stand about six to eight feet from Rachel.

No, I haven't seen anyone. Rachel says before transforming back into a human. I take it Ichigo or Elfangor is here?

I'm here. Haven't seen Elfangor yet. He says. I'll come down after you're done. He adds, moving from his previous perch, showing himself while in his kite morph.

Just how long have you been here, Ichigo? Naruto asks, glancing up at him. He suppresses the urge to fluff up and screech at the predator below.

Rachel is rather quick but not as quick as Cassie or Naruto. And yet, the girl is faster then him when it comes to morphing, he's likely the

slowest out of the group but he's sure that once he's use to it, he won't be that slow ever again.

When Rachel is done, Naruto backs away as he flies down towards the ground. He feels his pulse quicken and he focuses on returning to his true form. As the world begins to shrink, that instinctive mind seems to fade into the background of his mind.

He sighs softly before glancing towards Naruto and finds the black furred fox sitting not far from him. Suddenly, Naruto barks in excitement, heck Naruto's tail wags back and forth while turning to face a northeastern direction. He watches as Elfangor comes trotting towards them.

"It's good to see you, sir." Rachel says in a very polite tone. He's pretty sure that she's rarely been this polite before.

Elfangor inclines his head, he notices that the blue furred alien seems to have brought a bag with him.

Elfangor

Well met. He says warmly to Rachel. He catches sight of a black fox, he already had an idea of who it was.

I never thought I'd spend more then a few minutes in his company... If only Loren... I just know the Ellimist foresaw that she would lose her memory. He thinks to himself, he can only assume how difficult his son's life has been.

You know, I don't get how you can eat without a mouth. Naruto muses as the fox boldly weaves about his legs and circles him. I seriously don't see any mouths upon your legs either.

As my hooves hit the grass, my hooves absorb the juices from the crushed plants under hoof. He explains. How long have you been in that morph? He asks curiously, he rather not have his son trapped in a morph like Arbron.

Just transformed in little over forty minutes ago. Naruto answers after pausing in circling around him. Guess I can transform back. His estranged son admits and after moving a few feet away, he watches as the fox morphs back into the shape of a young human boy.

He sure is quick. He thinks in surprise while Ichigo asks, "What is it that you brought along?"

It is a com device that I'll need parts for. I am hoping some of you could purchase them. He explains to the orange haired boy.

"What do you plan to do with it?" Rachel asks and he answers, I have hope to discover if any of my fellows remain. I don't plan to send any messages, just listen for them.

"Ah, I guess that makes sense." The girl says while Ichigo seems to glance around expectantly. "Do you expect a lot of your people to have survive crashing to Earth?" Rachel asks.

Even if they did survive the crash, I doubt they knew enough to blend into their surroundings. I had seen the dome of the ship fall into the ocean. I hope that there were some of my people within its protective shield. He answers, he could only recall seeing the life thread of his younger brother coming to weave itself with five life threads belonging to these young humans.

He hopes that the vision proves true as he regrets truly getting to know his younger brother. He couldn't help but feel free to live his life once again. He hadn't felt like this since he had left Earth with the Ellimist, leaving his human life behind him.

Rachel

She mentally sighs, she really wishes Cassie were here. She felt oddly a strange from the events going on around her, after all, she's never had to deal with another Andalite outside of Ax and that undercover group that arrives to release that virus. *What a time, it*

should be Tobias here, receiving Elfangor's awkward fatherly affection and worry.

Naruto didn't seem to mind the extra attention Elfangor pays him. "This is so unfair... Here Elfangor is, alive and well and Tobias isn't here to spend any real time with his father." She mutters.

"So Elfangor thinks Naruto is his son? Huh, I guess that makes sense, more sense then..." Ichigo muses softly while Naruto asks Elfangor questions concerning the kind of ship the Andalites had arrived in.

"Do I even want to know what you thought Elfangor wanted with him?" She asks before frowning. "Is Naruto missing his own family? Is that why he's hounding Elfangor like that?" She asks.

Before Ichigo answers, the other two members of the group arrives. Ranma in the morph of a Northern Harrier and Cassie in the morph of an Osprey. She's just glad that Cassie has shown up as she feels more grounded.

The Mall

What did I do to get stuck with him? She wonders as Naruto hums while looking between to different wire adapters. They were in an electronic shop looking for some cheap electronic toys, which causes her to wonder why it was that Naruto's looking at cables and surge bars.

"Why are we even looking at these things?" She asks the supposed ninja. "These aren't what we're suppose to be looking at."

"We're being followed." Naruto says softly. "They're hiding over by the TVs and radios." The blond adds and she glances over just in time to see somebody duck out of sight.

She casually glances away before turning his back to that part of the store. "You know anyone who'd stalk you?" Naruto asks her and she

shakes her head.

"Which means it might be somebody for me." Naruto muses. "Stay here, I'll head over to the games. See if you can't catch sight of a hair color or something." The blond states before walking away with one of the wire adapters.

She frowns at the boy's back as Naruto does begin to look at the computer games that are shelved along the back wall. She turns her head and out of the corner of her eye, she spots a red head exiting out from behind the TVs. The red head's eyes were trained upon Naruto with what appears to be a frown upon the semi-emotionless face.

She jerks her eyes away from the boy when the red head glances in her direction. *Never seen him before...* She muses and she feels the kid move pass her.

She reaches out and puts a hand upon the guy's shoulder, only to find herself pinned to the floor. "Gaara! What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be in a sandbox some where?" Naruto asks and she feels Gaara stiffen.

"Shouldn't you be sitting somewhere, eating twenty bowls of ramen?" The red head responds in a blank tone that sent shivers down her spine. "I see you're already found somebody new to date."

"Ah, let her up, man. She's cool, kind of new but rock solid if you get what I'm saying." Naruto says and to her surprise, the red head called Gaara does let her up.

"Seen a metal slug about?" Naruto asks and Gaara snorts.

"Got it out. Didn't like raccon-dogs." Gaara replies as the two shake hands before going in for a guy hug.

She's kind of rubbing her wrist while watches the two, she's certain they're talking in code, one that doesn't seem that hard to follow,

although that one about raccon-dogs doesn't seem to make much sense.

"Gaara, met Rachel, Rachel met Gaara." Naruto introduces them to each other. Gaara nods a tiny bit in her direction while she smiles slightly, not sure what it was about Gaara that sets her teeth on edge.

"Let Rachel and I finish up here in the store before we head out to discuss business." Naruto says and since Gaara doesn't respond, Naruto seems to gather up at least three electronic toys and that cable adapter. She's a bit surprise when Naruto takes out a credit card.

"My uncle said I could borrow it. I hope there wouldn't be any trouble." Naruto explains in an apologetic note to his tone but the cashier just seems to wave it off, allowing Naruto to pay using said card.

They left the store without any more incidents and other then a stop to pick up some cola, they left the mall, walking down the street. "How do you know he's not a Controller?" She finally asks Naruto after a block.

"Gaara, you feel up for taking a nap?" Naruto asks the red head and the other boy just starts.

"That doesn't prove anything!" She snaps and Naruto waves it off.

"It became insane and I believe it had a heart attack." Gaara states and she blinks, trying to imagine a Yeerk having a heart attack.

"Guess the one-tail is nattering about in your head then? Huh, can you use chakra? I can't seem to access mine nor can Ichigo or Ranma access their usual set of powers." Naruto says.

In answer, she watches as the small gourd that had been hanging from Gaara's belt loop begin to shift a little, taking the form of a flute

before returning to the shape of a gourd. "Hmmm, got some access but not as much as you normally do, huh? Better then me then." Naruto muses.

"Hang on, what could scare a Yeerk enough to die of a... heart attack?" She demands.

"I'm possessed." Gaara states calmly.

"Demonically possessed." Naruto adds and she just blinks at the blond. "Ok, it's like this, Gaara hosts an insane one-tail raccond-dog demon who grants Gaara control over sand. Majority of the time, the sand automatically moves to protect Gaara from receiving injuries but because the demon is so close to the surface, it natters at Gaara to kill people, to feast on their blood, and when Gaara falls asleep, the demon gets full control over Gaara's body. Also, demons produce a type of energy that is rather poisonous, it's one of the reasons adults are never used to seal out of control demons into, only babes are immature enough that their bodies adapt to housing a demon and its energies within their bodies."

"So the Yeerk couldn't deal with Gaara's demon then?" She asks and Naruto replies, "Seems so. Unless the Yeerk couldn't wrap its mind around seeing everything Gaara's done since Gaara became awake to the existence of time loops..."

"It never got the chance to review those memories." Gaara states and she just shakes her head, she really didn't know what to think of Gaara and guesses that, in time, she'll grow use to him.

Hopefully.

To Be Continued . . . Maybe . . .

Portal Maddness 2: Naruto

I don't own Naruto, Werewolf the Forsaken, Ranma 1/2, and Pokemon!

"Well... Crap." Sasuke says while staring up at a seven foot tall wolf monster that's glaring down at him. The Uchiha felt as though his legs were weighed down and his heart beats rapidly.

Move... move... move... move... move... ***MOVE*** *, damn it!* Sasuke mentally screams but still, his body doesn't obey as he stiffly takes a few steps backwards. The feeling of something running down his inner thigh.

Suddenly, a howl sounds to Sasuke's left that causes the monster to glance over in that direction. The wolf's ears perk up and the monster glances at the Uchiha, giving the young thirteen year old ninja a look of disgust before racing off the edge of the roof.

Sasuke falls onto his knees, the genin didn't know where he was but Sasuke took some comfort in the idea that Naruto had to be in a worst situation then confronting that wolfman monster within minutes upon arriving in this world.

"You ok?" A young teen's voice wonders and as Sakura's vision returns, the girl found a very cute looking teen staring down at her with worry shining out of his blue eyes. Sakura flushes while shyly looking away, Sakura couldn't find her voice so she just nods.

The teen helps the pink haired girl to sit up. "Thanks." Sakura responds in a tiny voice, very much aware of how close the cute boy is to her.

"Well, you don't look as though you suffered much from that fall..." The teen muses as the boy checks the back of Sakura's head. "Just a few cuts and bruises but otherwise you seem fine."

Then the teen says, "Anyway, name's Ranma, Ranma Saotome."

"Sakura, Sakura Haruno." Sakura tells Ranma, her face still feeling a tad heated. "Where am I?" The young kunoichi asks as she move to get up.

"Eh? China. Pops and me are headed to this legendary training grounds." Ranma explains.

"Mind if I tag along? I think I'm kind of lose..." Sakura admits to Ranma. *China, huh?* Then Sakura wonders, *I wonder if Sasuke-kun is around here somewhere...*

"Gonna have ta talk with Pops about that." Ranma says while shrugging. "He's the one with all the money after all."

Sakura smiles slightly before nodding in acceptance. "Thanks for looking after me while I was out." The pink haired kunoichi says before Ranma begins to lead her away from where she landed.

"Feh, wasn't a problem, Sakura! It's a martial artist's duty to look after those weaker then them." Ranma says with a shrug while Sakura watches Ranma's behind while following the teen.

Sakura hums softly, not really paying Ranma a lot of attention while imagining activities they could do together.

"Huh... Shouldn't you be gone? I mean, I beat ya up pretty good before I sent ya flying." Naruto says to this black furred dog sporting a off white skull, bone bracelets about each paw, and two curved bones upon the dog's back.

The dog had spat fire at Naruto, bite him twice, and then, between growls, rammed its body at him, trying to get Naruto to fall down. Naruto might not have gotten along very well with animals but the Hokage-wanna-be never seen a beast do such things before and the blond didn't know if the dog had been using chakra or not.

The dog lies down and then rolls onto her back, Naruto saw that the dog was a girl, while looking up at him with puppy dog eyes. The belly, like the muzzle sports orangish red fur.

Naruto stares down at the dog from his position by the fire, wondering what to do. With a sigh, Naruto took a cooking fish and tosses it towards the dog. "Fine, apology accepted."

The blond glances away from the strange dog, at least the dog had been relatively normal compared to the few onion beasts Naruto had pulled from the ground, encountering various types of large fish and tadpoles who also attacked the boy.

As Naruto stares into the fire, the young genin wonders about what new creature's he'll encounter before hooking up with Sakura and Sasuke. *Just how many of these forest beasts can use chakra? Are they edible?*

Naruto jerks slightly as the dog nudges his elbow. Glancing at the dog, the blond boy hums a bit before moving to rub the dog's neck. The canine growls softly while moving to lean upon Naruto, the dog's eyes were closed and her ears pointed backwards.

"Just where am I? I mean, I've never met a dog that spat fire before." Naruto muses after a few minutes of scratching behind the dog's ears. "No offense but not even Akamaru could do that and that pup is as pure-blooded nin-inu as a dog can be."

The black furred dog growls at that before turning to look into the fire. "You're hungry, aren't ya?" Naruto asks and to his surprise, the dog nods with a bit of a whine.

With a sigh, the blond picks up another fish on a stick and gives it to her. The dog's tail wags happily while eating it. Naruto snorts softly but begins to take renewed interest in the fish in his own hand.

Naruto had caught six non-attacking fish and since his chakra is a bit out of whack, the blond couldn't use clones to forage around while he was fishing. Naruto wonders if the rest of his team are having the same problems with their chakra.

Maybe I just need to do more of those tree walking exercises... Maybe I can camp here while I wait for my chakra to return to normal... The blond thinks while eating his fish.

Guardian Summoned: Buffy

I don't own anything!

"So... You summoned me to hold onto these book just in case somebody betrays you?" Naruto asks this be-horned guy who seems bald on top. The magical necklace that allows him to understand the guy is wrapped around his left wrist.

"Yea, the sums it up. Keep them until I show up with their new owner and I'll let you keep that necklace as your bonus." The twitchy guy says, not that the blond blames the guy, he had attacked the guy within seconds of waking, slamming the guy down upon the floor while speaking in a language the guy only understood cause of the magical necklace.

With a shrug, Naruto takes the bag containing the thick tomes. It wasn't long before the guy leaves, leaving Naruto alone in this underground tunnel. With nothing better to do, the blond begins to do some target practice as he waits for the guy to return with the buyers.

Day Later

Naruto watches as Faith enters into the tunnel. The blond ninja keeps himself from frowning at her approach. *Guess I get to tie her up and continue waiting.* Naruto thinks as Faith studies Naruto.

Faith had cursed when that demon had stated that he didn't have the books on him, that he left them with a summoned guardian and that unless she pays him the money, she won't be getting the books. When pressed concerning what the guardian was, the guy had simply answered, "I wanted somebody with a lot of fire power but wouldn't draw attention to itself. Capable of using forces beyond our

knowing but doesn't have any interest in the books or in staying in this world for longer then it has too."

This kid doesn't look like he fulfills any of those points. Kind of cute, in a clueless way too. Faith muses as she stops not far from where the blond is sitting.

"I'm here for the books." Faith tells Naruto. "Your friend got his money and left."

"Lair. Guess he never told you that he has to be with you to get them from me. Killed him, didn't you?" Naruto states, he watches for a minor flinch upon him accusing her of killing the client, it seems he guessed right and that means he'll have to find somebody else to send him home.

Faith doesn't respond, going straight at the blond but within a few steps, she finds herself laying down upon the tunnel's floor with the supposed sitting blond resting upon her back. "What just happened?" Faith wonders out loud as she feels something begin to loop around her captive arms.

"I'm tying you up, that's what happened." The blond states and Faith wiggles about, trying to get her arms free. But it seems as though this summoned guy is more then strong enough to hold her.

Naruto raises a slight eyebrow at how much more stronger the girl is then what he expects. Naruto isn't worried, the wire he's using is plenty strong enough to hold under the forces that Faith is exerting upon it. The ninja gets up off the slayer and moves to sit back down.

While Naruto muses about what to do now, Faith tries to break the bonds holding her arms only to discover that they were holding up pretty good against her slayer strength. Finally, after a while, Faith stops trying to break her bonds to get into a sitting position. "Gee, I didn't know that kids your age are into bondage."

Naruto snorts as he glances over to the siting slayer. "Personally, I'm more interested in seeing two girls wrestle about in mud then whips and chains. But then, I did train under a super-pervert who's into writing porn. Best selling porn, sure, but still porn." Naruto says to Faith before forming a hand sign.

To Faith's surprise, she watches as another ten blonds appear and then take off out of the tunnel. "How did you do that?" Faith asks and Naruto just smirks.

"That's a secret." Naruto answers before glances out of the tunnel. Naruto's curious about this town, he had only seen small parts of it while following that horned twitchy guy.

"You know, he's dead and that means you're sure ticket home is gone." Faith says, deciding to try a different tactic. "The mayor likely has the resources to send you home."

Naruto snorts and glances over to Faith. "Hence why I'm sure as in hell won't be giving them to the mayor. I might be a mercenary but even I have some standards. If your mayor was so great, he would have given you the money and you would have the books instead of getting your arms tied. Twitchy would have left and I would be back home enjoying my ramen." Naruto informs Faith, he notices the look of surprise concerning what he's revealed.

"Just what are you?" Faith asks and the blond replies, "I'm the number one most surprising maverick ninja of the Hidden Leaf village. Uzumaki Naruto, believe it!"

"You're suppose to be a ninja?" Faith asks in disbelief and Naruto nods. "But your wearing orange."

"Yea, yea, yea, so what? It's a great color!" Naruto growls, crossing his arms while studying Faith with slightly narrow eyes.

Faith just frowns while she continues to work upon whatever it was that's holding her arms together while scowling at the seemingly

younger teen. Naruto just ignores Faith as he waits for a clone to dispel so he can inherit its knowledge.

"Damn it!" Faith curses after a few minutes, she felt whatever it was that the blond use cut into a finger of her's. The slayer tries to press her fingers over said finger to try and stop the bleeding.

Naruto just shakes his head. Then suddenly, the blood perks up as memories come flowing into his mind. Naruto frowns at the memory of how the clone 'died'. *Stupid cat...*

Naruto waits some more to receive another clone's memories as the previous one had gotten distracted by investigating a noise and found a dead body being devoured by a feral cat. Just thinking about made the blond's stomach quinsy. *Still, who leaves a dead body laying about so carelessly?*

"Well, I'm bore." Faith states after she's done counting the number of pipes hanging above their head. "So..."

"It's not my job to entertain ya, you know." Naruto remarks to Faith. "How goes your attempts to get out of that wire coming along?"

"You used wire to tie me up?" Faith asks, surprised at the fact she's having so much trouble find a thin string of metal. "What is it, enchanted or something?"

"Enchanted? Nay, just a minor bit of chakra used to strength it for a few hours." Naruto explains dismissively. *Most ninja empower their limbs with chakra to disrupt the chakra in the wire though. Guess this shows that she doesn't know how to use it.*

"Chakra, huh? Sounds like your an aura mage." Faith muses, she had read Gold Digger a few times.

"Huh? What's an aura mage?" Naruto asks.

"You know, chakras as in the energies of the body that make up your aura." Faith says, she had done some reading and the slayer is fairly confident she knew what the blond means.

"Chakra is what ya get from mixing your spiritual energy with your physical energy. Hand signs help mix the two in certain ways to craft a jutsu." Naruto explains. "Sometimes your body gets so use to crafting a certain jutsu that you don't even need to form all of the hand signs or any at all."

Faith frowns as she tries to wrap her head around this particular idea. *Sounds useful, but how do you get the two to mix though... I doubt I'll be capable of mimicking it, might be something unique to do with him coming from a different world. A trick his brand of humans created or evolved to handle.*

Faith wasn't much into book smarts but that doesn't mean she didn't have an education. The young slayer also picked things up more quickly when it fancied her. She just doesn't like to discuss or show off what she knows.

Naruto's head goes to the main tunnel as he gets another clone's set of memories. "What the hell? Don't these guys have better things to do then to patrol for kids skipping school?" The blond ninja wonders out loud but decided he knew enough to head out on his own.

"See ya." Naruto says to Faith as he picks up the leather bag holding the five volumes. "Do watch for those water beetles, they grow rather big down here." Naruto adds in a cheerful tone, he uses the substitution jutsu with a rather large stone, vanishing from Faith's sight.

Faith curses as the guardian leaves with the books, not paying any heed to the rock that appeared when Naruto vanished. *And now he's got a running start. This was suppose to be easy, damn it!*

As he gets to the exit, the blond uses Henge jutsu to look a few years older as well as alter his hair, eye, and get rid of his whisker

marks upon his cheeks. With a slight smile, he leaves the underground tunnel and emerge out onto the surface.

Few Hours Later

It had taken a lot of time before he finally got the information he needed concerning the local good guys. Naruto just scowls at that sigh, welcoming him to the local high school. The blond continues on his way while wondering what to do with the information concerning Faith betraying this group.

Regardless, Naruto's pretty sure that they would be the safest bet to take these books off his hands. Sure, they might not be able to send him home, but they can at least give him some of the local currency to pay somebody to send him home.

Naruto finds a pair of men in the library. The two suddenly straighten and turn to face him. "You got the money or not? One of your slayers killed my client and I'll be needing that money to find somebody to send me home." The blond tells the two flatly.

"Buffy did what?" The elderly looking man says and Naruto just shakes his head. "Nay, the other one, the girl in black leather. I believe she mentioned bondage during our little run in along with wanting the books for the mayor. Even tried to claimed the books but I'm only suppose to hand them over if the guy was with her."

"You have the books?" The tight ass vibe guy asks and he takes the strap off his shoulder and tosses the leather bag onto the table. The tight ass one moves to take inventory of the books.

"Twitchy wouldn't have summoned me just to have me watch fake books." Naruto points out as he moves to take a seat upon one of the various chairs. "Now answer the question! Do you or don't you have the money?"

Tight ass tries to snub him while explaining why they should have to pay him while the older one is already reading one of the books after

putting their glasses on. "The price is rather high..."

"And yet there are people willing to kill for them. Whatever price twitchy had asked for seems rather reasonable concerning they got him killed." Naruto cuts in, he never liked those oh so tightly whined hard asses. "It's either pay me the money or send me home."

Tight ass clearly didn't enjoy Naruto's tone as the blond levels the guy a look. The ninja just crosses his arms over his chest while kicking his feet up onto the table. In the end, the tight ass looks away first and mutters something about getting on that right away.

During the minor interview Wesley, AKA tight ass, asks him for details concerning his summoning and what answers he manage to get out of twitchy, AKA Skyler, when he confronted the demon, that kind of surprised Naruto since twitchy hadn't been... well, hadn't been scary or very powerful.

"I got the donuts..." Xander enters into the library to find a blond teen sitting at the table, feet up on the table and Wesley seemingly attending the kid. Xander glances over at Giles and finds that the ex-watcher reading a tome, he also spies another four volumes upon the table along with a leather bag.

"It's always nice to have more color in here." Xander says thoughtlessly, oddly very aware of the cloths the bright blond is wearing.

Naruto grins a bit at the newly arrived teen. "You wouldn't believe how many people seem to dis orange." The genin remarks. "'What an eyesore! You should try blues and greys.' 'Naruto you idiot! Orange isn't a ninja color!' 'Sorry but we're here on a mission. Now get out of that hideous jumpsuit so we can burn it by order of the Hokage.'"

Xander couldn't help but chuckle, already liking the new guy even though the idea that the kid was a ninja kind of seems... hard to believe but with a mental shrug, he rolled with it since he's seen and

witness stranger events. "My sympathies. None of my friends have taken it that far as of yet, but in a few years... Who knows?"

The donuts are placed upon the table after Naruto moves his feet off. "I'm Xander." Xander says to the blond.

"Naruto, Uzumaki Naruto." Naruto replies to Xander as the older teen takes a seat at the table.

"So... Read any good books lately?" Xander asks the younger teen. Naruto snorts softly as he reaches for the box, he hadn't had much to eat during his time in this world.

Summer

"Well, there he goes..." Buffy muses and the other Scoobies nod in agreement. The ink upon the ground seems to vanish seconds after the shimmering portal closes after the blond ninja entered it, returning home.

"I'm going to miss him. He really knew how to liven things up around here." Xander says. "I mean, those toads he could summon were something, weren't they? Talked too."

The two girls shiver slightly, neither minding said critter but when something gets to a certain size... "Toads should never grow that big."

"I wonder who would win in a fight, that boss toad or Godzilla?" Xander wonders while Oz replies, "Godzilla."

"Oh, I wouldn't be so quick to pick. I mean, that boss was welding a dagger, never seen a flesh Kaiju use one of those before." Xander says as the group wanders towards the town. "Plus, that toad had serious jumping power! He could get out of Godzilla's blast range with a single hop."

The End

Curse of the Digital Hazard: Digimon

I don't own Digimon!

Damn it! Fourteen year old Takato Matsuki thinks as he weaves between bystanders with surprising agility while not slowing down at all. The teen notices the upcoming walk light beginning to flash red and Takato manages to charge across before the lights change, the teen returns to his previous looping pace.

As Takato rounds the corner, within a few feet of the gate, the teen suddenly senses a familiar phenomenon and manages to stops a few inches from a water balloon flying to where the red hazel eyed teen would have been if he hadn't stopped. Takato's aware that his nostrils flared a bit as the balloon hits the wall to his right before the teen glances over to a lamp post where his usual stalker is standing with a displeased look upon their face.

With a shrug, Takato continues to the gate and just manages to enter the class building when the buzzer sounds. *Another normal day in the life of Takato Matsuki.* The fourteen year old thinks while sighing as Takato hurriedly walks through the halls of learning, hoping that the teacher is running late as usual, so that he's not marked late.

Takato feels the tension in his shoulders give as he enters into the classroom to find that the teacher has yet to arrive. The teen just manages to get his books out of his book bag when the door opens and their teacher enters. Mr Kawahira stalks over to the desk and after placing his business suit case upon the desk, begins roll call.

You would think he would have found a place outside of Shinijuku during the summer break. Ah well, just means that my tardiness will continue not to be recorded. Takato thinks as he gets ready for the review.

This semester is only two weeks old and yet, Takato finds that few things have changed from the previous year. His father is still dead, his mom is still struggling to come to terms with his father's death, Digimon were still crossing over into their world, causing havoc and panic in the world, centered mostly in West Shinjuku, and, of course, Takato's still cursed.

Takato mentally pushes such thoughts out of his mind, trying to focus on his teacher's lecture and following along with the on going questions. By the end of class, Takato's ears ring slightly and the teen glances out of the window for a few seconds after the ringing stops. Takato glances away to hurry to copy down the assigned reading.

Henry

"This is the eleventh one in the last two weeks... Just how do these canine Digimon manage to crossover?" Kenta wonders as the latest canine themed Digimon, a Gaogamon, is trying to turn Kazu's partner, Guadromon, into a metal chew toy.

"They also always crossover here in this tunnel." Kazu points out while Henry bites his lower lip as Terriermon moves from taunting the blue furred champion Digimon to attacking in the form of a head butt. "I mean, that dug out room has been filled in since spring break and yet, that doesn't seem to stop them at all!" Kazu complains, again, about that room they discovered just a week prior to it being filled in.

Where's the Ice Queen when you need her? Henry wonders with a sigh. The teenage Tamer hates sending Terriermon out to battle Digimon who have crossover into their world. Terriermon continues to be rather out of control when he's in his champion form of Gargomon, even after everything they went through with the Devas and the D-Reaper.

Out of all the Tamers, Terriermon and Henry were the only ones who have yet to achieve ultimate. Akito, Rika, Ryo, and, surprisingly enough, Suzie can Bio Merge with their partners to become megas.

Henry continues to beat himself up about Suzie getting involved with Digimon, the teen knew that he should have watched her more closely that day, when the others were preparing to enter into that portal Akito's partner, Shamanmon, had predicted to appear in the park for them to enter into the Digital world.

Henry shakes his head, trying to dismiss those useless thoughts. The partner of Terriermon's tries to focus on delay tactics while they wait for either Akito or Rika to show. Ryo has vanished into the wilds of the Digital World, looking for the reason for the ease of which canine themed Digimon can enter into the real world.

"Waking Dream!" Tapirmon, partner to Jeri, declares, signally Jeri's arrival on the scene. The blue furred Digimon bellow out in rage and surprise while Jeri waves over at them from her position.

"Bone Blast!" This attack hits Gaogamon squarely in the head. SkullSatamon muses, "Bone taking out a dog, it never gets old."

Henry rolls his eyes as Gaogamon is transformed into particles of data, vanishing into the air. SkullSatamon lands and within seconds, transforms into Shamanmon. Akito arrives and goes into a quick walk while glancing around at the damages their current fight has caused.

Henry walks over to where Terriermon had been sent flying. "He's gone, isn't he?" Terriermon asks him and Henry nods.

"SkullSatamon got Gaogamon with one attack." Henry says as he cradles Terriermon. *And once more, he's hurt because of me and my fears.* Henry thinks and then shutters as a flash from his time in the D-Reaper flares up before vanishing.

Will I ever get over my time inside of that thing? Can I ever be forgiven for what I had caused Terriermon to become? Henry wonders while the other Tamers socialize not that far from Terriermon and him.

Henry turns to watch them, trying to focus on what they're doing instead of what he's feeling. But, once again, Henry feels like an outsider, that he doesn't really belong. True, Akito and him had become friends at the beginning but that friendship had become strained when Henry refused to allow Terriermon to fight, even when it's clear that Akito and Rika could have used the help.

Henry begins to head to school once more while carrying Terriermon in his arms. The partner of Terriermon leaves without saying anything to his fellows, more then a little lost in his memories.

Takato

"So, yous out for the day?" Impmon asks as the teen walks out of the gates. Water dripping from his hair and cloths.

"You set off the sprinklers." Takato states in a matter of fact tone while Impmon walks upon the wall, following the red hazel eye teen out of all of the teens leaving school early. All of them wet from the rookie setting off the sprinklers.

Since Takato didn't possess a Digivice, nobody can prove that Impmon was his partner, which means that he's doesn't receive any blame for anything Impmon does. There isn't anything he can do concerning the fact that the virus rookie seems to follow him around. "Shouldn't you be goofing off in West Shinijuku this week?"

The imp like rookie just flickers his hand in dismissal. "Pff, why should I leave when I'm having blast without anyone trying to tell me not ta?" Impmon states and Takato moves his bangs so they don't drop over his face.

"Or worry about a 'Wild One' showing up and absorbing you." Takato remarks. "Isn't it time for you to find yourself a human partner? You've been wandering about without one for about three years now."

"Hey! I'm no Digi-Pet Poodle! I'm a free spirit, ya know! I don't like being chain to anyone or anything!" Impmon snaps and Takato had to bite his tongue to keep from remarking about how the rookie seems to be 'chained' to him since that night at the tunnel.

But then, he doesn't really see me as a human, just a Digimon wearing the skin of one. But then, he's clearly desperate for companionship and just wants me to be a Digimon since he doesn't think he can be friends with humans without gaining a Tamer. Takato thinks as they cross the street after Impmon leaps off the wall. *But then, I'm not sure I'm exactly human either.*

"So, ya going to... you know, tonight? Again?" Impmon asks Takato as they enter a strip mall that's about four blocks from Takato's school. They enter into the grocery store so Takato can pick up a few items, quick dinners for when his mom is working late shifts and doesn't have time to cook anything for supper.

"Impmon..." Takato sighs, shaking his head slightly as he considers what kind of juice that he wants to drink while the rookie has already picked up a bottle. "Once a week is more then enough for me. You do recall what I did in that room in the tunnel, don't you?"

Impmon snorts while tosses another bottle into his basket. "Don't see why your so scared, it's not like ya ever hurt anyone during those times." The rookie tells the teen. "So your emotions were raw back then, big deal, it's different now a days."

"I dug a path way into the Digital World!" Takato hisses softly, knowing full well that the Digimon can hear that. "I'm not even sure if we sealed it up right!"

"Pff, not our problem now is it? Yous don't live in West Shinijuku anymore nor do ya seem to return to visit any of your old friends either." The little virus remarks as they move away from the fridge and freezer section.

Takato sighs, knowing that Impmon is right about that. Both Kazu and Kenta had returned from the Digital World with partners of their own. Ever since Akito showed up at summer camp with Shamanmon, the two fans had hung about Akito, wanting to be part of whatever adventure their classmate would likely have.

Jeri also came back with a partner too. I thought she was hoping to partner up with that Leomon that saved her from that rat Deva... Takato reflects as he picks up some instant noodles.

"It's not as though we were still close by the time my mom decided to move out of West Shinijuku. They were busy with everything that happened concerning the D-Reaper and the deaths that occurred from the rampaging BlackMegaGargomon." The teen recalls while Impmon tosses in a few cans of pickled mango.

"Yea, I remember that, who knew the little mouthy guy had it in him to be such a loose cannon?" Impmon muses as they move towards can soups. "Kind of surprised that Henry ended up being that thing's brain, though."

Takato recalls the aloof Tamer, he hadn't known Henry Wong a back then but didn't really blame the Tamer for the death of his dad or for all of those people that died because of Terriermon's corrupt evolution going amok in the city, after the D-Reaper made itself known in the Real World. Takato did blame the D-Reaper and the Sovereign Digimon known as Zhuqiaomon for forcing Calumon back into the Digital World since, the way he hears it, the D-Reaper woke because the light of Digital Evolution had returned to the Digital World once more.

"Yes, well, I think if they found that room, they'd be able to close it. I mean, they're professionals aren't they? They must run into things like that all the time." Takato says, returning to the safer topic about the room where he dug into the Digital World.

"Ya would think so, wouldn't ya?" Impmon muses as they walk over to the cashier. "Bet ya a few of these noodles that they don't know

the first thing of closing that place up beyond filling it in."

Takato didn't reply as he's a bit busy emptying the basket onto the counter while the cashier is nervously glancing at Impmon. The cashier's uneasy didn't hamper him in the slightest as the young teen pays for the stuff using his debit card and leaving with Impmon trailing behind him with a tiny ball of fire hovering over one of Impmon's fingers and traveling in between the other fingers upon that hand before returning to the first one.

Takato's more then a little relieved that the rookie hadn't done anything more then play around with that little fireball. The teen has enough problems then getting booted out of another store because of the antics of said rookie Digimon. Neither of them spoke as they walk away from the strip mall.

"Yous ever wonder what would happen if ya bite somebody? Or donate blood?" Impmon asks Takato and the young teen glances down at the Digimon walking a few steps before him on his left.

"I really, really don't want to think about it. If this... condition of mine mimics then..." Takato trails off, he often loses nights worth of sleep imagining what could happen if he ever passed on his condition.

There were two of them, that night. One was white while the other one was black... Takato thinks before shying away from that night's memories. The teen could almost feel where the black one had scratched him in the back, even now it's a wonder that Takato's back remains fine even though it should be broken, forcing him into a wheel chair.

"Let's not talk about it, ok? It's not something I like to think about. Besides, it's suppose to be a secret." Takato points out to Impmon as they head for home, the apartment that Takato's mother had them move into after they returned from staying with their relatives who continue to live upon an island not far from Japan.

It was one of the few times that Impmon and Takato had been separated for more then a month's time. It also marked Takato's experiment in trying to control his condition so he doesn't get found out since Impmon wasn't around to keep him entertained during those few nights in which he was transformed. Takato had been so bored during those night that they stayed upon the island.

"Feh." Impmon says with a shrug while the rookie holds his gloved hands together, summoning a fireball in the space between them. Takato smiles slightly at the sight. *Somethings never seem to change...*

Henry

"Have you seen this Digimon?" Henry looks up from the card game going on between Rika and Kazu. The Tamer finds a pair of seven year olds, one boy and one girl, holding up a drawing of a certain rookie known for being a troublemaker.

"You're looking for Impmon? Why are you looking for that troublemaker?" Kazu asks while Maro, Akito's younger sister arrives along with Henry's own sister and Suzie's partner, Lopmon.

"What about Impmon? Has he been seen causing trouble again?" Maro asks as the two glance over at Rika, after all, Renamon is the only one who seems to be able to locate the imp Digimon before the virus rookie caused trouble.

"He hasn't shown up as of yet, but he's due to show up soon." Renamon says, appearing out of the shadow of the nearest tree. Henry watches as the fox rookie vanish back into the shadow.

"When he shows up, could you tell him that Ai and Mako are looking for him? We feel really, really bad about how we treated him and we would have tried to find him sooner but our parents only recently returned to West Shinijuku." The girl, Ai, says and Henry sighs, he knows why their parents didn't want to return but likely came back to their old jobs when they offered pay raises and other perks.

"Perhaps you can leave us an address to pass along to him?" Jeri suggests. The two's eyes light up and it wasn't long before they have the address of Ai and Mako.

Henry watches as the two leave and wonders just what kind of history Impmon has with the pair. "So that imp doesn't have one Tamer, but two." Terriermon muses while perched upon his head.

"I wonder where Impmon goes when he's not hanging around the park or causing us trouble." Kenta wonders as Kazu let's out a cry of dismay, signally that once more, the Ice Queen wins the game. Henry figures that the only reason Rika ever goes up against any of them is because its the only outlet of violence Rika allows herself when dealing with her fellow Tamers.

Rika doesn't seem to consider any of them her friends, associates yes, friends no. Shamanmon seems to be the only one Rika likes to spend time with outside of Renamon's company. Henry glances over to the goblin like Digimon to find that the rookie seems to sport a far away look while looking off in the distance before Shamanmon snaps out of it to glance back at Henry before glancing over towards Rika.

Henry frowns, the partner of Terriermon couldn't help but wonder what vision the viral rookie just experienced.

Shamanmon

The viral rookie known as Shamanmon had just glimpsed the most feared symbol in the Digital World, worst then those belonging to the demon lords and Yggdrasil, almost akin to the D-Reaper. The upside down triangle inside of a circle and three triangles at each point of the upside down triangle of the Digital Hazard. It was a symbol Shamanmon is only too familiar with since he saw the image whenever the Digimon was within the tunnel and whenever Shamanmon glances at Impmon.

The virus Digimon didn't understand how it was that this rarely seen force seems to be found here in this Real World. Shamanmon knew that there were other human worlds out there, it's hard not to when Shamanmon is connected to the Digital World a bit more then most species of Digimon. *Why do I see the ghostly touches whenever I look upon Henry and Rika? What purpose does the Hazard have for them?*

As usual, no answers come to Shamanmon as the spiritually aware virus rookie watches as Henry moves to take Kazu's place, after some prompting from Akito and Suzie, across from Rika. Shamanmon knew that Henry continues to struggle with what happened with the D-Reaper and with Terriermon's seemingly uncontrolled state upon Digivolving beyond rookie level.

Rika, too, has problems, problems that concern with connecting with people beyond her own partner and family. Shamanmon is at a lost at how to break through Rika's emotional walls but knew that somebody, preferably a human, had to get through to her. There had been a time when Shamanmon thought Jeri was the one but other then Rika being more tolerant of the other girl, nothing.

I can't help but wonder if Henry's and Rika's problems are connected. As if somebody was suppose to be addressing their problems... If that's so, then where is this missing link? Shamanmon wonders as the rookie watches Henry and Rika play their game. The impression of the Hazard upon the two seem to grown whenever those two interact with each other.

Takato

Takato couldn't help but feel alert when the young teen watches as this squad of five Pteramon fly over the street as he's heading to school. Takato slows down to stand still as the hazel eyed teen follows the squad, Takato can feel others around him were as well. *What are they doing this far from Shinijuku?*

Suddenly, Takato glances off to a roof top just in time to watch the infamous partner of the Digimon Queen sporting said teenager upon their back leap between buildings. Takato swallows at sight of the two, the Tamer and her partner lands upon the ground while the five armor Digimon begin to circle over head

Chaos begins to explode around Takato as people begin to realize that a battle between the squad and the pair is about to happen here, outside of Shinijuku. As the girl, Rika, climbs off of the DIgital kyuubi fox's back, Takato fights to stay where he is, heart beating faster then it usually does. Takato knew that if he moved, it wouldn't be away from the fight but towards it.

Takato's senses seem to sharpen causing everything around him to seem more in focus then it was just seconds ago. Takato closes his eyes just as he picks up the cry, "Dragon Wheel!" Takato mentally struggles to calm himself down.

Don't change, don't change, don't change, don't change, don't change... Takato mentally chants to himself as a battle rages less then a mile from where he's standing. It didn't matter that Takato couldn't see it, the teen could feel the power belonging to the six Digimon before him.

The sounds of the fleeing people, including drivers, become mute against the sounds of the raging battle. Five voices ring out in unison, "Missile Storm!"

"Rika!" The fox cries out and Takato's eyes snap open, not even glancing at the flying Digimon but at the teenager, the Tamer. Takato's heart seems to thunder within his chest as Takato is moving, not away from the battle but towards the point of the incoming attack.

Takato manages to get between the attack and the red head. "Rika!" The fox bellows as the missiles impact all around Takato and the girl Tamer, the famous Digimon Queen, recently dubbed the Ice Queen of Shinijuku.

Takato blacks out as something tears into his back.

Rika

Rika dimly hears and feels Renamon as the missiles impact around her. Before Rika is a boy sporting real red hazel eyes, the same color the fictional character Kari sports in the two seasons, not that Rika will ever admit to having watched both seasons from beginning to end, she has a reputation after all...

The eyes focus into Rika's own and she watches as the light in them goes dull as blood explodes from her protector's back. Rika soon finds herself holding the other teen's full weight as the boy collapses down upon her, the force from behind him causing the boy to hit Rika and pin her to the sidewalk. Rika pulls herself out from under the teen's weight and gets her first glimpse of the other teen's back.

Rika notices blood oozing out of this seemingly freshly carved symbol upon the teen's back. The jacket and shirt didn't survive the missiles impacting them but for some odd reason, that seems to be the only evidence of the squad of Digimon attacks touching her protector. *Focus, this isn't the time for hysterics! Deal with those Pteramon first and then with him.*

Rika gently as she could, move the rest of the teen off of her before standing up. Rika draws a card from her card holder and by the time it came within the red head's vision range, it had been transformed into a blue card. Within seconds, Taomon makes her appearance while Rika takes out her cell phone and reports that there's an injured teen, it took Rika a few seconds to find the street numbers.

As Rika grabs the boy's book bag to press down upon the guy's back, help in the form of Jeri, Kenta, and their partners arrive. Surprisingly, MarineAngemon comes right to where Rika and the bleeding teen are. As the tiny pink mega moves to land upon the teen's back, Taomon finishes off the currently solo member of the squad.

"What happened?" Jeri asks and Rika numbly answers, "He saved my life."

Neither of the other two Tamers pressed for details while Rika just keeps applying pressure upon the boy's back. The tag upon the book bag displays the fallen teen's school ID and Rika studies the face of her rescuer, one Takato Matsuki, age fourteen.

Takato

Slowly, Takato comes to his senses. The fourteen year old feels that his back aches and that its hard for him to focus his mind. Takato dimly realizes that he's not home in bed but either is he at school in the nurse's office, there had been a few times where Impmon's attempts at catching him off guard has resulted in some type of bodily injury, not that it affects Takato for long, just a few days at the most and about eight hours in the least.

"Takato, honey? You should try and get some more sleep. You lost a lot of blood." Takato's mom says as she arrives within his line of sight.

"Huh?" Takato wonders, it's unusually for Impmon to use anything that would cause him serious harm. The rookie prefers water guns over fireballs, water balloons over water guns, and buckets filled with stuff upon carefully arranged doorway traps over water balloons.

"You got in the way of an incoming missile attack that was heading for a Tamer. Her partner couldn't move in time to block her but you did." Takato's mom explains while moving his bangs from his forehead and then stroking his head.

"You're very lucky that those missiles hadn't done more then cause cuts upon your back. I don't know what I would do if I lost you." Takato hears his mom say and could see tears welling up in her eyes.

Takato flushes and mentally curses at himself for causing his mom to cry. They had moved out of West Shinijuku not just because of what happened to Takato's father, but because his mother didn't want to lose him to a Digimon as well. Takato moves to gently squeeze his mom's hand before giving into his exhaustion and falling back to sleep.

Takato wakes to find something weighing down upon his chest. Takato takes a deep breath before yawning. As Takato waits for his eyes to focus, the fourteen year old could very well guess who it was upon him.

"Impmon." Takato makes to croak and the viral rookie snorts. "You're standing on my chest, aren't you?" The red hazel eyed teen asks.

"Feh, like that's really hurting ya." Impmon answers before the rookie leaps over onto the nearest chair. "Yous such an idiot, yea know? Charging in between a Tamer and an incoming attack, an attack from five Digimon no less!"

Takato smiles slightly at the glare the rookie sends his way. "No even stoppin' to change! Just showin' up in ya human skin to protect some icy broad of a red head! Yous be thanking ya lucky stars that nothing got seriously hurt! Heck, they're passing off the lack of damage as some kind of force field springing up out of Rika's gadget to minimize the damage!" Impmon informs the bed ridden teen.

"Really?" Takato asks and Impmon nods, the teen is kind of fuzzy about what happened but Takato kind of recalls getting pretty close to the famous Digimon Queen, more like within a mile then within a few feet. "It's all so blurry."

Silence hangs between them as Takato slowly begins to drift back to sleep. Takato's back still aches but the teen found it to be a manageable ache. "What time is it?" Takato asks after a while.

"Clock says it's three in the afternoon." Impmon tells Takato. "Ya mom had to leave for work. Seems they want to keep ya overnight.

Just to make sure there's no side affect."

Takato just hums thoughtfully. After a while, Impmon fetches a familiar book, one that he carries with him since Impmon wants to know how it ends. It wasn't all that odd for Takato to read to the rookie, it was something familiar and Takato's honestly pretty bored and didn't feel like trying to sleep.

Henry

Henry pauses at the sound of somebody reading. Almost as a reflect, the partner of Terriermon puts a hand over his partner's mouth while slowly approaching the curtain drawn spot where the teen, Takato Matsuki, is suppose to be staying at. Henry gets slow and peers through a small slit in the curtains to find Impmon sitting on a chair while a brunet teenager reads out loud from a paperback book entitled RedWall.

Henry feels Terriermon silently snicker at the scene before them while Henry couldn't help but wonder about what Impmon is doing here. Last Henry had heard, the imp didn't particularly like humans and continues to refer to their partners as Digi-Pets. *They didn't find a D-Arc on Takato either so he's not a Tamer... So why is Impmon visiting this teen?*

Terriermon finally wiggles out from under his hand to say, "Gee, Impmon, I never knew you could be so civil with a human."

Takato stops reading to glance up at them while Impmon leaps to his feet with a growl. "It's none of ya business whos I hang out with. It just so happens Takato's a very tolerable human." The other rookie snaps defensively at Terriermon.

Henry sighs while glancing between Impmon and Terriermon, the canine type rookie had already launched himself from Henry's shoulder and lands on the chair next to the wall, opposite of Impmon. "Terriermon." Henry says in a warning tone, he rather not have Impmon tossing around fireballs.

"Impmon..." Takato says while glancing over at the viral rookie. When Terriermon snickers, Takato gives the green colored rookie a disapproving look and surprisingly, Terriermon seems embarrassed and slightly guilty under the other teen's look.

Henry's a bit surprise by his partner's reaction. It's then that Henry notices the color of Takato's eyes. *How odd...* Henry thinks while staring into those red hazel eyes. It brings to mind a certain cartoon character who was also a Digidestine, Kari Kamiya, partner to a Gatomon.

Henry looks away from the other's eyes, slightly unnerved by the comparison since during the first season, Kari was the missing Digidestine, the one they were looking for. "You're Henry Wong, aren't you?" Takato asks and Henry nods.

"I am." Henry feels the stirrings of guilt and self-loathing. Henry could only imagine what the teen had to say to him.

"I thought you'd be taller." Takato admits and Impmon snickers softly. Henry couldn't help but start stare Takato, pretty confused by Takato's comment since it wasn't something he's use to hearing.

Henry shakes his head slightly while Takato looks faintly embarrassed. "Sorry, it's just, you do have a reputation after..." Takato glances over at Terriermon before glancing back at Henry.

"Not one I'm proud of." Henry admits and Takato nods. "You seems kind of familiar..." Henry finally says while studying Takato a bit more.

"Use to hang out with Kazu and Kenta before my mom sold the bakery and moved us out here." Takato explains and Henry nods, it's been a while and the memory kind of hazy but yea, Henry did seem to recall a third kid hanging around with those two before the pair started to follow after Akito. "I haven't stayed in touch with either of them."

"Well, I got better things to do and foods to eat. Be seeing ya later, Takato." Impmon says suddenly and Henry watches as the rookie leaves.

"See you later, Impmon." Takato says and Impmon just waves a hand. Henry shakes his head, kind of stunned by the change in Impmon's attitude then what he's experienced in the past.

"You know, we really should have given him that address." Terriermon pipes in and Henry stiffens before groaning slightly. He had forgotten all about that as Henry found himself a bit perplex about the idea that Impmon was visiting a human without trying to prank or taunt them.

"Address?" Takato asks curiously and Terriermon answers, "Momentai! Just a pair of kids looking to reconcile with the guy."

"Really? Maybe you should leave it with me and I'll give it to him. I'll likely see him tomorrow, after I get out." Takato admits.

"You seem to be pretty good friends." Henry observes and Takato replies, "We got to know each other back when we were still living in West Shinijuku. See him around the park, use to take him some of our day pastries."

"Huh?" Terriermon asks and Takato explains, "My parents use to own and operate a bakery there. Mom sold the business after the D-Reaper incident was concluded."

"It's just you and your mom then?" Henry asks and Takato nods. "I'm sorry." Henry adds and Takato waves is off.

"I blame the D-Reaper and that fire-bird of a Sovereign then you or Terriermon for what happened to my dad." Takato states. "You two didn't create that program nor did you force that little guy, Calumon, back into the Digital World. You just got caught up in the middle of something larger then you expected. Like the rest of the world."

Oddly enough, Henry felt like something lighten a bit by what Takato, a stranger to him, had said. The others all said something along those lines but hearing it from somebody who Henry barely knew... "So I've been told." Henry admits and Terriermon just says, "Momentai! See, not everyone thinks it's your fault for what happened!"

Takato seems to glance between Terriermon and Henry for a few seconds while Henry just sighs. "You still feel guilty for what happened? It's been little over two years since it happened. That's a pretty long time to be stewing about it, isn't it?" Takato wonders and Henry just looks away.

"You know, I'm really beginning to like you, Takato! If you can't listen to any of us, why don't you listen to him? I mean, he just got attacked by a bunch of Digimon and he's not bitter about it!" Terriermon points out and Henry sighs, he just didn't know what to think.

As Terriermon and Takato converse, Henry just watches the pair for a few minutes until Takato asks, "How about you, Henry? What's your favorite character in Bleach?"

Henry kind of blinks at Takato while Terriermon snorts. "Earth calling Henry. You really shouldn't space out on us, ya know."

"Sorry." Henry says before asking, "Could you repeat the question?"

It's been a while since Henry found himself just hanging out with anybody beyond Terriermon or the other Tamers, although with the Tamers, Henry mostly just listens and observes more then participate in their activities beyond playing Digimon the card game.

Going to end it here

Digital Split: MegaMan NT

I don't own Digimon or Mega Man Battle Network!

Lan Hikari

Age: **8**

He loves his dad but there were times where he would like to be hold his father's attention for more then five or fifteen minutes. As the vehicle leaves with his father within it, he feels oddly numb; not feeling angry or sad. His mom squeezes his shoulders gently before stirring him back into the house and to the breakfast table.

He bites his lower lip as he seats himself at the table while mom seems to be gathering up dad's dishes. It occurs to him, suddenly, that his mom didn't like the fact that dad left for an emergency at the company instead of insisting that his underlings or fellow co-workers deal with it without him. It takes him a few seconds to think of how to distract his mom, cause he didn't want his mom to be sad.

"Are we going grocery shopping?" He asks before putting something in his mouth and chewing it. His mom pauses and thinks about it for a few seconds while staring at him before nodding. He smiles a bit; although he admits that it's not fair that his birthday falls on a no school day since if it were a school day, he'd be too busy to think about the fact that his dad is at work instead of being around.

As they leave the house, he glances towards a picture of his dad and suddenly, he found himself wishing, *I wish I had a dad who was around more and can be a dad.*

Then he feels guilty about wishing that and is more then glad to hurry out of the house as the alarm is counting down.

Later

Stupid beeping... He thinks as he rubs his eyes while walking towards his dad's home office. *If this keeps up, it'll wake mom up.*

He turns the door knob and enters into the small room that contains like two book cases filled with books. The desk is kind of old looking, it supposedly belonged to his twice great granddad or something, so it's pretty massive. He gets onto the chair, it's newer then the desk, and turns on the monitor.

As it comes online, the screen if filled with ones and zeros. They over lap each other as lines move from either right to left or left to right to up to down or down to up. The background is black with the various sequences of code being either white or a dull yellow. He couldn't make heads nor tales of the binary codes going about the screen, but then, that could be cause of how overlapping it all is.

Scratching the side of his head, he just gets dizzy of the lot, so he tries to turn off the monitor... only to find that the little light turned off but the ones and zeros remain. Frowning, he continues to press the button and the little light turns on but that's it. He presses it a few more times but nothing happened to the numbers so he tries to turn off the computer.

He presses it and as he glances up at the screen, the numbers begins to glow before a bright light flares up from the screen, blinding him for a few minutes. Even when his vision is regained, he finds it hard to believe what he's seeing upon the screen. He pinches himself and just causes himself to ache in that spot while the image upon the screen remains unchanged.

He turns his head this way and that but the image seems to remain the same no matter how he views it. With a hum, he decides to try something on the keyboard and jumps a bit as moving the mouse seems to cause the planet spin. A point also appears upon the screen and he points it at some spot on the planet.

He clicks and watches as the image of the planet seems to rush at him, giving him a better view of that part of the virtual planet.

Bafflement and curiosity causes him to experiment a bit with this, he even finds a way to zoom in more. *I knew the net is slowly taking the appearance of landscapes and stuff but this isn't what I envisioned.*

Then he catches sight of some kind of herd of zebras sporting helmets with a single metal horn upon them and seem to sport a few other odd features not seen in pictures of said animal. The virtual animals become alert and suddenly something wearing black armor comes charging from the left with a pair of devil men trailing it.

The herd of zebra don't flee but fire off blasts at the flying devil men. He flushes as he hears one of the black leather wearing devil men curse up a storm, using words he knows his mom and dad would frown at hearing from him. The other devil man fires off attacks of their own at the still fleeing black armor covered blue creature.

He quickly causes the screen to withdraw from that and sits back in the chair as he considers what he just witnessed just seconds ago. He stares at the screen, wondering what kind of program is running on his dad's computer. *Still... What kind of program runs when the computer is suppose to be off?*

The sight of the strange digital continent beckons him and while he knew the smart thing to do would be to return to his room, but that course of action wouldn't be him. So, he reaches for the mouse and continues to view this virtual world. The areas of water, too, sport these monstrous virtual beings with some of them appearing as dolphins and fish.

He pulls out of the latest area and stares at the virtual world upon the screen of his dad's computer. He suddenly yawns and begins to rub his eyes. Sleep once more driving its hooks into him, he tries to fight it but it's just so late...

I wish I could explore more of that... that... virtual world. Those beings seem to have interesting abilities... I wonder what they're called... He thinks sleepily as he finds himself leaning deeply into the back of the chair.

He suddenly feels as though he's floating in a black void with that world hanging before him. A soft murmur surrounds him, he's unable to make out what's being said, only individual tones and voices. He holds out his right hand, palm facing the world and he feels himself floating towards the planet, this seems to cause that murmur to become clearer and a bit louder.

He jerks his head back as he catches bits and pieces of what's being said. A chill seems to engulf him and he pulls his arms around his upper body, shivering in the void while dimly listing to the murmur of voices, some of the voices seem to be arguing with each other while others spoke of their dreams and nightmares. As he floats there, he finds himself torn between continuing forward and wanting to wake up in his dad's home office.

The dim of voices seem to stop and he hears his own voice say, "I wish I had a dad who was around more and can be a dad." He blinks, more then a little stunned upon hearing that; he had forgotten that he thought that during breakfast this morning.

"But my mom... She'll worry if just vanish." He says, he might want a new dad but he wasn't looking for a new mom. "I don't want her to worry about me."

"So be it." A chorus of voice, male and female, young and old, say as one.

Light suddenly engulfs him and then... blackness.

Morning

Real World

"Lan... What are you doing in your father's office?" His mom asks him as he struggles to wake, the lights being turned on had startled him out of the deeper reaches of sleep.

As he blinks to rapidly as the overhead lights continue to beam down, no mercy being shown to his sensitive eyes. He glances around and finds that, yes, he is in his father's study. He glances over at the computer screen to find it blank and off.

"I heard something and it was coming from dad's computer." He says as he leans forward, away from the back of the chair. "Ouch... my back..." He whimpers and he hears his mom sigh softly.

"Come on, I'll help you to the couch and get you something for your aches." His mom says as she moves to help him down from the chair. He's too occupied with his aches to feel embarrassed.

"You do have school today too." His mom reminds him and he groans upon hearing that; already last night's events were being pushed out of his mind, particularly that dream concerning him floating in that void with that world hanging before him.

Morning

Digital World

He slowly came to without his alarm waking him or his mom calling him down for breakfast. He takes a deep breath and the scent of flowers suddenly causes him to sneeze. With a sigh, he opens his eyes and rolls onto his back before sitting up.

Sleep vanishes at the sight of a meadow spread out before him. He glances up to find that he's resting under a tree with broad branches that are covered in leaves. He spends a bit looking up at the tree before glancing towards the meadow.

He moves to stands his legs and then wiggles his tail. He blinks and focuses on that last limb. He turns his body, arcing his body to the right while moving his head and tail to the left. He yelps at the sight of his brown tail with orange pebbly scale pattern upon the top of the tail.

"Where are my arms?" He wonders in a higher pitched voice then normal after he tries to get a look at his chest and discovers the lack of a chest. He does find short powerful lefts that are doubled bent with two thick toes making up the foot.

He discovers he a heck of a lot shorter then he remembers being. He glances around, looking for something to use as a mirror. After a few steps, he finds that by moving his head forward helps balance him when he runs.

Upon running across the meadow, he discovers the beginning of a forest viva sparse bushes and trees. He slows his pace as he walks through this forest. He finally finds a river and glancing down into the shimmering surface of the river, he finds a stranger looking up at him with hazel brown eyes. He turns his body and notices how he seems to be mostly a small head, two inch neck, and a rather round body sporting a tail and short powerful legs.

I kind of look like a dino. He admits to himself, the orange pebbly scale pattern does go on to cover the top part of his body and his head, though stopping short of the very tiny muzzle. He opens his mouth and notices the tiny row of sharp looking teeth, he also pokes his dull red colored tongue out for a few seconds before bringing it back into his mouth.

As he's occupied with his reflection, a small school of fish come swimming pass. At the sight of those fish, he becomes aware of how hungry he is. He tenses and leaps into the center of the school as he tries to snap at the swimming fish.

The fish scatter, leaving him with nothing to show for his effort but him being wet. He stalks out of the river and after shaking his body, he heads off to find something easier to have for breakfast. *This so sucks...*

Species Name: Chibidramon

Level: In-Training

Attribute: Data

Type: Baby Dragon

Attacks: Pebble Shield (not really an offensive move, causes the ground to raise up to engulf the in-training Digimon to protect the baby type from incoming attacks)

Month Later

Digital World

"Tag! Your it!" He cries as his tail tip touches one of the Koromon. He giggles as he races off while the fellow in-training Digimon squeals before hopping after him.

It's times like these that he's glad he has legs instead of stumpy limbs less then an inch in length like he has seen on four legged in-training Digimon. He manages to get clean away from the tagged Koromon. He turns and watches as the Koromon goes after a Viximon and manages to kind of land of the bushy tail of that yellow Digimon.

"Tag! Your it!" The Koromon says while hopping away, the Viximon seems a bit stunned before racing after that Koromon to re-tag them.

"Ready to go, Lan?" He jerks a bit and glances behind him, towards the gate to find his adopted father, a Shadramon named Sasuke. He nods at Sasuke and before making it within a foot of the fence, turns and calls out good-byes to his fellow in-training Digimon.

With that, his new dad glides down to the ground to pick him up and a short flight over the metal and wooden fence, he walks after his floating dad who's easy to spot since Sasuke sports armor and wings that are red trimmed with yellow. He begins to tell Sasuke

about his day, in particular the lessons a few of the other parents showed up to teach and his new dad asks question about the lessons which he gladly answers.

As they leave the neutral area and a comfortable silence falls between his new dad and himself, he begins to think about the time before he was a Chibidramon and wonders if he's missed. When he feels like he's about to cry, he blinks and focuses on Sasuke's back and focuses upon the fact that he's got a new life to live now with its own problems and rewards.

He tries to let go of the feeling of missing his favorite toys, his music, TV, his friends, and his... parents. He takes a deep breath and smiles at the various earthy scents that float upon the wind. He so enjoys the fresh air and the fact that there wasn't any roads or side walk for him to watch out for. The noise of a busy city doesn't commonly exist here and he's glad since there isn't any danger of him getting hit by a drunk driver or being dragged into an alley to be kidnapped to use against his d... old dad.

With the sight of his new home, a place resting in the branches of an old tree, he pushes thoughts of his old world, the human world, out of his mind.

The end

Takato's Journey: Digimon

Legendary Horses

I don't own Digimon!

Takato's Journey

The young stallion gallops along the rocky ridges of the mountain range, heading for a high ledge as black clouds continue to gather overhead. A really big storm is going to happen and Takato needs to find a protective place to wait out the storm. His hooves cause some small pebbles to dislodge and fall, but nothing of any real size to cause a landslide.

Other mountain runners were on the moving as well. At times the stallion can hears the cries of their young, they had likely stopped because they were hungry or tired. Takato doesn't let such things keep him from continuing upon his search for a protective shelter. *'At times like these I really wish I was born with wings...'*

The bachelor herd of pegasi had long since migrated out of the area when spring arrived, leaving him very much alone among this patch of mountain. Takato would have followed but, well, it just was too long a journey and by the time he arrived at their spring range, it likely would be in the fall. The young stallion shakes himself out of his thoughts, the feelings such thoughts were another matter though.

Thunder pearls out over head, startling Takato a bit, which leads the stallion to slow down. He raises his head and sniffs the air, managing to catch sight of lightning streaking through the black clouds overhead. With a shake of his head, the reddish brown mane whipping about before being catch once more by the wind and begins to dance to its tune.

As the wingless pegasus makes it to a narrow ridge, the clouds suddenly release their contains. Heavy droplets rain down at a slant. Takato couldn't help but think curse his luck as he is forced to navigate his way at a much slower rate since the water will make it difficult for him to get footing upon the stone ridge.

Thunder pearls out after a flash of lightning lights up in the free space to Takato's left. "The gods hate me." The young four year old stallion murmurs while continuing forward, wincing whenever one of his front hooves slips as he's trying to find a safe spot for them so he can continue forward.

'Why did I have to grow so large? Why couldn't I just stop growing when I reached my parent's sizes?' Takato wonders privately to himself as the rain continues to beat down upon everything under the clouds.

The stallion sighs and then turns his head to look backwards, wondering if he shouldn't just try to go back. Takato snorts at the thought before returning to look at where he's going while his tail whips about in irritation. The wingless pegasus stallion proceeds forward a bit more.

Close to the end of the ridge, the stallion decides to try leaping to by pass the rest of the few feet between him and the broad ledge that the ridge leads to. Takato's confident that he could make the leap as he sports the tough hollow bones of his heritage and stronger leg muscles then other pegasi as he lacks wings so he has to travel every where upon his own four hooves.

Hunching up a bit, Takato shifts his weight to his hindquarters. The young stallion leaps forward and as Takato lands, he let's out a joyous bellow before surging forward to stand under a ledge that's only twenty feet from the tip that he landed upon.

Once under the ledge, Takato begins to lick himself. Although hungry from his nerves being frayed, the young stallion settles for filling his

belly with water to tie himself over until the storm lets up so he can head for one of the various valleys that sports good grazing spots.

As the storm continues and Takato doesn't have anything to occupy his time with, the stallion growing tired and begins to find himself beginning to fall asleep.

"Where have you been?" Takato tries to make out the mare before him but no matter how he tries, the stallion couldn't make out any details of this mare. "Whatever, come on! The fireflies are about to begin their display."

The unfocused mare takes off, weaving through tree and bushes. Not knowing what else to do, Takato follows after the mare. The forest sports sounds that Takato has never heard during his life within the mountain range.

Suddenly the trees leave off and a meadow lies before him. Takato pauses at the treeline, suddenly aware that there were others within the meadow. He could smell the scent of stallions and mares but he couldn't make out which were which nor could he tell if they were pegasi or not.

"Are you just going to stand there or what?" That mare asks and he's startled to find her standing to his right. Takato doesn't know how but the mare seems to be glaring at him.

"Sorry, just didn't expect..." Takato doesn't finish but the mare seems to snort softly. He walks into the meadow and it didn't take long before the mare takes point once more.

The mare seems to find a spot she liked and lies down. Takato follows her example, the young stallion could hear murmurs of the herd. As the sun finally vanishes, quiet settles down all over the meadow and then, slowly, tiny lights begin to appear among the grasses and trees before they take to the air.

Takato couldn't help but be awed by the sight. Every which way he glances, those tiny glowing lights seemingly float in the air. "These are fireflies?" Takato asks softly and the unidentified mare nods.

"They're so beautiful." He says softly as Takato watches as they begin to clump together, creating a glowing mist. "Hard to believe they're just insects." The stallion adds while glancing else where to see other groupings of fireflies.

Groaning softly, Takato slows wakes as the sun's light irritates his eyes. The stallion yawns and begins to smack his lips together while swallowing. With a grunt, Takato moves to stand since it seems that sometime last night, he had laid down.

Takato stretches a bit before walking out from under the ledge. There were some small dots of pooled water about the stone surface and it didn't take long for the young stallion to drink his fill. He then glances around, taking the changes the storm has wrought.

The stallion sighs and begins to climb to get on top of the ledge he had used as cover. More then a few rocks fall down as Takato walks up the steep slope. It's slow going but Takato moves expertly about the newly dubbed slippery surface of the mountain that the stallion calls home.

The hunting cries of gryphons causes him to glance above as Takato pauses while walking down the path. The young stallion feels exposed as he spots black specks up in the sky. It had a while since gryphons have been spotted around these peaks, but then, it's likely that the gryphon's breeding year is coming up and the pair is looking to set up a territory in this part of the world earlier then expected.

Takato picks up his pace, heading for a valley that sports blooming flowers and bushes. It also has a spring at the center of it, forming a shallow pool and creates a small waterfall that leads down to a rushing river about a day's flight from the valley. The plants that grow

there never suffered much during any of the seasons, not with a spring feeding the pool.

As midday arrives, Takato finally reaches the valley. Other mountain dwellers glance up as Takato approaches before returning to their grazing or drinking. He heads for the pool before beginning to browse upon the various flowering bushes and plants.

Upon eating his fill, he moves up the slop and upon finding a patch of dirt, Takato drops down and rolls in it. Takato sighs softly as he lies in the patch of dirt for a while. The young stallion shakes his head and gets to his feet.

'If only I can bend around to get at all of those itches myself...' Takato thinks as he moves to find some shade to rest in. Upon reaching a spot, a surprised bleep causes him to glance back to find one of the mountain goats being lifted higher into the air by a gryphon.

Takato takes the time to get a good look at the gryphon, noticing the eagle markings upon the gryphon is clearly marked upon the feathery parts of the hunter. The fur parts are a shade lighter then the golden brown of the feathers with darker fur seemingly forming bars about the feline part of the gryphon's feet.

The gryphon and Takato gaze into each others' eyes for a brief time. *'Maybe I should give migration a try...'* Takato thinks as the gryphon continues to raise higher into the air. *'I rather not be mistaken for a simple horse and end up a meal for them.'*

Takato couldn't find the strength to raise his head or to swish his tail while the sun beats down upon him. It's been six days since Takato had left the southern most boundary of the range he had lived his whole life in. *'Six days since I had a decent meal too.'*

The wingless pegasus had to hunt down places for water and grazing spots. To cover more ground, the stallion stuck to the top parts of the mountain range and thus walks under the sun without

any real cover to give him relief. Takato swallows before panting once more as he continues to move at a ground eating trot. The wind is the only relief Takato has from the heat.

Takato slows as he comes closer to a large gap. Takato stops by the edge and glances down and finds a huge waterfall below, the stream seems to be going southwest. The stallion moves around, trying to find a spot that sports the shortest distance between the two ledges.

After some time, Takato couldn't find a good spot to leap the gap so the young stallion begins to search for a way down, hoping that down some lengths there will be shorter gaps that he can jump. He finds a narrow path by the time the sun is setting and begins to travel down it.

As it grows darker, his strength continues to wane and without light to help him get a good look, Takato is traveling rather blindly down the path. Suddenly something moves just as his hoof is about to be place before him and a bird flies up, startling Takato.

As Takato falls down, he couldn't help but watch the starry sky above him grow more and more distant. *'I guess this was my fate all along. To die by falling upon the stones of the mountain.'*

The roar of the falls drown out all other thoughts and then, suddenly, the stallion finds it hard to breath. His head finally exits out of the water, allowing him a few quick breaths before the currents drag him under once more.

Then, suddenly, Takato feels weightless once more and it dawns on him that he's reached the falls. The wingless pegasus stallion screams in terror. Upon hitting the water below, he blacks out.

The squawk of birds is the first thing Takato notes as he slowly begins to wake. Next, he begins to cough and feels liquid come up. Takato blinks his eyes, waiting for his vision to stop being blurry.

With a groan, the stallion begins to fold his legs up against his belly while rolling into a much more comfortable position. Takato feels some weight vanish upon him moving about and more then a few irritated cries of protest from the scavenger birds who to feast upon him.

Slowly, Takato becomes aware of how achy his body is and realizes that he's very much alive since he doubts his body's conditions would follow him to the afterlife. Raising his head, Takato snorts at the various crows and eagles that are about him. "Get Lost." Takato states at the group of birds.

The three eagles glance between them before leaving. The crows were more stubborn but Takato wasn't too worried since birds do tend to obey pegasi and other star-touched beings of the air like gryphons, hippogriffs, even dragons.

After a while, the sight of greenery causes Takato to struggle to get up off the bank. Upon getting up, the crows finally left and walking wobbly towards the trees, Takato continues to fight the urge to lie back down. With a bush within reach, Takato begins to browse at the leaves.

After a few mouthfuls, Takato moves towards a patch of flowers and begins to eat a few bites from it before, once more moving on. He found the leaves and stems of various plants to have a different flavor then what he's use too. With so many plants around, it didn't take long for Takato to fill up.

Takato moves and lies down under a broad branch tree. Sleep claims him within seconds.

Rika pauses by a tree since she thought she saw something under a tree. Curious, the unicorn mare moves towards the spot and does find a sleeping horse sporting reddish brown mane and tail. Water seems to have erased the sleeping horse's scent, making it hard to know what gender the horse is.

"Why did you... Oh, huh. A horse." Ami says the last part in disgust. "Looks to be dead to the world. Bet you a lynx will get it or a bear." The spring green unicorn mare muses as more of the herd comes to see the sight.

After a bit, the others flick their tails and continue towards the river for a drink, leaving Rika and a young unicorn stallion named Ryo to remain. "He's pretty fine boned." Ryo remarks after walking closer to take a mighty whiff of the horse's scent.

"Might be one of the human's racers." Rika remarks. "Although, I didn't know humans had created a settlement this far east. I thought the dragons declared humans won't be expanding their territory ever again. Not with what happened with their experiments into meshing draconian blood with those dogs sixty years ago."

"There's an underling scent to him, one that kind of reminds me of birds." Ryo tells her. "Come take a sniff if you don't believe me."

With a grunt, Rika stalks over and takes a sniff of the strange stallion and finds that Ryo's right. This stallion has a tint of bird to his core scent. "How odd..." Is her only reply.

As Rika moves towards the stallion's head, Ryo moves back, allowing her room. With her nose close to the resting stallion's own, the stallion's eyes open and Rika freezes at the sight of those bright yellow eyes, the shade of yellow reminds her of birds of prey. With a start, the stranger moves to raise his head and their noses touch, much to Rika's bewilderment and then embarrassment.

Rika hurries to back away from the stranger, although she couldn't help but notice how the stranger's eyes seem to be more forward then her own or any unicorn's eyes. The stranger seems to be about Ryo's height and more compacted in build then a horse or unicorn would be. *'Powerful.'* Rika decides as she watches as the stallion gets to his feet.

A strange kind of sound seems to come from the stranger, a sound that is pretty high pitched and bird like. The expression upon the stranger's face is questioning and those yellow eyes clearly sport the flame of intelligence in them. The sound gets repeated but it seems to be slower then the first sound, she thought she noted a few other notes to the sound this time too.

"You think he's talking to us?" Ryo asks since Rika sure wasn't going to voice that question out loud.

This just seems to cause the stranger to become alarmed and another series of sounds come from the stranger. "Kind of reminds you of bird song, only... it's not." Rika notes.

"Well, looks like life won't be dull any more." Ryo muses.

"We're only twenty, Ryo. This isn't our problem." Rika says and begins to walk towards the river, trying to ignore how handsome the exotic stallion is in his odd way.

To be continued . . .

Heart of the Mine: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter!

Huh, so what should I do with these tunnels? A nineteen year old Harry Potter wonders upon reaching the center area that had housed dwarven workers of old who had been employed by the Black family. There's nothing left to mine, which kind of made the how place worthless.

I likely won't find any buyers for it since there's nothing much one could do with a played out mine... The young English wizard muses. Scratching the side of his head, Harry sighs and then heads for the center building as it looks fairly preserved compared to the other wooden structures that make up workshops.

Upon touching the door handle, the door shimmers and the door seems to swing open; Harry's grip upon the handle seems to have been ignored by the magic protecting the building. Entering, Harry glances about the room beyond the doorway. The sound of the door closing did cause him to stiffen a bit but shrugs it off. Crystal lamps light up, allowing Harry to see the interior of the building.

Harry turns down the hallway just beyond the front room. Along the hallway seems to be about four doors. Opening one of them reveals that the room had been used as office space. Two other rooms prove to be similarly set up, but the third one, the third revealed a stair case.

The second floor sports two large rooms, likely bedrooms since they still sports wooden frame for a bed and dressers. The last room is a really large office with metal busts and stone statues about the room. *Not a picture or fireplace in sight.* Harry thinks as he walks over to the large stone desk.

Just walking around the building causes dust to stir. Just looking backwards, Harry could see his prints upon the floor. "How long has it been since this place was cleaned?" Harry wonders out loud.

He could feel a bit of a draft happen about the room. Likely whatever ward is responsible for causing circulation to happen. The young wizard stops before the desk, placing a hand upon the flat surface, Harry then moves his right hand to the right, kind of causing a streak in the dust to appear upon the desk.

Making a face at the grim and dirt upon his hand, Harry wipes his hand upon his jeans while using his left hand to hold his wand. It took a few spells but the dust covering the desk vanishes and polishes the surface of the desk, revealing that the rock used is black with flicks of other colors upon it. Switching hands, Harry then creates a chair to sit upon.

The desk sports drawers but nothing remains within them, likely cleaned out when the Blacks evacuated the mine. Harry hums before exploring more of the room, he found two vaults and within one of them, a number of wooden items with amber decorating them. At the sight of the wooden items, Harry just frowns and picks them out of the metal vault that's behind the desk.

With a shrug, Harry takes the thin leather book that's under the cloth. Carefully placing enchanted items upon the cloth once more, he wraps them up after shutting the door of the vault. Harry sits down upon the chair, the young adult opens the book. It takes Harry a few minutes to puzzle out the spidery writing but it seems that those wooden implements function is to cause raw mineral deposits to be drawn to the mine.

It seems that the experiment using the implements worked but they still had to abandoned the mine since the news about the mine being played out had spread far enough that the Black family had to end their operations or other families would learn of their experiments in regards to drawing deep mineral deposits to the mine. *Makes sense, wouldn't want to share the wealth or the ability with another family.*

This just might be the way to recreate my fortune. So glad that Professor Bumblebee was thoughtful to give the Ministry all of my Potter family inheritance to rebuild. At least burning his picture at Hogwarts took some of the anger off from that. Harry thinks darkly as he reads about how to create, use, and maintain those implements.

Anger towards the old man continues to boil below the surface. *At least he couldn't touch the Black family properties and its money. Damn, how in hell did that man get my dad to sign that f#cking piece of paper? Didn't he bother to* ***read*** *it?* Harry mentally rants as he closes the book and get up off the chair.

Walking over to the other vault that Harry had found, he studies the metal door. It takes a bit of effort for him to open this vault up. The door is pretty tiny compared to the previous one but then, within the vault, Harry finds small six metal post that contains a small glowing ball of energy. Within its misty appearance colorful lightning seems to dance between the golden metal posts of the device and the tiny black speck within the center of the white mist.

Harry couldn't help but feel goosebumps raise up. A strange aching sensation seems to happen in his eyes and the faded lightning mark upon his brow. Minutes pass as he stares at the ensnared mist until finally, Harry looks away while takes off his glasses. Using his free hand, Harry rubs his temple before rubbing his nose bridge.

Harry's vision swims for a bit but then clears. Putting on his glasses, Harry finds his vision blurs causing him to take off his glasses once more. Harry glances around the room and is stunned to find that he saw the room as if sunlight lit it up. There weren't any shadows, just places that have least amount of light illuminating it.

"What...? How?" Harry exclaims and glances over at the odd device. He swallows as he realizes that the device is the cause of fixing his eyes.

"What is this thing?" Harry wonders and already knows that whatever it was, there's a reason why the Black family kept it down

in this mine. "I wonder if any of the other properties contain secrets like this one?"

After all, if it weren't for some clause about the new head of the Black family needing to tour unused properties then Harry wouldn't have given selling this mine another thought or the rest of the properties that he needs to tour. With a sigh, Harry closes the vault door and finds himself leaning upon the wall, panting softly and feeling very hungry.

Before Harry leaves the mine, he sets up the wooden implements with a Galloen as an example of what to draw to the mine. It wouldn't take long for gold to be drawn to the mine, about three days since they seem to be fully charged.

As Harry arrives to the entrance of the mine, an unusual thought unfolds within his mind. *Although... If I can conjure paper, why can't I conjure paper bills?*

Four Months Later

Harry picks up one of the freshly cold gold bars that he had smelted about twenty feet from the mine office. It had taken some doing but he had bought the equipment he needed to smelt his own bars since he didn't trust anyone no to speak of the fact that he's reopened the mine, which is why its only a small operation done by Kreacher and himself.

He smiles as he looks down at the bar in his hand before glancing at the row of other gold bars. *The goblins have finally signed that contract that I had that team of lawyers draw out. I'll finally be able to move all of this gold out of here without trying to sell in the more common global market (Muggle economic market).* He thinks, he had given up using the term Muggle (Might be a side-effect of Dumbledore and the Ministry of Magic screwing him though) to describe non-magical humans since there are over nine billion of them upon the world while the number of witches and wizards seem to number only in the millions, if that.

Harry places the gold bar back down and moves to find Kreacher to see if the house elf has tea in the make shift kitchen. Harry pauses to glance at the various crates next to the underground headquarters. Harry sighs at the sight and is reminded that he'll need to hire some dwarfs to help redesign the mine complex.

"Tea is ready, master." Kreacher says within the front room that's within sight of the door. "Ies picked up the mail." The elderly house elf adds, gesturing to the small pile of letters.

"Thank you Kreacher." Harry says and adds, "You can retire if you wish to. It has been a tiring day."

Kreacher bows before using the port-key to head back to his other remaining property to his name. Harry's emerald eyes land upon the small pile of letters after finishing his first cup. Pulling the letters close, he grins slightly at who they are from.

Looks like those bombs finally went off. Looks like they will never discover any rare or forgotten treasures of the Black family. Harry muses with a dark smirk upon his face as he shifts certain letters to the side.

The Ministry of Magic had decided to impose restrictions about what kind of properties half-bloods and muggleborns can own in the magical world. *I wonder what kind of reaction it'll gather if I begin to offer up bounties on UK Ministry of Magic personal or on certain pure-blood families? I have more then enough gold to do so...* Harry muses thoughtfully, he has grown to loath the Ministry of Magic since nothing had changed in regards to how muggleborn are treated, the only thing that has altered is that half-bloods are now lumped in with muggleborns.

Taking a pencil from his shirt pocket and a note pad to begin listing names of pure-blood families that he would love to vanish off the face of the earth, which turned out to have a lot of employees of the Ministry in it too. He sighs and pushes the list away from him as he realizes how similar his thoughts must be to a certain half-blood.

He knows he's undergone changes lately, ever since he viewed that strange device, Harry found himself viewing his current situation differently. *What do I owe them? I save them from Tom and yet they seem so determined to take very thing I own and place it in a museum or sell it internationally to collectors.* Harry thinks.

They stuffed Hedwig... He closes his eyes as he remembers seeing his dead owl on display while meeting with the current Minister of Magic, the one who replaced Shacklebolt five months ago. Harry could feel tears well up even with his eyes being closed.

It takes Harry a few minutes to reign in his emotions. He distracts himself by opening up one of those product endorsement offers. *What the F#CK? They can't do that!* Harry thinks upon reading the first letter.

"I'm done being used like a f#cking thing! I don't care if it brings down the ministry and its laws, they're going to pay, pay with their f#cking lives!" Harry growls and grabs the list.

A visit to a cyber cafe to print up the list and then to a photocopy shop to make five hundred copies of each page of names and how their beheaded heads are worth in pure gold bars. The minimum number of gold bars offered is six with the max being sixteen.

Using a certain disguised potion using various hairs instead of one, Harry visited various shady places, often leaving small stacks of the list at each spot. By dawn, those lists have found their way to various hit witches and wizards more then happy to earn such easy money.

Hit Wizard: Ethan Baker

Not only can I finally kill that arrogant f#cker, his friends, and his kids but I'll earn over twenty gold bars by turning their heads in? Hell yea! This is turning out to be the best month ever! The muggleborn named Ethan thinks upon finding a pile of papers that came in threes, the pages were stapled together and each of the sheets are full of names of pure-blooded witches and wizards.

He couldn't help but begin whistling a tune as he heads for the nearest floo port to floo to Nott's place. Upon entering into the living room, Ethan waits for somebody to come into the living room to investigate. It didn't take long for Nott junior to arrive and one cutting curse causes the young man's head to hit the ground with a wet thud.

It takes about fifteen minutes for the young man's parents to arrive and before either could demand about why he's there, they lost their heads. With a flick of his wand causes the heads to shrink before pocketing them into a certain black leather bag.

Ethan takes a handful of floo powder and heads to the next house. *Have to hurry before somebody else hits them first.*

Selwyn Faywe

His mug thuds upon the bar and he waits for the bar tender to fill it up. "Are you Selwyn? Selwyn Faywe?" A woman's voice asks huskily.

Glancing over at the witch to his right, he grins at the sight of the woman's bust size, not even bothering to look at the witch's face. "That's me. So, what do ya want?"

"Are you sure? I mean, you don't look like you use to be a Death Eater... I mean, they were all captured within a year after their master fell." The witch says and being drunk, it never occurred to Selwyn to wonder why this witch is even asking that.

"I left England within the week of his death. Likely one of the smart ones actually. Of course if I thought I could buy my way out like Malfoy, I wouldn't have had to leave my possessions behind." He spats as once more, the silver tongued blond had purchased his and his son's pardon.

"Good, I didn't want to get the wrong one." The witch says and suddenly, everything goes black for Selwyn.

Harry Potter

"Harry! Somebody has placed a reward upon my head! They already got my parents!" Draco Malfoy exclaims upon arriving into Harry's country home through the door.

"Really? Why don't you go to Shacklebolt? I mean, he's still in charge of auror unless he has been replace since I last saw him last week." Harry muses, he already knew about Malfoy's parents as somebody collected that bounty just yesterday.

What to do, what to do... Harry muses as Draco rants about how ineffective the aurors are. He finds it funny since just a month ago, during an interview with the Daily Prophet his old classmate mentioned how they not longer need to rely upon the skills of a certain frame seeking man who took out the last Dark Lord.

The sales of those properties were suppose to go to fund that department if I recall. Harry thinks as he watches the blond pure-blood wizard pace about his living room. "I really don't see how this concerns me, Draco. I seem to recall an article last month where you said that I'm unneeded now that the auror department's funds were increased from the selling various confiscated properties."

"I even believe most of those belonged to the Black family before I was forced to 'sell' them in exchange to get rid of suddenly uncovered unpaid fines. I believe it took considerable effort for me to even keep that old mine and this house... I believe your party remarked about the fact that I had Potter properties to concern myself with." Harry remarks and Draco stiffens, likely finally remembering that.

"I believe you lot forgot that Dumbledore caused the liquidation of all of my father's vaults and properties." Harry remarks and Draco squims a bit. "And then, just a few days ago, not only did the Ministry give businesses permits to use my name to sell their product but told them that they didn't have to pay me royalties from previous, current, and future sales."

"Tell me, why should I help you, Draco? You sure as hell didn't try and defend my interests in the ministry, even though you owe me a life debt." Harry says slowly. "But then, I believe every f#cking witch and wizard owes me a life debt since I did kill old Tommy boy for them. And yet, how am I treated? You strip me of my inheritances, of my property... of my right to my own name. Is it any wonder that I decided enough is enough?"

"What did you do?" Draco asks in a harsh tone.

"Why, I'm taking back my dignity, Draco. I'm getting rid of these people who think they can do whatever they please to those who don't walk in their social circles." Harry explains. "Simply put, I'm helping the extinction of an inferior culture and people along. You lot are only dragging magic down, you put restrictions upon it, you police it, you fine it. You think only you and your families are the only ones with any right to use magic and since your powers are waning, you can't stand seeing how powerful in magic the muggleborns or the half-bloods are."

"You can't match their magical growth so you try and find other ways to cut them down. And they let you because they thought your society was one of fairness, it's only until they leave Hogwarts are they force to see just how unfair your society is upon them learning just what kind of jobs they can have."

"You... You don't have the money to pay those rewards!" Draco finally finds his voice but Harry just smiles. Draco's face snarls before going for his wand, but Draco is bound up by magic.

"No attacking Kreacher's master!" The elderly house elf snaps upon walking into the living room.

"Thank you Kreacher. It seems as though you just earned his bounty though." Harry muses as he gets up from his chair.

"Ise be needing no gold, master." Kreacher says and Harry smiles over at the house elf.

"You know, you could always use that gold to purchase linen and make yourself some suitable cloths. It's not an order, merely a suggestion since I'm sure you can stand to wear something to warm those old bones of yours." Harry admits after a moment's though.

Kreacher considers this before nodding. "Ise wouldn't mind new bed sheets." The house elf admits as Harry summons Draco's wand.

Using Draco's wand, Draco's head rolls onto the floor with blood starting to ooze from Malfoy's neck. Harry stares at the lifeless head, expecting some kind of emotion to come forth but only relief seems to be within him.

I really need to find out more about that device and what kind of effects it causes. Harry thinks. *Because I'm sure not acting in a way I would have approved of six months ago.*

The End

Portal Maddness 3: Naruto

I don't own Naruto, Pet Shop of Horrors, Changeling the Lost, and Dragonlance!

"Damn it, Hiko! Let me finish skinning this beast before giving it to ya!" Naruto snaps at the blue dragon whelp that seems to be more then happy to follow the ex-ninja about since the blond had defeated a group of knights to keep the blue wyrmling from being killed like the rest of Hiko's siblings.

"Not fault ya slow!" Hiko snaps at Naruto, its a wonder that in the five months that they've been together that the blue whelp has become this fluent in Naruto's native tongue. The wyrmling is trying to gut the stag that Naruto had killed.

Naruto just glares at the blue whelp but continues to skin the stag while trying to keep the stag is pinned to the ground long enough for his knife strokes to cut the furry hide free from the rest of the body. Hiko seems to be enjoying moving the dead body while the blond is skinning the beast. The body stops moving when Hiko managed to pull out most of the stag's organs and guts.

Why am I traveling with Hiko again? Naruto wonders to himself as he finally finishes skinning the stag. Hiko snarls as the blond cause the body to move a bit while Naruto pulls the skin from the body.

Naruto just rolls his eyes at Hiko's reaction. *Selfish bastard.* The dimensionally displaced demon container thinks while rolling the skin up so it's easier to transport to their camp.

"I'll see ya back at our camp." Naruto says to the gorging blue wyrmling, who doesn't seem to care that his protector/minion is leaving him alone. Nothing but the sounds of Hiko enjoying the dead stag follows Naruto as the blond walks away.

"Just how are you suppose to help me get home?" Sakura wonders as she stares down at this odd canine that the pet shop owner called a coyote. The pink haired teen is just glad to be out of that shop since she couldn't help but find the store to be rather creepy and dangerous.

The canine doesn't seem to glance at Sakura, just turns an ear in her direction briefly as they walk down the street. It's been about six days since Sakura had thrown that vase in Naruto's direction, though both Sasuke and the blond idiot had dodged out of the way, the soot or ashes within the vase still managed to fly all over the place.

He should know by now to stand there and take his punishment! Inner Sakura growls and Sakura nods her head in agreement with that. *You'd think he know by now not to stop picking useless fights with Sasuke-kun. He should know that he'll never reach Sasuke-kun's level of coolness or skill level.*

Idiot girl... The coyote muses upon hearing that. *She really doesn't get it, does she?* The coyote glances towards the dimensionally displace teen. *Oh well, she'll have to learn to keep her nose out of other people's business, especially when she should be worried about herself instead of obsessing about some body she'll likely never met again in her life.*

Pain, Sasuke thought he knew about pain before but now, now he's come to realize that he had known nothing about it or ever really experienced it in the truest sense. *Even when sparring with Naruto have I never been hurt before... I hurt him plenty though... I guess this is karma biting me in the ass...*

Then the giggling begins and the sing song rhythms concerning what kind of experiments they're preforming upon him. For now, the pain isn't strong enough to drive out all of his thoughts since his captors are giving him a minor rest and time to recover from the previous row

of experimentation. Sasuke knows he's weeping, he's just not sure if its because he's now got time to reflect upon his short, pitiful life or if he's already missing being experimented on since now they'll be giggling and singing to him, causing him to think about what new torments they can put him through.

Sasuke couldn't see his captors, they had at the beginning taken his eyes out. He can feel something in his eye sockets but he knows that they weren't eyeballs since his vision hasn't returned. The salt in his tears sting his injuries while Sasuke moves his tongue about his mouth, trying to figure out if they have yet gotten around to replacing his teeth with something else.

At some point, Sasuke feels himself becoming numb to the giggling and the sing song of his captors. His eyelids grow heavy and he blacks out.

NeoIzapa Cooperation: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter!

Neo-Izapa Cooperation Headquarters

November 1, 1994

To President Seath Harrison Vargr Jampotter Lykos. The latest shipment of beer has blah blah blah. Seath flickers a finger and the ass kissing letter moves to the tray with its brothers. As Seath moves to pick up the another paper from his In box, fire flashes upon one of the two chairs before him.

"You do know that I don't go by Harry Potter any more, don't you?" Seath asks the phoenix, his ears perked forward while the white furred wolf-man doesn't look up at the magical bird. "I know you like to humor that man, but I'm not in much of a mood to humor him. I do enjoy my independence after all."

Fawkes thrills for a few seconds before vanishing in a fireball, leaving some scroll upon the chair. With a snort, the scroll becomes ashes after the white wolf-man with sapphire eyes gives it a glance. Seath already has a good idea of what that scroll likely contained and he has long since decided when he returned as a five year old that he's had enough the the UK Wizarding world, but before the time traveler did anything, he had destroyed the device that would return him to his proper time.

Glamor Ink, got to love it, especially when its magic is capable to lasting up to six years. Seath muses, remembering how he managed to slip in a bunch of papers that had been signed by the right people. Seath just assumes that those that signed it thought the papers had to deal with the budget and had needed signatures to validate it.

Whatever they thought of those papers, they got signed and I became a legal adult. Seath muses as he remembers how relieved he had been when those papers had been filed. He had waited about a week before beginning to use his family vaults and back then, Seath, or to use his old name, Harry had a rough idea of what he wanted to do and one of the first things had to do with finding a way not to attend Hogwarts and he knew of such a way too.

With a sight, Seath leans back into his chair. The chair had been specifically to accommodate his tail, behind, and leg build. The chair and others like it had been part of a large order he had placed with dwarfs back when he started the company upon a few new therianthropes, freshly werewolf bitten people who decided to drink that potion that is the curse editing potion, accepting positions in his, then, magical miniature company.

Paying Fenrir was differently one of the best ideas I had. Too bad I didn't possess a sample of a large feline like a tiger or lynx before I took that potion... Ah well, at least I possess an infallible lie detector out of it. Seath thinks before wondering what ever became of that mangy werewolf for a few seconds.

With a sigh, Seath sets down the paper in his hand since its clear that he's not in the right state to continue through his paper work. *Changed my name after I recovered from the potion's effects. Kind of surprising that I came out of that with white fur and blue eyes, not that I'm complaining as now nobody will be able to say I look just like my dad save for having my mom's eyes.*

Seath moves to stand before a magical barrier that acts to keep separate the hospitable environment with the inhospitable one of the moon. If he turns his head just so, he can get a glimpse of the Earth. Seath can still recall how his budding company ended up being the first to colonize the moon.

Kind of surprised that the idea came from Skylar would actually work? I mean, you'd think a dwarf would prefer to keep their feet on the ground? It helps that unlike wizards, our magic doesn't begin to

fade in under two years of living up here. Seath admits as he stares up at the Earth.

Instead of importing food from Earth, they altered and added charms to certain enclosed miniatures to grow their own food and raise their own cattle. It had taken time but they managed to learn how to safely shrink and unshrink living things like plants, people, and animals. They even learnt how to enlarge the enclosed space of three by four foot box to seemingly become a large landmass little over the size of North America, giving them ample space to grow crops and raise cattle as they can control the climate within those miniature farms.

They began to grow a lot more grain and cattle then they needed and began to sell the surplus to non-humans as those races lack the land needed to grow their own since wizards and witches keep them from owning properties. When Seath turned twelve, they began to grow cultivate magical forests with animals and then they moved on to recreate various environments like a South American rain forest to help preserve endangered non-magical animals and plants.

Started mining minerals just last year... I still can't believe we hadn't thought to search for such pockets before Skylar began that mining operation in the belt when I was ten. Seath admits with a soft sigh. *Ah well, live and learn, live and learn.*

Seath looks away from the Earth to look at the slowly expanding compound. The compound is slowly becoming a city with its own shops and residency, the majority are fellow therianthropes with, oddly enough, centaurs coming in second and dwarves coming in third. No humans, magical or otherwise, live up here though.

The chime of the clock declares that its noon and within seconds, Seath transforms into his human form. Therianthropes prefer to spend one third of the day in each of their three forms as it has proven that such a lifestyle helps keep them from aging. For him, he spends the morning in his hybrid form, afternoon in his human one, and evening in his animal one. If it weren't for a certain potion

helping Seath to age artificially, he would likely look like a five year old still.

Seath summons his cloths and watches as the charms upon the cloths seem to shimmer and move to cover his body with only a minor application of magic. "Will you be eating lunch in your office or going out for it?" Claire, who's a cheetah therianthrope as well as his secretary asks as Seath is walking over to his desk.

"I believe out, Claire." Seath says as he takes out his latest novel and his own employee card. The card is needed to be able to get around the majority of the office space as it separates company workers from the newly arrive settlers of the compound.

"I see, sir." Claire in her hybrid form says as she moves out of the doorway to allow Seath out of the office.

"Oh, and keep an eye out for port-keys. I received a visit from a phoenix this morning." Seath explains and Claire nods with pressed lips.

Seath manages to catch the lift before it descended downwards. *I wonder how fazed the headmaster is concerning how everything is diverging from his thought out plans?* Seath wonders while his employees sharing the lift with him continue to chatter with each other.

November 24, 1994

Seath looks up as a rather large fireball appears not far from his desk and when the flames vanish to reveal Fawkes resting upon Dumbledore's arm and the arm of one of the judges. Seath studies them for a few seconds before security pops into the room. "Place the cuffs on them and stun the phoenix." Seath states before returning to signing a page upon a report.

None of the three intruders manage to udder a sound before Seath's security detail deals with them. "Sure we put them in cold storage,

sir?" Julius inquires.

"I believe that should suffice." Seath says after glancing up and studying the three for a few seconds. "Keep them until tomorrow morning before deporting them back to Earth. I believe they belong to the UK part of the world." The white furred wolf-man says.

The leopard therianthrope salutes before motioning for the others to pick up the three. Within seconds, the security detail and intruders vanish, leaving Seath alone once more within his office. Seath already knew why they came and didn't care to try and reason with the lot since they clearly didn't even bother to try and go through the proper channels and thus, he doesn't feel as though he needs to give them a moment of his time.

June 24, 1995

"One would have thought you'd learn your lesson from the last time you visited." Seath states calmly as he looks up at the phoenix. "We both know that since I didn't attend the first task, it's clear that I'm not a participant." Seath adds icily and the fire bird just sighs.

Seath studies the phoenix for a few seconds before considering a different angle. Quickly, Seath stuns the magical bird and picks up Fawkes to take the bird to the research part of the compound. Seath raises an eyebrow at the smoke that rolls out into the hallway upon his opening of an office door.

"Lork?" Seath asks the insane goblin and hears his head of testing department croaks out, "Here!"

"What do you need? Can't you see I'm very busy!" Lork demands while snatching a metal tube from desk top.

"I want you to examine this for any trace of any alien magic effecting this phoenix." Seath states as he holds up the stunned bird.

Lork and the two gnomes within the office eyes light up at the sight of Fawkes. "Really? Truly? A genuine phoenix?" Lork asks, the black skinned goblin drops the tube and it thuds upon the ground.

"Yes, this really is a phoenix." Seath says before adding, "I want you to keep careful notes upon examining this bird and I want them on my desk within an hour of you being through with your examination as well."

Lork just nods in an absentminded way, clearly too mesmerized by the sight of Fawkes to really put up an argument about sharing his notes with anyone, including he himself. "I'll leave you to begin your study then." Seath states as Lork comes to stand before him.

Seath hands the stunned bird over to Lork. A metal band to hamper teleportation magic is slipped upon Fawkes' foot before Lork takes the phoenix from him. The two gnomes move stand next to Lork and with a sigh, Seath withdraws from the office, heading back up to his office.

Seath is fairly confident that Fawkes won't winded up dead after Lork's examination, whether or not Fawkes wishes he were dead afterwards would likely be the question though.

June 30, 1995

"This meeting better not be a waste of my time." Seath growls as he follows a goblin towards the meeting room. *At least they went through the proper channels this time.*

Seath's claws click upon the stone floor and his ears reflect his state of mind. The various beads and items have been magically woven using those elongated strands, so as he moves they softly click against each other. Typically, Seath's fur wouldn't have long strands to so but with an application of a potion, certain areas were it was applied had grown long, allowing him to weave beads, feathers, and jewelry using his long strands of fur.

Seath had also used another potion upon his fur to darken sections of his white fur, creating various designs upon his head, arms, chest, and back. He created geometric symbols about his body. The various decorations woven in his fur and the markings he had created upon his fur coat were just temperate and easy to remove since all Seath had to do is shift into his human form. The fur holding the decorations will fall off and vanish before hitting the floor, leaving only the various beads, feathers, and jewelry upon the floor.

Stopping just before the door leading into the meeting room of the bank, Seath takes a few minutes to center himself and to force his body to display a calm, confident appearance. Seath had decorated himself up to reinforce the fact that he was a civilized being. Attending this meeting in his hybrid form is just to remind them that he's not human, reminding the lot that the Boy-Who-Lived doesn't exists, only Seath Lykos remains.

They'll be off set by my appearance, thus giving me the advantage. Seath reminds himself before he takes the door handle and opens the door.

Sapphire eyes scan the room, noting the reactions of the various parties within the meeting room of the bank. "Good day. I am President Seath Lykos of Neo-Izapa Cooperation, although you likely know me best by my previous name of Harry Potter." Seath states and the residence within the room jerk as if he had slapped them.

Seath doesn't move to take a chair, after all, the chairs would only cause him to become discomforted. "Now then, why have you arranged this meeting with me? I happen to be a rather busy person after all." Seath states. "So, could we hurry this along? I have reports to go over and documents to sign."

Seath is very pleased to see how quickly the other occupant of the room quickly turned upon Dumbledore, demanding to know what happened to him. Seath watches this for a bit, enjoying how none of them seem to remember why they arranged this meeting as none of them turned to address him.

Seath did wonder if any of them knew anything at all about his company but dismissed that thought since he doesn't recall seeing any sale receipts concerning the UK. *As fun as this is, I have other places to be.* Seath muses.

"As fascinating as this is, we are here to conduct some business. I believe the first order of business is, I'm an emancipated minor and have been since I was five. If you don't believe me, then I suggest you requires that a goblin bring in a copy of said document. Sadly, within a few months of becoming a legal adult, I was bitten by a werewolf, although I was lucky enough to have privy to an experimental potion, I became what you see before you." Seath states. "With that in mind, I decided that the best course of action was to legally change my name and move out of the country."

"It wasn't hard to find and hire tutors once I was in Mexico." Seath states, enjoying the looks upon their faces upon hearing those explanations. "Thus, why I am not a student of Hogwarts. As such, I was not within the UK when this tournament began and even if I had signed up to participate in it, I wouldn't have used my old name since it is my belief that Harry Potter died the day he received that bite from a werewolf." Seath states, he knows that a certain reporter is in the room and this was more for her benefit then these so call important witches and wizards.

"Unless our business has to do with something other then said subject, I believe our business is done here. So, is there any business we need to touch upon or have I satisfied your curiosity?" Seath asks and after a few minutes, none of them manage to find their voice, so he says, "Well then, good day to you all."

With that, Seath takes out a port-key and within seconds, Seath arrives in his office and after glancing about, he finally lets loose a chuckle as he recalls their priceless looks upon their faces after shoving so much information down their throats. Seath could only guess what kind of article will be showing up in the Daily Prophet.

That was fun. Seath thinks as he moves to sit at his desk. His sapphire eyes alight with laughter.

I wonder how things will fall now? Seath wonders as he begins to read through an outline concerning creating ocean habitats. *Does it matter? I'm not going to bail them out of it this time, not when they still have control over Dementors and could get them to kiss those soul containers.*

The End

Bonus:

What has Become of the Boy-Who-Lived?

Harry James Potter, or to use his new name, Seath Harrison Vargr Jampotter Lykos, President of Neo-Izapa Cooperation has finally made an public appearance yesterday at Gringotts Wizarding Bank here in the UK. A meeting of sorts had been planned by Minister Fudge and Headmaster Dumbledore with the famous Boy-Who-Lived only for it to quickly become a joke upon the arrival of young Seath as just arriving within the meeting room, the Potter heir caused a stir at his inhuman appearance.

Within minutes, the Boy-Who-Lived admitted to being bitten by a werewolf within a few months of becoming an emancipated minor at age five, which explains his odd appearance of being stuck in the form of a human shape wolf appearance. It seems that the Boy-Who-Lived had drunk a potion that caused the newly bitten boy to live his life in this strange form.

If this wasn't enough, young Harry, fearing for his life, legally changed his name, emptied his accounts, and fled our of the UK to escape becoming a second class citizen. The young boy settled in Mexico and quickly hired tutors since young Seath feared that his newly altered appearance would make it difficult to receive an education.

It wasn't long before the young Potter heir purchased a the copy right to Izapa and opened a successful miniature company. By the time Seath turned eight, the pitiful wolf-child moved Neo-Izapa Cooperation out of Mexico. There isn't a listings of what new country the headquarters resides in, but it is likely a secret to keep people from hunting the Potter Heir.

The compnay founded by the Boy-Who-Lived, Neo-Izapa Cooperation seems to be doing a lot of business with non-humans, preferably dwarves and, surprisingly enough, centaurs. During the years, they have expanded into selling food stuffs, potion ingredients, and ore. There are also rumors of this company trying to enter into the fashion scene, though they don't hint how they plan to do so.

It should be noted that since the young Potter heir has legally changed his name over nine years ago, this name change seems to be the reason why the Boy-Who-Suffers not only continues to do magic as he was entered under his old name, Harry Potter, but causes this reporter to wonder if the young business owner isn't justified in being concerned about his safety.

The True Path of Stealth: Naruto

I don't own Naruto!

Some City in Earth Country

They're hopes of him failing in this bet dries up as the wagon begins to slow down.

Thus he had succeeded in winning the wager between himself and his whole class. He's not only been one of the run for two months but he's yet to be caught. He even has one more place to stop at, one thing to purchase, and he can return to Hidden Leaf in victory.

This will surely prove that I'm so much cooler then Sasuke. Boy, I can't wait to see their reaction when I stroll into the village with proof of my visitations to Wind and Earth Country! He thinks as he waits for the wagon to come to a stop and then drop down.

He relaxes his claws in the planks as the wagon stops at the gate. He manages to twist his current thin, muscular body to land on his four limbs. Upon shaking his head, he darts to the side as guards at the gate begin to check the wagon over. None of the guards paid his current Henge, a weasel, much mind.

It takes him a bit before he finds a deserted alley to change his Henge to that of a boy of five years of age with dirty white hair and hazel green eyes. He did add a burn mark upon his neck, he found it rather easy to create scar tissue using Henge and is kind of trying out creating tattoos upon his body using Henge jutsu. And finally, he sports cloths that appear to be at least one size larger then needed upon him as well as appearing pretty ratty as to help him pass himself off as a street urchin.

He's not sure where his actual cloths and pack vanish off into when he Henges, but he has come to realize that whatever cloths he created using Henge are pretty durable and don't cost him anything other then a bit of chakra once a day to maintain itself. Heck, he's learnt that if he were to wrap a hair around a stick, he can transform the stick into a kunai, although the Henge usually disappears about five minutes after leaving his person, he's just glad that it doesn't cancel out upon leaving his hand.

And so he wanders about the town, taking in the unusual sights while being shooed away from market stalls. After a while, he finds a nice enough spot and dismisses his current Henge so that he can access his rations that he had packed since he doesn't feel up to digging about within the trash for a quick meal or trying to steal something from one of the shops. *Now then, where would I find one of those paintings...*

He ponders this for a bit as he eats two field ration bars and kind of decides to try the better off part of town. He pockets the wrappers before Henging into the shape of a thirty-something adult with black graying hair and bread. He hopes that his Henge's cloths won't mark him as too much of an outsider as he moves to join the flow of people.

He grins softly at the sight of an art gallery, he's sure he'll be able to find a painting by this artist who's works are never allowed to leave Earth Country. He's not sure why that is, but is certain that possessing one of these paintings will prove that he had indeed visited Earth Country. He takes his sweet time studying the paintings in the gallery, trying to pick out which one he wants to steal.

He sucks in his breath at the sight of this painting featuring a family of kitsune kits, five kits in all in a forest setting. Each of the fire colored young ktisune kits possess two tails each. "That one was one of Riku Akino's earlier works. The forest is said to be inspired during Akino's travels though Fire Country."

He glances over at one of the gallery workers. "Is that so? Its a rather cute scene he imagined." He reflects upon returning to gaze at the painting. "It must fetch a pretty fine price." He adds.

"Not as much as you would think. Ever since the Yellow Flash defeated the Kyuubi, few are looking to purchase anything to do with kitsunes." The attendant adds.

"One would think that after ten years that opinions would change." He remarks. "Did Akino draw any more creature of legend or have you sold out of them?" He inquires and it wasn't long before the attendant shows him the few paintings by the same artist.

He leaves the gallery after finish looking about the inside of the building. He'll wait a week before robbing this store of one of its paintings. After all, he has other things he'd like to look for before returning to Hidden Leaf in Fire Country.

Nine Days Later

He continues to resist the urge to buck the man off his back. *Although, at least I'm not in a crap space in the Henge of a mouse or weasel.* He thinks as he shakes his head, causing his black mane to whip about a bit.

"Easy boy." His rider says upon patting his neck and then stroking the spot too. He sighs while continuing down the path that his rider is directing him to follow. His horse Henge coloration is that of a blue roan and stands about sixteen hands.

Last time I hide in a stable. Although, it does have its benefits. He thinks as he glances at some flowering plants or up at some sparrows flying over head.

His rider pulls upon his reins, reminding him to pay attention to where he's going. Nickering from his 'fellows' cause him to perk up. He spots a runner coming up from down the path. He makes a throaty sound which he hopes were correct in voicing his curiosity.

The party pulls to the side of the road to allow the runner to get pass them. His rider pulls and clicks softly, he notices the other horses slow down and he mimics them. The runner seems to slow as the runner jogs pass the first members of the party.

With the runner out of sight, his rider taps his heels into his side and with a snort, picks up his pace. As they once more range about the road, he once more ponders just what kind of business this group is on. He knows for a fact that they weren't samurai and very few of them possess a weapon so he doubts that they're bandits. The fact that they're renting him and the other horses means that where ever they're going, the place possess a stable likely run by relatives of the one that rented him out.

He guesses that he'll just have to wait for more clues. After all, they only left that town only one day ago. He's not sure how long they'll be on the road but he just hopes that it won't take too long to reach this distention since he really needs to get back home to collect his wins from the bet that's between him and his classmates.

Two Months Later

Home sweet home! He thinks as he catches sight of the gates of Hidden Leaf. He spreads his wings wide as he launches himself off the wooden roof of one of the trader's wagons. Black feathers glisten in the sun light as he heads to fly through the gates of his home village, one that he hasn't living in for little over six months as he was busy trying to fulfill the terms of the bet.

He, in time, soars over the stalls of one of the market places of the ninja village. Upon locating his apartment building, he adjusts his wings and tail feather to land upon the roof. Within seconds, his Henge dispels and he then moves to walk down the stairs to enter into his apartment before he decides to pay Old Man Third a visit.

Upon stepping through his apartment door, he sighs and stretches. He closes the door behind him and after walking pass his couch, he takes off his knapsack and drops it down upon it. The pack is filled

with not just proof of his visitations in Wind and Earth Country but also jutsu scrolls he found in pawn shops in various cities and towns, dry food stuffs, ninja equipment he purchased in Wind Country, and foreign money that he got by pick pocketing.

His gaze lifts from the village to the cliff faces. "The Yellow Flash..." He murmurs as he focuses upon the fourth face. "Just what kind of jutsu was it that you used in that war... I wonder if you got a chance to write it down somewhere. If so, I'm so going to turn this village upside down trying to find it, believe it!"

He laughs then and only stops after a few minutes had passed. He glances around, trying to find a clock to know what time it is. With a frown, he turns away from the window and begins to unpack his knapsack. The painting by Ruki Akino he stole while in Earth Country and triple bladed sword he stole in Wind Country he puts off to the side, deciding to take it with him when he goes visits Old Man Third.

Before he leaves his apartment, he takes the rolled up painting and unfurls it. He smiles at the kitsune kits playing in a forest. It's the same one that he had asked about with that attendant came up to him. With a sigh, he rerolls the painting and reties the cord, securing it to his belt before shouldering the decorative sword upon his back.

He uses a Henge to hide both from view as he doesn't want somebody to steal them from him. He leaves the apartment and once out of the building, he heads for the tower where Old Man Hokage's office is. He gets picked up just outside of the tower and is quickly taken to the Old Man.

"Hey, gramps! Long time no see!" He says cheerfully.

"Naruto... I see you are back from your trip." The Old Man states. "You do know that you caused people to worry needlessly about you."

"Heh, missed ya too, Old Man! Anyway, I only left to win a bet! I can't wait to get my earnings." He says to the Hokage. "Check it out! I got

one of those triple blade swords from Wind Country and a painting from the artist Ruki Akino!" He says, releasing his Henge so said items appear.

He kind of notices the startled look upon the Old Man's eyes but decides to ignore it as he places the sword upon the desk before the rolled up painting. The Hokage puts down his pipe before picking up the rolled painting. He can't help grinning as the Old Man unrolls it and his eyes widen slightly.

He watches as the Old Man checks the stamp and signature upon the back. "Pretty cool painting, yea? It's one of his earlier works." He explains. "'Course nobody in Earth Country are looking to buy anything featuring a kitsune cause it reminds them of how the Fourth dealt with the Kyuubi."

"Its very nice, Naruto." Old Man Hokage says as the man begins to reroll the painting. "Why don't you tell us of this bet then?"

With a frown, he begins at the beginning, "Well, ya see, it all started when some of my classmates started making fun of the fact that I wear orange cloths..."

The Next Day

He whistles a tune as he walks through the gate of the academy. He heads straight for the classroom, his Henge firmly in place since it wouldn't do to tip his classmates off that he's returned. It wasn't long before he finds Iruka-sensei in the classroom.

"Hey sensei! Long time to see!" He says cheerfully as he enters the classroom upon releasing his Henge.

"Naruto? Naruto! Where have you been? Do you know how many classes you've missed?" Iruka-sensei demands and he just laughs while rubbing the back of his head.

"I don't know, about six months worth? Boy, I can't wait to collect on that bet, believe it!" He answers and watches as Iruka-sensei rubs his nose scar. "Want to see my new sword that I got in Wind Country or how about taking a gander at my painting that I got in Earth Country?"

The chuunin instructor raises an eyebrow and he watches as Iruka-sensei looks at his sword hilt. He draws the sword and brings it before him, giving Iruka-sensei a view of the three blades coming out of the hilt. He notices the surprise flashing in his teacher's eyes at the sight of the blades.

After a few seconds, he sheaths the sword, feeling pleased with himself. "Want to take a look at the painting? It's one of Ruki Akino's earlier works." He tells the chuunin.

Iruka-sensei's lips press together while the academy teacher gently shakes his head. "Maybe later." Iruka-sensei says and he just shrugs.

He heads to take a seat out of sight, he even goes so far as to reapply his previous Henge to surprise the rest of the class. A few minutes later, the first bell goes and students slowly arrive with stragglers arriving seconds after the second bell sounds. Very few students take notice of him and those that did, he could only say that they would likely be better ninja since they seem to have a grasp upon the fact that one can never to too safe unless they are aware of their surrounds instead of taking it for granted that they were safe, be it because of Iruka-sensei is in the room or because they're in their home village.

I wonder how many of them would have gone about fulfilling that bet? Would it have taken them as long as me or would they have been caught within their first week outside of Hidden Leaf? I doubt they would know or think about picking pockets to get money... Doubt they'd be able to plan and execute it to steal either items. He thinks as Iruka-sensei does roll call.

When his name comes up, he stands up and dispels his Henge. "Yo, I'm back and you guys better be up to fulfilling your side of the bet, believe it!" He declares with everybody turned to look at him, he poses with a grin upon his face before sitting back down so Iruka-sensei could continue.

"Settle down! I said SETTLE DOWN!" Iruka-sensei orders as the students all begin talking at once. Most of them clearly don't believe he could have fulfilled his side of the bet, declaring that he doesn't have any proof.

Sucks to be them, the Old Man examined both items himself! He even wrote that scroll declaring that I won the bet. There's no way they can ignore that! He muses with a wide, satisfied grin upon his face.

Lunch seem to arrive fairly quickly and he was mobbed upon the bell releasing them from class sounds. "Read it and weep, you guys! The Hokage himself examined my evidence and wrote this!" He declares over the chorus of voices as he takes out the scroll and unrolls it upon the desk.

The class quiets down and Sakura reads the contains of the scroll out loud, including the fact that they were all on punishment detail for encouraging a fellow classmate to risk his life. He's not sure why, but he isn't expected to serve this punishment since the Old Man said that he was just a subject of peer pressure and he needed to catch up on all the work that he missed during those months he was outside of the village.

I have to admit that those two weeks spent with that lady sure helped to improve my reading and writing abilities. He reflects as the group before him demands to see his proof. He takes out a protective container that the Third had given him before taking the sword off his back.

"Here they are, a painting done by Ruki Akino of Earth Country and a triple bladed sword by the famous blacksmith of Wind Country,

Takatoshi Yurika." He declares as Ino slowly pulls the painting from its container while one of the girls unsheathes the sword a few inches, allowing them all to see the triangle look of the sword's blades. The smith's stamp is upon one of blade's sides.

His age-mates murmur at the sword and then at the picture featuring those kitsune kits. Most of the girls coo at the sight of such cute kits while the boys are more interested in the sword. He isn't all that surprised to see Sasuke looking rather sulky, likely not liking the fact that he managed to do something far beyond his skills.

After a while, his classmates begin to leave. It's clear they didn't like the fact that not only do they owe him a lot of cash, about three weeks worth of allowance from each of them but the Old Man has decided they were responsible for him leaving the village. He wonders how their parents will react to that as he rolls the painting up and puts it back into its container.

Test of Team 7

He watches as his first clone stands firm instead of scattering about. He climbs down the tree trunk, heading for one of his other clones. The clone soon uses Henge to alter his cloths to sport wider sleeves as he uses chakra to cling to his clone's arm.

The other clones should be altering their cloths too. Within seconds, the clone he's hitching a ride upon charges forward. He lunges forward and manages to bite upon one of the bells' strings. As his clone pulls away, one of the bells come along for the ride.

He climbs out of the clone's sleeve as the clone lands roughly in some bushes before the clone pops. He drops the bell string down so he can wrap his body around the silver bell. He feels very smug at stealing this bell but doesn't dispel any of his clones since he wants them to keep Kakashi busy, so busy as to not notice the disappearance of one of the bells. So he waits for the alarm to go off before arriving with the bell.

He breaths a sigh of relief when the fighting moves from this part of the training ground. He doesn't bother to move from his spot since he doesn't want to have the bell sound while he moves. Besides, it's not as though he's got nothing to occupy his mind since as a clone vanishes, he inherits its memories, allowing him to know what's going on.

By the time the alarm sounds, pretty much all of his clones have been vanquished. As the alarm sounds, those clones Henged into the shape of crows dispel and he discovers that one of the clones managed to get a prefect angle to see the hand signs of Sasuke's fireball jutsu. He dispels his Henge and picks up the bell as he focuses on the hand signs needed to preform such a feat.

He sits upon the log with not only a wide grin but with the bell in his jacket pocket. Kakashi arrives after his two team-mates arrive. He notices the look in Kakashi's eyes and takes out the bell, tension sudden hangs about the scene. "Can't tie me to the log, I got this." He can't help but remind the jonin.

It wasn't long before Sakura is tied to one of the logs. He frowns but couldn't find a memory that showed that Sakura had even tried to fight Kakashi, just her falling prey to a genjutsu. He also recalls her fainting upon seeing Sasuke caught in that earth style jutsu, so he can't see any reason why she shouldn't be tied to a log. *Well, other then the fact that she's a girl and will likely start tearing up in a few minutes.*

Sure enough, as Kakashi begins to lecture them upon their lack of teamwork, Sakura has started to tear up. He notices cause he wasn't really listening to Kakashi's lecture since he feels that the man was expecting silk from a sheep in regards to either Sakura trying to work with him or Sasuke getting off his high horse to work with either Sakura or himself.

Besides, its not as though I don't have another career option. I proved myself to be a fairly decent theif and if I work on it, I'm sure I can become one of the best in the Elemental Countries. Although,

considering what I hold, it would be a 'waste' for me not to become a ninja since I got tons more chakra then even Old Man Hokage does! He thinks, he does remember those lesson on politics he received while traveling with that trader in the form of a teen.

He is startled when Sasuke bellows and charges at the jonin. Within a blink of an eye, Kakashi has Sasuke pinned to the ground with a kunai pointed at the Uchiha's neck. "Get off of Sasuke!" Sakura screams and he glances at the pink haired teen in disbelief since he really doesn't see how the girl could make the jonin do anything.

"Like you're in a position to have him let Uchiha up even if you weren't tied up. He's a jonin, after all, pretty much out of our league." He remarks to Sakura and the pink haired genin is rather startled that he said that.

"I'm not very fond of suck ups." Kakashi remarks lightly and he snorts.

"Who's sucking up? You weren't even trying during that test! If you really took that test seriously, you would have hid and waited out the alarm without any of us being able to find you. Just because I'm an attention seeking brat doesn't mean I'm not an observant attention seeking brat." He points out. *Or I would have been detained at the various village and city gates and taken away to be question extensively.*

He managed to escape the two times he had that done to him, sure, but he's pretty sure that the increase in village security likely happened because of him. It was about then that he began using animal Henges to escape notice and to hide among incoming wagons. *Though, if I had known that I could have flown around, I would have finished fulfilling the bet far quicker then I had.*

Kakashi seems a bit startled by what he said while Sasuke likely sports a very loathsome look upon his face at the fact that he's saying that the jonin was going easy on them. "Well then, what kind

of excuse can you come up with as to why you didn't work with your team?" Kakashi asks lightly.

"Gee, I don't know, how about the fact that they're just mimicking the attitude of the villagers? Or obeying their parents' sentiments concerning me? I mean, sure, Uchiha's parents have been dead for years but it's clear that he has picked up on the civic attitude of me being a pest. I bet Sakura's a produce of both." He answers and he could tell that Kakashi seems to frown.

"So, when I realized the goal of this little test, I knew you were trying to get silk from a sheep." He adds and hears somebody snort at that turn of phrase. "Kind of impossible since silk comes from worms."

"Indeed..." Kakashi muses and oddly enough, he finds a hint of respect in the single, visible eye of the jonin.

"So... what's your decision? I mean, are you going to pass any of us or are you going to fail us?" He presses. "Cause I want to know so I can start making plans for the future." He adds.

"Hmm, I thought I made it clear that you failed." Kakashi states and he shrugs, "I wasn't listening to your lecture, didn't think it meant much considering the Uchiha clearly won't take it to heart."

Sasuke just 'fehs' at that while Sakura yells at him about how great the Uchiha is compared to him. He ignores them both as he drops down off the log.

"So, where do I turn this headband in? I mean, I rather not get in trouble by impersonating a Leaf ninja." He says as he unties the headband. "Or do you just take them from us before you go?"

"Leave it on the log, I'll pick it up once I'm done with these two since I take it you'll be leaving now?" Kakashi asks and he nods.

Once the headband is upon the top of the log, he grins before using the substitution jutsu on a rotten log his clones had discovered a few

kilometers away from this training ground. With a grin, he Henges into the form of a crow and takes to the air, heading not for his apartment, but out of the village, heading for the Land of Wave since he heard that it had nice views of various things.

Majority of his belonging are sealed in a storage scroll, he thought it a wise course of action on his part since it was unlikely that they could impress the jonin enough to pass, not when it's pretty obvious that the man really wasn't interest in having a team to model into ninja. He waits until he's high enough in the air before switching into the form of an eagle since he needs something with stamina to soar away from the village without needing to flap his wings.

Three Years Later

"Wanted, the Beast Thief, uses trained animals to aid in thieving throughout all of the continent. Reward for bringing in alive, $ 9,000. Rewards for bringing in dead, $ 4,000." He says before snorting at the wanted poster. There wasn't a picture to go along with the poster.

Only nine-thousand? Huh, you'd think it would be more considering the worth of most of what I've been stealing. He thinks as he gazes away from the poster and continues on his way to the back to upon on his apron to help out in the kitchen.

Being the only bar/mess hall in the small camp is the reason why there is a bulletin board located upon one of the mess hall's posts since pretty much everyone living in the camp eventually arrives to eat a meal they didn't have to cook themselves as nobody has their own private fridge in which to store food in. The fridge that the mess hall uses is a portable one that is powered by chakra then by electricity.

The purpose of this camp is to harvest wild herbs and begin preserving them so they can be shipped out when they head for their employer's base in a small town that's within a few days journey from the boarders the land of Fire. He only signed up because he wanted

to spend time out in the wilderness and not in the Henge of an animal.

He stiffens as his primary distraction dispels after being around for about three years. *Huh, oh well, I knew the clone would vanish one day, at least there's a good three year period in which time manage to cover up my real trail in the world. Although, I wonder how many will connect the Beast Thief to Naruto Uzumaki?*

So I end it here

Shinigami Naruto: Bleach

I don't own Bleach or Naruto!

"Why couldn't my test be beating you up, Aozora? This whole scavanger hunt is just so tiring." He says to his Zanpakuto who's name is Aozora no Kemono.

"Don't give me that look! It's not as though I make the rules, you know." Replies a being that appears to be some kind of winged demon. **"Although, I do kind of enjoy being out and about instead of stuck in your mindscape."** The manifestation of Aozora no Kemono adds.

His Zanpakuto that measures to be five and a half long with two foot wide flat blade that seems to be made out of some kind of blue metal, the metal always shins blue though some sections of it is lighter or darker then other parts of the blade. The guard about the hilt seems to be stiff metal chains encircling it. It's because of Aozora's unique blade, Aozora no Kemono is considered to be one of the prettier Zanpakutos in all of the Soul Society since he manifested Aozora no Kemono while still attending the, then, new academy; the academy that replaced the previous method of master and apprentice(s).

"Glad you're enjoying all of this, partner, but I really want to master Bankai before I'm needed back at the academy." He, once more, says to Aozora. "Besides, it seems like I'm missing the frame to put these scattered pieces of the picture. Heck, I'd say that there should be more pieces needed since few of these seem to match up with each other." He adds as he finishes up his meal.

"I don't see why you prefer to teach then to go on patrol with your division. We are hard to beat in a fight, after all. We could have easily fit in with the eleventh division instead of being

member of nineth division." Aozora says. **"If were were on patrol, you could easily find time to fulfill this task while keeping it a secret as well as move along onto using it. Homing your skills against Hollows."**

He frowns as he brushes his bright blond bangs from his face. He leans back in his chair, glancing over to where Aozora is siting upon one of his few chairs. Unlike his quarters in the Seireitei, this house in the farthest reaches of the Rukongai districts and thus, doesn't have a lot of creature comforts. Instead of answering, he merely studies Aozora's red hair done up in a pony tail, the horns and spiked eye ridges above Aozora's purple eyes(in appearance think Disney's Gargoyles).

He can easily see the top parts of his partner's almost bat like wings. He's seen Aozora fold his wings about his shoulders, creating a kind of cape while the 'thumbs' of the wings kind of hook upon each other. With a sigh, he glances towards the entrance of the house, trying to think of how to explain that the number nine means something to him.

"There's just something about that number... I just feel like it has some kind of meaning for me, like it's some kind of link to who I really am." He finally says, it's the first time he has finally verbalize it.

"Huh, how... interesting. I wonder if you'll be finally willing to explain your dislike of the number seven then." Aozora muses and he tosses his Zanpakuto spirit a look before getting up off the floor.

"I think I'm going to tour about this district one last time. Forgive me for leaving you here, Aozora. I rather not rub it into their faces what I really am." He says politely to his Zanpakuto.

Aozora waves a hand in a dismissive fashion. **"Enjoy the boring sights, Naruto. I think I'm going to give that puzzle Gyou gave ya a try."**

With a nod, he walks through the beads that act like a door. The sun is only just setting but since the residents of this district don't need to eat, nobody but him really pay much mind to the passage of time. A few if any of the residents mark him walking down the street.

He notices Teruna, a brunet and Tsuyako, a fellow blond seem to be arguing about who wove the best looking mat for Nijito. The nervous, gentle, shy, and yet good looking Nijito seems to be wearing a look of despair upon his face. It's clear to him that Nijito will soon try and talk them out of their argument only for the two to turn on him, demanding Nijito to chose which mat is better.

Off to the side, Kazou and Lee seem to be enjoying the show that's centered around their good friend. He shakes his head, continuing down the street upon witnessing his prediction come true between Teruna, Nijito, and Tsuyako. "What do you mean you refuse to chose!" The two young women shout.

"Naruto! It's Gyou! He's... well, come and take a look!" Uchito, one of Gyou's assistants says.

They jog towards the house that's at least a mile outside of the village. He sighs at the sight of smoke and notices Toshiaki coughing while Gyou is trying to get back into the house.

"I'm sure Uchito will be here soon with Uzumaki in toe, sir." He hears the blond Toshiaki tell the red head, being sure to keep a good grip upon Gyou's left wrist.

"I'm here." He says and the pair glance in his direction. He ignores them so he can casts a water Kido to flood the top floor of the custom made house that Gyou worked to build.

The smoke changes color and he sighs in relief. "I wonder how you'll handle fires once I've return to the Seireitei, hmm?" He says to the three residents of this district that he often comes to visit every few decades since he graduated from the academy.

"You could always teach us a few kido before you leave." Gyou says with a sly yet easy grin upon his face. He snorts softly at the very idea of teaching any of the locals kido since it's unlikely that they'd ever receive a steady supply of food in order to build up their spiritual reserves to preform kido.

"Or I can take you lot back to the Seireitei so you can enroll in the Shinigami academy." He counters and the three just scowl at the idea. He crosses his arms over his chest and raises a slight eyebrow, waiting for them to explain what they were up to that caused a fire.

"Boss here was trying to build a steam powered drier." Uchito confesses and Gyou just rolls his eyes while crossing his own arms before him. He merely sighs, he wonders where Gyou got that idea but re-frames from asking.

"I'll never get where you find the material to construct such things." He admits frankly. "And I've been a Soul Reaper for close to six centuries now."

Toshiaki just sighs and heads into the house/work shop. "Really? Didn't you spend like, fifty years here before getting recruited?" Uchito asks, the younger of the three hadn't been around back then.

"More like twenty, actually." He admits. "Although it did take me ten years before I was allowed to join a division. I had to work on my control, among other things." He adds, doubting that any of them wants to hear about his time in the academy or how he survived long enough to get enrolled.

"You left within days of my arrival here in this district, if I recall correctly." Gyou reminisces. "I still recall how everyone was talking about you handing those rogue Shinigami a sound beating before that patrol arrived in search for them." The red head man remarks with a grin.

"I'm so glad that you continue to find such a life changing event to be so humorous." He replies dryly. "After all, I was dragged off to the academy within days of that patrol reporting it."

"It's your own fault for allowing them to take you then." Gyou answers simply and he sighs, he just knows that Gyou just won't want to hear about the lecture one of his escort had given him. He moves to enter the building while Gyou heads to find a rain barrow to wash up.

I was eating stones, dirt, and other things that one just doesn't eat when one is alive just to fill me up. It's a wonder that it worked, but then, this is the Soul Society and thus everything is made up of spirit particles from the dirt beneath our feet to the clouds drifting overhead. He thinks as he studies the floor, particularly the minor puddles that remain.

He casts another kido to dry the floor. Instead of heading towards Toshiaki, he heads up stairs to see if the other levels need to be dried as well. He can hear Uchito groan and speak to Toshiaki.

Soon enough, all of the levels above ground level are dry and as he comes down to the main level, he finds Gyou and Toshiaki taking large metal parts down to the basement. Upon seeing him, Gyou says, "The basement needs your magical touch, Naruto! It's pretty filled up."

He just nods and heads down the stairs, midway down, he sees what the red head means. He assumes that Uchito is off gathering up fire wood for the furnace. He casts a slightly higher level kido to get rid of the layer of water that covers the floor for about a foot.

With that done, he moves towards anvil before calling up to the pair, "It's done." He watches as the two come down while hauling the rather long bit of metal.

As Gyou and Toshiaki head upstairs to bring down more pieces, Uchito arrives with his arms full of wood. As he watches the three, he

reflects that if he were like his fellow Soul Reapers, then he would think helping any residents of this district to be beneath him. If any of Soul Reapers knew what he does during his time policing this district, he's pretty sure they would throw a fit or lecture him about how he has better things to do then to help these souls out on the fridges of the Soul Society.

Already many of them disapprove of the fact that he does wear other cloths when off duty and still within the Seireitei instead of doing so in the higher level districts of the Rukongai, typically fifth district through to first district were acceptable places for Shinigami to spend their off duty time. He just doesn't see why they should care what he wears when off duty. *But then, I am part of a military...*

After a few minutes, he moves from his position by the anvil to walk over towards the counter to see what kinds of plans Gyou and his assistants have come up with since he was last in here, which was about four days ago. *Huh, a mechanical dog.*

"Naruto! You know we can use some help over here!" Gyou hollers and he glances over towards the red head before leaving the counter to go assist the three.

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With his eyes close, he tries to lose himself within himself. The box containing the pieces of a picture resting before him. He feels Aozora at the edge of his mind but he wasn't looking to contact Aozora no Kemono.

He doesn't know how long he floated within this white space until a old, warped wooden door appears before him. The door knob is a simple bit of metal instead of something much more broad and easy to grip. With his right hand, he grips the metal knob.

Suddenly, the metal twists in his grip and the door pulls inward, away from him. He stiffens at the sight of a hallway that appears dimly lit and seems to have metal tubes either coming out of the ceiling or

along the side of the hallway. After a few minutes, he finally steps into the hallway and feels more then sees the door he entered through vanishes.

"Kind of reminds me of the sewers under the Seireitei." He can't help but muses, although the are various differences between this place and the sewers. He walks down the tunnel, a thin layer of water upon the floor. Some of the pipes above his head sometimes drops water.

He can't help but find this place to be pretty depressing as he continues to explore this place. Then, finally, he finds a room. He feels the hairs upon his neck perk up while paused by the entrance of the huge room. His heart rate increased and his mouth goes dry, he can't help but wonder why this room causes such a reaction.

After it proves impossible to control his heart rate and other bodily reactions, he gives up and steps into the large room. As he gets close to being in the middle of the room, he gets a good view of what appears to be huge metal door that appear to be doors to a giant cell. The metal is rather rusted and almost appear half melted. The scent aside from the scents of decay, rusted metal, and blood it seems to hint that some kind of large animal had lived here once upon a time.

And then, he spies something hanging upon one of the doors. He walks over and stiffens at the sight of a rather huge frame with parts of the picture being missing. What remains of the picture shows a map of some continent as the background with various faces of people, a few of them look familiar like this one who looks like Gyou only with some tattoo upon his temple and black rings about his eyes or this one who seems to be Nijito only with a more arrogant set to his face and sporting silvery eyes.

His arm trembles as he reaches out to take the frame off the ancient door. As he gets within a centimeter of the frame, those fragments that he collected around the Seireitei appear. He watches as the pieces of the picture move and sets themselves in the blank points of the picture.

The picture within the frame is now complete and after a few seconds of studying it, he finally grips the frame. As he pulls the frame from the gate, everything around him breaks apart and then, he blacks out.

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"Huh, I think I can identify ten of these people, even if their appearance seems to be slightly altered." He hears Aozora muses. **"It seems like you finally fulfilled the requirements for Bankai. It only took you a whole century and a half."**

He sighs, his head is pounding as he tries to get more comfortable. It takes him a few minutes before he can gather enough strength to ask, "Not that I don't mind but, why are you still manifesting yourself outside of my mind-scape?"

"Oddly enough, you're mind is stuff to the brim with a new or is that old, set of memories. So, until you absorb them, I'm not going to able to rest comfortably in your mind." Aozora explains.

"So that's why my head is pounding..." He groans softly. It wasn't long before the spirit of his Zanpakuto spirit appears over him with a cup of water.

He raises himself up by his elbows before grabbing the cup. He gulps it down before resting the cup to his forehead before handing the cup back to Aozora. His partner takes the cup with a hand that sports three clawed finger and a thumb.

He lies back down as he waits for either his dizziness passes or when Aozora brings him the cup refilled with water. He's exhausted and yet he can't find a way to fall asleep. Aozora arrives with the cup once more filled with water.

He drinks it down after raising himself from the floor. He glances pass the fire place to where his Zanpakuto is resting against the wall.

He finally sits fully up and he looks down into the fire pit as he rubs his temples.

"It's time like these I wish I brought medicine instead of depending upon my medical kidos and knowledge." He mutters. He become a jack of all trades simply because he offers to help tutor students privately when they are trying to apply to certain, specific division.

"Well, don't expect me to give any of those a try. I'm better at causing damage then reversing it." Aozora replies to his left.

He glances over and finds that, once again, Aozora is sitting upon one of the few chairs of the house. After a few minutes, he glances around for the picture that Aozora had mentioned. It takes him a few seconds to find it, he gets up and walks almost drunkenly over to it.

His headache grows worst and he finds himself sitting down with it upon his lap. "Huh, old lady Tsunade and pervy-sage..." He muses as he studies a blond sporting a purple diamond mark upon her forehead and a old looking man sporting white hair and strips of red tattoos going from the eyes down to the jaw line.

He blinks as memories of the two replay within his mind's eye. He closes his eyes and turns his head up to gaze at the ceiling. "Why am I remembering my old life now? What does if have to do with my Bankai?" He wonders out loud with only Aozora about to hear him speak to himself.

His thoughts drift to his Shikai release. The command to activate it is 'Phrase from sight, Aozora no Kemono!' His Zanpakuto divides into two Katana sporting four and half foot long blades that also sport dual edges while appearing to be made out of the same blue metal as when Aozora is in his seal sword form. Shikai allows for mist to cover the field, hiding him from the sight of everyone within the mist.

Within the mist he controls the atmosphere, he can call forth any kind of weather bit it simple rain and hail to cyclones and monsoons. The weather doesn't hinder him within the mist, only those within the

mist along with him. It allows him to move about the battlefield without being sensed by those within the mist.

"How long was I out?" He suddenly asks as he's reminded of the fact that he could have been out for a few days because of Reiryoku exhaustion. He had suffered from it upon achieving Shikai.

"Only been two hours." Aozora answers. **"I don't know if you will or will not suffer from Reiryoku exhaustion when you finally use Bankai."**

"Ah, shouldn't you know what your Bankai is?" He asks Aozora. He turns to regard his Zanpakuto's physical manifestation. *So glad that he's not a fox.* He can't help but think, although that does kind of cause him to wonder where that came from.

"I'll know when I manage to reenter into that head of yours." Aozora says. **"I do know that it involves releasing a much larger storm over an area. I believe it also give you a larger space in which you won't be detected in as the storm brews overhead. The details beyond those things are sketchy though."**

"Really? I guess that makes sense." He admits upon reflection. He then turns to study the picture again and is soon lost in memories of his life before he arrived at the Soul Society, his headache forgotten.

Northern Gate of Seireitei

"It's good to see you, Naruto-sensei! How was your patrol, sensei?" Ayano says upon him entering into the Seireitei.

He smiles at his ex-student as she bows before him. "Ayano, I'm not your sensei any more so there's no need to add sensei to my name." He reminds the young brunet who went onto become a member of the third division.

"Sorry, sir, but I'll always see you as my sensei. I'm sure many of your previous student do as well." Ayano reminds him with a slight

smile.

He smiles slightly, he knows she's right and it warms him that they continue to think so highly of him. *I wonder if this is what Iruka-sensei felt when we continued to call him that?* He wonders to himself.

"How have your duties been treating you, Ayano?" He inquires and after a few minutes, they part ways. Ayano heads out of the Seireitei and he heads deeper into it.

He gets stopped by other students, particularly those that approached him for private lessons so it wasn't until noon before he finally made it to his apartment in the ninth division. It has been over three years since he had last been within this apartment and for the next ten to fifteen years he'll be teaching at the academy before heading back out of the Seireitei.

It wasn't long before he's found a spot to hang the picture of his friends from when he was alive. Once more he notices that Sasuke Uchiha isn't featured among his friends featured in the picture. *It's amazing to think that Gaara, Lee, Kankuro, Kiba, Konohamaru, Neji, Temari, Tenten, Temujin, and Udon are so different here in this afterlife. I wonder what became of the others though...* He wonders while studying the picture.

Kami, I hope none of my friends ended up as Hollows... He finally thinks as he considers the chances of his enemies ending up as Hollows. With a shake of his head, he heads for his room to begin undressing so he can have a nice warm shower.

It's good to be home. He thinks to himself as he enters into the bathroom. He turns on the shower's water, being sure to make sure that the hot water is twisted a bit more then the cold water knob.

"Although, what do I do now that I got my memories? I would have been better off without them..." He mutters to himself as he shampoos his blond hair as he reminisces about his live as a ninja.

Guess I'll just have to take it one step at a time.

MLP Wish: Harry Potter

I don't own My Little Pony or Harry Potter!

"Fred and George have gone too far!" Hermione declares upon his coming down the stairs. He moans softly, his head is pounding and Hermione just aggravated it some more.

"What did they do this time?" He asks his only female friend as he gets within range of the couch. He pushes up and stands only on his hind legs so that he can sit down upon the couch. His tail kind of aches from how he's leaning upon it so he moves it. He's just happy that his wings weren't fully upon his back, more to the sides so they don't really ache as he sits upon the couch.

Instead of telling him, the dusty pink unicorn pony with light brown mane and tail merely opens one of her books, displaying the open pages for him to see. He frowns as he notices the moving pictures, something about the appearance of those pictures cause his headache to spike even more. "I don't get it, what's wrong with them?" He finally asks.

Ron snorts and he glances at his second close friend, a ruby red winged unicorn pony sporting dual mane and tail colors which are bright yellow and orange. "Even I can see what's wrong with those pictures! Just look at them! They altered the pictures in the books to look like some kind of naked ape!" Ron points out.

But... aren't we suppose to be... His thoughts cut off as some more students enter into the common room. "You won't believe what happened to the Fat Lady!" One of the three shout and a lot of the students who were hanging about the common room turn to stare at the threesome.

"Just come on and see for yourselves!" Another one of the three unicorn ponies states in an annoyed way and as if all connected to the same mind, all those within the common room get up and walk outside of the common room to see what's up.

He arrives outside of the Gryffindor common room with those who are up. He stretches his wings and takes to the air to see over the tops of his fellows. Once more, he gets this feeling that there's nothing wrong with the painting but with them, which is rather confusing since he clearly... er, kind of remembers his life as he is, although his memories are rather blurry upon the details though.

"One of us should go get a professor!" A girl among the crowd says and murmurs of agreements sound out at that idea. He moves from the spot that he's hovering in to take a look at the rest of the painting about.

After a few hours of touring Hogwarts, he discovers that every painting that is of a person appears to be human instead of a unicorn pony or a winged pony or even a winged unicorn pony. He swishes his tail in annoyance as he stares before one of the tapestries of Hogwarts, confirming the fact that anything pictured, painted, or woven features humans instead of the previously mentioned pony types. Even those who should appear as normal non-magic using ponies are humans.

With a shake of his head, which causes his blue and purple dual colored mane to shake, he decides to head for the Great Hall to get breakfast. *Can't believe I woke up so early, well, a lot of people did too.* He thinks as he takes to the air, flying through the hidden ways that are only accessible when flying... only to ram into a wall.

He manages to stop himself from hitting the floor and gently lands upon the floor. "Ok, something is mightily wrong with all of this. The twins aren't capable of influencing the castle to this degree." He mutters as he walks through the halls to get to the Great Hall.

He pauses and watches a group of Ravenclaws exit out of the Great Hall. They ignore him as they talk among themselves about the mysterious alterations to all of the pictures and paintings of Hogwarts. It's clear that nobody had taken time to look at tapestries as of yet.

He enters into the dinning hall and glances towards the head table. He finds none of the teachers or fellow staff members were up there. With a hum, he turns away and glances over to Slytherin table and finds that the majority of the house is glaring towards Gryffindor table. It seems that everyone seems to be accusing the Weasley twins of the alterations to the various paintings and such in the castle.

"Hey Harry! Where have you been?" Colin Creevey asks. He glances over at the sandy blond winged pony sporting a chocolate brown mane and tail. He can almost spy the camera icon upon the first year's hind quarters.

"Just touring the halls, looking at the other paintings about the castle." He answers as he walks pass the clump of first years, heading to sit next to Hermione. "Well, it isn't just your book or the paintings in the stair well that are odd." He says as he sits down upon Hermione's left.

"Did ya find any signs of the twins?" Dean asks him and he shakes his head. "Huh, I wonder where they're hiding?" Dean, a fellow winged unicorn pony who's color is dusty blue with silver mane and tail wonders out loud as he begins to fill his plate with pancakes and scramble eggs.

"They're bound to show up, if not here then in the kitchens." Saemus remarks. "Pretty wicked prank. Still, you'd think they know better then to do something this obvious." The purple with teal mane and tail unicorn pony states, it's clear that Saemus' mother came from a family of purely unicorn stock.

There are a few pure-bloods who prefer to breed with only fellow winged ponies or unicorn ponies. Typically, they end up marrying muggleborns since they only have one of the two physical signs of magic. He reviews such thoughts as he glances around the table, picking out those that only possess a horn or wings.

Why can't I visualize the Weasley twins? He wonders as he notices Ginny Weasley, he notes once more that unlike Ron, she only sports wings and doesn't posses a horn; it does happen sometimes in pure-blood families that the more children one family has that some of the children are born with only one magical trait.

With a sigh, he focusing only on eating as his headache begins to come back upon his musings. "I think I'll check the dungeons for your brothers, Ron. Care to join me?" He asks as he gets off the bench after turning his body about so he can leave.

"Nay, there's a chess tournament I've been invited to be in." Ron says with a wave of his right hoof. "Thanks for asking though."

"Hermione?" He turns to speak to his other friend. "You want to come and lecture them when we find them?" He asks.

"I'm going to go check the library." Hermione says as she pauses in eating a muffin. "I'm sure there's a book around here that they didn't touch." The unicorn muggleborn says.

With a shrug, he drops down onto all fours after taking a few steps away from the bench. He walks for the door and sighs as he begins to wonder just where to begin his search. He does stop by a stair case to turn and look at the icon upon his own hind leg. The icon is a white shield with an image of a red dragon head upon it. It stood out because his body is black.

"You would think they would at least wait until the first week is over before pulling such a widespread prank..." He mutters to himself as he walks down the stairs. *I wonder if this has anything to do with those books upon rituals that I saw in their room that one time...*

He pauses and after a few seconds, decides to cast a silence spell upon his hooves so he doesn't make any sounds upon walking upon the stone floor. *Maybe I should have gone back for my cloak...* He thinks to himself as he walks through the dungeons.

As he turns a corner, he finds himself colliding with somebody. He doesn't find himself knocked down and finds himself staring at the pair of humans before him. Then, it clicked as the pair stare at him with wide eyes. "Fred? George? What the heck did you two do now?"

"Harry?" George asks and he snorts as he swishes his tail.

"Yea. Now answer the question! What did you two do now?" He asks, narrowing his eyes as Fred helps George up from the floor.

The two exchange looks before they say, taking turns throughout their answer, "Why don't we find a room and discus this? Rather not have slimy snakes overheard this."

With a sigh, he nods and allows the two to take point. It takes them about thirty minutes of sneaking about the dungeons until they arrive at an unused room. All along the way, his memories slowly begin to untangle themselves unto he possesses two sets of memories. One set has him as a human and are much more darker then the set that has him in his current form and things seem to be a bit more... nicer in compassion to his experience as a human boy.

"Ok, what happened?" He asks as he watches as the twins move to sit upon the large desk in the room. "And why aren't you affected by this as well?" He adds, he enjoys not needing glasses to see.

"Well, during our summer, we began researching a way to alter an area through a single spell. What we found were variations of a wishing ritual." The twins explains, each taking a turn explaining it. "We decided to wait until we were at Hogwarts before testing it. We just wanted to do a minor change and there was this toy that we found rummaging through our dad's shed of muggle things."

"It was a little pink pony with dual mane and tail sporting blond and light blue with this odd icon on its butt, or is that back hip?" The two continue after a minor pause and he holds a hoof against the spot between his eyes as he realizes what toy they found.

"You found a My Little Pony toy and used it for this ritual, didn't you? That explains so much..." He grumbles. "The toy represented the idea of what you want the world to reflect!" He says before pausing as he tries to recall where he got that from.

"How did you figure that out?" One of the twins asks. "And why would anyone entitle that toy to be a My Little Pony?" The other adds.

"Well, for one, My Little Pony is a rather popular toy for girls. So popular that it even got made into movies and into a cartoon show. It's a muggle form on entertainment." He explains, adding the last part when they got confused.

"Let's just say that its got this huge following with little girls around the world." He summarizes upon the still confused look upon their faces. "As to understanding the ritual... Don't really know where it came from." He states flatly.

"Anyway, we were standing in position that made us immune to the ritual's effects. That's why we're not, well, colorful." The twins finish after a few minutes of silence.

"You didn't clean up the ritual, did you? I think I might know how to reverse this." He says after he ponders for a while. He still don't get why he's got this knowledge but he kind of has an idea of what needs to be done.

"No we didn't. Just follow us." The twins say and they were, once again, in the dungeon hallways.

They arrive at the room and he notices that the toy in the center is that of a human. He frowns before he moves to get a closer look at

the ritual diagram. As he looks at the ritual, something in his mind translates so he can read it.

"Well, I think I know what you did wrong and I think we can do something about it before lunch." He says cheerfully. He then begins to tell the twins what needs to be erase so they can put in the right parts. He makes sure to move the toy out of the circle.

It takes two hours but they are finally ready to do the ritual once more. He stands in the center nervously but knows that this needs to be done. He has a rough idea of what could happen if he doesn't follow through with this path and strongly objects to what the future holds if its allowed to follow down that path.

God, please forgive me for what I'm about to do but I refuse to allow the world to follow that course. He thinks as the twins chant the spell in passable Latin.

As the ritual activates, he takes control of the magic and he senses the world at large. He freezes as various emotions roll into him and he understands that he's about to do the right thing for a whole new set of reasons. And so he plays god, fixing the mistakes the muggles had made to the world, be it the hole in the ozone to the inorganic garbage that's building up all across the world.

Once the world has become healthier, he begins to go to the source of the damage and erases all traces of the evil humans had constructed accidentally as they advanced their civilization. He does pause as he realizes that Fred and George seem to struggling to try and end this. So, he reaches out and changes them, he makes sure that their memories are also affected just like the rest of the world.

With that done, he returns to making the world in which they live to be a better place. He turns his gaze to the moon and begins to use magic to make it habitual, has the necessary gravity, and rotates, he then uses magic to seemingly expand the surface of the moon before teleporting the majority of the magical races up there. A few

mundane species also joined them, they're role is to be food for the majority of the meat eaters.

He constructs a huge city upon the moon, one that will allow every magical pony to reside there with more then enough room for more. He also creates underground farms to feed the populous of the city before beginning to ward the city to keep undesirable species from entering it. Once the city is to his satisfaction, he returns his attention to the earth.

In time, he manages to erase cities from the world before expanding the surface of the world so that over nine billion ponies can be supported. Once the world is cleared of all settlements, he then begins the task of creating settlements, he also makes sure to alter the memories of the world to accommodate his most recent changes.

Once that's done, he is sure to create various gates throughout the world for magical ponies to use to travel, be it to the moon city or around the world. He 'steps' back and studies the world for a few seconds before erasing every soul bit from earth, going so far as to destroy that path of magic upon Earth and, after a few thoughts, the Moon.

Then he finds he's not yet done as there are still vampires, hags, and other near humans he needs to deal with. It takes him hours to studying the whole of the various, humanish races before he decides upon a course of action. The vampires are killed since they were nothing but dead bodies being animated by magic while the curse of the werewolves is replaced, making them into wolf animagi as well as making sure that all previously mundane werewolves are pegasus ponies or unicorn ponies. No race is spared, many had their very natures and magics changed so they are made less violent and capable of fitting into the typical peaceful pony society.

It shouldn't surprise him much at how naturally peaceful the My Little Pony species is, but it also means that there won't be much in the way of human type of violence which is killing, raping, money greed,

and other extreme negative traits that humans seem to indulge in. A pony's type of violence seems to be prank pulling compared to human type and far less likely to leave lasting marks upon an individual or the world around them.

He did find it tremendously hard to create a believable history but he does so. It's hard for him to say if it were believable but it's what he created and wrote. His final touches were to erases his 'finger' prints so that if anyone tries to search out what he did, they'd have a very hard time finding the clues they need.

With that done, he lets go of the magic, fully expecting that the backlash will destroy him as he does have a soul fragment inside of him. He learnt about it from the information dump he received concerning the ritual. He's pretty sure that this way will save far more lives even though it will alter them beyond recognition of their previous selves or what their old natures use to be.

The released magic suddenly blinds and he... feels...

"Welcome home, my child." He hears a woman's voice say and he feels something wrap their arms around him, He feels so protective in this embrace. **"You've done what I had hoped. I'm just sorry you won't be there to experience it."**

The End

Shinigami Naruto: The Test

I don't own Bleach or Naruto!

Oh, this is going to be so much fun! He thinks as he sets the white fox mask into place over his face. ***"I'm sure your students won't find it very fun."*** Aozora remarks from within his mind-scape and he mentally shrugs.

He adjusts his red kimono before running his hands through his blond hair. He uses medical kido to alter his hair color to red with his pony ending in white, mimicking a fox's tail. The kido was developed by one of his students as she had been teased mercilessly about her odd color hair, it had been sporting dual colors, that she looked for ways to their hide it or to dye it and with his help, created this unique kido.

Humming a soft tune under his breathe, he is sure to center the gem like sphere upon his necklace so that it hangs over his chest. The fangish beads of the necklace are all pointing away from his neck. Finished, he checks himself one last time in the mirror before tapping his sandals and turning away.

He walks out of the shrine and gazes down at the forest where teams of students should be wandering about, each with one of a pair of scrolls in their possession. The forest is larger then the Forest of Death where the second part of the Chuunin Exam had taken place and none of the 'natural' dangers of it though. Another change is that the various teams had been dropped randomly about the forest instead of them all starting outside of it.

"How many do you think will get the true purpose of this training?" Aozora wonders before manifesting himself in the more 'physical' world of the Soul Society. **"You basically set them up**

against one another and yet you expect them to form an army to stand against you, the so called Fox Sage."

"There will be times when you must chose between fulfilling the mission while trying to ignore the danger an unknown party represents or putting the mission on hold to form a temporary alliance with their enemies to deal with said third party. It's fine to follow orders but to only follow them with disregard of your unit's lives... There's just too many who think like that already, particularly in positions of power that I want to at least try to make them aware of the possibility of them being in that position." He says to Aozora.

"I see. Well, I think you're in for a disappointment in this upcoming test." Aozora no Kemono muses. **"And you are, sadly, correct about how easily Soul Reapers mindlessly follow orders to the point of suicide."** His partner says with a sigh as they watch the sun set before them, the retreating sunlight causes the forest before this little mountain to look surreal.

He smiles under the mask as he nods as he glances over to Aozora. "I couldn't have created this forest without you, you know. You are link rather firmly to all of the elements. With your aid, I used earth and water to create this forest" He says to his Zanpakuto spirit. "Is it any wonder that when released you create storms?"

Aozora smirks and cape his wings about his shoulders while hoooking the thumbs at the mid-point of the collar bone. **"It's nice to be recognized for the aid I lend to you, my welder."** Aozora remarks dryly.

"Beside, I do have to wonder how well the upper brass will react to this test of yours when you head back in about six days' time." Aozora muses thoughtfully after a moment of silence. **"Your true intent isn't going to sit well with any of them, they don't take criticism well."**

"Not much they can do about it, I've become a valuable teacher at the academy. I am the only one there that's teaching because I want

to teach instead of it being an assigned duty by my captain. I've become something of a professional teacher and I am rather popular with the students too." He reminds Aozora.

"Guess it helps that the survival rate of fresh academy students has never been as high as it is since you started teaching." Aozora adds rather calmly. **"Any way, it's almost time for you to start your haunting, oh great Fox Sage."** And with that said, Aozora vanishes from his sight.

He rests his left hand upon the dagger that is his Zanpakuto. It had taken a lot of effort to not just shrink Aozora but to make the metal of the blade to take the appearance of basic steel. Aozora's normal blue metal appearance is rather unique and would blow his cover.

I wonder if anyone decided to wait until evening to move about? He wonders before shrugging the thought off. Within seconds he Shunpo to the base of this little mountain.

"It's game time." He mutters, doing his best to disguise his own voice. He holds out both arms with the palms of his hands turned up to the sky. He focuses his mind to create tiny blue fire balls, mimicking the special flames that are said to be used by Kitsune. Nine tiny blue balls of fire hover in the air before him before they zoom away from him, heading into the forest.

With a grin, his body glows and shrinks. His form shifts about until its in a form of a nine-tailed fox. The glow vanishes as he shakes his body. He stretches his altered body and moves each tail individually a few seconds.

Once he's satisfied, he trots into the forest that he had force to grow. *Let's see who's in the neighborhood.* He thinks to himself.

Aizen

"Aizen, Katsu, are do you make of that?" The third member of the unit, a student named Dan, asks while pointing to this blue fire ball

that kind of reminds him of the description of Kitsune's Fox Fire. The tiny blue ball of fire slowly drifts towards them and he watches as Katsu, who's closest, move to the blue fireball.

"It's kind of pretty." Katsu muses and he snorts softly, finding it typical that a girl would find something potentially dangerous to be pretty. "Huh, it's not even warm." Katsu adds.

Katsu suddenly jerks back and he gets up to see what's wrong. "It's... it's growing." Katsu says and he frowns at the sight.

"This has to be a trick sensei set up." Dan states while gripping his Asauchi's handle. "There can't be any Kitsune in the Soul Society!" The brunet student says upon drawing his Asauchi.

As Dan slashes at the five foot blue fireball, he tries to preform a barrier kido only for the 'Fox Fire' to explode and its energies wash over them all. He curses softly under his breath as he rubs his eyes. He freezes as low, throaty growling reaches his ears.

"Oni... Oh god, it's an ONI!" Katsu screams and as he looks, he finds a being standing about nine feet while sporting a pair of red horns that jet out of very pale white hair. He feels the ground tremble as the red skinned Oni take slow, deliberate steps towards them as they retreat from it.

Then the Oni raises its kanabo and bellows, "The scroll! Give it to me and you might walk away with your head not bashed in!"

Katsu screams as she turns to flee and it seems that Dan's nerve also escaped him. He stares into those black eyes as he tries to bind the Oni using kido, only for the Oni to chuckle as it casually breaks it. Suddenly he finds himself flying into a tree and he doesn't recall the beast moving to do so.

He feels something tugging at his belt and he wakes to find a nine-tailed Kitsune trying to tug the scroll out of his belt pouch. It takes him a few seconds to release that the Oni had only been an illusion

and yet, he finds his ability to move to be hampered. He does finally grabs the scroll, causing the ruby furred mystical beast to pull away from the scroll.

As he draws himself up, he stares into the fox's yellow eyes. *"I see. Well, congrats on waking from my illusion so quickly. I believe we'll meet again."* The nine-tailed fox states calmly before turning into a blue ball of fire and zooming away.

Regrettably. He thinks as he tries to shake of the aftereffects of the Kitsune's illusion. He glances at his squad members for this test and find they're still out of it.

"How... interesting." He muses out loud as he watches them. He can only hope that no other team is within yards of them as they would have an easy time getting their Earth scroll.

Naruto

It seems that Aizen has some talent in illusions. He thinks after visiting the ninth team to be found by his Fox Fire and put under an illusion to keep them from waking as he searches them while looking for their scroll. With the exception of squad five, he did collect each squad's scrolls.

Each of the eight scrolls are held in eight of his nine tails as he trots towards the shrine. All in all, he is rather happy that at least one out of nine squads managed to hold onto their scroll. *I wonder how many will venture here to try and retrieve their scroll or to get the one they need... Of course even if some of the squads managed to capture their second scroll, they got a bit of a wait before they can begin to turn them over at one of the three stations.*

He does wonder how well that puppet of his is preforming. He rather have people not knowing that the Fox Sage and Naruto Uzumaki are one and the same. As long as the puppet is in plain view of other Shinigami, nobody will be able to prove anything concerning the Fox

Sage and Naruto Uzumaki other then maybe the Fox Sage being a student of Naruto's or somebody volunteered to play the Fox Sage.

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"Only four squads passed, eh?" 'Naruto' muses upon arriving in the clearing with other academy staff. More then a few students stare between 'Naruto' and him, the Fox Sage.

"I was rather busy or I would have ensured that none would have passed." He states in his altered voice, more then glad that the mask helps with that. "Aizen Sosuke proved to have all the qualities of a fine leader. Charismatic enough to get the majority of his fellows to follow him in hunting me down." He explains.

"I see, well, congratulations to the army of Aizen then for managing to prove that you aren't mindless drones." 'Naruto' states and he can't help but chuckle at the stun expressions upon their faces upon hearing their respectable teacher say that. "If you are not in need of medical attention, you are all allowed to return home to get cleaned up for a party at Isa's which will start at seven." The puppet adds and the students cheer before heading off in different directions.

The puppet of him and himself begin to discus the performance of the class while the other Soul Reapers collect the scroll that he had piled in the middle of the clearing. They kept up the act to the point where they left the forest to continue their discussion someplace more comfortable.

"Well, looks like you managed to pull that off rather well." Aozora remarks as the puppet collapses upon arriving in his apartment. He picks up the puppet and then, focusing his Reiryoku, causes the puppet to be destroyed.

'Yes, it does, doesn't it? You didn't complain as much as I thought you would, all things considered.' He thinks to his partner while taking the shrunken Zanpakuto from his belt.

It takes about a minute for the sword to return to its original size and shape. He pulls the blade out a few center-meters to check and see if the metal the sword is back to its original color. Nodding to himself, he sheaths the sword once more and leans it upon the chair in his living room before heading for his bedroom to begin changing out of his current set of cloths.

I wonder if any of them truly got the lesson I was trying to teach? He muses in the shower where seconds before, he returned his hair to its usual state. *Ah well, at least they won't be able to forget about this test, even when they become Shinigami and take positions in the various divisions.*

The City Naruto Built

I don't own Naruto!

Day 12

"Alright men! Let's get this kingdom of Kiboo built!" A thirteen year old Naruto Uzumaki says to his army of two thousand shadow clones. The clones raise their arms up and shout back to the original, "Right!"

Groups of clones vanish off in different directions while the original moves to speak with a clone holding a bit of cut out bark. "Ok, lead me to where we should mark the foundation." The original says to the clone who's acting as his secretary.

The clone nods sharply before leading the original to the rocky hill that they shall build a fortress upon.

Beach

Day 17

The rest of team seven is with the other the rookie nine plus Gai's team were busy far to the west of the island. "So... Naruto hasn't come crawling back yet?" Sakura asks as she drops a woven basket filled with sea creatures that the majority of the girls had gathered; Tenten seems to be focusing on making arrows.

"He'll be back." Kiba states in a dismissive way. It's Kiba's turn keep the signal fire from going out. Akamaru whines softly and the loud, tattoo wearing genin strokes his dog's side.

"Still, it's been about a two weeks since he left. Shouldn't we at least sent Neji or Lee to search for him? Just to make sure that he's not hurt?" The pink haired genin wonders as she begins to put crabs and

mussels into a large clay pot that Shino had crafted and Sasuke had fire baked.

Once filled with the sea critters, Sakura begins to fill the pot with drinking water from the jars that, for today, Chouji and Lee are in charge of keeping filled with drinkable water from a stream a few kilometers from their camp. Ino and Hinata approach with their fish that they netted.

"How's Akamaru? Is he still feeling the heat?" Hinata asks her team-mate while dropping the net down.

Ino moves to collect a bunch of twigs for them to use to cook the fish while Kiba replies, "When the shelter is built, he'll finally have a cool place to rest. If Naruto hadn't been such a drama queen, the shelter would have been built days ago."

"I wonder what Naruto is doing now?" Hinata wonders softly to herself as she looks eastward.

Fort Ramen

Naruto hums under his breath as he walks through the first level of the underground part of the fortress. The clones had done a good job in using those imperfect earth jutsus to aid in not just tunneling through the rocky earth but in getting the rocks out of their way. The original Uzumaki's tour brings him to the newer section.

This part will soon have a chain gang of clones to take whatever stones they discover as they dig down to create another level of the basement. But before that happens, the clones will be using earth jutsus to strength the walls, ceilings, and floors of this part. With a shrug, the original heads back the way he came, heading to return to the surface.

The basement is already being used as a cellar to keep smoked meat and dry greens. There are plans for a water reserve to be connected throughout the fort but that will have to wait until the area

is dug. Upon getting out of the basement, Naruto arrives in a room that will become the kitchen.

Roads are already being created outside of the temporary wall that surrounds the base of this rocky hill. When the time comes, a more permanent one will exist a full kilometer in every direction from the center of his fortress. Some areas are already being marked off for future gardens and fountains that will be created within the future enclosed area.

"Our patrols report that none of our previous associates have moved out of the area they've already explored. It is unlikely that they've finished constructing any of their shelters since you left. They have been hit by the blunt of the incoming storms so it is likely that the incomplete shelters will continue to be incomplete until storm season passes." Naruto's secretary role filling clone reports as he enters into the courtyard.

"I see. Well, knowing the various stubborn geniuses among them, it's doubtful that they'll do anything beyond trying to construct those shelters. Hopefully they won't feel the need to search for me until Fort Ramen is fully constructed." The original says before frowning.

"Err, I think we should start assigning code names and maybe encourage your brothers to alter their appearance so they don't appear identical to me. I mean, they could just alter their cloths or maybe the hair, I'm not asking them to totally alter their looks and what-not unless they want to, you know?" Naruto says to his primary adviser.

Within seconds, the secretary like clone now sports non-spiky blond hair, a pair of glasses, and a simple set of cloths consisting of a white shirt and light brown baggy pants. "Alright, sir, I'll pass it among the boys. If you wouldn't mind, I'd like to be known as Fu." The newly dubbed Fu says to the original.

"Already, Fu it is. You may go spread the word now. I think I'm going to check on the carpenters and maybe spend a few hours helping

them." Naruto tells Fu and the clone nods sharply before walking away, leaving Naruto to scratch his head while wondering how he manage to create such a serious clone like Fu.

Beach

Day 22

"How troublesome." Shikamaru mutters while carrying water filled pails towards the signal fire. Ino merely huffs in agreement as they walk with the sun beaming down upon Shikamaru's topless upper-body and Ino's ripped shirt that is done up like a tank top.

"It's times like these that Naruto's shadow clones would be a great help." Ino huffs as the signal fire become clearer. "You'd think the idiot would be begging us to take him back out of shear loneliness." The blond murmurs.

Shikamaru doesn't say anything while Ino vents some more about Naruto's disappearance. Hinata stands to greet them. As they gently places the pails down upon the ground, both Shikamaru and Ino rotate their shoulders before stretching a bit.

"Did you want some help with the pails?" Hinata asks and Ino practically shouts, "Yes!"

And so the four pails of water have their contains poured into the stone jars that Shino's bugs had hollowed out by eating the stone to craft the jars. As the last pail is done, the foragers arrive arguing about something concerning whether they should try their hand at clearing away sections of forest to try and plant certain berry bushes in the clearing.

Neji seems to be defending the idea while Sasuke is arguing that they won't need to farm since they won't be here much longer. Chouji doesn't seem to care either way as the rather husky ninja seems more concerned about beginning to make lunch.

Shikamaru and Ino sit down with Ino coming to Sasuke's defense. As Chouji divides the various veggie and berries among those around the signal fire, those building the shelters arrive. Sakura and Tenten appear to be scowling and refusing to glance at each other.

As silence reigns among them, Sakura breaks it by saying, "You know, I think I miss having the goof-ball hanging around. I don't know how but with him around, we never argued this much."

Murmurs of agreements echo that sentiment.

Ramen City

Day 30

"It seems that the others are beginning to range beyond their typical boarders." Fu reports and Naruto sits up to look at Fu, wiping his forehead with the back of his right hand. "They seem to be moving in pairs while doing so. It seems that they are trying to pick up your trail."

"Really... Huh, any estimate concerning when they'll discover this city?" The original Naruto asks Fu before drinking some water from a wooden container that Cat and other carpentry incline clones.

"If they finally abandon their main camp and with the two Hyuugas with them, perhaps four days of hard running but if they stop to camp, eight days." Fu states. "I've already called in our western patrols. It's likely that they will take up guard duty upon the western walls."

"Good, good." Naruto says as he studies the others working on planting various flowering plants and a few fruit trees. The fountain is still getting worked on since a bunch of intellectual clones are busying figuring out how to pump water throughout the city.

"How goes Seal testing?" The original kyuubi container asks Fu. "They must be doing something right since I haven't received any of

their memories since yesterday around noon."

A normal day in the life of Naruto Uzmaki since they became stranded upon this island and he had a difference of opinion to the group's collective opinion.

Outside of Ramen City

Day 39

"Naruto made that city? But, he was the dead last of our class! Are you sure that he just didn't stumble upon the ruins and claimed it?" Ino demands of Neji as the group hides in the forest about a mile away of the wall.

There is a gate located a bit more to the northern part of the wall. They noted it as they encircled the wall for a few miles south.

Everyone but Lee and Sasuke are crouched within the cover the forest offers since there is no cover between their position and the wall. Some members of the group is finding it hard to swallow that the blond genin known widely as a knuckle head could build something so huge, even using his signature jutsu, shadow clones.

"Naruto..." Hinata whispers softly as she studies those posted along the wall. Some of them appear to have different hair colors, styles, and other little differences but mostly the bone structure is the same upon all of them so she knows they are clones.

"As interesting as this conversation is, I believe you're surrounding." A voice says and the group shut up to look around.

Within seconds, a group of clones appear and one in particular seems to exuded a commanding aura even though the clone's appearance is almost comical considering that they know Naruto's personality rather well.

"But... How?" One of the group asks and the bookish clone merely smiles ever so slightly.

"It's amazing that even wearing that orange eye sore as you call it, Naruto had the highest scores in stealth. He did manage to evade ANBU for hours after what he did to the Hokage Monument." The nerdish clone code named Fu muses. "Compared to that, this was rather an easy even with you having two Hyuuga."

"Who says we'll let ourselves be captured?" Kiba states while moving into a pose that will allow him to preform man-beast clone with Akamaru.

Fu only raised an eyebrow at this.

Ten Minutes Later

"This is so embarrassing..." Sakura says as she hangs form a spear shaft that is carried between two clones.

"Their reaction time is much more superior then his usual ones." Neji remarks. Both Hyuuga and a few of the others like Ino and Shino are forced to wear these jumpsuit that seem to be suppressing not just their chakra but their bloodline limit or family special jutsu.

"I should say so, I myself have existed for close to twenty days." One of the red haired guards remark. "Some of us though, they've been around before building of Ramen City started, like Fu." The guard says, nodding towards the glass wearing clone.

"Just how long can you guys last until you dispel naturally?" Sakura inquires. "And how is it you can be so far from Naruto's side?"

"Not sure how long we'll last but if we stay upon this island long enough, we'll likely find out. And why shouldn't we be able to range away from our creator? We are the most independent clones ever crafted using jutsu." The same clone guard explains as they walk northwards to the gate.

Castle Tengoku

Naruto leans into his throne that is within his throne room, his clones insisted that he needed the throne to go with the room. The blond would have been happy with an office but his clones clearly had other ideas. *At least they're not making me a crown.*

Blacksmith

"Ah-choo!" A group of clones sneeze at the same time.

"You think somebody is talking about us?" A silver haired clone code named Shuuseieki as he swipe his nose.

"Who knows? Anyway, I can't wait to see his face when we show him his crown!" A malt style, neon green haired clone code named Haru says with a wide grin as he holds up a artificially created sapphire using earth jutsu to collect the right elements to form such gems.

Castle Tengoku

"Ah-choo!" Naruto sneezes a few times in a row. "I hope I'm not coming down with anything..." The young ninja mutters, still unaware that he will soon be dubbed King of the Kiboo Kingdom, Defender of Castle Tengoku, and Lord of Ramen City.

(The clones are still working on the name of their knighthood)

"Err... Naruto! Fu and his unit are waiting outside with their captives. Shall I permit them to enter?" Doo asks, Doo is an orange and black haired clone who seems to be among a small group of clones who seem to enjoy sporting mismatch eyes, even among that group Doo is rather unique. Doo sports one that is Naruto's typical looking blue eye and a copper colored eye with black sclera and iris.

"If you won't mind, Doo." Naruto says to his current bodyguard. Doo salutes before moving to fully open the doors on his own.

Fu is the first to enter into the throne room. Naruto sighs when Sakura and Ino demand for him to have his clones unbind them from the spears. "Oh shut up!" Doo snaps at the girls after the unit is all within the throne room.

Naruto couldn't help but smile at Doo's reaction and from the looks from the guards, they seem to share Doo's sentiment. *Oh this is going to be very troublesome.* The kyuubi container thinks to himself.

"You know, you guys really shouldn't be that surprise by your treatment. I mean, we didn't exactly part on good terms." Naruto states. "A lot of you also dismissed a lot of my ideas of improving our base as a waste of time. The last report from my ranging patrols seem to say that even after a month, you still haven't finished your huts."

"Funny how it only took less then twenty-seven days to complete this city." Naruto muses before adding, "Heck, we're almost done creating the gardens of this fair city. Kind of goes to show that even with various geniuses or book savvy among you, you can't operate well outside of the career of being a ninja."

"Kind of sad, if you think about it that way." One of the guards carrying the 'guests' of the city muses after a moment of silence.

"So then, what do you plan to do with us?" Neji asks the blond sitting upon the throne.

"Well... I thinking putting you into cells until I decide what to do with you. I might even send a few units of guards to fetch Lee and Sasuke." Naruto states. "Take them away, but make sure they get cleaned up before being placed into their cells." Naruto tells the guards, they salute before marching back out in order to travel to the kitchens.

Day 61

"Huh..." Kakashi muses at the sight a really old fire pit. There are stone jars not that far from the old fire pit among other items that seem to be slowly but surely being engulfed by the sand.

"They seem to have tried to build shelters but they were never completed. Though that might be because they used such flimsy material." Gai states after joining Kakashi by the fire pit.

"We found a battle site. It seems there were disputes among them." Kurenai reports a little distance away.

The team of jonin instructors head to see this battle field. "Lee must have been one of the combatants." Gai states calmly while Kakashi moves around, studying every broken or burnt tree or grass.

"Sasuke's fireball jutsu created this." The white haired jonin states at a sport where the dirt seemed to have been partially melted.

With a frown, Kakashi summons a dog. "Find a scent and lead us after it." Sharingan Kakashi states.

Day 65

"Who taught their genin earth jutsu?" Asuma wonders as they stood before a gate that is open. They can clearly see guards all along the wall.

None of the three admit to it so silence hangs among them for a few seconds before Gai begins to walk through the gate, heading into the city. Kakashi soon follows after the Green Beast with Asuma and Kurenai hasting for a few seconds before following the two.

"Hey ya! Did you want a tour around our fair city or did you wish to visit with King Naruto the First?" They glance to the side of the gate to find a clone, it had to be a clone, sporting black, orange, and white hair and yellow eyes with green flakes about the iris. Instead of whisker marks upon the cheeks, this clone sports dark purple tattoos with a figure of a dragon suggested.

"I know, I know, pretty cool tattoos, right? Names is Haundo and if ya want, I'll be your tour guide. I'll show ya the many wonders of Ramen City and Castle Tengoku." The dubbed Haundo says.

"Yosh! You're student is most talented, Kakashi! Yes, Haundo, we shall gladly take you up on your offer!" Gai says and Haundo beams.

"Alright! Now then, follow and I shall lead you to the wondrous garden of Taigaa! Its fountain sports five tigers with a tiger lilly being at the center of them." Haundo says while leading the four jonin down a street.

Hours Later

"And finally, our last destination, Castle Tengoku! The castle is one of the first buildings built. At that time, Ramen City was Fort Ramen and it only occupied the land of the hill. A temporary wall had been built about the bottom." Haundo says as they enter into the courtyard of the surprisingly large castle.

The four jonin found the tour rather informative but they had begun to notice that none of the other genin had been mentioned throughout the creation of this fair city. They had spied various clones, some exact duplicates of Naruto Uzumaki with the others preferring to appear vastly different then their creator.

The four jonin have visited pretty much every district of Ramen City as their tour guide lead them around. They visited each of the gardens of the city as well as the markets. They noted how each district sported its own design and decorations.

"I don't suppose you can tell us what became of our various genin. You haven't mentioned them throughout the tour so far." Asuma says and Haundo looks thoughtful.

"Well, that's because they didn't help with any part of the founding or creation of the city. The majority of them arrived rather later and it

was believed that they planned to mooch off of our hard work, so they are guests within the dungeons." Haundo explains.

"Naruto and them had a difference of opinion when it came to how to set up residence upon this island. Naruto wasn't satisfied with only keeping close to the landing nor was he happy that his suggestions concerning jutsus being dismissed as a waste of time and chakra since the rest seem to believe they weren't going to spend more then a week or two upon this island." Haundo continues.

"Of course none of them objected to him creating shadow clones to do the foraging, watching the signal fire, or being sent out looking for usable scrapes from the sunk ship." Haundo says with a sigh. "The last fight had to do with the fact that whenever it stormed, the flimsy incomplete shelters would get ruined. Naruto wanted to give trying to shape shelters using an earth jutsu that he hadn't fully mastered. And so, Naruto marched off to explore more of the island."

"And thus, he discovered this place and saw a chance to create all of this." Haundo says. The group stilled as they processed all of that.

"That is rather unyouthful of my team." Gai muses with a frown.

"Ah, don't worry, it's not as though they're being tortured and they are being fed two meals a day." Haundo remarks upon seeing the looks on Asuma and Kurenai's faces. "Although, our Seal research team has been trying to understand Sasuke's curse seal, though sadly or happily, they accidentally destroyed it just last night. It seems that the seal's base was a poison and once they broke it down, it vanish."

"Sasuke seems to be comatose about the fact that it's destroyed. He raged for a few hours about how that seal was a gift for an avenger such as himself and wants them to reapply it." Haundo states after wincing slightly. "Once his anger was spent, he fell into a depression and is pretty much ignoring everything around him, off in his own little world."

Kakashi had mixed feelings concerning the destruction of the curse seal that Orochimaru had 'gifted' the young Uchiha. The jonin can only guess at how much more mentally unstable Sasuke is and hopes that once they return to Hidden Leaf, the hospital staff will be able to help him.

"Anyway, you guys must be pretty hungry! Come on, I'll take ya to the kitchen unless you guys want to dine in the dinning hall?" Haundo says, moving onto a new subject.

It's about then that the four jonin did find themselves to be rather peckish and they follow their guide to the kitchen. "You want smoked fish? Or do you prefer fresh?" Haundo asks as he moves to put on an apron.

"Fresh." Kurenai says and the clone nods. They watch Haundo with their eyes but their thoughts didn't encircle the clone at all as they each thought about their genin.

Master Bedroom

Naruto studies his pack, mentally going through a checklist. With a satisfied nod, the blond genin tightens the string before shouldering the strap. The blond is sure to adjust his headband before heading out of his chambers.

"Looks like you're in charge Fu!" Naruto says to the clone upon closing the door. "How goes the release of the prisoners?"

"Very good, sir. Sasuke continues to prove unresponsive while more then a few of our... guests have tried to kill their attendees upon having their chakra restored to them." Fu reports.

Naruto sighs, he rather expected that reaction from the majority of them. "So they didn't realize they were being attended by puppets until the blow didn't dispel them?" He asks the organized clone.

"A few seem to be more incline to believe that you've created a better, more durable version of us. Which wouldn't be such a bad idea, actually." Fu muses and Naruto smiles.

"Considering how often I use that jutsu, it shouldn't be that hard to test out slightly different things upon using said jutsu. After all, I'm still responsible for repopulating the city when a clone dispels prematurely." Naruto says. "Which will be rather tricky when I'm all the way back in Hidden Leaf."

Epilogue

7 Years Later

"It's good to be home." Naruto says upon being summoned back to the island of Kangaekomu, in the sealing room three in the wing of Castle Tengoku.

"It's good to see you as well, sir." An unchanged Fu says, clearly voicing the group's opinion. "It hasn't been the same since you left."

Naruto grimaces as he recalls that day. "There are days where I wish I never left." The twenty year old, recently declared missing nin admits with a sigh.

"So we begun to understand. Still, our king has returned and he brings us new additions for our library." Omoi, the clone that has taken it upon himself to create a library. The black haired clone is one of a group that wishes to see a new city built to the southwest, a cliff over looking a cove.

"So I have, so I have." Naruto muses and tosses the scroll containing all of his plunder from the major ninja villages and a few of the lesser ones too. Omoi catches the scroll and vanishes in a flash to begin organizing the contains.

"I have Tako run a bath for you in your chambers." Fu says. "I believe your crown is still within the glass case where you left it."

Naruto's adviser adds with a hint of a smile and Naruto groans at the reminder of his kingship.

At least the title King is a more suitable title then missing nin. I never abandoned the village, it abandoned me. The twenty year old genin thinks as he heads out of the room, heading for his waiting chambers that are many floor above his head.

Naruto pauses and glances over at Doo and Fu. "Be sure to start posting sentries about the island. It's likely they'll try to find me here after I haven't been sighted upon the continent after a few months. I didn't leave any clones behind, so it shouldn't be too long before they try coming here." Naruto informs the group, who just nod in response.

The End and Yet, a New Beginning

Shinigami Naruto: The Return

I don't own Bleach or Naruto!

"We're finally heading back to Seireitei after fifty years..." Aozora muses as while reading the order to return to the Seireitei. **"Aren't you a bit worried that they're from the Captain-Commander instead of Captain Tosen? You know, your division's latest captain?"**

"They mention war time measure are being enacted, though against who..." He shrugs as he adjusts his rather large knapsack before slipping the greatly shrunken Zanpakutō. He had used his spiritual power to shrink it to the size of a typical katanna until they reach his apartment in Seireitei, then at which point, it'll return to its typical size.

"So, you think two of the noble clans have finally decided to go to war then? If they have, maybe you can try looking a few years younger, like a twelve year old or maybe even an eight year old to get out of going to the front line." Aozora remarks jokingly after taking a long look at him.

"I enjoy looking like a seventeen year old, Aozora. It always offsets the new students into thinking I'm just one of the guys. Thus it helps them to relate to me outside of the classroom." He defends as he gives his Zanpakuto spirit a minor hard look.

"Ok, fine." Aozora says before adding as he's about to leave their home of fifty years, **"So, are you going to say farewell before we go?"**

He turns to look at Aozora only to find Aozora has vanished from this dimension. He closes his eyes and leans slightly upon the door frame as he sighs. He gently bangs his head against the wooden

frame before picking himself up and heading to do a round of the district to say good bye to the friends that will likely forever reside in this district. *Still surprises me that out of everyone I've known while I was alive, I would be one of the few who manage to get my full name right.*

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"The Captain-Commander is ready to see you, Uzumaki-san." Lieutenant Chojiro says and he raises up from his seat. He bows at the second-in-command of First division.

"Thank you, Sasakibe-sama." He says as he raise up from his bow. He then enters into the Captain-Commander's office. "Yamamoto-dono, it is good to see you in such good health." He says upon sitting down upon a chair before the elderly captain's desk.

"It is good to see you as well, Naruto. The quality of the graduates has fallen since your assignment in the far reaches of the Rukongai. Those souls you recommended for the Spiritual Arts Academy have done very well and have become rather remarkable Soul Reapers." Yamamoto says and he nods politely.

"It has been a long time since you achieved Shikai form, has it not? How proceeds your progress upon achieving Bankai?" Yamamoto asks him.

"I have it achieved it, although I have some problems with maintaining focus while it's activated. I had not thought to mention it in my yearly reports since I will likely continue to have problems mastering it. It is a rather unorthodox release I believe." He answers, he begins to worry about why the head Shinigami is bringing this up.

"I see, but that doesn't change anything for I am promoting you to the position of captain within your division." Yamamoto informs him and he feels as though his world just got set up upon its head. "There is much to do and so little time to do most of it. That is why I

am very much relieved to hear that you have achieved Bankai even if you have yet enough experience using it."

"I did not know Tosen-san had passed on. Forgive me for not arriving for the funeral, sir." He says but the Captain-Commander sighs and he frowns. "I'm sorry, Yamamoto-dono, for being out of the loop, perhaps you can enlighten me upon the circumstances leading up to my sudden promotion?" He asks, being sure to pick his words rather carefully.

"I had not expected the news not to have reach you before now, Naruto, forgive me." The Captain-Commander says at last and he patiently waits for the powerful man before him to enlighten him. "It would seem that three captains had plotted to acquire a device that the former captain, I'm sure you remember the incident with Kisuke Urahara, created and was exile for."

He nods, he did indeed remember Urahara and his usual partner in crime, Yoruichi. "That incident always seemed... off to my mind. Urahara never struck me as the type to be so... so... ruthless when it comes to experimenting." He admits, he never liked how none of the victims were asked to ID who tried to hollowfy them.

He presses his lips as he realizes something. "Sir, does this mean that those three were behind what happened back then?" He asks after noting that the Captain-Commander didn't seem to be in a hurry to continue speaking.

He sits back and closes his eyes, he remembers the test he arranged when Aizen had been a mere student. *I wonder if it all started then... He had been fairly popular after that test. So many people looking at him for leadership, its enough to swell anyone's head.*

"I only hope that your faith in my ability to lead division nine is not misplaced, sir. I have been away from Seireitei for five decades and I can only imagine what changes have taken place during my

absence." He says to the man who shaped the way the Soul Society trains new recruits by founding an academy.

"I believe you have the skills needed for your new duties, it's not unlike teaching in its own way." The ancient Captain-Commander informs him with a soft smile. "The Seireitei has need of your abilities outside of the academy during this time of war and it is your responsibility to step up."

He bows his head in acknowledgment. "There will be a captains' meeting tomorrow so I suggest you use today to prepare to face your fellow captains. I believe Shūhei is waiting to take you to your new office. I'll be sure to have your haori sent to you by this evening." Yamamoto-dono tells him.

"Yes, sir. Thank you for this honor, Genryūsai-dono." He says as he gets up from his seat, he bows deeply to the ancient shinigami before leaving the office with his mind slightly awash of various emotions.

"Sir." Shūhei Hisagi says as he enters the waiting room. He studies Shuhei, noting a few new tattoo upon his ex-student and new lieutenant.

"I trust that the head quarters of division nine hasn't changed much since was away on patrol? Then let us walk together and perhaps you can fill me in more upon events that have happened while I was away, Shuhei." He says as they move out of the waiting room.

"His betrayal must have hit you the hardest." He adds and feels Shuhei stiffen slightly but doesn't respond. He can relate to what many Soul Reapers are going through concerning this betrayal.

I wonder if Sasuke ended up here? Or did he get sent to Hell? He wonders as he gazes out of a large window that they are passing on their way out of first division's head quarters.

"The pain, it never goes away. Time only dulls it and perhaps, causes the details to blur. The cut will likely scab over but never heal properly." He murmurs softly before looking away from the window.

"You've had something like this happen before?" Shuhei asks and he smiles sadly at his companion. He pauses to answer.

"Once and it happened centuries ago. Funny thing is, perhaps I should have seen it coming after that one fight we had. He was such an ass even before we began that fight." He says with a scowl as he remembers how Sasuke refused to put on his headband. "The only regret I have is that I made a promise I should have to someone who was just a silly minded girl and didn't like seeing her imaginary prince fade to reveal a very disturbed boy."

"You had a crush on her, didn't you, sensei? And you were competing against her crush to get her attention?" Shuhei asks and he chuckles slightly before nodding.

"That pretty much sums most of the points up really." He answers. "The details make for a very complex tale though and I doubt you'll want to hear me reminisce about the 'good old days' like the old man that I am, eh?" He asks with a sly grin and Shuhei rolls his eyes.

"You're hardly an old man, sensei." Shuhei remarks warily and he snorts softly. "I might not be as old as Captain Unohana or Yamamoto-dono but I when I started attending the academy, Captain Jūshirō and Captain Shunsui were only two grades ahead of me."

"If you won't believe me, you can check the records of the academy." He adds upon noting how Shuhei just shakes his head in disbelief. He's not sure whether to be amused that his new subordinate doesn't believe him or a little ticked off that he didn't believe he's telling the truth.

"Or perhaps I can speak to either of them to see if you're telling the truth." Shuhei muses and he snorts softly while slowly shaking his

head. "I'll be sure to have my hangover cure ready for you the day after you do that." He muses.

Silence soon descends between them until they were out of the building. He uses that time to reminisce about his time on team seven before and after Sasuke left. *It's funny, I kind of miss their quirks, even now, over thousands of years of being dead.*

"Shuhei... Tell me, how were they found out? Has Central 46 punished anyone for not preventing to catch them before they went underground? Any idea of their current base of operations could be found?" He asks as they walk through the street and he feels Shuhei look at him.

"Central 46 has yet to have their numbers replaced since they were murdered by Aizen. So nobody is being accused of anything by them, at least not right now. That might change after this war is over." Shuhei says before making a throaty sound. "Perhaps I should start when Rukia Kuchiki was sent to the real world on patrol..."

"This is going to be one long story." Aozora muses as Shuhei mentions Rukia giving her powers to a moral, creating a substitute Soul Reaper.

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They will not enjoy this experience... Not at all... He thinks and feels Aozora agreeing with him as he holds his Zanpakuto before him.

The strange blue metal of his blade glinting under the sunlight. He closes his eyes and braces himself for what's to come, of the drain upon his energy reserves that this demonstration will cause. He privately wonders how well the Seireitei will stand upon the storm about to be released.

"Bankai!" He can't help but shout, his heart thundering in his chest as energy explodes from sword. The force seemingly breaking the metal of the sword's blade with the metal shards disintegrating into

the air as black clouds suddenly shroud the sky as the wind not just howls but screams.

The hilt in his hand finally dissolves and his whole being begins to as well. Soon, he is the storm raging overhead. Seemingly with each breath he takes, a cyclone seems to spawn and exhaling causes them to grow. The storm grows worse and he uses all of his will power to search for the place where he released his Bankai so he can destroy the target so that he can finally seal it back up.

Upon finding it, he tries to will lightning, just lightning, to destroy the target. It kind of does but a bunch of ice also rains down upon it after the lightning hits it. With the target destroyed, he focuses on the spot upon which he wishes to reconstruct at once he releases his Bankai.

Just as it cancels, he feels Aozora moving to help close the 'door' and within a minute, he is once more appearing in a non-elemental form with the tip of Aozora kind of digging into the ground. He's breathing heavily but he takes it as a good sign that he hasn't passed out.

He's dimly aware of the so called 'clown' captain of twelfth division trying to convince the Captain-Commander to allow him to take him to the lab and study him like some kind of lab rat. He manages to stand, slightly shakily at first and using his oversize Zanpakuto as something to lean on. With each breath, his pounding in his head eases.

The reactions of his new ranking seem to have varying reactions to witnessing his Bankai. He glances towards the target and gets a ground level view of the damage that he caused just a minute or two ago. The remains of the storm is the chunks of ice about the target, he's glad that all he had done as a storm was rain down instead of hailing down.

Funny how right they were when they declared me a force of nature... He muses silently to himself as he listens and responds rather automatically to their questions. He's a little too tired to really

think about the questions being asked or to think about their reactions at this point in time, although that doesn't stop him from memorizing them.

"I bet a lot of them are looking forward to seeing it used upon our future enemies and upon the traitors. Fear will definitely be something we'll encounter from them in the future but then, they do have reason to fear, don't they?" He hears Aozora no Kemono muse.

He can't help but agree, they had every right to be wary of what he can do in that form. For as a storm, very little can do any lasting harm. He never heard of a release like his, even going through the records at Central 46.

"Well done, my boy, well done." Yamamoto-dono says to him, causing him to look at the very aged and worn Captain-Commander. He can't help but flush under the man's gaze and manages a nod before the man turns and walks away.

"We must celebrate! Come, onto the bar!" Captain Shunsui Kyōraku says upon slapping his left shoulder.

It wasn't long before he finds himself slightly dragged slash carried away with Aozora no Kemono still being held in his right hand.

Trials of Youth: Naruto

I don't own Naruto characters!

Age: 20

Yawning, he woke and blinks as at the sight of a tail belonging to one of his sisters. His parents had given him a brother and two sisters and while he knows he's a bit more fortunate that he only had three siblings as he could have had five. He flickers his ears at the thought before he slowly begins to move out of the kit pile of their milking den.

As he finally leaves the minor pile of sleeping siblings, he shakes himself before walking to the seemingly massive entrance of the den. With a shake of his head, he walks out of the milking den, heading for the play area of the nursery. He grins at the sight of the nursery that is practically empty.

He moves to the center of the playground to try and connect with this really colorful cloud within his mind. He knows what that cloud is and he really wants to see if he can use it. He only become aware of his illusion powers when he was knocked off of one of the tiers by one of the bullying groups of his age-mates and got knocked out. It happened a few sleep-times ago.

He tries his hardest not to pout as the colorful cloud continues to drift away from him as he tries to walk into it, but the space between the cloud and himself isn't as great as his previous attempts. Suddenly, pain bursts from him and he's forcibly brought out of his mind. He growls and tries to dislodge the bully to stop the bite upon his shoulder.

"What you waiting for? Hold him down!" Snaps the lead bully of the group and it wasn't long before the other seven members of the

gang charge forth to do just that.

"Get off!" He growls, trying to wiggle out from their grasp. Anger and fear dominate his mind as he fails to dislodge their grip upon him.

"Or what? You'll wet yourself?" The leader taunts and he just snarls angrily at the gang of nine.

"Turn him over, I want to teach this idiot a lesson about talking back to his superior!" The leader of the nine says and he manages to almost get away from the gang since they had to let go of him to flip him. It was a bite at his tail tip that causes him to cry out.

He turns and glares hatefully at them, wishing that they're deepest fears to haunt them right this minute. Suddenly, something looms around him and the one biting his tail tip yelps as the kit backs away as quickly as he could, tail curled up under his belly. He just growls at the nine as he feels something eating his energy but he refused to lie down since he can only guess what they'd do when he's totally unable to defend himself.

The rest of the gang are shivering in fear and more then a few are cringing upon the floor. Just as he collapses, urine suddenly comes from the nine before they all fainted. Within seconds of realizing they are out of it, he falling down upon the floor, he feels so drained...

"Looks like they'll think twice about bullying you, huh?" He hears a smoothing voice muse before feeling a tongue licks his back. "Come on, let's see if we can't get you something to drink, unless you want to try eating some fruit?"

"Fruit, please." He murmurs and the adult kitsune then gently picks him up. He's glad that it isn't by the scruff of the neck.

He glances backwards and sees two tails within his range. He tries to see if he can spot the tails on the other side but, he only got dizzy so he didn't see if the blue kitsune posses four or five tails. He

wanted to ask how many tails they had but decided that he'll likely know upon getting to the food reserve of the nursery.

What drained me? He wonders, finally turning his mind to what happened when his tail got bit. He recalls how desperately wished that they were faced with their fears, the ones that haunt them even when they're wide awake.

"Iku! Why are you bringing that kit here? Did you find out who as casting that illusion in the nursery?" He hears a vixen's voice and he turns to spy the four tailed, green furred vixen laying by the entrance of the food den.

He feels himself being put down and his carrier, Iku, replying, "Met the caster. Not that I blame him, one of the kit gangs were trying to teach him why he shouldn't talk back to them." Iku nudges him and he glances up at the kitsune before standing a bit upon shaky legs.

"There's so many of those in this generation... It's going to turn into a blood bath in the next few decades if the council decides to let it play out." The vixen says as he tries to walk over to her.

His stomach growls and whines as it feels as though his mid-section has a hole in it. He shakes his head, trying to dismiss the hunger pangs to focus on walking the few feet between Iku and the vixen. He hears what the two adults are saying but he doesn't have much time to think about it.

He finally makes it to the side of the vixen's head before collapsing down upon the ground. He feels the vixen, who's name is Waka, turn to regard him and gives him a few licks before using one of her tails to bring a few berries within range of his mouth. Drool escapes his mouth and with a yelp, he practically pounces upon one of the berries.

Each of the berries might be minor tidbits for the adults, for him, they were half the size of his head and he'll be lucky if he manages to eat two of them. His milk teeth gnaw upon the waxy outer skin of the

berry but he finally manages to break it. He licks at the juices oozing out of the break for a bit before biting the edge of the rip to expand it so he can eat the 'meat' of the berry.

It's sweeter then milk but its got that after taste, which isn't unpleasant just... odd. He thinks, its only in the last two years that he and his age-mates have begun to sample actual food. It'll be about two decades before they are totally weaned onto solid foods.

"Thank you for the berries!" He says after eating three of them, which kind of surprised him that he would eat so much. He looks over at the giant pair of four tailed kitsunes when he said that.

"You got just as much on you as in you, little one." Waka muses and within seconds, he's between her paws and getting clean. The smoothing feel of the tongue upon his body and his filled gut slowly causes him to be laud to sleep.

Age: 50

He grins as he causes flowers and grass to 'grow' around him. His two sisters squealed in delight while his brother snorts. Once the floor of their old milking den is covered in the illusion of grass and flowers, he turns his attention to causes illusionary vines to grow about the walls before turning the ceiling into sky with a few clouds kind of drifting over their heads.

"Ok, now I'll try for making some simple insects." He says to his siblings. *Practice makes perfect.* He thinks as he tries to mimic some of the insects that their various teachers show them through using illusions in the safety of the nursery instead of taking them outside of the underground city.

In the three decades since he first access a part of his heritage as a kitsune, the various gangs of bullies have long since learnt to leave his siblings and himself alone or else he'd use them as test subjects in mastering his early access of illusion magic as the normal age in

which young kits begin to gain access to their ability to create illusions is between a hundred to a hundred and thirty years of age.

The adults had declared him a genius because he accessed it a good eighty years early, topping the previous record of when an eighty year old accessed their natural illusionary gifts. *Of course accessing illusion gifts doesn't mean I'm an adult. To be considered an adult I would need to be able to create Fox Fire and that usually happens when a kitsune is over two hundred.*

Giggling causes him to snap out of his thoughts and finds that those insects are changing colors every few seconds and displaying a sparkly effect whenever they move. He chuckles at the imperfects that he inadvertently created. With a frown, he focuses on correcting these effects, much to his sisters' disappointment.

"Shouldn't you four be on your way to class?" He hears Iku ask. The illusion remains up even though an adult has entered into it.

"I'm pretty sure your parents wanted you to attend your lessons." The four tail adult adds. He groans but cancels his various illusions.

"I guess, but it's been weeks since dad has been home and mom left a few days ago to help forage for the nursery." His brother explains as his siblings move to stand before the blue furred adult. He sits down to scratch an inch behind his ear, he gets up to follow after his siblings on their way to the multipurpose main chamber of the nursery.

He cocks his head as an idea grows and he smiles. He slowly tries to weave an illusion to hide his body and the dirt shifted dirt under his paws. He then stops moving and lies next to a wall, mentally chuckling at this idea.

"Where's your brother?" He hears Iku asks down the hall. "Wait here, you three." He hears the blue furred adult say.

As Iku comes within sight, he struggles not to laugh out loud when Iku's eyes slip over his spot. He feels a burst of pride at being able to fool an adult. Suddenly, he yelps as he feels Iku's teeth about the scruff of his neck.

He tries to think what he did wrong with his illusion as Iku places him behind his siblings. "You're good with visual illusions but you haven't gotten around to fooling the other senses yet, kitling." Iku tells him and he blinks.

"Huh? Other senses?" He asks and his siblings seem to be a little interested in the fact that he might still have a long way to go before being a full master of illusions.

"Other then vision, you have hearing, scent, and touch. You have only been working on visual illusions with a hint of tricking the touch." Iku explains and he blinks as he considers that.

"But none of the illusions used in lessons touch on either of those other senses!" A sister of his protests. "So how would we know about these other senses that need to be tricked?" The same sister points out and Iku chuckles softly.

"As you lot are only kits, we don't use the full force of illusions against you since you're too young to have a defense against them. Well, your brother likely has defenses against the encompassing power of illusions as he is capable of using illusions." Iku explains as he takes the lead once more.

Hmm, I wonder what flowers and grass smell like? He wonders as he follows after Iku. He'll have to ask one of the other on duty care-takers. *Maybe they'll even caste an illusion to show me what they smell like...*

Age: 100

He snorts and continues pass the 'hidden' gang of bullies. As he finishes passing through their area illusion, his changes take effect.

You would think they would know better then to try and fool me. He thinks as soft giggles and chuckles begin to fill the air.

The bullies remain ignorant of the changes he created in their illusions. None of the nine had tried to weave their illusions together the layers don't really mesh well. What he did was mesh his changes upon all of their illusions while making sure that they're unaware of the changes he made. To dismiss his illusion, all nine layers will been to be turned off.

"... his tail! It's got those scaly rings on it!" "...never want those colors on me, they just an eyesore when done up like that!" "...get that sparkling effect? I wish..." "...suits him, don't you think?"

He glances towards the group of female kits who seem to be enjoying what he had done to that one gang of bullies. *One gang down, a dozen more to humiliate.* He thinks as he heads to his favorite perch on one of the upper tiers.

He curls up and focuses on creating an illusionary moss to cover his tail. He works what it would feel like in his fur, which is kind of hard since he hasn't a clue what it feels like to have a clump of matted fur feels like. It always feel odd when he's experiments involve himself in the illusion too.

He knew it was an illusion but he wants to be affected by the illusion though. He watches as the dark green plant-like illusion sometimes phrase out of sight, allowing him to see his tail without the moss. With a frown, he tries to had the illusion of fur poking out of the moss, trying to make it appear closer to the skin.

An odd ghost like touch of his fur makes his fur prickly. With a sigh, he dismisses the illusion to roll upon his back. He stares off in front of him as he ponders how difficult it is to try and mimic things he's never experienced. *Maybe I should try sneaking out of the nursery area?* He wonders.

He reviews the idea, after all, he's gotten really good at hiding using illusions to do so. The problem, he realizes, was the fact he has yet to find any exits leading out of the nursery area of this underground city. *And yet, there's got to be since how else do dad and mom manage to head out to hunt or where the care-takers go when they're not on duty...*

With a chuckle, he flops off of his back and onto his side. With a shake of his tail, he gets to his feet and heads off to find an adult to stalk.

Age: 150

He manages to stay within the ebony furred Junji's shadow as the party of five kitsune adults who range from having three to four tails. Every bit of his illusionary skills have gone into make him appear part of Junji's shadow. He has tried other ways to sneak beyond the underground city's tunnels and they had failed.

He wheezes at the pace of the party. His ears flatten against his skull, his mouth open, and his tail hanging limply behind him. The party had been on the move for a sunset, a sunrise, and another sunset. He's glad his stamina manage to allow him to keep up but now, it's running on empty.

He knew that the more tails a kitsune had translates to how mystically and physically powerful they are but it's another thing to experience it first hand. They must be over hundreds of kilometers from their island home. He still recalls how scared he had been upon realizing that he'd have to walk upon that rotting log set up as a natural bridge between the island where the city had been dug and the mainland where the party is headed if he wanted to remain hidden.

The party has slowed to a walk instead of the lop they were using previously. Hunger gnaws at him while his paws ache from the distances they traveled. He can barely swallow as he hasn't had a drink since the day before he attached himself to Jinji.

"We'll rest here for now." The honey furred, five tailed vixen named Beniko says. She is the leader of this party and he gladly drops upon the cool ground after the rest of the party lies down to rest.

He hadn't realize he had fallen asleep until he feels somebody picking him up by the scruff of his neck. He yelps in surprise and soon finds himself under scrutiny of four of the five adults. He curls himself up as best as he can and trembles at the varying emotions his noses tells him the adults are experiencing.

"What have you got to say for yourself, kit?" Orange furred, three tailed fox name Tarou snarls. He whimpers softly at the look of fury being directed at him. "Answer me, damn you!"

He feels his tail getting wet as he looses control. Two of the group move to hold Tarou from standing over him. "Cool it, Tarou! We won't get any answers if he faints from terror!" Jinji snaps.

"He managed to keep up with us with two days of hard running while maintaining that complex weave upon Jinji's shadow." Crimson furred, three tail Aoto muses. "How many kits do you know that can create an illusion that can fool adults so well? Or maintain it for over a few hours?" Aoto adds.

"What does it matter? He's a kit! And kits aren't allowed out of, let alone away from the island! This mission is canceled because of him!" Tarou bellows loudly and angrily.

"Not necessarily... If he can fool us, imagine how easily he'll fool those Oni." Jinji muses and he's a bit confused as to why they're bringing up that race.

Aren't they more common in the central regions of the world? He wonders. He noticed Tarou snorting in derision at what Jinji had said.

"He'll come with us. For some reason, Fate has decided that this young kit's purpose is to join us for this quest. He will not be

receiving special treatment either. As long as he's with us, he's an adult." Beniko decrees before she gets up from sitting down.

"Now then, pair up with somebody and hunt for your meal. We've still got a long way to go." Beniko states and he watches as Aoto moves to Beniko's side. Slowly the other adults head off, leaving him with Jinji.

He gets up off the ground and waits for Jinji to head off. He doesn't look up at Jinji, but at the various bushes about the clearing that hang under gaps between the trees. He's never hunted before and really didn't know much about where to find it or how to kill it.

Jinji moves and he follows after, he's determined not to act like a kit, dependent upon the adults of the group.

Oni Camp

He felt like a coward as the huge brutes lock the others into a wooden cage that sports talisman scroll spells about it. The cage is but one among twenty that exist. The few large ones contain spiral deer and horse demons.

He had escape the Oni's notice by weaving a hasty illusion about himself. It had worked and thus, he lies cowering be the roots of an ancient tree. He also felt fascination concerning the way the Oni stand upon their back legs and their forelimbs possess hands like monkey demons.

His kind are capable shapeshifters and thus, he wondered why none of the others hadn't transformed into Oni themselves and try to bluff their way into the camp. The majority of the party does possess three tails and more, thus signally that they're mystical side being able to give them access to the power of form-changing. *We're cunning and adaptive. Unlike so many others, we're gifted with mystical abilities that other races take years to train in. So why not use them?*

His fear pushed aside as he feels the need to know what powers Oni have that allow them to be immune to the powers of his race. After all, if the adults didn't use such gifts, then it must mean that they were a waste of time since the Oni must have ways to counter them.

Night has fallen and finally one of the Oni leave the camp to make water. He follows after, keeping low to the ground. Only when he's sure that the Oni is distracted, he begins to uses different sense illusions to see how the Oni counters them. For the illusion of touch, he made it seem as though the ground under it was unstable, for the illusion of hearing, he causes a whistling to happen from a tree behind the brute, for the illusion of scent, the smell of blood coming from the tree opposite of the one he's using for hearing, and for the illusion of sight, a huge demonic wasp to be hanging over the tree with the illusion of smell.

As he watches, the Oni snarls and covers his ears while standing up from the crouch to face the tree where he set the hearing illusion about it. He watches in puzzlement as the Oni begins to punch and then kick the tree while snarling something in its native language. After a few minutes, he cancels the hearing illusion and opts to give the wasp buzzing wings.

The Oni quickly snaps his head and looks up over that tree, towards the wasp. The Oni's eyes seem to widen before the Oni test subject grips part of the tree it was beating upon to throw stuff at the wasp that he created. He cocks his head as he causes the wasp to move out of the path of that ripped bark.

With a twitch of his tail, he causes the illusion wasp to dive bomb the Oni, being sure to add scent and touch to the insect illusion while maintaining only the original smelling illusion. He makes sure to have the wasp move out of the Oni's attacks and then sting the brute using the stinger.

As the Oni screams and races away, it's likely yelling about how its been poisoned. He sits up and dismisses the various illusion that

weren't meant to hide him. Minutes later, the Oni returns with three others.

With a soft grunt, he creates a swarm of normal size demonic wasps and have them move from that tree that had the blood illusion. He wants to see if any of this group knows how to counter illusions. The other three Oni grumble and laugh at his original test subject while waving their hands at the swarm of wasps hovering around that tree, wings buzzing.

He causes the wasps to land back upon the tree and the three new Oni head back to camp, still chuckling about what happened to the first Oni. That one glares about and murmurs things in a very threatening tone before stumping off after those three.

"This might be easier then I thought." He murmurs thoughtfully. He just needs to be sure that the Oni destroy their cages by creating something that causes so much chaos that the Oni don't realize that he's influencing their reactions.

"Needs to be something so startling that it throws them off and then to keep them guessing. Can't let them think too." He murmurs before chuckling, he remembers this certain tactic that he used when three of those bullying gangs decided to try and attack him, believing that with more numbers, he wouldn't be able to target them all. "But boy were they wrong..."

With a nod, he slinks off and waits until the majority of the camp is asleep before putting his plan into action. It'll also give him a chance to roam around their camp, studying it from every angle he can. He only wishes he could climb up a tree to get an aerial view of the camp.

As he's about to drift off to sleep while the Oni eat their burnt meal of meat, though he's puzzled about why they went to the trouble of burning it. Tarou's voice got so loud that one of the Oni growl and get up, walks over and shakes the cage while yelling at them. Once the

Oni returns to the fire, the party begins to whisper among themselves.

He even watches as they try using Fox Fire upon the cage but the written spells keep the cage from begin effected by their efforts. He watches as the scrolls glow even without any of the party using Fox Fire. It takes him a few minutes to realize that they were now trying to use illusions upon their captors but the written spells would not allow the effects to go pass the bars.

Finally the adults just lay down and seem content with glaring at their captors. The party isn't the only ones, the horse demons were doing so as well. None of the Oni seem concerned by this and once more, he curls up to wait for the time when most of the Oni are asleep to go head with his plan.

The Oni only began to nod off when some jug of sake got passed around. His Oni test subject is the one forced to be on sentry duty, much to its anger. He becomes a little more alert and slowly begins to weave illusions upon the resting Oni in preparation for the big one. *It's never too early to influence others using illusions.*

He waits until the sentry begins to nod off before releasing the well tailored blanket of illlusions to act out upon the camp. The first thing that happens is the low burning fire to 'explode' into a merriment of colors that covers the area, the explosion is followed with a deafening bang which are then followed with as many loud noises that he's experienced in his short life, making sure that the source of these sounds aid in forcing Oni to back into those cages.

As he had hoped, he managed to direct most of the Oni to destroy both empty and filled cages. He even creates various kinds of large, unnatural insects. Once the cages were destroyed, he releases the entrapment part of the illusion, making it appear as though vines were growing out of the ground to wrap themselves about the Oni.

The freed captives weren't being influenced by the illusions but they seem a bit stunned by how the Oni are acting. They remain frozen

until Tarou leaps at the nearest one facing him and bites down upon the Oni's throat. With that, the freed captives began their assault upon the Oni.

He hurries to cover their attacks with illusions, making it appear as some kind of ghost is attacking them using various weapons. Once the last Oni is dead does the demonic horses head off and the spiral deer, only captives not to attack the Oni, then follow their example. The illusions die with the last Oni and he sighs, loudly.

He is a little too busy watching Jinji to notice that a few of the other kitsune have altered their forms, taking the pose of an Oni but the features were off. The one with orange hair picks up the jug of sake and gulps some of it before one of the others do so. He's at a lost at how to react but it wasn't long before Jinji is before him and looking rather proud.

"Good job, kit. Come on, you must be starving. Their brains are yours to eat or in this case, take the first bites, as you are the reason why they're dead." Jinji says and he nods, he heard of that tradition even though he doesn't understand why it's in place.

None of the adults sport disapproving looks of any level or type. They all seem to look upon him with respect and he, oddly enough, felt kind of unworthy of such looks. *I only did what I've been taught, using my strength when the enemy is at their weakest.* He thinks humbly as Jinji's transforms and hefts one of the Oni's metal weapons to cut the skull of an Oni open so that he can get at the brains.

Oddly enough, by the fifth mouthful, he felt something tickle his brain but ignores it in order to eat what he can before Jinji motions for him move onto the next one. Once he's had a few bites of each brain do the others begin to eat them. He cleans himself a bit before he curls up close but not too close, to the low burning fire and falls asleep with a full belly and the knowledge that the others will protect him from whatever dangers that this world holds.

Council of Kyuubis

He struggles not to look around the magnificent chamber that houses the meetings and dealings of the whole city. All thirty-nine of the resident kitsune sporting nine tails are in attendance, their fur coloring changed upon them gaining their ninth tail, going either white or gold and sporting glowing eyes.

The adults laying about him smelt primarily of fear and it he oh so felt that he's about to lose control, wetting himself before these most powerful kitsune who reside in the underground island city. Guilt and shame racked his insides as he knew this hearing is about him. He also had a feeling that this wasn't about congratulating him for saving the lives of the group he trick through illusions just to get out of the city.

He has caused those of the party to break a bunch of rules simply because he had remained with the group instead of being escorted back. He knew that the adults were in hotter water then himself too, but had a feeling that whatever is to come of this meeting, it all depends upon him and he's at a lost as to why that was so.

And yet, he's the one in the center of the group with all the adult members of the party circling around him, making him the subtle focal point of the group even though Beniko is... was the leader. The weight presses down upon him and around him, making him wish that he could just wet himself and faint, but he just knew that giving into those reactions won't do anything but damn them all.

All of his lessons replay themselves in the silence within the chamber as the kyuubis settle themselves upon nice looking pillows. Their tails moving about shifting the pillows until the kyuubi is comfortable upon their nest of pillows. He briefly wonders what its like to have so much power at one's beck and call before reminding himself that he's got enjoy power under his command to allow him to kill that camp of Oni.

If this goes wrong, I doubt I'll ever worry about achieving my ninth tail let alone my second. He thinks sourly. His self-loathing is cut short as one of the vixen kyuubis remark, "So, this is the little genius that we've heard so much about... Rather runty looking, isn't he?"

"Oh, hush! We were the same when we were that age." That one's neighbor remarks. "It's sad that he'll be killed before achieving his true potential. I had hoped to see him having kits of his own, perhaps more then a few of them taking after him when it comes to maturing..."

A chill goes through him upon hearing that he's likely to be dead by the end of this session. He manages to keep himself from whimpering or generally acting out as another kit his age would. It won't do him any good anyway.

This adult thing is really hard... Particularly when I'm not really an adult. He thinks as a few more of the kyuubis make small talk until the one with a rainbow stone causes the stone to pour out white light, blinding him and then causing him to see spots of color that he tries really hard to blink away.

"Beniko, you acknowledge that you should have returned with the kit upon discovering him?" The ancient sounding golden kyuubi asks and though he doesn't see her nod, knows that she had done so. "You know the rules concerning kits, particularly during these troubled times and yet you continuously endangered the kit in question. What's worst is that you were captured by the Oni and left the kit unattended within hostile territory!"

He really wants to whimper at how tense the atmosphere is as this kyuubi continues to dig into Beniko. After finishing with Beniko, the kyuubi moves onto berate the other adult members of the party. This goes on for what feels like huge stretches of time until the kyuubi has rend each of the adults out for not just allowing him to continue in their company but other things they've done in the past.

Most of the adults ringed about him are shaking, a few had tried to pipe up to defend themselves, only to get cut off within seconds of making a sound. Many of the kyuubis send stern looks down at the speaker for a few minutes before letting up.

He wondered if he should be relieved that he doesn't have much history to speak of or resentful that he hadn't been subject to the belittling that happened to the others. He did wonder just what will happen when this kyuubi begins upon him. He couldn't get a good sniff of anyone beyond the scents of all those kitsune about him so he doesn't know what emotions the kyuubis are experiencing.

"And now, we attend to the source of the problem." The speaker of the kyuubi says. "The kit who thinks he's an adult."

He frowns and glances down at the rainbow stone. "Because of you, all of the kitsune who allowed you to tag along will likely have their tails bitten off and sent off in exile if you, yourself can not prove that you are capable to shouldering an adult's burden." The kyuubi states.

He looks up and cocks his head questioningly up at the lead kyuubi, kind of curious as to what that means. *Unless it means that I have to call forth Fox Fire... That's the only way that I know of as to how to prove that I'm an adult since I certainly don't have the size of one, at least not yet...*

"Perhaps it would be kinder to kill him now instead of sending him to the Maze of Trials." One of the previously silent kyuubis muse but the speaker doesn't reply. The speaker simply glances at each of the kyuubi behind him until one finally gets up off the nest of pillows, bounding down from the high balcony ledge.

He's suddenly very much aware of how small he is compared to every adult he's met in his short life. The white kyuubi stands a full two heads over Beniko, who's a four tail kitsune and much longer in the body compared to her as well. His ears flatten fully against his

head for the first time since the kyuubis began to appear upon that balcony ledge.

Instead of picking him up with his jaws, the kyuubi waits for him to get up onto his shaky paws before turning to lead him some place. He follows after, privately wondering just where and what kind of maze he's expected to run. The paths the kyuubi leads him through seem to be rather old and not used as much as the other hallways of the underground city.

He finds that his voice to be rather faulty when he manages to gather up enough courage to speak only to find himself unable to. He so wants to know more about this maze but it seems that he won't be able to until he is placed upon the entrance.

"You're made of some stern stuff, kitling. Your predecessors have usually acted their ages, wetting themselves and whimpering piteously..." The kyuubi tells him and his head perks up. "They had used illusions to do the same as you, but they never achieved their skills as early as you, though. Fate seems to have some kind of grand designs for you, kitling. Trouble brews in the southern lands, more and more of southern demons are pressing their boarders northward, into regions typically home to those preferring to live in a basic fashion."

His ears perk up somewhere in the telling. He frowns as he wonders why the kyuubi is telling him. It's not as though he's more powerful then a single kyuubi, let alone a council of them.

"And here we arrive at the beginning of the maze." The kyuubi says before a stone door. As he tries to make out the door, he watches in surprise as one of the kyuubi's forepaws alter to mimic a monkey's hand or an Oni's hand.

Then, suddenly, the door creaks and the kyuubi pushes upon the door and it swings inward. He sneezes at the scent of stale air. The kyuubi chuckles as the golden fur kitsune moves into the room.

He follows and is stunned to find that it's only a room, granted there are strange designs upon the walls, floor, and ceiling, but it doesn't appear to lead into a maze. As he walks over to the nearest wall to get a better look at the marks, the room brightens even more. He glances over to find one of the kyuubi's tail tips aflame with Fox Fire.

It's the second time he has seen the mystical flames that is unique to his race and he is fascinated by how it only gives off light without a scent of smoke or seems to burn unless the creator wishes it to burn. It's then that he notices the stone chest that the kyuubi is going through.

Within minutes, the kyuubi has a bundle of herbs in his paws and he watches in bewilderment as the kyuubi walks to the center of the room upon only his back legs since the kyuubi's front limbs seem to be occupied. He notices how at times, a tail or two would drop down to help steady the powerful kitsune.

The bundle of herbs drops down at the center spot and as he watches, the golden furred kitsune summons Fox Fire to start an actual fire. As the herbs catch fire, a strange scent fills the air. It's kind of... relaxing, causing him to feel rather light headed. He shakes his head, trying to dismiss the feeling and while he's doing so, he hears more then sees the kyuubi leave and the stone door closing behind the adult kitsune.

He turns and walks towards the bundle of herbs with the intent to douse the fire but he collapses not even close to the aflamed bundle of herbs. As he stares at the spot, he swears the smoke seems to have creatures dancing within it. He blinks his eyes as the light headed feeling makes it hard for him to know what's real and what isn't.

By the time his head clears, he finds himself in a kind of familiar place and glancing behind him, he finds a landscape that is like the forest he had traveled through with those adults. He knows that it's a part of him that's 'tamed', he couldn't think of a better word to use to

describe that power as he hasn't really mastered it. *It'll be centuries before I can make that claim.*

He glances away from the illusionary landscape to face the darkness once more. He walks through the blackness, away from the safe part of himself. Time is meaningless as he wanders about this place, looking for something he needs confront.

He doesn't know when he spotted it, but he saw a tiny blue light at some point before him and he alters to direction to head towards it. The light slowly grew bigger after what feels like a million steps and it took a few more million before he finally stands before a cyclone of blue fire. The cyclone remains in place with small flares sometimes crackling off from the funnel of cycling baby blue fire.

He doesn't know how long he was memorized by the flames of baby blue but he snaps out of it when the cyclone suddenly roars and something creaks. He takes a few steps backward, only to watch as the cyclone seems to move towards him. With wide eyes, he turns and runs. He can hear the cyclone of Fox Fire slowly but surely follow after him.

He keeps his pace to a ground eating lop like the group had taught him. The cyclone continues to roar, it becoming louder and he can feel the sound rattle his bones, but he refuses to speed up from his set pace. He also refused to look back, he didn't know why it was a bad idea to look back but he trusted that knowing.

He doesn't know how long he lopped before the cyclone but he does know that he tripped over something. He whines at the sight of a skull with a back paw stuck in its eye socket but does since the roar of the cyclone is closer. He reaches down at the skull to take it off but pauses as an odd sense of rightness seems to hit him with his mouth about it.

Fright demanded he pulls the skull off but instinct tells him to leave it. Feeling indecisive, he glances back and finds the cyclone within five

feet of him and closing in. He pulls his head from the skull and lets out a mournful yowl as the cyclone engulfs him.

As he burns within the heart of it, he finds himself numb to the feel of his body and yet, he can feel his foot still in that skull. It feels as though that skull is anchoring him within the cyclone. Of all of his senses, his sight is totally disabled while the others are merely dull. He moves to curl his body and once that's done, he tries his hardest to curl around the skull while wishing the fire of the cyclone would stop harming him.

As he feels the coolness of the skull upon him, he concentrates upon the coolness of it. Slowly, the heat around him seems to fade and that coldness begins to engulf him. Suddenly, he's thrown out of the cyclone and he lands, only nothing is upon his one back paw. He also finds that he's regained his senses.

He looks at the Fox Fire cyclone for a few seconds before getting to his paws. He walks up to it, this time, he knows that it won't burn him. It takes him a few minutes but the cyclone breaks apart and becomes nine fire balls. With a thought, they shrink and he has them dance around him.

He begins to laugh as he turns about in place while the nine balls of Fox Fire simply move up and down while rotating counterclockwise as he circle clockwise. Then he catches sight of his rear end and his control over the Fox Fire almost slips. He is bewildered at the sight of two tails coming out of his behind.

His fur color hasn't taken that of an adult's but he does sport twin tails. With a shake of his head, he thinks about the forest that his illusionary skills has built and suddenly he's in that forest and finds his Fox Fire to be burning upon this pile of logs.

He feels something poking his side and within seconds, the forest vanishes in a blink of an eye. His eye sight is rather blurry but he turns his head to look at the kyuubi that had guided him to this room.

He twitches both of his tails as his ears flicker about. The kyuubi stops nudging his nose into his left side.

With a yawn, he moves to stand upon his paws. The kyuubi is already walking out of the chamber and he follows after upon shaking his head to get rid of the sleepiness that the herbs had installed within him. He finds himself rather hungry and thirsty after what happened in that stone crafted room.

Everyone seems to rise up to their paws as he enters into the council room. The kyuubis upon the balcony ledge murmur among themselves while the adults he had traveled with and rescued are rather stunned and very much disbelieving that he's standing before them. He only pauses for a few seconds before deciding to return to the center of the ring of adults possessing tails less then nine.

"How do you feel?" Beniko asks him and he answers truthfully, "Hungry."

"That's typical." Jinji murmurs while the others snort softly. A few move to allow him to take his place once more and with it, he sits down instead of lies down.

Minutes later, the room is engulf in white light and the murmurs stop cold. "So, you return to us sporting a new tail. Let's see if you can show us what we sent you to master." The speaker states.

It takes a few seconds but he causes Fox Fire to cover all of him. The speaker nods and he dismisses it, it'll be a while before he knows how to create it in the air around him without it touching him but he's got time now to do so.

"Bring in the boy's parents. This young kitsune needs a proper name and it seems he's long pass due for one." The speaker says and Beniko gets up.

He turns and watches as Beniko vanishes out of the room. Minutes later, Beniko brings in his parents. The yellow color of his father's fur

and crimson blood fur of his mother causes him to smile, especially when their scent reaches his nose. They gasp slightly at the sight of him and his father's six tails intertwine with his mother's four.

As his parents stop just outside of the circle of kitsune, the speaker of the kyuubi says, "Do either of you know where this young kitsune came from?"

"We do, great one." His parents say in unison.

"Tell us where you know him from." The speaker says and it's then that it dawns on him that this was how the naming ceremony goes.

"I know of him as I carried him here." His mother says and his father then responds, "I know of him as I witnessed her carrying him here."

"Then, as you have carried him here, I proclaim you his mother." The speaker decrees while looking at his mother and then the speaker turn to his father. "As you witness her from carrying him and did not prevent her from doing so, I name you his father."

"As you wish it, great one, so we shall be." His parents reply.

"As you are his parents, give us his name so that he can be given membership to this city." The speaker says.

His parents pause for a few seconds before his mother speaks, "His name, oh great one, is Naruto, son of Minato and Kushina."

"Naruto, son of Minato and Kushina, do you accept membership to this city?" The speaker asks.

"I do, great one." He manages to says.

"Then in the name of this council and with the authority that the city gives me, I welcome you, Naruto, into our city." The speaker says. "May your fires burn brightly."

He just bows and as the speaker moves from the stone, his parents and the party of kitsunes move forward to greet him and to congratulate him upon gaining his second tail, especially since he's not even two hundred years old.

I have a name... And they won't be punished for taking me along! I'm just so... happy! He thinks as tears well up as everything finally catches up with him. He begins to apologize for causing this mess and other things, like causing his parents to worry about him and promising to try and stay out of trouble.

In time, his mother picks him up as his stomach makes itself known that its empty and needs to be filled. The other kitsunes head off while his father merely licks his mother's neck as they move for the exit. He doesn't care about being carried, his paws hurt from all the walking he's done since he arrived in the city and wonders if this will be the last time he'll be carried by the scruff of his neck like a kit.

The End

The Founding of the Country of Qarrezel

I don't own Harry Potter!

August 1, 1991

He clutches his three notebooks filled with pages of information and sketches of his made up country as he waits for the Port Key the goblins sent to activate. It had only been a day since Hagrid dropped him off at his aunt and uncle's place, he's pretty much alone in the house and likely will be for a few days before they make it back.

He's just happy that costume that he had tricked Dudley into wanting to go as a knight one Halloween with him dressed up as his squire. *All it took was that picture of a knight and his squire. So glad that one of those books people keep sending Dudley had to do with history.* He thinks before it feels something gripping his stomach and dragging him through this blur of scenes until he arrives in a stone room.

Oddly enough, his reflects manage to kick in before he dropped to the floor. He blinks his eyes a few times before rubbing his eyes by the bridge of his nose. Standing up a bit straighter, he glances towards a goblin.

"Mr Potter hear to see Bonedice." He says to the goblin. "This way, Mr Potter." The goblin says before the goblin gestures to follow him.

The door at the end of the hall opens after his guide knocks upon it. "Thank you for your assistance." He says to his guide before entering to meet with his account manager.

The door closes behind him and he gets his first sight of the goblin who likely worked with his parents. He greets the goblin before he sits down upon a chair before the rather human size desk that the

goblin is sitting behind. He knows that the dress code are robes but, well, if what he wants his country to finally come into being, he had to get them to deal with him without whatever expectations they have of the humans they usually do business with.

"Who is said to be my guardian within England's Wizarding society? My guide yesterday had not told me and I doubt that my aunt holds any kind of legal position within their society." He says upon putting his various notebooks down upon the desk after studying Bonedice.

"As your parents' wills were sealed, your godmother isn't in any state to take you in, and your godfather imprisoned, I believe the headmaster of Hogwarts has stepped in to be your guardian." Bonedice states and he frowns upon hearing that.

"I find it rather, odd that this man has taken such an interest in my life. Isn't this... Albus Dumbledore rather busy with his various duties and responsibilities to act as my legal guardian?" He asks. "I find myself seeing a very large conflict of interest when a headmaster of my future school and primary legal maker of this society considers himself my legal parent when I've never met with or interacted with this man since he placed me with my mother's sister." He muses after a few seconds of silence.

"The man has a lot of political power within England and Scotland." Bonedice states in a manner of fact tone. "There isn't much you can do to get out of his thumb."

"Actually, I find myself disagreeing with that. You see, for a number of years, I have considered myself leader of my own country." He says and he spreads the note book before selecting one. He pulls out an official document confirming the existence of his made up country, one that a certain Minister commissioned that sports the date of formation.

"I believe that this document confirms the existence of my country." He then takes out stapled document that he had sent the previous evening and had gotten it back within half an hour. He waits until the

goblin finishes looking at the previous one before handing this much more important document. "This is also grants me diplomatic immunity within the UK's Wizarding society. I do believe that as the Holy Emperor of Qarrezel, I do not need a legal representative as I am my legal representative."

Bonedice grins in a very savage way. "I take it you want your parents' will unsealed, sire?" The goblin asks and he returns the grin with a nod. "Wait here, I'll have someone filed these while I retrieve the will."

"Before you go, I wish to know, had the headmaster signed as witnessed with the will? And what kind of punishments can you bring him up on for betraying such a document?" He asks Bonedice. *Well, so far so good. I had expected Bonedice to put up a token fight in believing my claims... Which means that the goblins don't like the headmaster very much.*

"Sadly, because of his positions, there isn't much we can do if the man is an oath-breaker. But we can get any gold he withdrew from your vaults back. I believe I'll have the locks upon all of your vaults changed, though that might take a day or two to complete." Bonedice informs him and he sighs, he had thought something like that would allow the man to get off.

"I also believe an Inheritance ritual would be beneficial. I will need all the wealth I have if I wish to begin building my empire." He muses.

Bonedice tells him how much such a ritual costs and he merely told the goblin to arrange to have the amount taken out of his trust fund. With that, the goblin leaves him alone and after a few minutes, he reaches for another document. The various sheets are rough drafts that he had come up with over the years for making alliances with other countries or a race of creature. Each of the treaties has a name upon the top and jot notes of what kind of agreements he would want with each.

He takes them and folds them before pocketing them as he doubts that he'll need them, for now at least. He picks up one of the older notebooks and flips to the back of the cover and studies the coat of arms that he created for his country, Qarrezel. It consists of a eagle sitting upon a sword's hilt as it's lodged in the ground with vines twining up about the blade to the hilt. On either side of this sword is a wolf on the left and a lynx on the right. A plaque rests at the bottom with the country's name upon it.

I wonder if there is such a creature as a lion-drake in any of the magical societies of the world...

August 5, 1991

"What's going on in here?" His uncle bellows and he glances towards the door leading to the living room. "Where is that FREAK?" Vernon growls as the man thunders up the stairs.

"Oh great one, it seems your relatives have returned." Kimi, one of an army of house elves that he inherited. The majority of them are getting his properties ready for him to tour, the tour's purpose is for him to pick which estate he'll be moving to and live upon while they figure out how to move the properties so that they are right next to each other.

"Boy! Where are you?" His uncle thunders just as the door of the kitchen opens to reveal his cousin Dudley. His cousin gulps at him and then pales at the sight of Kimi.

"He's in the kitchen!" His cousin squeaks out, his cousin's hands going straight to his rump while backing out of the kitchen. He hears the other two house elves that decided to attend him arrive just as his cousin's bulky front is blocked by the kitchen door.

"How goes the examination of the wards?" He asks the three house elves and they share a look before his uncle arrives through the door. He ignores the man, knowing that the elves won't allow any of

his relatives to harm him and will use whatever force they have to do so.

"Carpie thinks that sooner wes get you, oh great holy one, out of this place, the better!" Carpie's exclamation seems to be followed by Boo nodding in agreement. Vernon suddenly goes very pale and shuts up upon noticing the very non-normal beings attending him.

"Boo be happy when wes away from weird block. Boo never thought Boo would be seeing so many duplicates of same houses!" The younger house elf says and he winces at the haunting look upon Boo's face. "Boo shall have nightterrors for long into future. So... plain. So... boring..." Boo adds under his breath while rocking slightly upon his feet.

"What the hell are those things? And how dare you bring them into my home, boy!" Vernon bellows and he glances over at the adult with a raised eyebrow as his train of thought of how to comfort Boo is cut off and he looses it.

"Their house elves, Vernon. They're magical servants who attend to the duties you typically assign to me. As to why they're here, well, these three are here to attend to me until my inherited properties are ready for occupation." He explains and adds, "I currently can call upon a few over a hundred of them to do anything I wish."

Then he remembers his previous train of thought and turns to Boo. "Once everyone is asleep, why don't you make this house and property suitable of housing someone of my standing? Of course, you'll need to make it reversible since when we leave, I don't want such things remaining. It might cause them to think themselves beyond their station." He says to the house elf and it shakes the young elf out of his thoughts.

"Oh no you don't! I don't care what you think your capable of, you little freak, but I will beat you senseless if you..." He watches as the three house elves bind, blast, and shrink his uncle.

His aunt screams in the living room but he ignores it. "If any of them gets within four feet of me, you can stuff them in the basement for a few hours or you can freeze so they can be used as statues." He says as he grows bore of dealing with these people. He had books to read, treaties to write up, and investment reports to review.

"Yes, great Emperor Harry sire!" The three chime in and he can only assume which of the two options they personally prefer. "Does wes got to return the man to normals right away?" Mimi asks and he shakes his head. He can only assume how the three beam happily at that.

I hope Hedwig is safe. How was I to know that the most advance gadgets of combining muggle tech with magic would be in the US? I wonder if she'll manage to bring over a catalog along with my order? Hopefully they'll shrink the lot or at least, have some way for her to bring my order home safely. He thinks as he returns to trying to puzzle out one of the many journals he inherited when he went through that magical ritual to see what other families he can claim.

September 1, 1991

He pulls his head phone from his ears after pressing stop upon his walkman when he hears his last name and then first name. He notices how quiet the hall becomes even before he begins to walk out of the herd of first year students. As he moves from the herd, whispers suddenly sprout among the four tables sporting various banners.

He's glad for his new glasses as the glass the lens are made out of had layers of enchantments to allow him to see perfectly in any kinds of light and to protection against various elements. He had not even known that kids were expected to return year after year to the eye doctor to get new proscriptions. He saw clearly the various emotions upon the various teachers' faces, particularly the slight frown upon Albus' face.

As he turns his back to the staff, he has the sorting hat in his hand and puts it on as soon as he's on the stool. *'So, you're the Holy Emperor of Qarrezel. Well, I know where to put you, don't I?'* The hat says to him and then, out loud, "The Royal Suit!"

Within seconds, a single table appears with a throne like chair. He murmurs his thanks as he takes the hat off and once off the stool, he puts the hat there as he begins to walk over to his table with a grin. It wasn't long before he has his headphone on and presses play upon his walkman.

The robe's emblem becomes a crown before the Hogwarts' crest of four animals. His eyes become half closed as he ignores them, patiently waiting for his supper to appear. He's got his memory pendent all set up in case anyone tries anything with him or to him.

With the discovery of a special staff, he has finally found a way to collect all of his properties and have them all laid out so they're next to each other. He now owns over thirty farm of varying size all ready to be cleaned up and various magical species of vermin to capture and sell for money before he decides to start up farming, ranching or for him to begin building the capital city of his country, Qarrezel.

September 20, 1991

"Why don't you attend classes any more?" A ginger haired first year student growls upon planting his hands upon the table top. He merely raises an eyebrow at the Gryffindor.

"How is this your problem? I'm a visiting royal and as such, I do not belong to any of the four houses. Just because Albus refuses to accept that doesn't excuse you and the rest of your house from accepting it." He replies as he continues to read the summary of various experiments that his new citizens and employees are undertaking on his behalf.

Hmm, looks like I'll have to have the elves raid the UK's ministry for their old research in this direction. Perhaps I should just tell them to

locate and duplicate all written records, books, and what not while they are there. He muses while gently tapping the end of his pencil upon the desk top. *Might be a good idea to hit Hogwarts too. Summer would be ideal time.*

"Don't call the headmaster by his first name! And don't disrespect him!" The ginger haired eleven year old explodes.

He frowns and glances over at the angry student. "Hm, you must be slow, but that's fairly common considering how inbred your society is. After all, there are things one can't correct with magic." He states while privately adding, *Like how I possess a double Y gene. Must have gotten that from my dad. I wonder how much some of those US researchers would pay if I provide them with more samples of 'Pureblood' blood?*

Damn glad that I've performed those rituals they suggested to correct it. Perhaps I should try and preform that deer one to increase my agility? He muses as he returns his gaze to the report in his hand.

"What did you say? Are you insulting me?" The ginger haired student snarls and appears to be in the process of grabbing for him when the librarian appears and shushes the ginger eleven year old.

"This school should offer biology since it would likely help prevent such things as marrying your cousin from occurring, especially when since it describes what kind of disorders arise from such pairings." He remarks in a thoughtful manner. "Although, your culture seems to idealize the Greeks and Romans cultures, so perhaps you lot see a wife only when you need an heir and prefer boys and beasts for your pleasure? It could very well explain certain animalistic features I've come to note within the vast population of students and teachers."

With a bellow, the ginger hair child launches himself at him but he merely touches a paper featuring a rune and a shield shimmers between them. The librarian takes the ginger haired lad by the ear

upon noticing the books flying off the table and screeches, "Out! Out of my library you... you... hooligan! Out!"

The boy tries to protest but they fall upon deaf ears. His hand had left the rune when the librarian appeared and grabbed the other's ear. He honestly doesn't see the point of attending classes when the US have easy to read books that outline ways for beginners can practice each of the subjects that Hogwarts sports for first years and subjects that only admit third year and up. He bought a rather wide selection of such books that range not just from common magical and non-magical subjects but to the obscure like rituals.

I wonder if I shouldn't try for a transfer? Nay, I'll just look into hiring tutors come summer and only if none of my current employees lack the ability to teach. He decides before returning to reading the report, trying to find the point where he stop at.

Staff Meeting

"He's not even attending his detentions, Albus! He don't care that he's losing house point and when pressed about why he won't attend, he claims it's because he's busy managing his country!" Professor McGonagall answers upon the headmaster asking about how things are going with the students.

None of those present need to know who 'he' is and a few of the other staff member could only privately sigh knowing that this was going to turn into another one of those rants concerning a certain boy Emperor. "He should have his wand snapped and expelled!" A certain potions professor growls.

I wonder if anyone has noted that despite Albus' declaration of him belonging to the Gryffindor house that they haven't lost any points when anyone tries to take points from Mr Potter... The magics of Hogwarts know what's what even if the majority of us refuse to admit it. Filius Flitwick thinks to himself.

Even during the few classes he attended it was clear that he's farther along then the rest of his year. He likely hired someone before school started. Professor Flitwick thinks to himself. The tiny teacher already had a good idea about who'll be the top student in first year and while Hermione Granger would be close, he knew it would be Emperor Harry the first.

October 31, 1991

Two Hours Before Dawn

It had taken hours of standing before a non-talking mirror to get his ears just right as well as making sure that the lynx fur cream he completed last week was coming in as the recipe had said it would. With that done, he moves onto putting in some potion drops to temporary grant him perfect vision. Taking off his glasses, he then reaches for a pair of fake fangs and then a lynx mask. With the mask firmly in place, especially the top cloth part featuring the ears, he moves to sit by the bed.

Once sitting down, he goes on to put on those leg extensions, gets up to put on the bob tail, and upon having his paw gloves, he then awkwardly enter into this space between four wooden posts. He pauses to put the gloves on before walking into the space of the five by five square. He flinches as black cloth seemingly explodes from each of the four rune covered poles.

Within two seconds of the cloth walls appearance, his body tingles as certain parts of his body begin to have magic editing them to make such fake additions a seemingly natural part of him. As the tingling sensation vanishes, the cloth walls vanish as quickly as they appeared.

A might dazed, he steps out from the square the four poles create and heads out of his room. By the time he's in the living room area, he hears chiming and he picks up his pace to answer the door. Upon opening it, he finds a small party of students ranging from at first year through to seventh year waiting.

He greet them, "Welcome to the Royal Suits. I hope you enjoy this meal that we're about to share together."

Once Percy Weasley has hold of the door, he leads the group to the dinning hall that his two stationed house elves have set up. Each person within the group is dressed up as an animal, mystical or mundane. The fore mention Weasley prefect is dressed as a stag while the Weasley twins are dressed as a raccon and a ferret. Their younger brother, Ron, did not receive an invite as the boy has been trying to forcefully butt his nose into his business.

The majority of those from the seventh year were muggleborn and he's already offered them employment right out of Hogwarts. The work will be primary handling and breeding magical creatures for a year and once that year is up, he'll allow them to seek employment elsewhere, continue working with magical creatures, or moving onto some other project of his. His plans for the creature breeding is to see if he can't magically create a various fictional magical species like a tiny dragon that could be sold as a pet or a huge turtle that one can build a small house upon its shell.

As they arrive at the dinning hall, strings of lights flicker on to reveal their breakfast. Most of the group gasps at how the table is set and the various food statues that his house elves back at his properties had worked to supply this feast here and the one back there for his employees. Tonight this hall will be cleared, the large table will be taken away and replaced with smaller tables that will line the opposite walls while a small sitting area will be at the far back. The large space will become the dance floor and music will be pumped from a record stereo through to various mounted speakers.

"Was this cooked here at Hogwarts?" One of sixth year girls asks and he shakes his head. "I have all this cooked at my estate by my house elves. I did not want to impose upon the school any more then I have to in regards to my hosting invitation only events." He explains as soft music begins to play.

As they take their places at the table, they all stood. They wait for him to address them. "My thanks to you for joining me upon this morning to honor my parents and to celebrate this holiday. I know it will be hard for you all when dawn arrives and the fasting begins so I will try and keep this short." He says.

"Over ten years ago, my parents raised their wands to defend their home and myself from a deadly threat. This murderer also tried to claim my own life that night and it is only through my mother's death that I survived, for what can a babe of one could do to defend themselves from this murderous brute of a Dark Lord? This No-Name?" He pauses.

"Whatever magic my mother focused that night, it proved to be powerful enough turn the man's magic against himself, thus saving my life." He says. "So, to wrap things up, to Lily Potter!" He says, raising a mug of hot chocolate.

"To Lily Potter!" His guest chime and they then sit down to begin the feast. He felt he did a rather good job with his toast as it is his first one.

Evening

Once again, he answers the door. He's not sure how many of them had fasted during the day but it didn't matter much if they didn't as he did. The living room had been transformed from what it had been this morning, taking the appearance of a forest. It was all just an illusion but it didn't dampen their reactions, as few of them know the tale tail signs of an illusion.

His guest murmur softly among themselves as they enter into the dinning hall. The walls and ceilings sport illusions that make it seem as though they're outside while the floor takes a stone like appearance, complete with some plant life. The hall is meant to look as though they were upon a top of a mountain.

A gentle wind ruffles through his fur while the disguised speakers pipe in some dance music into the room. He notices a few of the muggleborns' eyes widen as they seem to identify the song. He turns to the group and simply says, "Enjoy the food, the drink, and the music."

With that, the group of regular students move off to either side of the hall for the food tables while a few pairs move to dance upon the floor as he walks over to the minor throne upon his own visitation to one of the tables. He's had plenty of practice moving, eating, and drink in his current magically transfigured costume since he placed the order for that kind of automatic transfiguration ritual. The magic will be reversed itself in either twenty-four hours or by entering into the ritual square after two hours.

"Vain. Guilt. Good work." He says as he finishes the food off his plate. The two house elves appear at their names being called. They bow while murmuring their thanks before vanishing to manage the stereo and likely refilling empty platters upon the food tables.

He gets up and searches for one of the various girls that are sitting alone. As the evening progresses, he dances with the majority of the girls in attendance, glad to have the grace of a lynx this evening. During pauses, he would fill up another plate and another cup before returning to his throne to eat and drink what he gathered.

At ten o'clock does the party end and a large pile of gift bags appear with the guest's names upon them. Within each is sports one of four easy instruction book for four different subject and they are potions, runes, transfiguration, and illusions. Each bag also contains a chocolate figurine of either a cat, bat, skull, or broom stick. There are also small bags of candy corn, gum eyeballs, and gummy fangs. The final gift within the gift bag is a long sleeve shirt sporting their house crest and colors with an ever fit enchantment upon them.

Guilt then leads the guests out of the dinning hall and once out, Vain cancels the illusionary enchantment within the dinning hall. He gets up from his throne and stretches a bit before glancing about the hall.

"All of your majesties guests have exited out of the suit." Guilt says upon popping back into the dinning hall. He nods thoughtfully.

"This was a pretty good party. Sure, it's my first but it seemed that everyone enjoyed themselves." He muses and the two house elves agree.

Maybe hosting a Christmas party won't be that bad of an idea. Though I should have one where I celebrate it with only my employees/slash citizens and another for invited guests. He muses as he begins to think about how to go about planning both as he practices with his magic by aiding the house elves in cleaning up the hall.

Fred Weasley

"I got a bat." He says as they compare what they got within their gift bags as they head for their common rooms. A few of the others seem to be doing the same as he holds up the palm sized chocolate bat while waiting for his twin brother to pull out his own chocolate figurine.

"Seems to be a skull." George says and does display the palm size chocolate skull. "Wicked!" They chime in.

"Check out the shirt! Now this I wouldn't mind wearing to class!" A fifth year wizard exclaims and he turns to see a mostly red shirt being held up. Faded gold displays the Gryffindor lion on the left side while about the right breast area sports their crest in brighter yellow.

Putting the chocolate bat in a box back into the bag, he then pulls out his own shirt and finds if rather soft to the touch. It appears pretty much the same as the one the fifth year held up. "An Easy and Safe Guide to Transfiguration." A third year witch murmurs.

He had noted a book within the bag but hadn't thought much about it. He shoulders the shirt and takes out his own book. "Runes Made

Easy." He reads out loud while George reads out, "Guide to Making Brewing Safe and Easy."

"A Field Guide to the Art of Illusions." Another pipes in. It soon became obvious that they each received one of the four books. He found nice big words and pictures within the book, so much easier to read then the kind of yellow paper and tiny print their text book sport.

"It must of cost him a bit to purchase all of these book just for these gift bags." A wizard muses while a witch snorts softly while countering, "What about these shirts? They're pretty top of the quality stuff! They were made in France and have an ever fit charm on them! That's nothing to sneeze at, you know."

"I wonder where he got the candy and the chocolate from though. I mean, candy corn? Gummy fangs?" George wonders and the muggleborns stifle a chuckle but it dies as they find their head of house waiting for them before the entrance to their common room.

We did put those slips telling her about the party on her desk, so what's got her knickers in a bunch? He wonders as the elderly witch seems to build herself up in order for a long lecture.

December 20, 1991

Harry Potter

He studies the headmaster's office. It's not the first time he's been called here, the first time had been after Halloween when the man wanted to speak with him concerning his party. It didn't end the way the man had wanted since he reminded the man that within his suit, his word was law, not the headmaster's and if he decides to host any kind of parties within it, he will. He had pointed out that he could have commandeered the kitchens of Hogwarts to cooking for said party but hadn't and the man had better remember about how little power he, Albus Dumbledore, had in his, Holy Emperor Harry Potter, affairs or life.

He then began discussing the fact that if the man keeps trying to overturn the treaty that Minister Fudge had signed that he will withdraw and declare war upon them. He went on to explain the other treaties he had with various magical races like werewolves, centaurs, and, of course, goblins. He implied that he already have on staff hired mercenaries, he managed to keep from meeting the man's eyes by regarding the man's pet phoenix.

He smiles as he recalls the sour look upon the man's face. Most of the portraits seem rather dismayed concerning how the Wizarding Society is 'indulging' his delusion. He merely ignored them after remarking about how could it be a delusion if the sorting hat granted him the Royal Suit.

A soft chirp causes him to glance over at Fawkes. He smiles slightly at the bird and then checks his wrist watch. "Huh, five minutes. I here by enact the five minute rule." He says as he gets up, he ignores the portraits as he heads out of the office as it was getting close to the time where his Port Key will activate, taking him to his current place of residence.

As his Port Key is about to activate as he's outside, the headmaster hollers at him but the item activates. He smiles as he finds himself standing in his underground throne room that's under the manor that he's living within. He unzips his jacket and takes off his boots, they vanish, likely being sent to the closet.

As he sits down upon the throne, all of his house elves appear within the room and bow down before him while saying, "Welcome home, Holy Emperor Harry the First!" He flushes slightly at the sight but allows himself to sink slightly into his throne.

"Greetings citizens of Qarrezel. I have returned to spend my winter break here." He says and the house elves murmur excitedly, though why, he didn't know since they knew that he was coming here.

"I take it that my employees have left to spend time with their families?" He asks and the house elves note in agreement. "How

goes the preparations for the two holiday celebrations?"

The house elves huddle into some groups and then from each group a single house elf. They approach the throne, they do a quick game to decide who's report first, and then one by one, the house elves take turns explaining their parts in the over all preparations.

The two parties will be held in two different estates. The invitation party will be held on the twenty-third while the citizen/employee party will be held on the twenty-fourth. As the house elves will be attending that second party, he had hired a muggle catering company to cook the food, to be the servers, and to clean up.

He often leaves Hogwarts to visit London to go on buying trips in both the Wizarding world and the Muggle one. He's bought a bunch of new tapes to listen to upon his walkman as well as began looking for films as his employees had wanted something to watch outside of work as they not only worked within his currently tiny country but live there as well. It was rare that they leave his country and so it's only natural that he would look for ways to make their time within his tiny country enjoyable even though its doubtful that they would have found the same kind of employment in the UK or anywhere in Europe that houses the same sentiments as UK Wizarding World.

"Majesty... You sure you wants muggles to... cater the party on the twenty-four?" Corty asks him and he raises an eyebrow.

"I know that your race thrives upon work but, just for these few hours, I want you all to enjoy this holiday. You can work as much as you want before the catering company arrives and pick up where they left off after they leave, but while they're here, you are to relax and enjoy the party, ok? They won't be here for more then six to eight hours." He says.

"We got to wear those illusion things while they be here?" Corty asks and he nods. "It's best to be sure that they don't know your true nature. They believe that this is a kind of cosplay party." He says and the house elves frown at the unfamiliar word.

"Cosplay is kind of like a costume party only with a lot more acting and trying to keep to certain roles. At this point in time, all of you are not just citizens but my army and nobles as well." He says and the house elves all look rather stunned. "Hence why I hope you all have finished creating those suits of armor and wardrobes of noble cloths for some of you, I hope, will be wearing such to this party." He says.

"Carpie wants to be a knight!" "Mimi a lady!" "Boo a earl!" "But Vain wants to be an earl!"

He smiles slightly at the antics of the house elves, it seems that they're really getting into this, has he had hoped they would. He keeps an eye on all of them, prepared to step in if they begin to get into physical rows.

December 23, 1991

House elves stand about wearing heavy suits of armor that hid their faces. It seems that most of his guests believe that he hired goblin guards to be stationed throughout the manor and in particular by the doors. He had been careful about who he invited, using old reports to avoid sending invites to Death Eaters.

He even put upon the invites that any guests that show up with the invited will be subjected to a arm search to be sure that none of those who followed his parents' murderer would be allowed within his presences and if the one that brought one of the marked could be sent home if they protested such a search and the result that follows.

He had also made it a point not to invite the headmaster or any of the staff of Hogwarts. There are standing orders to keep the man from entering and to forcefully escort the man out as well.

From his position upon the silver and white gold throne sporting cushions filled with unicorn hair that parties of house elves collected while killing Acromantula(part of the treaty he has with the centaurs) for their venom and their silk. Iconic wolves lay about the bottom

while two lynxs appear as arm rests. The back is an eagle with its wings spread.

The throne was just one of a few that his elves had crafted. It was one of eight thrones that they had created. He had liked each of them but had decided upon a primary throne that would remain in his true throne room. The other seven though, he decided to use during parties that won't be held in said throne room.

He notes the clump of students about one section of tables, the majority of them were the same ones he invited for his Halloween celebrations as well. It's not that surprising that they were skittish at being around so many 'important' people like the some of the department heads and the Minister of Magic. The dance floor before him have few dancers upon it as most of his guests seem to be rather busy speaking among themselves about business, he can only assume it's business.

With a glance, the guard stationed to his right comes a bit closer. "Could you ask Madam's Bone's niece if she cares for a dance with myself?" He pauses before adding in an exasperated tone. "Perhaps if I dance, that will finally encourage the rest to dance instead of discussing business."

Min the house elf nods sharply before heading off in that direction to the student part of the room. Susan Bones hadn't been a part of his Halloween celebrations, it wasn't because he hadn't invited her, it's because she and her Hufflepuff friends had declined. That's not to say that he hadn't had Hufflepuffs at his Halloween celebration, only none from the first and second years.

He hadn't tried to re-invite those that had declined since it was his belief that had their chance. After all, it had gotten around about what happened during the dance and a lot were envious concerning the gift bags. Those shirts had cause jealousy among the school but the real interest was in the four books as they have become in demand by the student body, particularly when the potion guide outlined what

they were potentially doing wrong when preparing their ingredients and how they were putting them into the potion.

Susan Bones came in the company of her aunt and he figures that she's come to these parties before so she shouldn't be that self-conscious with so many 'powerful' people about. *Hopefully, she'll not take this dance too personally either. I had danced with every girl during my Halloween party so I should be able to do the same here without too much trouble.*

He notes how Susan jerks slightly upon Min passing along his request. He hopes that Min remembered to use an illusion to alter his voice to protect what race Min himself is. He watches as a few of the girls about Susan encourage the girl before she nods. As Min returns, Susan follows the house elf.

As Susan bows, he nods before raising from his throne. He holds out a hand upon standing to the first year Hufflepuff. Susan blushes as she takes his hand, its likely due to the fact that he's using that eye correction potion that he had used for Halloween so he doesn't need glasses this night.

Murmurs quiet down or stop altogether, allowing the music of piping in to be heard so clearly. A few seconds upon seeing him dance causes a few more to find partners and do the same. "If you don't mind my asking, why did you decline my Halloween celebration? I don't recall doing anything that offended the first or second years so."

"You refuse to attend classes. You don't seem to care about losing Gryffindor points." Susan answers.

"Just because teachers say they're taking points because of me, doesn't mean the points are taken. I know as the Ravenclaws pointed me to check the library points book to see if the magic of the castle is taking the points away. The magic hasn't done so as the hat itself had declared me beyond such so I can't be used to increase or decrease House Points. It's why none of those that attended my

dance lost points when caught on their way to their common rooms." He explains and Susan looks stunned for a second, "Oh!"

"Anyway, the point system is a joke after you read it. The potion instructor takes points away for the silliest things and rewards his house for the silliest things." He continues on. "You'll also find that Dumbledore signs off the taking and the giving of points, so the headmaster apparently approves of the man's underhanded ways of ensuring his house wins the house cup. But I know you likely will need to read it for yourself so check the shelf marked school management."

"I will." Susan replies. "But I don't see Dumbledore allowing such things to happen." The first year Hufflepuff adds and he snorts softly but doesn't reply since the song ends.

"I hope you find another to dance with. It would be ashamed if this is the only dance you'll receive this evening." He says as a third year Ravenclaw witch hangs a few feet away, likely waiting for him to finish with Ms Bones.

They part with that and he offers his hand to the older student who takes it after bowing to him. "Have you and your fellows looked through that catalog and order form?" He asks after exchanging pleasantries.

"We have and have sent in our order while we were in Hogsmeade. You were correct in regards to our mail is being reviewed before it is sent to us." He nods, it's one of the reasons why he spent do much upon certain bird band sporting a wide array of enchantments to make it rather hard to sideline Hedwig.

"I take it you've found the Shrieking Shack to sport that tunnel as the Weasley twins had said it would?" He asks and the witch nods. "Their information in regards to much of Hogwarts have proven true."

They speak shop for a few seconds before they just chit chat about something less serious like comparing who's dressed in colors that

match the decoration or how silly the Minister is with that toad like woman following him about, hanging on his every word.

And so it was that most could be found on the dance floor for the rest of the night. He dances with all of the female students of Hogwarts and manages to dance with a few of the older single witches as well. As midnight arrives does the party end and like before, he hands out gifts to his invited guests and their companions they brought.

The minister received a cloak made out of Acromantula silk. The department heads receive personalized quill and ink bottles. The other adults received scarfs made out of bicorn mane. The invited students received marble statues of their house mascots along with their name upon the base. While the guests of his guests received one of eight items and those eight items that all sport the Qarrezel coat of arms upon them, the first item is a set of glass mug, the second item is a pair of cotton gloves, the third item is a set of plates, the fourth item is a set of cutlery, the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth items is a gift of four small pictures during one of the four seasons.

December 24, 1991

He watches as the house elves dance about the dance floor while a few human couples dance among them. Being so much taller the the house elves, it made it easy to pick them out. The witches and wizards in his employment have either chose to dress in dress robes or in nice suits and dresses.

This party, he finds, is so much easier and doesn't feels any pressure concerning how to act. It helps that people were dancing without him needing to initiation it or that they need to stand so much on ceremony or for introductions as they all know each other. None of his employees were currently dating so no need for any gifts for their guests nor did the house elves want gifts, thus he just gave his employees a holiday bonus.

He just sits back and enjoys the sights of this dance. Hedwig is perched to his left and seems to be enjoying the party too. He's not sure how a order of bird feather painting kit that came with five feather paints. The kit is kind of automatic and the snowy owl had just stood at the center while the kit begins to do its job. He's not sure how the kit knew what Hedwig wanted done but he has to admit, that shade of blue did look good on Hedwig.

I wonder if it wasn't made specifically for birds to use? He muses, he didn't mind if it was since Hedwig has been such a trooper when it comes to being a delivery owl that she deserves something to pamper her.

I wonder what the coming New Year will hold for us? For Qarrezel. He wonders and becomes lost in his thoughts.

June 19, 1992

He glances around the living room of the Royal Suit, wondering if this might be the last time he'll see this place since he might not return. The so called safest place in the world not only had a troll get in during Halloween, but unicorns have been killed by something and Hagrid hatched a dragon. He's not sure how Neville and Hermione ended up in the Hospital wing or what has become the the so called Defense Against the Dark Arts professor has vanished as well.

Not only wasn't Hogwarts safe but it offers sub-par education. "I should sue." He muses since he had learnt anything at this school other then how the headmaster allows a bully to reign over the school to make him look like the good guy. *The man kept something here in the school and it likely caused those two to get injured.*

With a shake of his head, he finally leaves the suit, all of his belongings have already been taken back to Qarrezel. Depending on how this summer goes, he may or may not be pursuing conquest of Scotland. He knows that Albus hasn't stopped trying to legally challenge his country's existence, the man has only gone through other channels.

He knows that the Death Eaters are supporting Albus in this. His contacts within the bank hint that a lot of business is being done concerning money being transferred around. *Not that it matters, I've already declared that since the Ministry allowed so many Death Eaters to get off that they're not terrorists but some kind of hidden branch of military. The goblins, werewolves, and centaurs are willing to support that claim.*

As he walks down the hall, he spies a group of students from the Slytherin House coming but before a light of theirs could touch him, he's teleporting out of Hogwarts and into his command center of his estate. "Have wands been issued?" He asks and Kimi nods.

"Then proceed to not just capture but advance. Be ready with those ward stone. They want a war, they got a war." He says as his chair comes out of the floor, he sits upon it.

Illusionary windows give details of the advancing forces but between they are no match for against his house elves welding not just wands but wearing armor with various types of shielding runes against physical, magical, potions, and mental aspects of warfare. The Death Eaters fell easily but the hired wands took a few extra minutes.

The attack is over in under an hour and victory came about simply because the house elves acted as a unit then individuals. "Claim a full three kilometers around and then sent them to raid every property belonging to those enemy fighters. Remember to dispatch a messenger giving the goblins permission to totally absorb their vaults in the name of the goblin nation."

"What of the werewolves part of the enemy fighters?" Kimi asks and he looks thoughtful for a moment before answering, "Alert the leader and offer to give him these rogues. If the man declines, we'll test those collars crafted to control the werewolf curse and then release them. It's the wizards and witches we need to imprison and question."

"No food and water until you say so, majesty?" Kimi asks and he nods. "Make it so, General Kimi." He says as the five other house elves flip about the sentry posts about the property.

Those raiders are already vanished into tiny cells, their snapped wands on the floor of their cell, and only a pail for a toilet. The goblin messenger leaves the property before the counter forces head out but then, the forces need to set the ward stone about the newly claimed ground and be sure that the magic will be stable before they are free to make the next move.

"When the raiders come back, I'll have a message ready to be delivered to those races we're treating with." He says, he's already have a note pad in hand as well as a pencil. He's confident that his house elves know what they need to do and how to proceed when it comes to this counter raid. He didn't hire that ex-military squib instructor in February for nothing.

The first thing the house elves will do it grab those witches and wizards within the house. Force them to give cloths to their house elves, they will then stun the humans before delivering them here in a different jail complex for questioning, and then his house elves will then take everything out of the place taking the building apart very thoroughly in search for hidden items. Once done, everything will be delivered to one of the houses before the raiding party moves on to do it all over at a new location.

Only when they're done with the raiding will they begin sorting through everything that they claimed from those raids. Dark items will be placed in warded area, books in an area, cloths in another area, etc, etc. It shouldn't take long since all but seven house elves will be going out on these raids.

"Alert me if they run into trouble or when those newly released ones are wanting to join our country." He says to his general and Kimi merely nods in a distracted way, it's clear that she's busy speaking with someone as she whispers into her mic.

Lunch arrives and he dispatches those messages to those races he's treating with, complete with observation orbs documenting the attack. He also gets a reply from the leader of werewolves saying that they could do what they will with the rogues as long as he doesn't kill them. He'll have his team of researchers tomorrow put those collars on before releasing them in London.

The goblins sent a progress report concerning their ceasing of those vaults belonging to member of the enemy army. They mention that they'll need the owners to sign a few documents so that their actions can be seen as legal within the UK's Wizarding Society. He didn't have a problem with that and knew that they can't be under duress when signing or else the magic upon the documents would void it. He's got a surefire way to get the lot to sign a statement agreeing to the goblins' ability to cease their vaults and doubt that they'll be in a mood to read said documents when presented with them in a certain way.

"When will we begin the questioning of our... guests." Reaper asks, the house elf is in charge of his current information department within his army. He glances up from his jot notes concerning what information to release to the press to study the gruff house elf.

"The prisoners are to be left alone, no food or water until they sign a goblin document. The guests... well, you can start to work on them around midnight. Don't use potions on your first attempt at questioning, just be sure to have recorders about. I'm sure you know how the rest of this goes." He says to Reaper and the house elf nods.

"No bleeding them?" Reaper asks and he replies, "Save the bleeding for the first session with the prisoners. At this moment, they are forced to be my guests. Once the goblin documents have been signed will they be released but I don't see that happening for at least three days from now. I'm sure that's enough time for you to get every drop of information from them and to erase their memories of giving that information."

"Shall we inform the employees of this?" Another asks and he shakes his head. "Just tell them we were only going through drills. We'll inform them before I send what happened to the press."

August 12, 1992

He studies the army of not just house elves but of goblins, trolls, and werewolves. Save for the trolls, the others were not only armed with typical weapons like swords, daggers, spears, shields, spell firing guns but also with wands. The trolls wore the more massive armor while the rest wore mixture of leather and steel. All of the armor has protective magic woven upon it while allowing for free movement.

The goblins and trolls were being paid to fight while the whole of the werewolves had sworn loyalty and become citizens of Quarrezel the full moon after the attack upon his country, it's when those experimental collars proved that they can reign in the inner madness of the werewolf curse, granting the werewolf total control over his transformations. A minor side effect was that their bites were no longer infectious in anyway. *Likely doesn't hurt that I don't have any racial laws or that I've conquered most of Scotland, thus they'll be granted land upon which to build their homes and raise families.*

He's not too troubled about the lack of humans in his army, he had paid handsomely to his human employees for their skills with the wand since few of the werewolves know how to use it. The goblins had been surprisingly helpful in regards of use of that knowledge transfer ritual, but then, he had just given them the juiciest bank accounts right off the bat while asking for only five percent of the total sum of what's within there.

"How are your pack-mates' spirits, Fenrir? I know few of them had not like how we took Hogwarts. That Remus fellow seemed particularly outraged we won without encountering much resistance." He says to the leader of the werewolves.

"I believed he had hoped for Albus to be more prepared. The man is a spy for the man after all." Fenrir Greyback states and he snorts

softly at the very idea of Albus doing anything other then retreat or defend. He wasn't that surprise to learn about Remus being a spy, it's likely a position the man had been in during the reign of terror No-Name had spawned that lasted over a few decades.

"I had noted you objected to the lack of physical combat during that battle." He recalls.

"And yet the school fell to us before dinner, just as you had foresaw." The werewolf remarks. "I doubted that the Dark Lord would have been able to take Hogwarts as easily as you did."

"Good thing that the goblins have taken care of the man's soul anchors, eh? Who knew they would be that out raged upon finding one upon the Hufflepuff cup? They were foaming at the mouth to find the rest." He says, his scar upon his forehead had been dealt with using a technique to stop his heart and then using electronic shocks to restart it. With that sliver of soul gone, he found himself not feeling so heavy and noticed changes in his emotions as the silver of soul influenced him to feel the more negative emotions more acutely then positive ones.

"At least we finally going to have two armies go at it instead of all this retreating." Heartbeat the gobliness states while staring hungrily over to the other side. The gobliness's battle trained Gytrash paws the ground. The saddle of the Gytrash's back provides magical protection to light, hence why the canine is out during the daytime.

"I doubt they have anything to say during this parley." General Kimi mutters and Heartbeat nods in agreement. The number of house elves serving under him had long since increased, especially when all of the Hogwart house elves were freed but still wanted to remain with the school, so they swore loyalty to him and he gave the running of the school to Chef. It had surprised him to learn just how many house elves worked at Hogwarts, it seems that there was just too many of them since the excess house elves have joined up with the army.

He had promised Chef that yes, the school will be accepting students when September comes. He had already sent out letters to the students and every family that has a magical child. It surprised him to learn that some muggleborn witchs and wizards weren't at school because they couldn't afford to send them. He changed that by deciding that the up coming school year will be free and that he'll supply what they needed since he already decided to change what's being taught and how it's being taught.

It still shocked him how many ex-muggleborn students were willing to move back to the UK to teach at Hogwarts, one that's under his control at that. Many of them were willing to even become citizens as well, although they did want the war to be over before they swore any oaths. They had been keeping him updated concerning course outlines and what kind of material they would need to teach. At the moment, he has the sorting hat standing in as the headmaster since he didn't want to give the job to a painting and Chef refused the appointment.

"I'll wager that it'll end with one of them trying to hex or curse us." He admits with a sigh. The unicorn he's riding upon snorts so he leans forward and strokes her neck. The mare oddly enough appeared within hours of them setting up camp by the lake. The unicorn sports odd gray spots about her rump and the tips of her mane and tail are black, which makes him wonder if its the reason why the mare, he hasn't thought up a name for her yet, is willing to tolerate him.

"Let's get this over with, I have plans this evening." Fenrir Greyback snaps upon his Thestral mount. With a nod, the unicorn mare begins to move forward. Kimi's pony follows close behind, likely due to feeling more protected next to the unicorn then with the Thestral or the Gytrash.

Minister Fudge, Madam Bones, Albus Dumbledore, and some elderly wizard weren't riding upon anything. He notes how drain and drawn Albus is and figures the man is hurting dearly for the lack of his Fawkes. They wait in the middle between the two armies and some of the enemy fighters get a better look at the unicorn that is willing to

bear him into battle. He can only assume what they're thoughts are upon the matter since he does ride bare back and there are no reins for him to control her. The mare's only protection is a steel breast plate about her ribcage while her legs sport metal braces to protect her joints.

The fact that he's righting a unicorn reminds them that he's the Holy Emperor of Qarrezel, with empathize upon the word *Holy* . He's pretty sure that if he had been riding something else, they likely wouldn't have second thoughts. The mare paws the ground as Albus tries to come straight at him. The mare lowers her head, pointing at the man with her horn. It's the first time this has happened as the mare hadn't even done that to Fenrir or even Heartbeat.

"She really doesn't like you. But then, you did allow those Acromantula to go uncontested within the Forbidden Forest. They did claim many lives as my subjects had discovered piles of unicorn bones about their main base within the forest." He muses and the mare knickers in agreement.

The other three move slightly away from Albus while the man merely stands his ground. "Now, Harry my boy..." Albus begins but Fenrir and Heartbeat laugh at that.

"That's Holy Emperor Harry. After all, Qarrezel now stretches all across Scotland and certain parts of England." Fenrir says and he nods his head slightly, his crown isn't as heavy as it looks but that's likely due to the feather weight charm he had placed upon it earlier.

"You can't possibly be serious about that!" The unknown wizard spats and Fenrir replies, "You're government is the first to acknowledge the country so you believed it existed or you wouldn't have signed those documents confirming to that effect."

"We goblins have filed that document and I believe sent out copies to the ICW after thirty days. You didn't challenge it then so, legally, he is an emperor and as for his Holiness, well, I've never heard of a unicorn enjoying a male's company let alone allowing somebody to

ride upon their backs." Heartbeast pipes in and the wizards all sport sour looks.

"Then you should stop before the ICW gets involved." Albus says and he raises an eyebrow.

"We do not recall treating with the ICW concerning the joining of their council. Nor do we recall receiving any documents declaring their involvement in this regard. Perhaps they feel that your ministry has been lacking in following their laws?" He muses, he found it odd to be referring to himself in the royal we but it seemed like the right direction to take.

"As a matter of fact, my kin in the bank have sent the ICW many evidence concerning how Albus Dumbledore has been allowing the Dark Lord known as Voldemort," the gobliness scowls at the flinches, "You allowed Death Eaters to gain freedom, you kidnapped a boy, had his godfather sent to prison without a trial, and worst, didn't do anything concerning the man's soul anchors! You had one in your own school but you left it alone! Where anybody could find it."

"What are they talking about, Dumbledore?" Madam Bones asks upon noting how stunned look upon the man's face.

"Not now, please. It was all for the Greater Good!" The man pleads.

"And who says you get to decide that, I wonder? I believe I recall Remus speaking about how you spoke out against those racial laws but the documents collected during a raid upon the ministry says otherwise. You keep sprouting about equality but you don't do anything to make it happen." Fenrir says.

"And you think this brat cares about that?" Fudge snaps and Fenrir answers, "Yes, I do. He sent treaties about to the other races weeks before he attended Hogwarts. And just a few months ago, he gave my people a way to totally control ourselves in either form."

Then Fenrir takes out a wand and with a smirk, causes fireworks to burst out of the tip for a few seconds before putting it back. "He's given us wands and knowledge upon their use. Not even the Dark Lord did anything but make promises. His majesty has proven himself far more worthy of our loyalty then your government and... No-Name." Fenrir finishes.

"You allowed that child eater a wand?" Fudge demands, clearly not hearing everything.

"We have granted them much more then that, Fudge. We have granted them a future. They can now settle down and marry. Raise children to continue their lines. We have given them a chance to be normal." He states calmly. "If all you plan to do is hurl insults at us and turn deaf to the benefits of surrender, then we have nothing more to talk about." He adds.

As the mare begins to turn around while Fudge stutters, Kimi yells and suddenly, cries of outrage erupt. He glances over his shoulder to find the nameless wizard bound and a shield about Kimi and her mount. "We doubt you will have a good day. Come now, we have other things to attend do." He says to the three under his command.

Before they even reach their side, the enemy has open fire. Not that it matters as the hasty constructed poles before their front line stops the spells dead. The magical energy is sent to the three large cannons. "Let loose the dogs of war!" He says upon returning to his position with his decorative mace held high.

The cannons open fire as his mace is swung down. The cannons hurl forth huge area stunning spell into the incoming enemy. More enemy fire is absorbed and redirected to the cannons. "Archers!" Heartbeat bellows and goblin archers ready their bows.

"Fire!" And a hail of potion filled arrows are sent off towards the enemy. The enemy might posses anti-arrow amulets but they didn't have anything to protect them from the potions that explode from the hallow arrows shafts as the amulets snap the arrows.

"You would think the centaurs would have thought of that tactic." He hears Fenrir muse softly under his breath.

"Fire!" Heartbeat bellows after giving the archers a minute to grab another arrow. Again, arrows hail down upon the enemy and having their contents spilling forth while the cannons thunder over head.

Finally the line of wizards get within seven feet of the front line. "Wolves at the ready!" Fenrir shouts while Kimi hollers, "Elves at the ready!"

The enemy line advances to four feet and both Kimi and Fenrir bellow, "Charge!" With that werewolves, house elves, and trolls charge pass the shielding poles.

Everyone upon his side is charging with the exception of the archers and those that operate the cannons. With his mace in hand, he enters into battle, smashing his mace down upon the robe wearing enemies. He notices dimly how the unicorn mare lashes out with her horn, teeth, and hooves. He doesn't know how he manage to stay upon her back but he did.

His armor absorbs the spells as fuel to the web of healing spells that link each of his army's armor. Any magical attacks that is directed right at the soldier, they're fairly useless concerning area effect spells. For some odd reason, products made from organic things holds the healing matrix of spells far better then non-organic products. Another reason for the mixture of leather and metal armor.

Though it felt like hours, the battle is won within forty minutes. Few from his army had died and it doesn't surprise him much to learn that Dumbledore couldn't be found about the field, he knew that without Fawkes, the man couldn't teleport off of the field as they had erected wards to prevent that. He glances about, trusting that the enchantments upon his glasses will see through the man's concealing spells.

He spies the man studying one of the poles with his wand out. He weighs his mace for a few seconds before he flings it at the man. The mace's head causes a cracking sound upon connecting with the man's head. Within seconds, the others surround the man with spear heads pointed at the man.

He walks over and one of the house elf soldiers hand the mace over to him. He nods his thanks before studying the felled wizard. "And so your ministry falls. How well does this defeat sit with you, Albus? Everything you fought to preserve, helped along, and killed for is no more. The victors write the history books, Albus, and from where we stand, you shall be the villain, your true history shall be written, not the lies you crafted and had put down upon paper. We are fairly certain that the ICW will be more then happy to give you a cell next to your old lover." He says to the man before watching Heartbeat tie up the man's arms behind the man's back and take the man away with a few of the group acting as guards.

"And so ends one chapter of all of this and a new one begins." He murmurs to Kimi upon her arrival at his side. "So, what are our casualties compared to their's?" He asks his general as they head for his tent.

December 31, 1992

He swirls his glass of wine as he reviews the drafts concerning the publishing of the founding of his country and the conquest of the UK's Ministry of Magic. Hedwig scratches herself with a clawed foot while Fawkes remains dozing upon the nest of ashes and soot from the fire place. He sips from the glass before taking his red pencil to write a few notes in the margin of the page before moving onto the next.

"You know, one would think you would have something better to do then read that. It is New Years Eve after all." His godfather, Sirius Black, remarks upon entering into this chamber from the hallway.

He puts the glass of wine down before the sheets in his hand. "Shouldn't you be busy watching those pornos?" He counters while Hedwig makes a disgusting sound upon hearing that particular word.

"Sometimes you just need a break from such ah, draining activities." Sirius explains while approaching his desk. "I do believe you need a break as well."

"It's rather hard considering the fact that I'm still organizing my civilization, how those in power are picked, and how laws are enforced." He remarks. "There's always something that needs my attention."

"Like those experiments in creating that strange hybrid between a Nunda and a phoenix? It kind of looks like a gryphon except for its colors and size." His godfather muses as he takes a seat across from him.

"That's the idea, actually. In a few years, if those faux gryphons prove to be able to breed and function without any outside interference, you'll likely witness attempts at a creating a downsizing dragon breed. The size goal is the size of a hawk or a golden eagle." He explains.

"You seem to have a pretty good idea at what you want to breed." Sirius muses with a frown. He studies his godfather for a moment.

"Magic begets magic, Sirius. This world could do with a lot more magic in it." He tells the man, he can only wonder how the man will react to the news of having people looking into terraforming the other planets and moons of this solar system.

He did sign that treaty with the ICW promising not to expand his country beyond the British Isles on Earth. He did not promise not to expand his holdings beyond this planet however. He knows for a fact that a lot of various races are looking forward to mining the meteor belt for metals and gems.

True, so far all of the magical none humans have proved to have an easier time keeping their magic but that doesn't deter him. A company of dwarven citizens should be completing the lunar compound within a year or two. They are using a perverted form of Port Keys to supply their ship with fresh air and water while taking away the tainted air and water. They have food caplets delivering food and taking trash and waste away.

"It sounds as though you want magic to come out in the open." Sirius states rather calmly. "Which seems to go against the current attitude that the ICW supports." The older wizard adds.

"Too little too late." He murmurs as he glances over to the fire place. "The parents of muggleborns are made aware of magical society, certain people holding positions within muggle government knows about magic, and let's not forget squibs." He says before he takes a sip from his cup of wine.

"Although, if those experiments with those power enhancing braces work, squibs will be capable of welding magic. Heck, with enough research we might even have muggles welding magic." He says. *Although, that's just a side effect upon researching ways for magical humans to keep their ability to use magic in space.*

He notices how Sirius stiffens while sporting a shocked expression upon his face. "I can see that you find that to be rather unbelievable, huh?" He says and his godfather nods slightly.

"You have to remember, we can draw upon resource from around the globe instead of locally. New sources can be created through creating new breeds of animals and plants. I'm sure you recall those Mint Cherries from the parties last week? It's what my new head of plant development had brought about trying to combine herbs with fruit trees, trying to create multipurpose plants that not just supply food but medical and clothing material." He explains. "Although, at this point in time, Medina is sticking to magically hybridizing muggle plants before trying magical."

Sirius slowly shakes his head. "Unbelievable what happens during being wrongfully imprisoned for a decade causes you to miss." Sirius murmurs.

"Well, I'm just happy all that time being exposed to Fawkes' singing and receiving those mood uplifting potions have helped to repair the damage done by those Dementors." He says as he reaches to grab one of the crackers with cheese and fruit upon them. "You're actually focusing on something that's not related with Peter or Albus." He adds before putting the snack into his mouth.

He noticed the range of emotions that play out upon his godfather's face while he chews what's in his mouth. He glances away, he kind of wished that Remus would have elected to remain here then to leave Britain but the werewolf left with the majority of adult wizards and witches. *Good thing I separated the adults from their kids and gave the ten and up the option of leaving the isles totally or to attend Hogwarts on a student visa.*

True, not as many of the kids chose to attend Hogwarts but those that did, well, he's just glad that the majority of them were those that had attended his parties during his one year of schooling at Hogwarts. Like for example three of the five Weasley children had chosen to accept the student visa. Percy seemed a bit dismayed that his sister won't be attending Hogwarts and slightly exasperated that Fred and George had done so. *You would have thought the whole of the Weasley children would have jumped at the chance at attending Hogwarts not just for free but without needing to purchase any school supplies.*

"I toured Hogwarts at the start of the month." Sirius says and he wonders if the man knew which way his thoughts were in as the man continues, "I've never seen the student body so relaxed or enjoying their classes. The professors seem to have time for students. I had thought getting rid of the point system was a bad idea but, well, I've never seen the students so... friendly."

"The sorting hat is responsible for the point system being taken away. As for the professors, well, it only made sense to have classes sorted by aptitude. Each year is divided into three different classes per subject. The students are tested to see if they should be place in the high performance class, the average, and those with problems grasping the material." He explains. "Having smaller class sizes allow the teacher to have less papers to grade and make them more available to help individual students."

"I believe that each professor only teaches two different years for the subject, giving them even more free time." He adds as he recalls the meeting he had with the sorting hat before school started. "For example, a professor teaching first year transfiguration could also be teaching fifth year transfiguration. It seems as though the hat had more teachers applying to teach then it knew what to do with." he adds.

"Rumors say that young goblins and werewolves will begin attending next year." Sirius muses and he nods. "Yea, they will. Hogwarts will be also accepting dwarf, centaur, any being's children really. The centaurs likely won't be sending any yet, although I did send them wands and text books on charms and other spells as a good will gesture." He confirms.

"That's... rather bold." Sirius admits and he shrugs. "I would suggest that young house elves attend but, well, they have certain needs that can't be fulfilled as students." He explains with a frown.

Sirius just shakes his head at the whole thing. "You really do support equality among the races, don't you?" Sirius muses and he snorts softly.

"The goblins are applying to being allowed to create and manage their own school. I'm holding out, wanting to have at least one age group attend the full seven years of Hogwarts before agreeing. I'm looking into building magical elementary schools for those under the age of eleven." He pauses to drink some wine, "The elementary

schools will focus upon teaching the subjects that doesn't need magic like history and runes."

"You not waiting on implementing changes are you?" Sirius muses. "Got to strike while the iron is hot." He replies.

Silence descends between them, Sirius does use his wand to create a glass and pours himself some fruit wine before taking one of the crackers from the plate. "So, does this mean I have your approval to start up my own movie company?" Sirius asks as he moves to continue reading the draft for the upcoming history book.

He blinks, kind of surprised about the sudden appearance concerning his godfather's business idea. He shrugs as he replies, "As long as you use your own account, sure." He pauses before suggesting, "Just a minor suggestion, try looking among muggle comics, novels, and screen plays as you won't have to worry about special effect."

"Like Batman and Superman?" Sirius asks and he frowns slightly. "Yea, although, you might want to find something needing spectacular effects as they're the ones most unlikely to be converted into movie format. You also have to speak to whoever owns the copyright in order to avoid getting sued for copyright infringement."

"I see. Well, if I can't come up with anything original then I'll try that route." His godfather says and he hums in agreement.

"So, does this mean you'll be opening movie theaters?" His godfather asks and he chuckles softly. "Got five under construction, they're waiting for school to let out before having their grand openings."

"How about tv stations?" Sirius asks and he sighs softly, it seems that Sirius isn't going to allow him to continue with his review of the history book.

The End

Shinigami Minato: Bleach

I don't own Bleach or Naruto!

As he sorts through various files, being sure to insert the updates within the folders before putting them aside. Suddenly, Mie Kensaki drops a bunch of new files upon his desk and he sighs softly as he moves to put the new folders into his in box. *Maybe I should have joined that training journey after all...*

"Huh, yea, I can see the resemblance. Only, he's grown his hair out into a ponytail, his eyes are slightly different shade, and has a slightly different angle to his face." Mie muses and he counts up to five before asking, "What are you talking about?"

"The new captain of ninth division, Naruto Uzumaki." Mie answers and he jerks upon hearing his son's name. "Just got appointed last week. He use to teach at the academy, one of their most prized instructors too." The woman adds.

"I see. What's so special about him other then his appearance and former occupation?" He asks while Sutaaraito(starlight) begins to waken within his mind.

"His Zanpakuto is rather large, he doesn't seem to be keeping it to a smaller size. The hilt has linked chains acting as the guard and it's name is Aozora no Kemono. It's a fairly unusual one as it isn't in tune with a single element but multiply ones." Mie explains. "It seems that his Bankai has him seemingly physically dissolving into a vast storm that spawns fast growing cyclones, large balls of hail, lightning dancing within the clouds with thunder roaring minutes after, and vast amounts of rain pouring down."

"Such a Bankai sounds as though it would be handy when confronted with a massive number of enemy lines." He muses while

his Zanpakuto remarks, *"Make you wonder if he blames you for how his life turned out, doesn't it? Of course the chances of him remembering are pretty much nil since he didn't get collected by zero division upon arriving in the Soul Society."*

He does his level best to ignore Sutaaraito. *Oh, hush.* He thinks to Sutaaraito and he can sense her mood become even worse. "Are you hinting something or can I get back to working on these files?" He asks Mie.

"Just wondering if your hadn't been experimenting with that cloning kido and caused another clone of you to come into existence." Mie states rather coolly and he turns his gaze away from Mie's face at the accusation. He recalled the problems **that** incident caused for his division.

"There are times where I wish you continued down that line of study. It would be interesting what other personalities lurk within your own mind." Sutaaraito muses.

"I have not attempted that line of kido since the Emperor sent word ordering me to stop." He answers. "How old is this new captain? Four hundred? Five hundred?" He asks.

"Well, we've his old academy record and well, if it's right, he's a bit over two thousand years old." Mie admits with a defeated sigh. "Which is likely true. He never raised from his seated position within the ninth since he achieved it. He doesn't seem the ambitious type since it seems he was rather content with his teaching position and his patrols to the out reaches of the Soul Society."

"Are you wanting me to investigate him?" He asks Mie. "You seem rather obsessed with this captain." He adds, he doesn't know if he hopes she wants him to or dreads the idea of coming face to face with his son.

"You just want to stand before him and apologize to him. Like that will help him now, being dead and all." Sutaaraito snaps at him.

He knew his Zanpakuto is right but he's focusing on Mie as she answers his question. "Just a minor information gathering done by our own would put such fears to rest. So, I believe that yes, you will be investigating the background information concerning Naruto Uzumaki. Interviewing him with be the end of your investigation as we don't want to alert him to the fact we are doing so." Mie tells him and he nods.

With that, Mie leaves the office and he pushes back upon his chair as his thoughts whirl with the fact that he has just been given official sanction to contact his son. *I wonder if he ever found the one and had kids? Did he ever study under Jiraiya-sensei?* He thinks while Sutaaraito reminds surprisingly silent.

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"Excuse me! Are you Gyou?" He shouts, trying to get the red head's attention.

"What? Go away, I'm busy!" The red head bellows while twisting a valve, not bothering to look at him. He's a bit perturbed by this attitude since most see the black kimono and almost automatically become fearful and subdued.

He with a groan, he preforms a kido to freeze the sprouting water. Gyou seems to still and then curse before turning to face him. Gyou's curses stop suddenly at the sight of him. "Naruto? No, wait, it's too early for him to show up..." Gyou murmurs out loud while frowning at him.

He blinks at Gyou's attitude while the red head man rubs his frost covered shirt and pants. "Who are ya? And what do ya want? Do you know what kind of damage ya did with that kido? I'll have to reforge the pipes!" Gyou snaps at him, clearly unimpressed with him.

"I just want to speak with you concerning Naruto Uzumaki." He says while Sutaaraito chuckles at how Gyou spoke with him. *"Oh I like*

him! He's certainly got a pair!" His Zanpakuto remarks as Gyou scowls at him.

"What about Naruto? He's a shinigami, he patrols about here usually between a decade or two period where he's gone back to your headquarters to teach at your academy. I'm sure you Soul Reapers know more about him then I do." Gyou answers as the red head pushes pass him.

He sighs, not use to dealing with this kind of attitude outside of his division. Although to be fair, he wasn't wearing the jacket. He pauses as he catches sight of a symbol he recalls seeing commonly upon a forehead protector. He glances over to the red head while thinking about the Kazekage, noticing some similar looks between them.

His left hand goes to a pouch that holds a memory recovering device, he brought it just encase he needed to reverse the memory erase powder. If Naruto had been up to illegal things, it would stand to reason that his son would have used such a device upon the residents in this district. *Not harm in checking... If need be, I can always erase them again.*

Sutaaraito murmurs about how he had hoped to use that tactic upon his own son but he just ignores her. *Why couldn't I have a Zanpakuto who doesn't communicate so frequently with me?* He wonders as he manages to appear before Gyou and activates the memory retrieval device.

This causes Gyou to faint and he manages to catch him and gently lowers the red head upon the soggy ground. He begins to get a bit antsy as minutes tick by and Gyou hasn't come too. Then suddenly, sand engulfs him while Reiryoku pours from the fallen Gyou. He tries to Shunpo out but the sand somehow, keeps that from happening.

Finally Gyou gets up from the ground while his eyes are still closed. He frantically tries to piece together what's going on and can only think that Gyou had been a demon container to Hidden Sand's own

demon, the Shukaku. Finally, Gyou's eyes open and he's slightly shocked with the look in the man's eyes.

"I see, so you are his father." Gyou murmurs in a monolithic tone. "For what purpose have you restored my memories?" Gyou asks as the sand finally loosen but hangs in the air.

"You knew him while he was alive?" He asks Gyou and the red head nods. "He saved me from myself. He gave me something to live for." Gyou answers simply.

"There are others in this district who knew him while he was alive." Gyou adds and he felt excitement race through him. "But that does not explain why you want to know of him." Gyou states.

"I'm here to do a background check and, I want to know the kind of person he became before I met with him." He answers. "If you wouldn't mind telling me about him, Gyou."

"Gaara. My real name, it's Gaara and I became the fifth Kazekage of the Village Hidden in the Sand." Gaara says and the sand finally releases him before the sand falls to the wet floor as Gaara's Reiryoku finally gets under control.

He's probably hungry now. He thinks to himself as he follows after the former Kazekage and demon container. He does have more then enough food so it wouldn't hurt to share with Gaara.

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He tries to get some sleep but his mind just won't let up upon reviewing the information Gaara had supplied him with. He also has a list of others to use the memory restoring device upon. Gaara will get back to him upon the subject of erasing his newly restored memories as Gaara doesn't know if he wanted to be sent to the academy to receive training to become a Soul Reaper or return to life as a simple inventor.

Before retiring, he had made a quick round of those Gaara identified as knowing his son during the time they were alive. Instructing them that he wanted to meet with them come dawn. He plans to restore all of their memories in one go. As he closes his eyes and still upon the sleeping mattress.

As his eyes open, he finds himself within his mind-scape. It wasn't long before he spies Sutaaraito. His Zanpakuto spirit's appearance is that of an otherworldly beauty who's skin is so white that it seems to glow compared to her surroundings. Long, braided pale blue hair flowing down Sutaaraito's back while her totally black eyes stare at him with minor flakes of white. Sutaaraito wears a priestess attire only gold and gray in color while holding a monk's staff.

Poking out of the pale blue hair are ear points that are rather sharp looking. He assumes that if he were to chose what being his Zanpakuto spirit would be, he would say a Western Elf. "Minato." Sutaaraito states coolly and he returns the greeting, "Sutaaraito."

The few times he's been brought here had been when Sutaaraito wished to physically assault him. Typically when she grew tired of him ignoring her. She generally harps about how all the mistakes he's made throughout his both of his lives, his living one and his current dead one.

Unlike many among division zero, he can't preform Bankai, not that it matters much since he is more valued for his seal skills then his fighting skills. Sutaaraito is a vacuum type, capable of depriving a spot of everything, including oxygen, though why Soul Reapers need to breath, he still doesn't get and just assumes that it's more of a habit then anything, a deadly habit that he can exploit using his Shikai.

"Are you sure you wish to pursue this course of action? These souls have rights concerning whether or not they want to recall their living lives." The regal elven worman says to him.

He didn't feel the need to answer, he knows that on a moral level she's right but Gaara only encountered his son during certain times and only knew very little of Naruto's childhood, how he acted during his time in the academy, what his typical day was like... There's such a wide selection to choose from really. *I wonder which family adopted him...*

"You're only doing this because you lack confidences concerning how Naruto will react upon seeing you. You fear that he'll reject you, you already have." Sutaaraito says. "Perhaps when you finally confront him, you will be capable of moving beyond this fear." His Zanpakuto spirit says.

With that, his mind-scape breaks up and he finally gets some sleep.

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"What are you doing here?" Somebody asks and he silently curses. He holds his arms up and slowly turn around to discover a non-human being sporting bat like wings, red hair, and navy blue skin tone.

"How... interesting." Muses the monstrous being upon the wings folding over the shoulders, giving the male being the appearance of a cloak. He slowly plans out an escape route while the seemingly demonic being studies him.

"I take it your here to meet with Naruto? He should be along shortly as he only stepped out for some groceries. I'm fairly certain you know who I am, but it's only polite that I introduce myself. I am Aozora no Kemono, the Zanpakuto spirit of Naruto Uzumaki."

He blinks, not sure how to react to that as he assumed that with a name like Aozora no Kemono, his son's Zanpakuto's spirit would be a kind of bird or maybe a sickle weasel. *I thought he already can preform Bankai? So why manifest his sword's spirit?* He wonders.

"I thought once one attends Bankai, you don't need to manifest your Zanpakuto's spirit." He states and Aozora no Kemono snorts while moving to sit down upon the couch with a back to it, it's then that he notes the tail and how Aozora no Kemono's legs are constructed.

"You subscribe of that school of thought, eh? Guess there aren't any enlightened shinigami outside of Naruto." Aozora no Kemono remarks and he feels Sutaaraito's interest concerning this odd practice. **"It's rather enjoyable being able to taste a cup of tea or a fresh batch of cookies..."**

"You must be on good terms with Naruto if he's willing to waste so much energy in giving you a physical body." He murmurs and he feels Sutaaraito scowl at him. Aozora no Kemono snort softly.

"He doesn't even feel the drain. If you've seen my actual self, you'd get an idea at his reserves at the beginning of his career. Considering what our Bankai is, it's a wonder he hasn't expired during the first attempt. As it was, we both were out of it for a good two weeks, although, he did recover an hour or two before I did..." Aozora no Kemono says and while he's digesting that, the door knob turns.

His first thought upon laying eyes upon Naruto was, *He barely looks to be out of his teens! How can he be over two thousand?* He also notices the orange shirt his son is wearing and smiles slightly as he recalls that meeting.

"Huh, hey, dad, what you doing here? Shouldn't you be in the belly of that shinigami you summoned?" His son asks him upon closing the door and he can't help but stare in frank amazement at Naruto.

"It almost looks like you broke him." Aozora no Kemono states in a bemused tone. **"Here, I'll take those and put them away while you two have a chit chat."** The non-human being says while moving to take said bags from his son, the captain of ninth division.

"Huh, he certainly knows how to redeem you speechless, doesn't he?" Sutaaraito states rather calmly.

Gotta Touchem All: Animorph And Pokemon

I don't own Animorphs or Pokemon!

-Is that fox suppose to have six tails?- Ax wonders and Tobias murmurs, -Huh? What fox?-

As the Andilite moves, Tobias gets a clear view of said fox. -Eh... huh, that kind of looks like a Vulpix but that can't be right...- The boy trapped in the body of a red-tail hawk says.

-Any particular abilities its suppose to have?- Ax inquires while his main eyes are focused upon rusty red fox sporing six tails.

-Ah, well, according to the game, they're capable of producing fire attacks. It's sketchy about how they're able to do so though in the game.- Tobias answers while getting ready to launch into the air the moment the strange fox gets ready to pounce in his direction.

-Perhaps I should acquire it?- Ax wonders and Tobias blinks in surprise at the idea. -No reason why it won't work... Just be careful.- He answers.

About three seconds later, Ax's tail blade is resting upon the body of the vulpix. The little six tail fox had been knocked out by the flat of Ax's blade. Tobias takes to the air and begins to glance around, trying to spy some hint to suggest how they got here.

Tobias watches as a purple rodent glances up at him before returning to its previous actions. -What is that creature by the river?- Ax asks as the Andilite moves to the water to get a drink.

-Huh? I've never seen that one in any of the games.- Tobias murmur. The hawk moves to circle over the river that's about thirty feet from where they encountered the vulpix.

"Bi? Bid loof of!" The buck tooth mammal shouts at the sight of Ax before leaping into the river. -A bidloof likely. These... monsters tend to be named by what word sounds they make.- Tobias explains while noticing these small group of tad pole Pokemon sporting whiskers shaped like an tv antenna.

The hawk Animorph spies a poliwag swimming after a magikarp while a few goldeen moving down stream. -Which to choose, which to choose...- Tobias muses while circling about the river that seems to be forty feet wide.

About fifty feet from where Ax is, Tobias spies something that appears to be an eevee. Tobias heads in the little beast's direction, as the hawk stuck boy enters into a dive bomb, the eevee notices him and takes up a battle pose. The brown fox like Pokemon evades out of the way but Tobias manages to grip the tip of the tail.

Upon contact, Tobias concentrates upon the eevee and the brown monster goes into a minor trance for a few seconds. Upon shaking its head, the eevee darts off away from Tobias. Upon righting himself, Tobias takes to the air and heads back.

While Tobias acquires the eevee, Ax watches various monsters move about. The young Andilite contemplates acquiring one of the monsters hanging about the river. The alien spies moving plants coming to the water's edge. "Oddish?" One of the plant monsters wonder at the sight of the Andilite while the others of the group drip their leaves into the river.

Ideally, Ax wonders what they would taste like when he grazes. Ax watches Tobias arrives back and pulls his hoof from the water. -I take it you acquired one as well?- Ax asks Tobias.

-Yea, I think I spotted a cave where we can try out our new morphs. It's located behind a water fall a pretty long ways away.- Tobias says.

-Lead on then.- Ax says and as Tobias wings it northwest, Ax enters into a trot. While Ax keeps a stalk eye upon Tobias while the other

glances around, noticing some deer type monsters grazing a few meters away. A few of them glance up and watch as Ax trots by.

Large butterfly monsters flutter over a meadow of flowers while large green worms could be found in the stands of trees. Brown birds move about the berry bushes while living vine knots sit in patches of sunlight. The roar of the falls grows and they soon travel right next to the river the falls feed.

Various kind of bug monsters seem to hang about the minor lake that the river flows from and the waterfall feeds. They startle a pack of orange and black striped canine monsters that Tobias identifies as growlithe. The pack of six growls at them before taking off.

Tobias lands upon a rock and waits for Ax to arrive. -What an interesting selection of beasts.- The young Andilite muses thoughtfully and if Tobias could smile, he would be sporting one.

-I'll go first.- Tobias says before he kind of glides down to the ground. With wings spread, Tobias begins to focus on the mental image of the eevee he manage to touch. Bone crack and pop while feathers fade to give way to fur.

Increasing slightly in size, Ax watches as his fellow rebel and best friend's head suddenly sports long and thin looking ears, similar to a rabbit. The fur around Tobias' neck suddenly puffs out becoming a light brown mane. As the tail grows, the inner organs shift about. Suddenly, Tobias drops forward and within seconds, the wings have given way to legs.

The change end and Tobias shakes himself, ears perking up. "Eev? Ee vee." Tobias says out loud while sending, -Huh? Sounds like zubats and golbats.-

-Any trouble with its instincts?- Ax asks and Tobias replies, -Surprisingly, they're not pressing in on me.-

With a slight intake of breath, Ax summons up a mental image of the odd fox that Tobias says is called a vulpix. The first thing that happens is Ax's blue fur becoming rusty red while Ax's eye stalks begin to fade. Bones crack and pop as Ax's face stretches to form a muzzle.

Organs shift within Ax while shrinking down. Ax's arms shift position as the front set of legs shrink until they vanish into the belly. The tail blade gets retracted just before five other tails suddenly begin to grow out of Ax's backside.

-I'm bigger then you.- Ax muses while noting that Tobias' morph is male. **"You're also male."** Ax barks out.

"And you're female." Tobias counters and then they blink as they realize they understood each other without thought speech. Their ears flicker about and they each catch bits and pieces of conversations.

-Well, the anime did have them being able to understand their own species and other verbal sounds of other Pokemon species.- Tobias muses while Ax spats *ember* at the rock Tobias had been perched on and is very impressed with this ability.

-Should we try and acquire other... Pokemon while we're here? They would be good additions in the war.- Ax notes, trying to ignore how his current set of instincts seem to find Tobias' morph attractive.

-That is the question, isn't it? Perhaps we should find some town and see if we can't become Pokemon Trainers. That should allow us to travel without too much hassle. It would also allow us to get fur samples from those we capture.- Tobias says while coming up to Ax's side. -But first, we got to know where we are.-

-Should we demorph and then take to the air?- Ax asks, turning to look at the brown fox like morph. Tobias' scent causes Ax's morph to bristle up and Tobias, upon noting this reaction, backs up while giving Ax a questioning look.

-We could or we could explore the cave. We might be able to gather up battle experience in these morphs and maybe encounter some other Pokemon to acquire before we leave this area.- Tobias suggests and Ax takes a few steps behind the thundering water.

-I'll keep time.- Ax says at last and Tobias nods before trotting pass. Ax shakes his head before following after, eyes slowly getting use to the dim light.

Month Later

Ax and Tobias stop a few feet from the path to take a break, to demorph and to feed their Pokemon. Tobias' chikorita, Grace, plumps herself down while Ax's totodile, Ripple, wanders over to the bench and climbs onto it. Neither of the two Pokemon reacted as their respective trainer begins to change after they put down their pack that contain the other Pokemon and empty balls.

As Ax and Tobias once more appear human, they let out their other two Pokemon out of their balls. Ax's female spearow, Song, and male hoppip, Spore, stretch about before moving to sit by Tobias' female sentret, Alert, and female wooper, Alice. They each have acquired their own captured Pokemon and those belonging to the other.

During their cave adventure, Ax managed to acquire a male zubat morph while Tobias managed to acquire a male geodude. Thus Ax and Tobias share six same Pokemon morphs and two the other doesn't have.

Food jars open and dry Pokemon food gets set before the group of six. The Pokemon begin to talk among themselves while Ax and Tobias take out a map to figure out how far they are from the nearest town or ranch. They will, hopefully, encounter other Pokemon trainers along the way, they could use a bit more money in purchasing supplies, although they can stay at the Pokemon centers and get meals for free, but then, their secret would be found out so they stick to camping outside of various towns, cities, and ranches.

After about fifteen minutes, Ax and Tobias are ready to go, they heard about this Pokemon convention and contest happening in about two weeks in Marketville. They hope to acquire a few unusual Pokemon from the other regions. Tobias leaves Alert out while Ax leaves Song out.

Marketville

Ax and Tobias had a fairly eventful week. It had taken a lot of thought upon how to pass off Ax's natural form off as a costume. It had allowed Ax to acquire an onyx, hoothoot, ekans, nidorina, sandslash, ponyta, hypno, scyther, mightyena, duskull, and a luxray. As for Tobias, he managed to acquire a murkrow, hoothoot, ekans, nidorino, raichu, rapidash, chansey, dragonite, linoone, duskull, and a rare female lucario.

They had seen others battle and have battled themselves, most often in their first morphs. Ax in vulpix morph got passed off as one of Tobias' while Tobias in eevee morph got passed off as one of Ax's. Ax's party also now consists of a male dunsparce, Hover, and a female snubbull, Rachel. Tobias's party expanded to include a male spinarak, Spindly, and a female mareep, Sparkles. All got Pokemon belonging to Ax and Tobias had been used during various battles with other visiting trainers of Marketville.

The pair also learnt more about what regions they would likely need to visit if they want to acquire. Tobias would like to acquire a psychic while Ax would like to acquire a dragon. Neither of them know how much time they still have in this world, so they decided to head to the nearest airport after raising enough money to purchase tickets, hopefully one of the charter flights that have private restrooms for them to demorph within them.

Willing to accept somebody to adopt this story idea! Just PM me if interested!

Uzumaki Enterprises

I don't own Naruto!

Age: 10

"Huh... But, why? I'm content to pulling pranks!" He says to the Third Hokage while putting the film camera back into its box. "Besides, nobody would want to help me filming them..." He murmurs as he pushes the box on the counter towards the elderly leader of Hidden Leaf.

"I believe I have a solution to that. How would you like to learn how to make water clones?" The military leader asks him and he gives the old man a stunned look.

"Really? You'll teach me a jutsu? Oh! Thank you, thank you, thank you..." He repeats 'thank you' about thirty times before he remembers that he's got ramen to eat and quickly breaks apart his chop sticks to begin pigging out on the pork ramen.

All the while the Third chuckles in amusement at his antics. "So, you'll be keeping the camera then?" The old man asks him and he just nods, not really thinking about the camera, only about the jutsu the old man plans to teach him.

Two Weeks Later

He studies the camera once more, he's grown bored over the two weeks. Since he had promised the old man Hokage about not pulling any more pranks before the elderly Hokage taught him the water clone jutsu, he's been at loose ends. Sure in his spare time he's drawn up various plans concerning prank pulling but it got old as he's unable to put them in action.

He raises a slight eyebrow at the sight of a key under the book of instructions. A tiny tag says studio key and he finds a note explaining the key and what he can expect to find in this studio. He couldn't help but be intrigue by this work space, so he repackages the camera and instruction book, carrying it under his arm, he leaves his apartment in search of the place.

It took about an hour to find the place and using the key to unlock the door, he fumbles about trying to find a light switch. Even when he finds it, the lights didn't really shine all that brightly. He pockets the key while moving into the main room.

He explores them all, he found more blank film as well as a few strange machine. A shelf of books seem to be about how to make a movie, inserting music, and pretty much anything in relations with making a movie like costumes and how to improve the background noise like cloth moving or hoof beats. As he looking to a desk drawer, he finds a few scrolls detailing simple seals that range from flash bombs to blood pellet tags that hold will hold fake blood.

Where was all this stuff when I was doing my pranks? He wonders as he automatically saw how all of this stuff could be used to help in prank pulling. With a sigh, he puts the box down and unrolls one of the scrolls to begin learning how to much such tags. He's glad that he's got an actual ink set and tons of blank sheets of paper, he's got the typical paper usually used for tags but he's going to need a lot of practice to get these seals just right since his writing skills is dismal, he's better at reading then he is at writing, likely due to him being entirely self taught in both skills.

Five Months Later

He scratches the side of his head as he studies the blond girl before him. Ino huffs slightly and moves out of her pose to cross her arms over her chest. "It's nothing against you, you under stand, it's just that the camera doesn't pick up genjutsu." He says finally.

"But I got an opening in costume design if your interested." He adds and Ino's face brightens out of the slight scowl her face had adopted. "I'll take it!" Ino declares and he hands the girl a copy of the script that Hinata had written out.

All he knows is within a month of him discovering the office, the young heiress of the Hyuuga clan had left a note saying she's willing to take a position in his film company and decided to give the script outline to Hinata to polish. What he got back did have a bunch of mature scenes that include the main character and the lead female having a bedroom scene but it did have a lot more explosions and fighting scenes that he just decides to ignore those baffling, strictly adult scenes.

He's not sure how Ino learnt about all of this, he had only just got the permission he needed to use various training fields as back drops and only just settled upon the appearances of his main cast of characters. He had to create large holes and then unseal vast amounts of water into them as a source of water for his clones. Having it around will also help keep the clones from being easily destroyed.

"You're really going to follow this script?" Ino asks as his clones finish getting the site as needed for the upcoming fight scene. Those clones arm coming over to the minor well of water and dispelling within it, he really didn't want to waste water needlessly.

"Well, Hinata seemed to know what she was writing about and, well, I couldn't think of any reasons not to exclude any of the scenes." He tells the blond. "Is something wrong? Anyway, I'm about to start, do you have any objections to the cloths my clones will be wearing for this scene?" He is sure to motion towards the story board as they also have drawings concerning the kinds of uniforms the enemy will be sporting.

Ino's face remains red but she does take a look before shaking her head. "Those will do, for now I guess." The blond eleven year old says.

With a nod, he takes a sack from the hanger and walks over to the well he created. He takes out a large paper pouch and dumps the mixture of powders into the water. He takes the pole and stirs the water before adding two bottles of liquid thickener before stirring that into the water. Once the water is a deep, dark red color, he notes how the water is slightly sluggish but that won't affect the movement of his clones.

Letting go of the pole, he goes through the head signs for the water clone jutsu. He's sure to focus upon mental images that he wants his clones to assume. He had learnt how to craft water clones into the images of animals and to assume the appearance of other people beyond his own appearance. Gender wasn't a barrier at all, nor was size.

Once the clones were in position, they had pick up their special equipment, aka the blood pellet tags. Once he's got the mic in position and fastening it down so it won't move much, he sets up to the camera and once the camera is rolling, cries, "Action!"

The clones act out the scene without any of them really getting dispelled. Once the scene is done, his clones get up and get ready to redo the scene while he moves the mic and camera to the next position to do a retake. The clones use dirt to cover the fake blood that's splattered about the area. The clones each took turns upon dispelling their cloths and recreating clean ones from the well water.

And so it went until he's got all five angles of this scene. "That's a wrap!" He says, very pleased at how his first screen shoot had gone. And so, the clones begin to take down the preparations. *Good then I got the second and third sets prepared. It shouldn't take long to set one of them up and shoot those scenes before heading to the office to begin editing them.*

"Huh, I guess it's easy to get through a shoot when their all clones." Ino muses as he hands her the next two shoots costume designs for her to review. The backstage stuff is getting sealed within storage scrolls.

Once his clones are done, they once more get into the well before dispelling. With them all gone, he takes out the special storage scroll and seals all of the dyed water into it. Grabbing the pack with all the scrolls in it, he begins to march up to the second set.

Ino walks after him after a few seconds. She has a few ideas for the next shoot, mostly for the female fights that are about to come up. He listens as Ino points out how the women are more likely to act in a fight and cosmetics used to help highlight their looks. He frowns slightly as that sounds like it'll be a lot more work, but guesses that Ino likely knew what she's talking about, he'll just need Ino to create facial sketches and use the colors. He'll likely need to have a few clones about for models but is sure that Ino's capable of doing this job as she is one of the girls trying to land Sasuke Uchiha as her husband, so she would need to know these things so she can look her best.

Three Months Later

"Patches of Omissions." The Third Hokage says to him and he frowns. He didn't see why he's here in the office, not when he's got to prepare for this even's showing.

"Are you complaining about the title? If you are, you'd better talk to Hinata Hyuuga cause she's the writer." He states simply and he swears that the old man dropped his jaw in surprise, although a few seconds later and the old man schooled his expression.

"That's not why you're here." The Hokage states and he frowns while asking, "Then why am I here? Are you looking to purchase tickets? Cause I'm pretty sure that this week is sold out. But if you really want to watch it, I guess you could sit next to the projector."

Since there weren't any movie theaters in Hidden Leaf, he's had to find some place to show the film and had found an old warehouse that needing a lot of fixing up but it worked. Boarding up the windows, clearing out the old wooden boards and sweeping up the floors made room for the various benches, old sofas, and chairs for

ticket holders to sit on while watching the movie. Hinata had found the huge white cloth needed for the screen while Ino had been in charge of ticket sales.

The first show didn't have a lot of people, he recalls that there had been seven jonin and Iruka-sensei. One of the jonin had been wearing green spandex and seem to enjoy saying 'Youth' a lot. He recalls the number of gasping sounds that Iruka-sensei had made during those romantic and bedroom scenes. Heck, that one silver haired jonin put his book away when the second bedroom scene got shown and remain put away until the light came on. Iruka-sensei had been really red faced and had left quickly while the various seven jonin seem to wait a few extra minutes before leaving.

After that first showing, they've had packed house for then on, which kind of made it worth it since it means they really enjoy the film. Heck, that silver haired jonin has seen at least five more shows since the first. He's already looking forward to making another movie, he knows Hinata is working on a new script while Ino seems to be busy coming up with future ideas for costumes.

"That's not what I want to talk to you about." The old man Hokage says and he frowns, not sure what else the Hokage would want from him. "This is about certain scenes that you filmed. Particularly, the bedroom ones."

"What about them? I wasn't sure if they went off right but both Hinata and Ino seem to say that they came out better then they expected." He says, he leaves out how red faced the pair were whenever they saw said scenes. "I would have liked to have more explosions in the movie but I decided to trust Hinata and didn't change anything she wrote."

"Who's idea was it to rate it R then?" The Hokage asks and he answers, "Ino and Hinata were insistent on that one. I kind of thought it sucked since I wanted to rub this in Kiba and Sasuke's faces about how successful my film is."

"Naruto... Has anyone mentioned how babies are made?" The old man asks out of the blue and he just stares blankly at the elderly ninja sitting before him.

"What's that got to do with my movie? I mean, babies come from some super secret lab in under the hospital, right? I always wanted to see the place cause I wanted to see if I can't make myself a younger sibling but I can't find it." He explains wistfully. "I mean, I'd be a great big brother! I seen how its done and it would be great to have somebody who needs me and looks up to me."

He notices how sad the old man is and he figures the Hokage is likely remembering his own younger sibling. *I wonder if I should change tactics and try to rent Hinata's younger sister... I wonder how much Hinata would charge per hour?* He thinks to himself.

"Has nobody taken you aside and given you any kind of lecture concerning where babies come from?" The old man asks after a few minutes of silence. "Like the nurse?"

"I'm still not following. I mean, the last time I was in her presence she offered to do an operation that would help me learn, I think she called it a castration? She says that it's used to help calm down male dogs and horses, allows them to think better." He says before adding, "I didn't take her up on it cause I don't want to cheat, I'll make it to Hokage without that castration, believe it!"

He watches as the old man begins to rub his temples with his fingers. "That's good, Naruto. And I need you to promise me that you won't take anybody up on any... beneficial sounding operations. If anyone does make the suggestion, I want you to come right to me and we can discus it here in my office." The old man says and he just nods, he didn't see any reason not to do as the old man asked, after all, it gave him another reason to visit with the guy.

"Sure!" He chirps and the old man smiles slightly. "Is there anything else we need to talk about or should I go?" He asks.

"I would like you to find both Hinata and Ino. It seems that I have something to discuss with them." The Hokage says to him and he nods.

"Will do!" He says as he gets up from the chair. "See ya later, old man!" He says as he leaves the office.

I wonder if he's going to try and get free tickets from Ino? He wonders as he exits the tower and heads off in search for the two girls. After all, the sooner they have their meeting with the old man, the sooner he can find out what it is the Hokage wanted to speak with them about.

"Hey kid, you made one hell of a movie!" Some old white haired man says. The man ruffles his blond hair before leaving. He turns and watches the guy walk off, he notes a large scroll hanging behind the man's back. The guy seem to be more interested in the women on the street then the guys.

With a shrug, he refocuses on the task of finding his costume designer and his writer.

Week Later

"So... we made a good hundred thousand right off the bat and we're getting a five percent in royalties on the movie. I never knew you can make that much money so quickly." He says to Hinata as they walk to his apartment.

Ino will meet with them in a few, she's going to try and see if Sasuke is interested in going on a date with her. He highly doubts that the guy has even noticing the opposite sex, much less looking to be in their company.

"After meeting with Lord Hokage, I reconsidered the direction for the next film." Hinata stutters out and he perks up. "Does this have anything to do with those mythology books and scrolls you've been reading during lunch?" He asks.

"Yes, I thought we'd try something concerning the mythical creatures." Hinata explains. "But perhaps we should wait for Ino? I'm sure she would like to be here when I explain my idea." The Hyuuga heiress adds and he nods, he clearly recalled the few other staff meetings Hinata and him had begun without the blond, only for Ino to get all huffy about it.

Minutes pass as they made small talk about how chakra control that Hinata suggests they try next since he needs a lot of work concerning it as he has way too much chakra on hand. He's just glad that Hinata knew so many different practices on how to control one's chakra. He's gotten so good that he can create cloths out of water instead of making water clones to wear the cloths.

His current set of gray long sleeve shirt with orange vest and brown shorts are all made using that technique; the only real cloths items he's wearing are his various weapon pouches. Sure, he had to head to the bathroom a few times during the day to refuel the water the cloths were made out of but with practice, he's sure that he might one day be able to maintain them without waters every two hours, maybe even putting it off for a good eight hours.

Ino seems to be pleased to see him out of that orange jumpsuit but is confident that she hasn't figured out that they cloths are made using that water jutsu. After all, he couldn't afford to buy groceries let alone purchase nice cloths that what they appear to be. *I wonder what other elements I can make cloths out of?*

As they lose things to discus about concerning the latest chakra control exercise, Ino enters and slams the door. He winces as it usually means that the blond is in a foul mood. He's kind of wishes that Ino and Sakura hadn't ended their friendship since this usually means that they have to deal with the upset blond.

"Why's wrong with how I dress?" Ino demands while looking at him and he cocks his head to the side while he studies what she's wearing.

"It... err, empathizes your belly?" He answers, kind of at a lost at how to answer that but knows that he had to give some answer.

Ino pauses and places a hand over her exposed belly. "What's wrong with that?" The blond girl demands.

"It's a good place to insert a kunai?" He replies, saying the first thing that pops in his head and that seems to cause Ino to pause. Thus Ino walks over to join them without much trouble, it's clear she's considering his reply.

"I guess your right." Ino admits with a sigh as she slumps down into the chair. "But how am I suppose to show off how slim I am if I cover it?"

"You ever think that you would impress Sasuke by dressing as though you're about to go into battle?" Hinata offers when he glances at her with look asking her for help.

"Yea, Sasuke does take being a ninja pretty seriously." He adds. "Ever thought to improve your taijutsu? I'm sure he'd be even more impressed if you manage to rank second to him." He admits, he really doesn't want to discus this at all, but, well, they don't usually get any work down unless they wade through Ino's latest drama.

Ino wrinkles up her noses and opens to say something but stops and looks towards a wall. "It's not as if following those fashion magazines are helping any." Ino finally admits in defeat and Hinata reaches out to comfort the blond.

When Ino didn't continue on this after a few minutes of silence, he finally brings up the topic he wants to confront. "What's our next film going to be about? I know Hinata's been looking through mythological creatures and stories..."

Hinata nods and begins to outline a story concerning a child somehow getting spirited away to some magical land where various fantasy creatures call home. Hinata makes suggestions of the child

encountering kitsunes and other mystical beasts like two-tailed cats and lion dogs, fighting oni, learning from tengu, and even gracing the court of dragons.

"That sounds like it'll be a fairly hard angle to sell. I mean, Hidden Leaf isn't keen on anything related to kitsunes." Ino says.

"I like the angle but how about invaders from another dimension? We can call them demons, fiends, devils, or oni. The main could be a half-breed and a bounty hunter?" He says and Ino taps a finger against her chin.

"We could have various fractions. Make them more beastly in nature." Ino muses slowly.

"We can have the humanoid type called demons and have them being responsible concerning the bounties. Make their whole society hidden and needing hybrid since they're unable to pass themselves off as humans." Hinata reflects and he nods.

"We could try creating miniatures cities out of metal and glass like some of those summoned movies! Create those metal contraptions and their weapons." He says with a grin. "We can have it over top of a pail of water to help strengthen those tiny clones!" He says.

"I can design design those things!" Ino says. "Though you'll have to work on creating clones under an inch tall." The blond girl says and he shrugs.

"I'm more worried about how to get the miniatures all filmed." He replies.

"I think we could visit the discard pile of the old people's home. They are the ones who fish for useful items. We could likely find tiny camera among the discards." Hinata stutters out.

"Sounds good! Want to go now or did ya guys want to work on designs?" He asks and Ino waves him off.

"You two go, I'll stick around here coming up with a sketches for the 'Demons'." Ino says and thus, Hinata and him leave his apartment.

Month Later

After two weeks of waiting for Ino's miniature order, they decided to go in a different diction since, in the end, Ino got really frustrated with the order taking more then a week to get shipped. Not to say that the order was canceled, they just decided to do something that didn't have them waiting for so long and had plenty of it in stock. It helps that they found something that pretty much didn't cost much money and it had to do with this battered old looking manga featuring talking lions. The book's called the Lion King but by the time they were done making a bunch of changes to the story, it barely resembled it the book.

They decided to call it Destined for Change. The characters remained animals but the main cast typically come from these two animal groups, magic using lions and magic using hyenas. The hyenas rule this canyon of bones and mushroom forests while the lions rule the lands of plenty. The lions come from a wide array of prides that sport such names as Dawn Sight and Faith's Wings. The hyenas come from various clans with such names as Bone Breakers and Spore Furs.

The conflict comes about from a meteor that creates a wide trench in the canyon that leads to their lands getting flooded. They're forced out of their native home lands and forced to encroach upon the lion's homes. Naturally they come into conflict with certain parties on each side seeking to enslave the other species.

In the end, the supposed 'good' guys on the hyena side get killed which results in the race getting forced through a magical gateway. To survive, they place themselves into a magical sleep, waiting for the day when the few that escaped this fate can rally enough forces and set them free.

While not a happy ending, it did leave room for a bunch of sequels if it proves to be popular. It also proved easy to film since they didn't need to worry about cloths, although Ino is the one who created most of the glowing tattoo designs for both sides. The ink they used to apply said tattoos was one that reacts by coming into contact with chakra by glowing and since the clones were constructs of chakra, they continued to glow, even when they didn't want them to.

It had only taken them so long because he had to figure out how to create tiny seals or for his water clones to be capable of channeling any jutsu he can do. In the end, he kind of succeeds in both as his tiny, human clones did do a good job writing out those seals while he learnt that if he creates a water clone strictly out of his own blood, thus becoming a blood clone, the clone is capable of being a channel for a jutsu.

He's privately glad that he only had to make tiny blood clones since he figures a full size blood clone would likely kill him. He plans to see if he can engulf a drop of his blood in chakra and insert it inside of a water clone, could the droplet of blood be enough to allow the water clone to channel a jutsu? He'll have to try it later as Ino's out of village order has finally arrived, allowing them to pursue that old movie idea.

"That's a bit better then your previous movie, Patches of Omissions." Iruka-sensei says. The chuunin had somehow got the position of having final say on whether or not any of their films will be allowed to be seen within Hidden Leaf.

"Although, I was looking forward to a happy ending, but then, I take it you have plans for a sequel." Their academy teacher says and he can't take it any more.

"So we can we start selling tickets for it or not?" He asks. "Ino's got a good two hundred posters ready to be posted around town." He adds and Ino proudly displays said poster.

Although, she could do to improve her artistic abilities... He silently admits. *I'll give her points for trying though.*

"Just as long as you add the thirteen to that PG rating as it does feature a lot of violence and death on screen." Iruka-sensei says finally and Ino squeals before pulling him in for a hug. Ino bounces up and down, all the while holding onto him, much to his embarrassment. He keeps reminding himself that he loves Sakura and that this doesn't mean anything.

"Sounds good." Hinata stutters out with a relieved expression upon her face. Iruka-sensei nods as he gets up off the couch and heads out of the warehouse turned movie theater.

Three Weeks Later

"Huh, looks like Uzumaki Enterprises just got an offer to produce some film called Monster City." He says upon arriving into the basement where they're filming Nerves; that's what they're calling that one about the half breed bounty hunter killing dimensionally displaced beasts that are grouped into Fiends, Devils, and Abominations.

"What's the script about?" Ino asks while she moves the lights just so to mimic the correct time of day. Each of the desks have various sketches ranging from alien creatures to clothing designs for each of the characters.

He rips open the envelop and takes out the thick script. He hands the loose papers over to Ino once she gets up from her crouch. He skims through the script and can't help but snort at certain points, but over all, he didn't see how they'd have difficulty making this picture, easy money actually.

"We could actually afford to construct an actual movie theater and hire people to work it." Ino says after whistling at the amount this company is offering. They exchange papers and he snorts softly at the number of zeros.

"If only your clones could be independent, then we could get them to build the miniatures for this film while we're in classes." Ino says.

"In a few weeks we might not need to worry about the academy. We'll be taking the examine to get promoted to genin. If I don't pass then I'll be doing this full time as it'll be my third try." He says to Ino, he notes how startled Ino reacts to the mere mention of the upcoming examine.

"Oh, yea... Genin..." Ino murmurs and looks off into space, clearly more interested in her thoughts then what's going on about her.

"At least you got all three of the jutsus perfected. I doubt I'll ever be able to preform the basic clone jutsu. They just keep looking like crap." He says.

"And I'll likely get paired with Chouji and Shikamaru when I pass it." Ino states with a hint of despair. "I mean, sure, our partners worked well together but who's to say we'd be able to follow in their foot steps? I mean, Shikamaru would likely just say 'how troublesome' ever second sentence and Chouji will be more concerned with stuffing his face!"

Ino rants for a few minutes about Chouji and Shikamaru's bad points. He's kind of sympathetic but mostly annoyed since he considers the pair to be almost friends. They and Kiba would skip classes or sneak out of class if they were bored in one.

"Makes ya hope that Hinata, you, and I end up on the same team, eh? If we did, then we won't have to figure out schedules concerning the continuation of our work creating movies." He sums up and Ino simply sighs.

"Anyway, you get this started while I got purchase the stuff needed for this one." Ino says as she grabs the key for the cash chest. As soon as Ino grabs what she thinks she needs, the blond tosses the key to him and he puts it back on its hook before he moves to sit at

this stool surrounding with various screens displaying the upcoming scene in different angles.

Once he's seated, he then forms a single hand sign that cause the tiny clones to act out the scene while he watches viva the multiple cameras. It won't be long before they've got enough raw film to start creating an actually film. *I wonder how much this one will go for? Not as high as Patches of Omissions but certainly higher then Destined for Change.*

Most of the money they got from the two earlier movies went to repaying Ino for the miniature models that she bought with her own money and to pay rent upon that warehouse.

If they get the money for Monster City and manage to get a good price for Nerves, they should be able to pay a genin team to demolish the old market district, as that part of the village has been abandoned for years now, and then hire a construction firm to build a large theater, they're going to try to have ten or more sceening rooms in which to show ten different movies at the same time.

He tries not to think about his other project too much since he doesn't want to get his hopes too high up concerning recreating a life size, functioning bike that the lead character, Steel, rides around in.

Ending it here

Maskes: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter

December 20, 1992

He stares down at the embers of the fireplace, his thoughts lingering upon not only what he learnt from a book containing information about magical animals. He wanted to learn more about phoenixes, he hadn't been prepared for what he read and the conclusions that suddenly hit him. He sighs and after a few minutes of debate, softly calls out, "Dobby?"

A very faint pop and before him stands the house elf that's been hounding him to leave Hogwarts. "Yes great Harry Potter sir?" Dobby asks and he hastes for only a second.

"Dobby, do you still want me to leave Hogwarts?" He asks and the house elf bobs his head rapidly up and done. For a second, Harry wondered if the little guy's head would pop off.

"Ok, good, cause I need you to gather somethings for me." He says. The little magical being perks up as he gives the little elf what he'll need to do so.

Merlin... I hope this works. He thinks as the little elf vanishes away and he takes a sip out of the wine that he had Hedwig import. He said it's a gift for a teacher and thus, it's how he got it into the school. It likely helped that he's also a legend among those that live in this world so nobody thought twice about the request.

January 2, 1993

He stands in the abandon classroom not far from a side door that leads out of the castle and then takes out a tiny bottle that contains the Polyjuice potion, it also sports a small collection of hairs from ten

different guys, he had made sure to tell Dobby that part. He downs the potion after changing into the close that he asked Dobby for, they were in muggle style as he plans to fade into the muggle world. He even has a plan ticket to head out of the UK, he's heading for Australia as he hopes his accent won't stand out.

Earlier, he had used transfiguration to move his famous scar so it's no longer upon his forehead. He has placed a minor illusion upon his forehead to make it seem as though it's there. None seem to notice the difference, but then, Hermione is still in that cat hybrid form. While he was visiting, he had inquired if the headmaster had offered anything to any of the petrified students or the cat but the man hadn't offered any phoenix tears to bring them out. It kind of appalled him that nobody even thought to ask for those tears since Fawkes does live in Hogwarts and it shouldn't be that hard to get the fire bird to donate a small bottle or two.

It's not my job to protect Hogwarts. The man has the means to end all of this but it seems as though ***he*** *isn't interested in preforming his job.* He think as the potion finishes altering him, a single glance into a hand held mirror displays his reflection as a twenty something year old man with wavy blue tinted hair and hazel eyes. His eyes seem slightly almond shaped while his skin is ever rather tan.

Pocketing the mirror, he takes out one of the most important items that Dobby stole for him, a Time Turner. As midnight sounds, he turns the hour glass twenty-four times. The magic takes effect and he watches as those that had previously visited this room blur in rewind until, once more, the midnight chiming is happening.

With a grin, he walks over to where he stored the knapsack and hefts it. He had known he went through with this this morning since when he visited, the knapsack was gone. Dobby had only given him the Time Turner a few hours after noon after all. He does up the zipper for his jacket while he shoulders his broom.

Once in the treeline of the Forbidden Forest, he climbs onto the broom. Within seconds, he's zooming southward, looking for the

railway tracks to follow. He figures that there are permanent spells upon them to keep them hidden from view of muggles, thus a perfect way to get to London without exposure and getting lost.

He's glad for the muggle attire as his jacket and snow pants keep him rather warm while the single lens goggles allow him to see without feeling the wing sneaking under his glasses. He's got a hat and a scarf protecting his head and face. Gloves covering his hands and nice faux fur lining his boots' inside.

He's done his best to keep any part of himself from being exposed to the cold and he's fairly sure he succeeded in it.

January 4, 1993

He sips from the metal hip flask that contains more of the Polyjuice potion that he needs to drink once an hour. With that done, he quickly reaches for his cola to wash away the foul after flavor while he glances out of the window. *I was expecting to ride in couch... I wonder how Dobby got the pounds to buy the ticket? Heck, I'm more then a little worried about where he get two hundred thousand pounds that I requested along with the ticket.*

The house elf also manage to get him not just two extra wands but six. The elf also got him various kinds of jewelry based defenses against mind reading, location & tracking spells(it seems the different between the two is that tracking spells allow one to follow where he's been rather then where he is), and magic resistance boosters, although it also made it slightly harder for him to cast spells but at this moment, he doesn't know many useful spells so it isn't much of a hassle at the moment.

Dobby had also gotten hold of a memory modifier potion that's keyed to make the little elf totally forget about him. The potion only works on eliminating memories of encounters up to a year max, which is just want they needed. It takes about fifteen minutes before the potion begins to affect the drinker so, Dobby had drunk it before him and once ten minutes have passed in which they said their good

byes and what not, with five minutes left, the house elf returned to his family.

Why am I still obsessing with what's been done? I'm finally getting away from the Dursleys! So what if I'm leaving behind Ron and Hermione? I came to the Wizarding World looking to escape the Dursleys but I still ended up returning there and I had to face off with the specter of the man who killed my parents. Sure, I like magic and it's not as though the UK is the only place where one can learn magic, after all, there is a whole world beyond and a good number of those living there had to discover other ways to use it. He thinks to himself.

He closes his eyes as he leans down upon the leaning back of his seat. His thoughts revolving about defending his position about leaving as he feels so much guilt over this but the actions or the lack of actions on Dumbledore's part remains the core defense for his leaving. He still has the Time Tuner in his possession and knows he needs to train himself up cause it's clear that Voldemort won't rest until he's killed him.

His new watch chimes and he leans up to drink more of the potion. A replacement for his cola arrives as well. In the end, he grabs one of the magazines he bought waiting for the flight to take his mind off of his guilt over leaving.

March 16, 1998

He swirls the liquid in his glass as his thoughts chase each other about in circles. The ICW had, as of one pm, been occupying the UK for about six months. It's only recently that the death toll has been released to the great wide world at large, particularly since the trials are about to begin for not just the Death Eaters but against various politicians, which include Dumbldore, though it's expected that Dumbledore will walk away with a slap upon the wrist, which he just couldn't stomach as the man likely could have prevented the whole war in the UK.

Maybe I should send that owl... He thinks while Hedwig arrives to put a package upon the table. None at the cafe cared since it's got ties to the general magical society. He studies the heavily altered Hedwig, after all, having a snowy owl would have lead everyone straight to him and he couldn't have that.

He has transfigured Hedwig's white plumage to that of a screech owl. He even had to add the traits but over all, most of what he did was cosmetic in nature and is rather easy to reverse. Heck, he's manage to pass off Hedwig's size as a minor potion accident where some growth potion ended up on a mouse and she ate it when it wasn't done growing, thus the effects got transferred onto her.

Hedwig isn't the only one who's had physical work done, he had turned the wand onto himself. His eye color was the first to go, his eyes have been various shades of blue, hazel, and are now a brownish yellow. His hair has been through the various colors humans naturally sport to some that are achieved through using chemicals to dye it to be out of the natural spectrum. At this moment, it's blond with blue streaks running through it.

Body shape, skin tone, teeth, and even his privates have felt the touch of his magic. He's reshaped his face, ears, and added or retracted scars, moles, and pimples. Heck, there was this one time he managed to pass himself off as a woman, it had been rather... arousing when he was growing breasts before a mirror. He hadn't done much to his package beyond shrinking it, altering the pelvis, and forcing hair to grow in that area in case he got stripped searched while going through customs, he had been heading to a war torn country to do a bit of shopping and heard rumors of male tourists getting laid over for weeks for some small reason or other.

He figured traveling there while appearing to be a woman was a good idea, which it was as it turned out some local cult lead by a witch seemed to be busy using mind control spells upon said all of the men that arrived into the country. The witch was busy using them as slave labor to construct guns and other items of interest. He had, of course, found himself entangled in the whole mess since there

seemed to be spells set up to detect men about some of the cities the witch controlled. The less said of that the better in his opinion.

There was this other time when he had used a bit of metal that had been melted using Fiendfyre to try and create a magical scar. He had decided to see if it could alter the shape of his scar and when it touch his famous lightning bolt scar the metal didn't seem to harm him as he had expected but it had caused his scar to scream. The scar just vanished under the touch of the still warm metal, nothing remains of either.

I wonder what was up with the screaming though... He muses as he opens the package up. He takes some meat from his half eaten sandwich and gives it to Hedwig before taking out the various broken magical items that he's been commission to fix.

It had kind of shocked him to learn that nobody ever tried fixing a broken or drained artifacts but it gave him a niche to fill. It hadn't been hard to get the right IDs made but it had taken him a bit to pick out a new name for himself as he couldn't go by Harry J. Potter. So he became Daniel 'Rafe' Dashiell, a nineteen year old halfblood from Australia. His parents paid for private tutors so he didn't attend any of the local schools, thus painting that his family had money, pretty much explaining why he's never broke.

I wonder why nobody ever thought of using an enlarging spell on raw diamonds or transfiguring paper into paper money... My experiments into speeding up chemical reactions in forming crystals and gems are coming along nicely. He thinks to himself. *Who knows, in a year or two I might have gemstones that will pass through inspection, thus I won't need to worry about people noticing anything fake about those bills... Funny, I would have thought that the magical jewelers I sell those gems to would be the ones spotting oddities to the gems I've sold them, particularly the enlargement charm that I use.*

His eyes widen at the sight of a vial with a french label saying that it contains phoenix blood. There is other types of magical liquid that comes from various other beings and beasts but he's never

encountered phoenix blood. With a sigh, he takes the various vials containing tears, blood, and pee out of the over all package before removing the fur, feather, scale, and skin samples.

He removes the cloth and studies the layered artifact with interest. Taking out his ash and kitsune fur wand, he casts various information spells and nods thoughtfully as it does explain why such items were sent along. *Looks like they not only want to repair it but upgrade it as well since some of the various samples come from creatures and beings not used during its creation.* He muses, noticing that instead of using paint, runes were etched upon the metal using mild form of acid, likely typical mixture that blacksmiths used back in the day of when they crafted such an item.

It's a complex item and the letter under has information needed to the purpose of this device. It doesn't shock him to learn it was made in Greece or that it came from the time of the Romans as it explains how it got to France. The French is kind of sketchy about what they used it for that caused it to break but the fact that the artifact had something to do with viewing the departed souls of the dead.

Thus why it possessed crystallized blood from a basilisk as well as a scale. Hmm, feathers and ash from a phoenix, a bone from a dementor, blood and skin from a lethifold, and finally blood, bone, and an eye from a thestral. He IDs and then he moves onto the various samples that came with the artifact in question.

Most of the samples come from other creatures and beings that represent life and death, or can cause instant death like samples from a nundu and a gorgon or capable of prolonging their life like a hydra. *Hmm... This such might be a bit of an overkill since it might not work right with all these new, foreign creatures as the creators didn't factor them in.* He muses but he could see that the new additions from the previously used creatures will be of greater help in the reconstruction since it'll give him greater insight of the hows, whys, and what-fors of the creation of it.

"Going to need to reforge parts of this. The problem will be seeing if they did anything special during the process of preparing the metal, during the engraving process, or during the setting of the crystals in the metal." He muses out loud while Hedwig just yawns. He smiles as he glances at the owl and chuckles.

"Sorry for boring you. Did you want the rest of this sandwich, girl?" He asks and Hedwig perks up, nodding yes. Once that's done, he returns to studying the artifact that he's to repair or was it reforge?

He was no longer the underfed, frightful boy of twelve but a grown man who is often hailed a genius and something of a free lance defeater of so called Dark Lords and Dark Ladies. The name Harry Potter doesn't mean much to him beyond that it belongs to his past-self. He has at least five other identities beyond Rafe that he masquerades as, often using the Time Turner to do so.

Life is more then enjoyable for him now and perhaps if things work out as he hopes, he will be enjoying centuries upon centuries of it with Hedwig by his side since he wasn't just going to let her die of old age on him. Magic is a very useful tool and it possesses limitless potential as it can be used for anything as long as you can dream about it.

The End

Inherited Power: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter.

Where are we going now? Harry wonders as the cart jerks sharply to the left. He recalls that they had return to the beginning and Hagrid had been the first to get off, but before he could get up to move out of the cart, the goblin suddenly shifted the lever and the cart went forward with a jerk.

The cart goes down and spirals a few times before it levels out in a very dark and dank floor. The stone seems to be black and sports grooves along its surface. The walls to lack vault faces and then, finally, they come to a stop by a set of stairs that lead up to a stone door.

"Why did you bring me here?" He asks the goblin and the cart driver replies with disdain, "Your great-grandfather had constructed this himself with the help of your grandfather. About three years before he died, your great-grandfather visited this vault with a pack of items and came out without them. Then your grandfather visited this vault a year before he died, although before he died, he contracted the bank to bring his grandchild here."

"Didn't my father visit this place?" He asks as he gets out of the cart, slightly overwhelmed with the idea that two unknown people were not only related to him but seem to await his arrival. "He didn't, but why? Didn't he know about this place?" Harry asks the goblin and the goblin snorts.

"Your grandfather was very specific about who we were to bring here. Now get on with your business here so we can return before that fool of a grounds keeper firecalls the headmaster and tries to bully his way here to retrieve you." The goblin states and he quickly turns to face the stone gate.

As he places a hand upon this circle featuring the outline of a hand, he feels something jolt through him and then pool about his scar. He hears screaming in the air and dimly realizes that he's the source. Then it feels as though something is trying to tear a bit of his brain out of his head through his forehead and he truly wished he could black out but he doesn't.

It feels like eternity as that bit of brain finally begins to give. He gasps and blinks his eyes rapidly. His whole being is sore and yet, oddly enough, his brain feels as if some unknown pressure is gone. It feels as though something had been plugging up his head, like having a stuffy nose only focused in his mind and now, now it's all cleared up and he can breath so much more easier.

As Harry focuses on his surroundings, he finds himself in a minor hall that leads into a large room. He walks down the hall that is light up by these vines of crystals that dance with various colors of light. It's rather soothing and he finds himself relaxing slightly as he stands before the room.

He can see another room and a set of stairs that lead up. The stairwell is, like four feet wide. Suddenly, something happens and his shoes finally fit while his cloths also seem to shrink while brightening up. His glasses vanish from his face but it didn't matter as he continue to see things oh so clearly.

He glances up at the ceiling above him before glancing down. There seems to be clawed feet upon the bottom while heads of felines look down. He glances towards the door and finds that the spot where he's standing is the only placed graced with such additions. He pulls at his now crimson shirt, it feels like silk, before glancing down at the black pants, which feels like cotton. His shoes look new, not torn or worn at all.

He smiles softly as he turns his eyes towards the couch. He glances down at the crystal tiled floor and takes a step. Lights dance under his right foot and when he pulls up his foot, the light dies. With a shake of his head, he steps more into the living room area of the

vault. *Now this is what magic should be like.* He decides, sure the alley had been kind of nice, but it had been kind of gouty with how the color clashed all over the place and thrown together as most of the buldings look like they were ready to fall apart with a good, solid shove.

The couch and various chairs all seem to be floating a few inches above the tiled floor. Pictures of magical animals line two of the three walls of the living room as the third wall seems to have a large shelfing unit containing rows upon rows of books, be it leather bound or made out of some other kind of material like stone or metal.

He walks over to the other room and finds it to be a dinning room. He walks through another doorway and finds himself in a kitchen sporting a huge stone fridge. He opens it to find it leading into a huge cold room sporting meat upon meat hooks towards the back while shelves filled with spice jars, fruit, veggies, and flour. He notices crates piled in one of the back corners, he just assumes that it contains eggs before he backs out and closes the door.

He heads back towards the living room and goes up the stairs. After about ten steps, he's on the second level and finds it divided into two large rooms. To his left, he finds a bedroom that also sports a bathroom. He enters to find about two different pools, one looks like a natural hot spring while the other is a pretty good size pool, it's currently empty of water.

He heads for the other room to discover it to be an office. It's fashioned with a white stone desk that sports a metal and crystal goblet upon the desk. Across from the desk is a large mirror that is black in color. He walks over and tabs the mirror to discover that it's make of some kind of black glass. The spot where his finger touches the surface causes a bit of numbness to his finger.

Shaking his hand, he walks over and sits down at the desk. He goes through the drawers and finds a bunch of important looking folders. In another he finds glass vials containing colorful liquid. In the top left he found a note with a minor bit of poetry upon it.

He pulls the little card out and turns it over to find it telling him to look into the mirror for knowledge of his enemies while saying the chant. Feeling a tiny bit foolish, he closes the desk drawer, moves the goblet a bit to get a clearer view of the mirror. Taking in a deep breath, he recites the poetry...

Few Minutes Later . . .

Harry just stares blankly ahead, his mind a whirl of feelings and thoughts concerning everything he just witnessed. He feels like vomiting and curling up to cry, to never step foot out of this strange house like vault. Tears run down his face and he touches his right cheek, his hand seems warmer then his face.

"All those people... They just... How could they? And that man..." He slowly shakes his head as he realizes that not only does he have to deal with Tom Riddle but with Albus Dumbledore as well as the old geezer had plans that dictate his life, heck the guy seems to be leaning on getting him hitched to some girl he didn't know and who doesn't even know him!

He just let those murders walk free... Didn't even try to put limits on them. Doesn't even think twice about sending the 'light' to their deaths but is sad when the 'dark' are killed? What a psycho, hypocritical bastard! He thinks and then he realizes that he doesn't have the skills needed to deal with either Tom or with Ablus.

He blinks as he hears something coming to his left. Blinking, he glances at the goblet to find light playing about the crystal bowl that the metal holds up. He knew what that is, he's seen a few of them while watching events play out from the various visions from the past.

With a frown, he gets up and moves towards the goblet. With nothing to lose, he dunks his head into the oddly green tainted gray liquid. Knowledge rushes into his mind, like how to turn a stone into a beetle, what to do when facing off against an angry gryphon, the

correct ward scheme to create the infamous death ward... It just goes on and on.

Finally, his head couldn't take it any more, he pulls himself out of the liquid pool of knowledge and reaches about for the potions he needed to take if he's to integrate all of this knowledge into his own mind. Once the headache subsides, he plunges his head once more into the liquid, this time, absorbing political knowledge concerning the Wizarding World and its laws.

It would be a good four dunks before all of the liquid knowledge has been absorbed. With a full head, he heads for the bedroom, his shoes come off with a bit of effort, and he banishes the blankets to drape over his body wandlessly. And so, he falls asleep upon a bed his forewarned, previous heads of the Potter family and magically crafted for future use.

Six Hours Later . . .

As Harry comes to, he sighs softly before rolling onto his back and stare up at the enchanted ceiling that seems as though he's underwater with silvery light shimmering down at him. As light moves as the water rolls. It's rather soothing and he fights the desire to fall back to sleep.

It's the thought of Albus that finally drives him out of the bed. He heads for the office once more, this time to collect the Time Turner his great grandfather had borrowed. The Time Turner his great grandfather had been about to return had been fake, not that anyone knows as it fell just as it was exchanging hands and his grandfather had banished the broken parts away.

Once the Time Turner is about his neck, he also picks up a ring that will act as a two way Port Key, allowing him to return and leave this place without any trouble. His grandfather had to come down to leave it within this vault. Once the ring is on his finger, the ring seemingly gets absorbed by finger, leaving only a tiny, snarling face that is just a shade or two darker then his own skin tone.

He heads for the kitchen to grab a bit to eat before turning the Time Turner back six time while standing in the kitchen. One quick sandwich made and eaten, he moves the Time Turner out from under his shirt and after using a time spell to check the time, he then flips the hour glass over six time. Time rewinds and as the past him leaves the kitchen, time resumes.

He waits a minute before heading out of the kitchen. As he passes through the one area, his cloths return to their original appearance but not his shoes. His glasses return but before he leaves, he alters the lens until he can see perfectly before enchanting the frames to be durable and the glass lens to see through illusions.

The stone doors pull back to allow him to pass through. "Finally." The goblin murmurs as he walks down the steps to enter into the cart.

The cart had somehow been turned around so they go back the way they came as soon as he's seated. The food in his stomach feels like lead weight within him and he's more then a little relieved for the ride to be over. Hagrid rushes over to greet him while throwing up a fuss over the 'kidnapping' of him done by the goblins.

He smiles slightly at this but reminds the half-giant that they have other things to do then to spend the day at the bank, arguing with goblins. They leave the bank and Harry learns that he's only been gone for about an hour, most of that time likely due to the ride there and back again. Though Hagrid doesn't press deeply, the half-giant does try to learn just where the cart goblin had taken him and he replies, "I'm sorry but it's family business."

He pauses at the sight of one of those villains he observed in the mirror and all of the emotions he had felt hours earlier rush back. He hears the windows of the store next to him begin to rattle before using his new mental skills to control the emotional storm wanting to break into reality. *That... **family** won't live to see September first.* He silently vows to himself.

"Lucius Malfoy. He's one of those that escaped prison by saying he was under the effects of the Imperius Curse." Hagrid says needlessly. "Hog's well-ump in my opinion."

He just nods, not really trusting himself to speak. It also calls to mind that many others who aided Tom were still out and about. *Shouldn't be too hard to get them all in attendance. I've seen how to do that very clearly, although Peter will be harder to get at. The rat hasn't been human for over a decade so the call likely won't reach him.* He thinks to himself.

Hagrid and Harry finally enter into their first store while Harry's busy reviewing ways in which to do all those accomplices in as well as their family in such a way that it baffles the minds of investigating witches and wizards. It wouldn't do to have a trail pointed right at him, especially if a few do manage to escape that little gathering.

Upon being dropped off at Privet Drive, Harry turns on the TV and finds it upon a show detailing the first World War. He witnesses the damage done by bombing and he begins to chuckle before it turns into a full blown laugh. *Just perfect! Just a little bit of magic to amplify the damage as well as a temporary ward scheme set up to keep them all there...*

Two Weeks Later . . .

He watches from a hill top not far from the Riddle Manor using a muggle made telescope that he enchanted to see through the first few walls of the house so that he can see the living room. The entire house sport various kinds of explosives all over like in the walls, floor boards although the place hosting the larger amount is the basement. All of the fuses wrapped up with a special kind of enchanted paper that will all burn if just one of the cut slips is set on fire.

So glad that I returned pretty much all of that equipment and replaced it with muggle created equipment. Not only is it cheaper but better made. Pencils and ball point pens are fair superior to quills

and ink pots. He thinks, sure he's never used said items but his great grandfather and grandfather had so he knew he wasn't missing out on anything there.

His watch beeps and finally, the guests arrive. He managed to bribe certain officials to get the majority of the Death Eaters from the prison to join this little reunion. Snape appears just seconds after the Malfoy family. With each passing second, all of Tom's followers, marked and unmarked arrive with their families in toe. The werewolf pack that had been hanging about in the graveyard finally enter the house and the last to arrive is Barty Crouch Jr.

Finally, all but Peter are within the manor and he presses a button on this enchanted stick that he carved to look like a muggle trigger. The wards spring into action, not only keeping the guests from leaving but also using an illusion to keep them occupied from noticing. He wandlessly summons fire in the palm of his hand that holds the slip of paper.

The house explodes with half a second after the paper is a flamed. He hadn't seen anyone get forewarned and using his telescope, finds that little to no whole bodies about the flaming wreckage. He sticks around as the fire trucks arrive but so far, no wizards or witches arrive upon the scene.

He soon packs up the telescope and once done, cases illusions upon himself and his broom before flying back to Little Whinging. He feels an odd relief engulf him as he muses over the fact that other then Tom and Peter, all marked, unmarked, and in-training Death Eaters are dead. He also feels giddy at the fact that he also possesses a rather famous, or was that infamous, ring that Tom had made into a Horcrux and feels more then confident in his ability to collect the rest, particularly now that those entrusted with said Horcruxes are dead.

Once he's in the backyard of his aunt and uncle's house, he uses his ring to arrive back at the apartment vault. He leaves his broom and the un-shrunken case containing the telescope by the stairs before

he continues up to his room. Before going to bed, he soaks in the hot spring for a bit before crawling under the blankets to get some sleep.

In one night, he managed to avenge the wrongs done to countless muggles, beings, beasts, and magical people. No recollection of those past events will haunt his dreams this night or, perhaps, for the rest of his life.

I wonder how this changes Albus' plans though... Were Harry's last thoughts before sleep over takes him.

September 1, 1991

The crowd of first year students is much, although as Harry gazes over towards the house of serpents, have nearly no students sitting at the table. *Bet ya that anyone can get their own room in that dorm.* He muses thoughtfully as he considers that table thoughtfully. *I doubt many of the students will end up in there as well.*

He turns to regard the other tables and notes that yes, the house of eagles seem to have the next lowest number. Which isn't all that surprising as there had been Death Eaters from each of the houses, although those from the house of serpents just happened to be the most mentioned. *Who would have thought I'd wind up with most of the holdings from the deceased Death Eaters? Must be because Sirius is a Black and most 'dark' families leave their fortune to other 'dark' families. I wonder what should I do with my new found political clout?*

Finally it's his turn to get sorted and he approaches the stool where the seemingly ratty hat is resting. He picks up the hat and sits down, it didn't take long before the hat and him have a minor discussion. After a few seconds, the hat declares, "Slytherin!"

He gets up from the stool after he takes the hat off. Placing the hat upon the stool, he walks to the table. He's the first to be sorted to this table, the majority have been sorted into the three other houses.

In the end, he's the only first year student to be sorted into the house of serpents, which pretty much means that he'll have his own room.

The other members study him thoughtfully before Albus gets up and says his bit before the food arrives. He doesn't pay it much mind as he's a bit busy studying a certain teacher. He might not know much about Quirrell but the man is on borrowed time even without him 'gunning' for the guy. *I wonder what kind of face Tom will make upon seeing the picture of all of his Horcruxes in it? They'll only going to be around until I manage to 'borrow' a Dementor and have it kiss the items before sending it through the veil. Just one more to collect and I've got a complete collection.*

His thoughts drift to the rat he had bought from Ron for only a single Galleon. He had transfigured the rodent into a plastic one before placing the transfigured Peter into his trunk. He had been oh so tempted to transfigure Peter into a clay statue and let it fall upon the floor, breaking apart easily and thus killing the traitor without anyone being the wiser but he needed the rat to clear Sirius' name and to dirty Albus' own.

Of all of my plans, I hope that my taking of the and passing the N.E.W.T.s will ensure that I'll never have to step foot in Hogwarts as a student once this school year ends. He thinks as dessert appears. Needless to say, Harry had a lot of plans to pursue this year and is very confident that they'll work out, especially the one to remove Albus Dumbledore permanently from the world.

The end of the night's feast is the singing of the school song and he swore his ears were bleeding at the racket the singers made. When his house-mates get up to leave, a fifth year motions for him to follow. He follows after the older student with a blank expression.

I wonder if anyone of them plan to ambush me? He thinks to himself as he follows the fifth year down to the dungeons. "If you don't mind my asking, but, shouldn't a prefect wear a badge?" He asks the young woman as they arrive at the entrance of the common room.

The teen studies him a moment before replying, "With so many of our house dead and our head of house still to be filled, nobody thought to reassign said positions to the survivors."

"I would have thought that the headmaster would have stepped in to do so in the absence of the head of house, but then, our 'dear' headmaster is rather busy in a different arena that the matter slipped his mind." He says in agreement and the young woman's lips twitch ever so slightly, it's clear that the remark caught her slightly off guard.

"Indeed. Those of us left weren't highly favored by the previous head anyway. As you lack fellow house-mates your own age, I would suggest you watch your back while in class and outside. Some might see your sorting into this house as a 'betrayal'." The fifth year teenager explains and he merely nods.

With that, his guide says the password and the door opens, revealing the common room of the Slytherin house. He heads up the stairs after glancing at a group of guys and up the stairs that are opposite direction then where the guys had pointed in, only to have the stairs flatten and cause him to fall upon his ass. With a sigh, he heads for the one they had pointed and it wasn't long before he found his room.

I was just asking for it, wasn't I? He muses privately to himself as he changes his cloths.

Next Day . . .

Harry woke at six am and heads for the vanishing room. He is sure to think about a storage room as he walks before it three times before the door appears out of the seemingly solid stone wall. It searches through the room, making mental notes of the more interesting items before coming upon the diadem.

He waits until he's out of the room before using his ring to teleport to his vault apartment. He puts it in the office upstairs with the rest of

the items before teleporting back to Hogwarts. With that out of the way, he heads outside to visit the lake for a bit to skip a few stones while he waits for the school to come alive.

Hard to believe that just over a month ago, I had just learnt I was a wizard. I wonder what my life would have been like if my great grandfather and grandfather hadn't visited that seer? Or, more importantly, believe it? That mirror just shows the past, not the present or the future though... I wonder what they saw in it that caused them to believe Albus to be a villain? But why didn't they bring my father, James, onto the secret? He wonders to himself before realizing that he could find out the last one if he uses the mirror to see that particular discussion.

He casts a time spell and leaves for the castle. He's got his bag filled with the needed books he's likely going to be needing for whatever class he is to attend today. He also heads inside, making sure to use a cleaning spell upon himself to clean off any mud he might have picked up.

He gets a few glares from the Gryffindors, which he ignores, as he doesn't find them to be very threatening, not with the knowledge his great grandfather and grandfather left behind for him to inherit. He not only feels confident in besting them, he can do things to them that they'd have no defense against. After all, a little memory charm and they won't remember their time together, which kind of sends a minor shiver down his spine at the thought of how the memory charm can be abused, especially as human nature is pretty much the same, muggle or not.

Hmm, not such a bad method to use if you want your family to survive. Might do the same with my kids, of course I'll need to contribute to the pool of knowledge. Maybe I'll try learning foreign magic... I'm sure there are plenty of schools willing to accept the Boy-Who-Lived if only to try and puzzle out how I survived the Killing Curse. I'm still young enough that they shouldn't have any trouble shuffling me into the school. He thinks, shying away from such grim thoughts.

He takes a seat at the table that has a plate setting and begins to dig into the meal offered. Before the rest of his house arrives, a small pride of Gryffindors approach him. The leader of the pride is the same boy he bought Peter from.

"I want my rat back." Ron informs him in a 'forceful' tone. He raises an eyebrow before replying, "Do you have that Galleon to return to me?"

Ron jerks his head, which answers that question. "Besides, the price just went up for said rat. He now costs the same as the Black fortune." He replies before tossing in, "You really don't know how to bargain do you? I mean, I talked you out of that rodent for dirt cheap. As they say, one man's trash is another man's treasure."

"I don't care! Give me Scabbers!" Ron growls and he just gives the three a cold shoulder.

"What do you three lions think you're doing?" Asks one of the wizards from his house. "Think you can pick on a single serpent did ya? Think since we lost most of our numbers that we'd be easy pickings, did ya?" A witch asks.

"He has my rat!" Ron snaps but he just knows that the first year Gryffindor isn't feeling as confident as he had been when they arrived.

"You got a gold for it and I've already stated my price tag for it too." He says while glancing at his irked upper year house-mates.

"There, so if you can't match Potter's price then you'll have to make do without your rodent." One of the seventh years snaps. "So run along before you feel how sharp our fangs are."

Ron and his two henchmen gulp and beat a hasty retreat. "I thought you can't with only an owl? What you need a rat for?" One of the witches asks.

"Oh, you know, just going to use the pest to clear my godfather's name so I can make use of the newly expanded fortune." He says and since the truth is rather unbelievable that they'll dismiss it.

"Ah good and here we were wondering if we'd have to take you by the hand to teach you cunning." One of the group muses dryly while the group ranges about him, subtlety showing a united face before the public. "Well, if it doesn't work out for you, maybe you can try assassinating him after getting him to sign a will sighting you as his heir." The same wizard remarks.

With a bemused smile upon his face, he returns to eating his breakfast as he'll likely have a long day today. Conversation was sparse but that was fine with him as the other tables more then made up for the lack at their table.

Christmas Holidays . . .

Most of the morning had been spent flying to the prison. It hadn't been hard to get a Dementor and to herd the thing into an expandable bag. He lands at the shore and teleports to London.

With the Horcruxes in his possession as well as the prettified possessed teacher, he heads for the entrance of the Ministry of Magic. "Mr Potter?" Madam Bones inquires upon stepping out of the way in.

"Madam Bones." He says, "I hope this means that you made the arrangements that I asked for?"

"Indeed." Susan Bones' aunt says and with that, they entered into the building. An elevator ride later find him in the room with the veil and a group of people, particularly a few international reporters in the group and people from the ICW.

"Good day gentlemen and thank you for coming this day." He begins and then continues for a few seconds on that vein for a bit before getting to one of the reasons why he had them met him down here.

"Now then, I believe I have proof that Albus Dumbledore allowed an innocent man, my godfather, rot in prison, thus falsely standing in as my magical guardian. Might I introduce the supposedly dead Peter Pettigrew." He says and takes out the plastic rodent.

He places the transfigured rat down and signaled for them to have their wands at the ready before transfiguring the rodent back into flesh and blood. Madam Bones herself casts the Animagus reversion spell and within seconds, a short rodent featured man is cowering before the group as cameras flash. Before the man could say anything, he summons wands from Peter's person, one of which turns out to be Tom's very own wand.

"A chair if you please." The high ranking ICW man says and one of the international Auror does as asked. A chair appears and sports wrist and feet restrains, which Peter is manhandled to sit into while somebody takes out the most powerful truth potion out there, forcing three drops down Peter's throat.

The Q & A session takes place, they began with the basics before leading into deeper questions, particularly if the man thought that Albus knew of his status as a Death Eater, which Peter answers, "Likely." The questions went on to touch upon Peter's illegal Animagus form and the casting of the Fidelius Charm that had Peter become the Secret Keeper to if Albus knowing who the Secret Keeper was and ideas as to why Albus would want Sirius Black imprisoned. He found those to be very enlightening.

Oddly enough, one of the questions asked was, "Do you believe Albus Dumbledore has modified your memory?" The answer to that was, "Yes."

The questions end and the witnesses discuss this. Even if Albus does get a slap upon the wrist, the public all around the world will have read about this Q & A session before the man could do damage control.

"Now then, Mr Potter. What evidence do you have that Albus Dumbledore allowed this terror war of... Tom Riddle, to last as long as it did." The official asks him and he takes out a toy figure.

Within seconds, Quirrel without his turban is standing stiffly before them. "May I present into evidence the very shade man himself? As you can see, this man is clearly possessed and I'm sorry to say, but he's also the current Defense Against the Dark Arts professor this year at Hogwarts." He says and then brings out the Horcuxes, noting that Tom's eyes widen at there very sight.

"And the man's Horcruxes." He says and he watches as the spell expert the ICW brought along moves to casts various spells upon them. The man pales and murmurs, "My God... These each have fragments of a human soul... But the process to do this has been lost."

"Tom found the means at Hogwarts and from his head of house at the time. Don't you think it rather odd that Albus Dumbledore, who at the time was employed as the Transfiguration professor, never thought to look for these items when Tom here lost his body? The man was well verse in the metal arts back then and likely, if accidentally, read young Tom's mind on occasion. It wouldn't surprise me if Albus knew that Tom is the one who released Slytherin's monster from the Chamber of Secrets, which to this day as yet to be located and the monster dealt with, even though Albus has Fawkes." He informs the group.

"You seem to be rather knowledgeable about all of this." The important official says.

"I should be, I myself had been Horcrux before my visit with the goblin bank. My scar is where most of the soul had laid while my mother's sacrifice kept its tentacles at bay." He says. "I'm willing to vow an oath as I'm too young for that potion." He throws in.

It takes only a few seconds to made the vow and to prove that he still possesses his magic, which proves that he spoke the truth. "You

seem to have it in for your headmaster." The official remarks and he snorts ever so slightly.

"Forgive me, but the man left me in an abusive home, as I'm sure Madam Bones had investigated," Harry nods towards the head of the Aurors in Britain. "Learnt that Ablus Dumbledore had done various questionable things while I lived at my aunt and uncles, like withdraw money from my family's vaults and has kept my father's Invisibility Cloak from me." He explains and takes out the bank statements that confirm said actions.

"Albus Dumbledore also had the Potter Will sealed." Madam Bones says and he's a bit startled by that admission, which seems to cause a few of the witnesses to chuckle. It seems that he just proved there were things he hadn't known, but then, he hadn't investigated that possibility.

With that, somebody created a table and forced Quirrel upon it with Tom's head looking up. The truth potion enter into the mouth before the prettifying spell is lifted. And so, for the first time, people would get to hear Tom Riddle's true reasons for becoming a Dark Lord and get a more accurate picture of what crimes the man had done before creating his army.

Much like himself, Tom did lay a lot of blame for his actions upon Dumbledore's feet. It seems that for a brief time, Tom had tried to earn Albus' approval in place of his father's but it hadn't worked out. The official even allowed a few of the reports to ask their own questions while the high ranking man tries to ward off a headache.

The interrogation goes on well into the evening, with minor breaks for food and for people to use the rest room. But once everyone had got answers for their questions and then some, he asks people to stand back as he's about to bring out the means in which he'll retract the soul bits from the items.

The Dementor's effects quickly occur within seconds of being released. Before the creature could come at him, he uses a Patronus

Charm, the beast is that of a fox, to herd the dark creature to the items. It takes a few minutes but the Dementor finally lowers its hood and kisses the journal while Tom murmurs threats against him.

Once all of the items have been kissed, he glances over at the high ranking man. "Can I have it kiss Quirrel?" He asks and after a few seconds, he gets a nod.

With that, he creates another fox and the Dementor more then eagerly moves to kill Quirrel. With that done, he has the Patronus push the magical creature through the veil.

And thus, the murderer is finally defeated. Now for the enabler. He thinks to himself before the silence is broken.

Within minutes, everyone was moving away while the chair containing Peter is levitated and set to follow them out of the Department of Mysters. He, though, summons the items and is sure to put them back into the expandable bag he pulled them from.

Epilogue

Harry smiles as his eleven year old son finish downing the potions before dunking his head in the liquid knowledge. Pride fills him and he hears his youngest children sigh in longing. True, he taught them how to weld magic but they got bored with studying and saw this as a way around that.

They'll learn differently when its their turn. He thinks while glancing at his two eldest children. He has never married but that didn't stop him from sowing his oats as it were and most of the women he had been with had been non-magic using and hadn't wanted to be tied down with a kid, so he tended to get full custody of his children.

He doubts he'll ever find the right woman to share his life with but in the mean time, he has a house filled with children to look after and educate. He has three sons and five daughters, his youngest are a

pair of twins, Casper and Chay, age five with his firstborn, a daughter he named Dorea, in honor of his grandmother, being sixteen.

Is it any wonder my hair isn't gray yet? I have five girls, at least Dorea doesn't show much interest in guys after what's his name dumped her. Although her relationship with Sakura does make me wonder... He muses while his eldest son, Tadhg, finishes absorbing the knowledge upon his fourth dunk.

His eldest son causes a fireworks display to happen in celebration while the rest of the brood charge forth to congratulate Tadhg. Pride flares up within him at the sight of all of his brood bonding together over this event.

He glances over towards a discarded plushie bear. With a shake of his head, he casts spells to repair the beloved Dumbies before summoning the transfigured Albus Dumbledore over to him, tucking the bear under his arm before moving forward to ruffle his son's wild brunet locks.

The End

God Sight 2: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2.

He wanders through the village with a half moon shining down upon the village, himself, and this part of the world. Grass and flowers grown upon the streets of the village. The grass rustles from the mice and other tiny critters moving about it as the wind is rather gentle this night.

The buildings all possess vines climbing up them. He thought he spies thorns upon them but simply sighs. He didn't need to use his magical sight to know that this place is under a spell of some kind.

"Why are we here again, master?" A winged imp asks upon landing upon his shoulder. "This place... it's covered in powerful magics." Vile adds.

"Be at peace, Vile. The magic will not take us so easily." He says, nodding towards a jewelry shop that has been broken into. The robbers rest upon the floor with a blanket of dirt upon them as they sleep, affected by the enchantment the covers the whole of this village like mist.

The imp, Vile, takes to the air and flies through the ruined window to sit before a bag filled with the robbers' loot. "Might we take a few of the sparkles for ourselves, master?" The dark red imp asks while picking up a ring.

"Nay, Vile, we won't. We are here for something much more important then a jewelry or printed paper." He says, he never did get why so much importance is placed upon paper money. He gets the idea behind it, yes, but to place importance upon paper, something easily destroyed, not, he didn't see the point.

A loud screeching scream echos throughout the night, likely a rabbit's death cries as he presses onward, towards the huge tree that engulfs what appears to be a high school. The sound of dogs fighting follow seconds after the scream. Vile flies after him and is likely pouting about not being allowed to take something out of the shop, he could pretty much guess at the direction of his servant's thoughts.

If only I arrived a few minutes earlier, then Vile wouldn't have been summoned at all. A few minutes later and Vile wouldn't have been bonded to me either. He muses. *A month more and then the imp will be released so he can return to his home dimension.*

The terms of the summoning stated that the imp would bond with the strongest magic user in the room for a year and a day. He had entered just as the deal was finalized and since his possession of the God Sight is the strongest magical ability one can have, the imp and him got bound together, much to the devil lord's bemusement and the warlock's and his own dismay. Vile had cared a heck of a lot since either way, the then, dull brown, non-winged imp was just happy to be in this dimension.

It seems that an imp becoming a servant of a human magic user is a right of passage where Vile comes from. It wasn't unusually for the bonded imp to under go alterations like sprouting wings, spines, horns, or gaining of elemental abilities. The first change to happen to the imp had been his color changing to its current shade after three months of their relationship and the wings sprouting close to two months ago. The devilish being also seems to have picked up the ability to influence plants, which is rather odd from what he's read as imps and other devil types tend to go for fire, earth, or ice. Usually because such elements allow for dishing out massive amounts of damage.

"Vile, if you will." He says, motioning for the still small imp to move before him. "Let's see how you fair in influencing this tree." He adds, he might not like the fact that he's partnered with a devil, even if only temporary, but that didn't mean he wouldn't make use of the imp

ever so often, if only to learn just how far along Vile has matured during their time together.

Vile perks at this, more then eager to test out his growing magical influence upon plants as well. The still two inch tall imp lands upon the ground, just a foot away from the gate. Using his second sight, he watches as Vile's own magical senses look for something before touching the tree's own magics. He watches as Vile and the tree's magical energies begin to mix slightly. Minutes later and the tree is mostly under Vile's control.

"Basement is where the book lies but the girl is in the nurse's office. Taken there when the spell finally caused her to sleep. She was there for three hours before the rest of them slumbered. The pair who used it left the book down there." The imp reports.

He nods, he can see that Vile spoke the truth. "The tree won't speak of what became of those two, will it?" He asks and Vile nods unhappily.

"It's only here because of the magic placed upon the girl. As it doesn't want to 'die' it focuses on keeping anyone from reaching her." Vile states with a mighty frown and as the tree's magical energies pick up on Vile's goal, it begins to fight with the imp, which causes the tiny devil to cry out slightly in startlement.

He watches as the imp begins to fight back. He doesn't do anything other then stand back and watch the on going fight. He did notice that the massive tree is trembling and growing not just up but outwards as well. A minor shield keeps the tree's roots from interrupting Vile's mental concentration, it's clear that the imp hasn't yet reached the stage where he can maintain both a mental focus and a physical one at the same time.

Finally, after a good ten minutes, Vile beats back the tree's will and is the tree's master. As the little imp comes to notice his surroundings, Vile causes the tree to move its roots, forming a tunnel into the school building. He picks up the exhausted imp and heads inside,

they'll get to the girl before going for the book as if they delay too long, the tree might gather enough energy to challenge Vile's hold over it.

Once they're within the right classroom, he gets a good look at the girl before glancing at the boy who was sitting in the chair next to the bed. He didn't really need his magical sight to see that this is the right boy, the young teen's prince charming. With a slight nod, he causes the sleeping spell to fizz out for a few minutes upon the boy. The boy wakes yawning and stretching. "What a weird dream..."

"Yes, well, if you would be so kind, just a kiss and this will all go away. The ageless sleep will cancel and all shall wake to find a few years have passed, not as much as Rip Van Wrinkle but still enough to give one a better understand of what he went through." He explains as he alters the young man's attire to reflect his role and alters the girl resting upon the bed to reflect her own role in this little fairy-tale made real.

The boy jerks while cheeks reddening. Getting to his feet, the prince leans over the princess, their lips touch but for a second. The spell ends as the girl wakes and then blushes heavily up at the sight of the teen. He's already heading out as the two begin to talk, the boy stuttering and the girl speaking rather shily.

The damage done by the tree's growth is undone as the tree fades into an illusion and then into a mist filled light. He's sure that within an hour, the rest within the school will wake and within the coming of the next day, the whole town plus later comers will wake. Vile falls limply upon his arm and soft snores inform him that the little imp is resting.

Once he retrieved the book, he uses the shadows to take him to the study of the half-fae who hired him. "Your father's gift, sir." He says in slightly flawed English as he holds the book out to the half-fae.

"Excellent." The man takes the leather back volume from his right hand. "Here's your gold." The fae blooded man says after reaching

into a desk drawer, a small bag just an inch taller then Vile is tosses to his right hand, he catches it and with a nod, uses the shadows to leave the office and to arrive at his house in the African Congo.

He places Vile upon the doll size bed that rests upon a bookshelf of his office. He lowers his hood before taking off his hooded jacket. He hooks the hood onto a hook next to the open window.

He stretches a bit before taking out the bag. He opens the purse strings and picks out one of the tiny bars. He places it upon the desk and watches as it glows brightly in the sun while expanding to be a good foot in length and a few inches in height. With a satisfied nod, he picks up the bar, he wills the still hanging enchantment to be reapplied, with that he puts the bar back into the bag, and then heads to a painting of a satyr.

With a touch at the frame, the appearance of a vault's surface pokes out. He solves the puzzle around the edge of the turning knob before moving the lever. The metal clicks and then he enters the code number using the turning knob before moving the lever once more. This time the click leads to the door swinging open to reveal two baskets, one saying In and the other saying Out. He places the tiny bag upon the in basket and watches as the bag vanishes. Seconds later, a sheet arrives in the Out basket and upon taking it, he closes the vault door.

The vault's face vanishes while he reads the sheet informing him of the latest bids for his help. For the first time since he left his father four years ago, he spies the name Tendo upon his bid list. He hums thoughtfully as he sides down upon one of the two couches in his office as he muses about said family, one he hadn't thought about since he left Tokyo.

He has a rather good idea of what the Tendos were hiring him to do, either track down himself down or find ways to cure them of their gifts... their curses. He wonders if Genma still resides with the family as he inclines more upon the couch.

A ring catches his attention and he gets up off the couch to get his cell phone from his jacket. "Hello?'

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He watches as Vile fades from view before the devil lord, too, vanishes, only after studying him for a few seconds though. He knew he'll miss the little guy perched up onto his shoulder but he didn't want to pay the price the devil lord had requested as the price to be bonded with Vile for another year and a day. "Maybe I should try for a faerie next for a familiar..."

It takes him a few seconds to realize that yes, he had thought that but he also spoke it out loud. With a slight chuckle, he turns and leaves the Be-Devil, a pub mostly visited by warlocks who've made deals with devils and demons. It wasn't a 'respectable' establishment as it caters to those who prefer the 'dark' side of magic like chaos and death.

Once outside, he heads down the street while he muses about his life without the winged imp. As his watch beeps, he heads for an alley way to use the shadows of such a place to transport him to Tokyo as he does have a meeting with Nabiki Tendo to sound out what it is they want from him.

He doesn't worry about her recognizing him as he's used various potions to permanently alter his skin color while relying upon illusions to hide his hair and eye's natural color while a simple pendent to alter his voice. The hood will also obscure his facial features.

He finds the ice cream parlor and places a simple order. With said treat in hand, he moves to sit at a booth, waiting for his wanna-be client to arrive. More then a few high schoolers glance in his direction with wary eyes which likely means that the bad karma of the Tendo and Saotome families has come to roost in this ward. *I wonder what kind of things they've witnessed?*

Suddenly, a horde of adult women and older teens thunder after a darting figure in black. He blinks as the horde armed with brooms, hooked poles, and an assortment of kitchen utensils bellow cries of 'there he goes', 'come on girls, we're almost upon him', and 'get that pervert.' As the horde vanishes, people come out of their hiding holes and resume their activities.

With a slight shake of his head, he returns to slowly eating his ice cream, enjoying it as he rarely got it during the trip he had made with his father. Sure, he can buy tubs of it but he rarely goes to the trouble of serving it in fancy ways like making shakes with it or even adding pop to it, he learnt of that from his time in the Americas; Canada and the US. *I wonder if I can find a place that sells Slurpee?*

Needless to say, he's sampled a lot of things since he left his father and has come to enjoy them. As he gets mid way through the sundae, Nabiki and a guy, likely Akane, arrive. He studies the pair using the God Sight while Akane moves to place their orders while Nabiki heads in his direction.

"You must be Vincenz." Nabiki states upon arriving at the table. He nods as he motions for the young woman to take a seat. "I'm Tendo Nabiki and my... brother is Kane." Nabiki informs him with a slight smile tugging at her lips.

"I take it that Kane is short for Akane?" He asks. "I see you have yet to figure out the catch of that spell." He muses before savoring another spoonful of ice cream while Nabiki's eyes light up.

"And what catch is that?" Nabiki asks and he replies, "Why, she just needs to apologize to the party that she strikes out at while angry. Although, it seems she has a lot to apologize for until she'll be allowed to return to her proper gender."

"Is that so... is that so..." Nabiki muses thoughtfully while watching as the currently male Akane arrives to the table with Nabiki and Akane's order. "I don't have to pay for that information, do I?" The middle

sister of the Tendo family asks after moving over to allow the male Akane to sit down.

"Consider it a demonstration of my talent." He answers and Akane merely looks between them with a frown. "So then, what does this job that I may take entail?" He asks.

"I suppose you've heard of Kyuuga 'Ranma' Nijito? The one who transforms into a fu dog?" Nabiki inquires and he hums in agreement.

It hadn't been that hard to find somebody so down on his luck that he would do anything to escape their current life. He found one of those and gave them such an out on the condition that they were willing to not only transform into a fu dog but also agreeing to subvert their own memories for those of a stranger. Magic ensured that not only would his substitute be branded with the two names but that their body would posses the fine tuning of his own since the young teen he had approached had not studied the art of the body at all.

The desperate teen did have a few conditions before he would go through with it and they were something he would have added, although not as strongly as his substitute wanted. While he couldn't give the guy the God Sight, he did give his substitute the ability to see the energies of chi and ki. It wasn't that hard and as the magical gift of the God Sight's limits unknown, few people would likely pursue deeper into the matter much once they figure out that his substitute could see chi and ki.

As it was, that gift of seeing those two energies was a very valuable gift in its own right. It would explain the 'magic' of it as well. It's are to say where chi, ki, and magic manipulation ended or began after all.

"Ah yes, the welder of the fabled God Sight." He muses as he turns his bowl so that the remaining ice cream is closer to his body. "That one is touched with chaos and chaos is not something a businessman like myself enjoys dealing with, if you get my drift." He adds.

"He's not that tough." Akane scuffs, clearly still believing to be the top 'dog'. "He's a cheater, if it weren't for this second sight of his, I have wiped the floor with his face over a hundred times!" The girl turn boy growls while Nabiki and himself watches as Akane stab the glass filled with ice cream.

"It seems you have a long history with him then?" He asks and while Akane growls, Nabiki just nods. "Perhaps you can fill me in upon this matter more fully? After all, one doesn't go after a wild card without a very good reason." He adds, he is rather curious about the gifts he left their elder sister and their... parent.

Nabiki tries to extract his reasons for inquiring while Akane didn't need much prompting. The ex-girl talks about the disguising behavior that overtakes their elder sister, one that causes her to be such a pervert! Akane goes on and on about tattoos Kasumi returns home with or about the totally attitude that is so much ruder then her normal behavior, so much so that it caused Soun to cry and... transform.

Before Akane begins to rant and rave about the changes in their parent, Nabiki holds up a hand to stop Akane from speaking. "I think that's enough for now." Nabiki says.

"Yes, I believe so. I'd say that Ranma just activated your karma and the physical transformation aspects might have to do with his curse." He says. "In the end, even if I did manage to over come him and bring Ranma here, he wouldn't be able to do anything. He just planted the seed, if you will, and it seems that those seeds have found very fertile ground in your karma accumulation."

Nabiki's face sours as she finally gets what he's implying. "You mean for us to be cured, we'd have to actively work on doing actions that would undo whatever kinds of karma we've accumulated. Which means for us total shift our current set of values and to 'better' ourselves in the spiritual sense, doesn't it?"

"That sounds about right. Only when you totally shed the behaviors that feed this... sapling growing within your karma, you'll never be rid of these curses. It is rather hard to alter once behavior outside of childhood and even then, it's questionable if the changes go deep enough to replace old tested and true method." He explains and it's rather true, they have their outs, they just need to pursue them.

"So basically, we just wasted time here, chatting with you." Akane states with a hint of anger.

"Oh, I won't say that. You now know why none of your previous efforts to remove them ever worked." He points out. "Besides, I'm not charging you for this meeting, so that's something as well." He adds as he finishes off the rest of his sundae.

With that, he gets up and leaves the ice cream shop. Once in the shadow of a building, he vanishes from Tokyo to get something much more filing then ice cream, likely from this little place he knew in Mexico.

The End . . .

The Company DNA Built: Animorphs

I don't own Animorphs or Naruto.

Fantasy Morphs. The brain child of Leon Gounding, the legendary founder of the rebel group, the Broken. This company offers, as the name suggests, altered DNA to acquire at a set price.

That's right folks, you can now acquire that unicorn you always wanted or soar through the air as a gryphon. The mythical it seems, is finding a way to break into the real world and through alien gene multiplication from an extinct race called Arn; a race that the Yeerks had killed off during their conquest of the Hork-Bajir homeworld and the creators of the Hork-Bajir race.

The likely beginning of the company likely began when Leon Gounding had began reviewing Taxxon DNA to see if he could alter their forms so they lack the consent hunger that was characteristic of the race, which lead to them volunteering to serve as controllers. The use of the Escafil device gave the grumbling Taxxons the means in which to acquire the modified DNA. Leon had also created a hunger suppressant for Taxxons; which is still used by Ambassador Arbron.

With the defeat of the Yeerk Invasion within sight, Leon Gounding began to design a Nothlit form for the Yeerk Peace Movement, which soon became the default Nothlit form for all Yeerks on Earth with the exception being those who chose Earth native animal morphs or those like ex-Visser One, Esplin 9466 Prime, who are serving prison sentences.

The company formally came together after the Alien Right clause was adding into the Bill of Rights and the Nothlit Yeerks received citizenship within the US. As few were looking to hire

their would be conquerors, the founding of Fantasy Morph gave the new alien citizens work and the base of operation started out to be one of the Yeerk orbital ships until which time they manage to appropriate office space.

By the time they did finally open, they had created the common morphs for mythical beast such as unicorn, dragon, kirin, hippogriff, pegasus, winged lion, and gryphon. For the grand opening, they released humanoid morphs such as trolls, goblins, elf, dwarf, centaur, beast person, tengu, ogre, orc, satyr, faun, minotaur, and lizard folk. A free service they offer is to allow the customer to pick out fur/hair color, length, skin tone, eye color, eye shape, genetic body tattoos, and other little personal touches, living up to their promise of no two morphs sharing the identical DNA. Although there had been grumbling concerning their policy of no gender bending, which would allow men to acquire female morphs or for women to acquire male morphs.

Fantasy Morphs has a policy concerning creating copy righted morphs based upon popular fictional races that come from movies, games, television, anime, and books. They also have a policy concerning the creation of human morphs. Although there are rumors that Fantasy Morphs are bargaining with various owners concerning the selling of morphs based off of their copy right species.

Fantasy Morphs do offer private custom morphs for those looking to create a certain race, be it humanoid or animal, particularly one of their own making. Many artist from various art sites have approached the company to create a morph that has all of the appearance and physical abilities of their creation. Fantasy Morphs do save this information and will only allow those with permission from their creator to acquire said morph.

Although Fantasy Morphs will continue to expand their data banks concerning morphs, the company does seem to be opening a side business by selling engineered plants which is

an attempt to counter the pollution that we, humans, have been releasing through using fossil fuels. The company even created a type of tree that is capable of releasing ozone particles.

It causes one to wonder if soon we'll be seeing a new kind of weed trying to finish what the Yeerks started.

Leon snorts softly at the article. They had done decades of research until they finally found a way to make their plants totally dependent upon the simple energy wave their specifically designed plant boxes would radiate with. The energy wave is harmless although they don't plan to release the fact they're using it as they'll likely be targeted by cons.

The twenty looking blond glances up at the kitchen cloak as he finishes eating his pancakes. Once done, Leon piles his plate with his fork and knife, quickly downs his juice; even after two decades he doesn't like coffee in any form. Placing the empty glass upon his plate, he stands up and then picks up the plate, heading for the dish washer.

Once that's done, Leon stands before a mirror. The blond rubs his left cheek with his fingers. Ever since the demon calling it... himself Kyuubi manage to force an episode of morphing-sickness while he was in mid-morph, his whisker like marks upon his face became almost invisible upon his face, although they can be made visible if he allowed himself to tan.

If it hadn't been for the Kyuubi, the Yeerk he voluntarily allowed to crawl into his head wouldn't have died upon first infestation or attempt at taking over his mind. The crimson energy the demon is capable of emanating killed Iniss 213's mind and the Kyuubi made Iniss 213's body a puppet; causing the body to exit and reenter him, he would have likely continue to host a Yeerk until either something happened and he died in a fight or the war ended.

Although Iniss 213 mentally died, the Yeerk's memories became his so he manage to successfully pretend to be Iniss 213. The blond had

only been nine when he joined the Sharing. Leon had always felt like an outsider, he had been great at sports as few had his reflexes, speed, strength, or stamina. He had been intelligent and could have skipped ahead but wanted to stay with his age-mates.

How ironic that my life really did change that day, but not in the way they wanted. Leon muses as he heads out of his house, being sure to activate the morph helper, it allows for non-skin tight cloths to be stored in the Z-space. Once sure that it's functioning, Leon steps into a screened area to transform into his goshawk morph.

His cloths vanish within a second of his first changes begin to happen. As the morph's instincts arise, Leon moves to stand before the porch before taking off. Leon could have used one of his 'fantasy' morphs to fly to work but enjoyed the lack of drag that comes with more then one set of legs. *I wonder if we shouldn't add a phoenix morph to the list of mythical beasts. We can base the feathers off of a hummingbird's own feathers to give the illusion of being made of fire.*

About thirty minutes later, Leon arrives at the office building serving as the main base of Fantasy Morphs. The ex-demon possessed business owner lands upon the flight door. Landing upon perch set up to open the dog size flap, he hops from the perch to the porch before the door. With that done, Leon walks through and once he's on the carpet, the door flap closes.

Leon moves to glance to the right and finds that somebody is occupying that room so he checks to the left. Upon finding it empty, he walks over into it and pressing this button using his beak. The door closes behind Leon and with a minor glide, he moves from the porch by the small door to the floor. With that, Leon de-morphs and before leaving the room, he flips the switch to allow the tiny to open.

As Leon gets a foot or two away, a customer's eyes light up at the sight of the room and enters into the room. The light above the door goes from green to red, signaling that somebody is using it. Ever since morphing became available to the public, most have taken to

flying into work instead of driving to, which is how the morphing helper became a common house hold item.

"Leon, we have another asking for the chick special." Estril 465 says as the blond is about to enter into his office. Leon glances over at the Nothlit Yeerk, one of Estril's five eyes have risen up from its usual position upon the large, flat skull.

Like all Yeerks stranded upon Earth, Estril 465's Nothlit stands seven feet in height, sporting five eyes, two positioned where a human's is, another pair of eyes are more to the side of the head and up a few inches while the last is positioned at the top of the head. Along the bottom of the jaw are heat sensing glands and the upper jaw sport a series of six nostrils about an inch round.

Leon designed their Nothlit form to possess an array of senses from the basics like sight and smell to heat sensing pits and a gel throughout their body to allow them to detect electric impulses while submerged in water. Leon had even gifted them with gills upon their backs to prolong their time underwater.

Leon had also given them the ability to switch genders between male, female, and neuter which is neither, at last once every two years. The minimum amount of offspring they can have is five with the maximum being twelve. It had been rather troublesome to ensure that each Yeerk acquired unique DNA, the Chee had helped by creating a program that altered one of the 'parent' chromosomes, which kind of gives a Yeerk two half siblings at the most. The same program is in use today to ensure their policy of everyone getting a unique set of genetics for their morphs.

"Another one, huh? That's the third this week." Leon muses while Estril 645 merely nods while finishing filing some documents before returning to his own office.

A chick special is an elderly client looking to create a young, practically a babe, morph in which to restart their life. It's not that surprising actually as the elderly always wanting a way to recapture

their youth. Not long after the discovery of the old acquiring young, beautiful and becoming Nothlits, did it the first law suits began concerning the legality of DNA ownership.

The first case of an elderly person coming to Fantasy Morphs had been two weeks after the first series of advertisements for the company began show up in sci-fi and fantasy magazines. As the DNA they possess doesn't have actual, living members, it wasn't a crime to acquire young members of these fictional species. The person had been rich and slowly dying from cancer, but hadn't felt ready to give up on life.

After a lot of wheeling and dealing, they settled upon not only the new age of the morph but how long the creature would live. It had been trying but doable and so, this person settled upon an unicorn base morph, as the person did plan on breeding, as they manage to get a few other people on board for this, they had to pay more special mind to the internal systems, which they then applied to the basic unicorn design that they sell.

They would go onto applying that same dedication to detail to the rest of their morphs that they are selling now and in the future. As they hadn't sold many morphs before this particular client, so they hadn't needed to do a recall as it were.

Make you wonder how many Yeerks thought to make use of Arn technology to create specialized hosts. Leon muses as he enters into his office, ready to face this client, thoughts of other business pushed aside.

"Tobias." Leon says, nodding towards the young blond teen, the co-founder of Xanadu, a 'retirement' resort. "How's Allen?" The blond asks as he closes the door before glancing over at the group consisting of an elderly couple with likely their lawyers.

"He's doing fine, Rachel hopes to have him potty trained by Halloween." Tobias replies before moving on to introducing the couple. It's not as though they need to met face to face or have

lawyers present but, then, it likely gave the clients a feeling of security; not that it would do much good since the majority of those in the office are war-veterans and if they don't already possess the physical means to tear a man apart, then they can morph into something that can.

And thus, the meeting began.

The Broken. The Animorphs. The two seem so interchangeable but back then, they each had started at different times and with different founders. The Broken began a few years before the Andilites fleet arrived and though it had possessed very few members and lack the ability to morph, it didn't mean that they didn't have a presence before the Animorphs formed and began their notable raids.

Leon Gounding, posing as Iniss 213, began the Broken by placing minor counter ads and ominous warnings concerning the Sharing. These minor ads were rarely given much mind, even by the Yeerks as most believed it was the ramblings of a crazy person looking for some organization to pin conspiracies to but we now know that they were in actuality warning against the Sharing and trying to warn people off from becoming full members. Those that joined typically were bore, anti-social teens looking for something to do in their spare time.

With the aid of these teens, Leon began to make minor changes to Yeerk feeding schedules, targeting particularly cruel but minor Yeerks and arrange for their abduction upon the day they needed to return to the Yeerk pool to feed. Within twenty-four hours, those teen who thought it just a prank soon learnt otherwise when something crawled out of the, then, controller's head and the person suddenly began thanking them for holding them hostage.

With a small number of freed human controllers, the groups activities truly began as the ex-host possessed their Yeerk's

memories and as none of the entrances possessed screening technology, the free hosts were able to gain entrance to the Yeerk pool to liberate weapons and items as it was too risky to attempt to free anyone from the cages. Once they had the items they needed, the humans would exit out of the Yeerk pool, make one last stop at the bank before vanishing off both the human radar and the Yeerk's own.

Since Leon targeted not just Yeerks in control of non-voluntary hosts, but those possessing semi-specialized skills, those newly freed humans began to make use of those skills to create the necessary items to help create bases and looking for ways to hack into the Yeerk data banks. Leon would also smuggle out spare parts and drop them off at pre-arranged spots, since none of the Broken; it continued to allow for Leon's identity and goals remain secret, even if the Yeerks did begin hunting the Broken down.

As the demon that resided in Leon's body continued to use the mindless body of Iniss 213 as a puppet, Leon had to tread carefully as Leon could not afford for Iniss to get promoted out of him and into a more 'suitable' hose less his condition be revealed and likely killed upon discovery but also had to remain high enough in rank to access more restrictive files. It should be noted that whie Leon no longer hosts the demon known as Kyuubi, he does continue to be immune to the energies that the Kyuubi welds and that the demon had used to kill Iniss' mind and allowed the demon to control the dead Yeerk's body.

Upon the defeat of the Andilite fleet above Earth at the hands of the Visser Three and Elfangor's last moments upon our world, the Broken still consisted of thirty ex-human controllers and twenty members who hadn't been controllers. The Broken had been getting ready to begin taking bolder actions against the Yeerks when the Animorphs began their first, clumsy raids against the Yeerks. While the first raid of the Animorphs did free a large group of human controllers, the Broken hadn't been able

to keep more then five from being recaptured as the arrival of the 'Andilitie Bandits' came as a surprise.

It wouldn't take long before the Broken began to take a different course of action then they had originally planned to take. Instead of starting to raid the Yeerks head on, they began to watch and wait to see how this new fraction would act and react while only stepping up upon placing warning ads concerning the Sharing. After a year, Leon decided to do something concerning the blood samples the 'Andilite Bandits' leave behind and one simple DNA test revealed the truth of the 'Andilite Bandits'.

Leon tries to piece together what it could mean as he deleted his test results. Leon would also go on to authorize the use of DNA eliminating chemicals, using a few cases concerning where a reporter would find some blood pool that their people within the police force often missed. Leon, as Iniss, suggested spraying these chemicals at the sites they can't easily close off or control the access of. It soon every human controller possessed a bottle concerning a chemical compound to be used encase of emergencies.

With that delaying the unveiling of the truth, Leon then had the Broken keep an eye upon the construction site Elfangor had landed upon and died at. They were to keep an eye out for any alien technology that the Yeerk clean up crew could have missed. This proved to be a brilliant idea as a young teen name David discovered the Escafil device and a member of the Broken paid the boy for finding their 'lost' sculpture, the member paid David forty dollars as a reward.

And so, the Broken gain possession of the Escafil device with each member but Leon gaining the ability to morph. The Escafil device also brought the two rebel groups together as the Animorphs raid one of their bases to get the Escafil device, the Broken would hand the device over to the Animorphs as Leon had ordered them to do if they ever came face to face with the

'Andilite Bandits'. Because of this standing order, the Animorphs revealed who and what they truly were. Through this, the Broken and the Animorphs began to work together as the Animorphs, being expert morphers, taught the members of Broken the 'art' of morphing.

While the two groups would go on missions together, they remain separate as the Animorphs continued to live their lives with their family while the Broken remain apart from human society for their safety. It would be until the arrival of a Black Ops team of Andilites would Leon be exposed as Leon had witnessed select members de-morphing but they hadn't had the time to do much other then escape while Leon said that the 'Andilite Bandits' had escape in human morphs. A few days later, Leon would appear in the base and members of both groups wanted to imprison him but manage to convince both that he was indeed the founder of the Broken like he claimed.

Both were highly skeptical concerning Leon's claim concerning being possessed by a demon and that it had killed his Yeerk's consciousness while using the Yeerk's body as a puppet. Upon examining the body and finding something seriously wrong with it did either groups believe Leon's claim, although they seem to be more convinced that Leon just has some kind of mutation to explain what happen to the Yeerk. Leon would then be up front with the groups and bring up the idea that they need to acquire Andilitie morphs to throw off any future DNA tests the Yeerk could do to unspoiled samples of their blood, using how he discovered that the 'Andilite Bandits' being humans posing as Andilites.

It is believed that after a few days of thinking it over, Leon revealed blood samples of Andilites that the Yeerks possessed and they used the Frolis Maneuver to create unique Andilite morphs. Other then morphing into Andilites just to see what they appear to be, neither the Broken or the Animorphs have made any use of their Andilite morphs.

As both groups come to terms with Leon's presence in their respective pasts, they offered to allow Leon to pick up the ability to morph but Leon declines, not thinking it a wise idea. Considering what happened concerning the Kyuubi's release from Leon, it was likely a wise choice, although the groups tried to change Leon's mind while they tried to keep the Escafil device out of Yeerk hands.

As the Yeerks go after the Escafil device, Leon and the Yeerk pool played host to a pair of unusual humans, one of which is said to sport blue skin and sports certain features that suggests a shark. While their origin is unknown, what is known is that the pair caused massive amounts of damage trying to get at Leon. Eye witnesses and filmed records show the blue skinned some how manipulating water to floor specific areas while the young, unassuming one calls forth fire, the majority of which seems the basic kind but also this strange black flames that consume anything, including stone and metal.

The pool area was evacuated as best as they could, more then a few hosts managing to escape in the chaos while Visser Three and his warriors try to fend the pair off. After about three hours, the pair vanish as suddenly as they arrived. It would take weeks before the pool to be repaired.

It would be three months before the pair would reappear and this time, at Leon and the Animorphs' school. The area became blanketed with thick mist and they once more, try for Leon but Leon manages to make it to the parking lot where he hot wiring a car before leading the pair away from the school. Jake had been given a note telling the Animorphs to stay at school but Rachel disobeyed and went after the three.

Leon lead the pair about the city, disobeying various traffic laws and it wasn't long before a news helicopter also got involved in the chase. The chase ended when Leon managed to run the ruby eyed, fire welding man over, causing him to vanish in a puff of smoke. Gun fire from the near by police station, likely

one of the controllers on the force, caued the blue skinned one to vanish in another puff of smoke.

Before a third occurrence could happen, Visser Three sent Leon up onto one of the orbiting ships under the pretense of Leon being pulled out of school. While the Yeerks would examine Leon for a month, they would only find that Leon's brain activity different ever so slightly from most humans, bones denser, muscles denser, above average reflexes, and as a very tiny variation genetic difference from other humans, not enough to get him classified as another species but still is rather noticable. None of these tests revealed the demon, Kyuubi's presence within Leon.

While Leon was bored upon the ship, he began to toy with a genetic sequencer that the Arn created. Leon would take different blood samples from races the Yeerks encountered and began running them through. In time, Leon would focus upon the Taxxon DNA, looking for the markers that characterized their eternal hunger. When asked what he was doing with either, Leon claimed to be developing hunger suppressant for the Taxxons as humans did come up with the same thing.

While Leon was up on the orbiting ship and the two rebel groups dealing with other things, the pair that seem focus upon capturing Leon made contact with Visser Three. They came to some agreement that involved turning over Iniss' host body over to them upon the condition that they allow Visser Three acquire their DNA. Leon hadn't been happy to hear but it would be the Kyuubi that would give Leon the distraction that he needed to flee.

The Kyuubi had altered Iniss' body enough to cause it to explode and to wash its energies over an area. As Leon proved immune to the energy and the others weren't, Leon managed to get away before anyone managed to chase after him. Leon would arrive at a Broken safe house possessing the altered

Taxxon DNA and the only copy of the Taxxon hunger suppressant.

Without much of an excuse not to accept the ability to morph, Leon would acquire the ability and would acquire a male goshawk, a crow, a barn owl, a Hork-Bajir, a dog, a fox, a coyote, an elk, leopard, hyena, a python, a dolphin, a river otter, and a rino before the Kyuubi would make use of these DNA sample to create its current body.

During the arrival of Visser Two, Arbron would make contact with the two groups. And as we all know, the Taxxons would all rebel from the Yeerks while the Visser Two was on Earth. As the Broken had reproduced the Escafil device, the majority of Taxxons upon Earth had quickly gained the ability to morph and acquired the altered DNA that Leon supplied.

With the Taxxons now fighting to stop the rebellion and the Hork-Bajir pressing to free more of their people, the Yeerks stopped with their cover war and came out into the open. The Animorphs would further cause fraction within the Yeerk forces by allowing them to take the reconstructed box version of the Escafil device and the Yeerk Peace Movement would capitalize upon its appearance to open their fellow Yeerk's mind concerning why should they continue to infest when they can gain their own bodies through becoming Nothlits.

Visser Three tries to squash this movement by starving the morph capable Yeerks, the movement applied to both human groups and once more, it would be Leon that would construct the Yeerk's Nothlit form. With help from those Yeerks sympathetic to their fellow Yeerk's suffering, they would allow the lab upon one of the newly landed ships to be 'captured' for Leon's use. By the end of the first day, Leon had come up with the morph the Yeerks would live as for the rest of their life in.

The Andilite fleet would appear two weeks after the Yeerks surrendered and open diplomatic relations with Earth's many

nations. Much to their chagrin, the secrets of the Escafil device had been figured out. By the end of the year, alien scientists would begin to create the morph helper as morphing would become something that the common man, woman, and child get and use.

How did something that simple get so complicated? Leon wonders as the group finally leaves while Tobias remains. "You sure they're not with any government organization? They seem to like asking a lot of questions, particularly after we showed them that storyboard."

"Jake hasn't mentioned anything concerning an investigation targeting either of us. Although it's been a while since any of us has spoken with Cassie." Tobias says. "But that's likely because she's been out of the country doing that tour for the pass four months."

"Marco is rather busy with his book tour." Leon adds thoughtfully. "The Kyuubi hasn't messaged me in the last two years. Ax is visiting his folks with Estrid."

Tobias hums while Leon finishes putting on this dimensional location bracelet that he keeps in his desk encase that dimensional group decides to pluck him from this world to theirs. The blond had almost forgotten about it in all of the hustle with the five hour long meeting. Tobias had taken breaks to de-morph while he had some drinks delivered to the office for everyone.

"I should head home. Rachel likely can do with a break." Tobais says as they head for the door.

As Leon is about to respond, the blond feels unbalanced. "What..." Leon murmurs while reach out for the wall to lean on.

"You ok?" Tobias asks and as something seems to jerk Leon, Tobias begins to curse. As the teen appearing ex-Animorph reaches out to grab Leon but the hand is shocked back upon touching the twenty year old blond ex-Broken.

Leon vanish in a puff of smoke, leaving Tobias alone by the open door for a few seconds before the seemingly younger blond heads back to Leon's desk to use the phone.

To be continued . . . ?

Cursing Using Fairy Tales 1

I don't own Harry Potter or the fairy tale, Beauty and the Beast.

The spell book costed him a fortune but then, the money he used to purchase it had been stolen from the goblin bank. He had used a time turn to do so but it had been well worth the effort. *Here's hoping that the enchanted gold won't be noticed until the spell runs out.*

He doesn't feel an ounce of guilt about the thief as the goblins clearly weren't neutral in this silent war going on between Draco and his own. Ever since he had cured himself of a certain love potion's effect and spent a solid two years in the 'muggle' world, he has found few allies among European Wizarding Society. It didn't help matters that he got engaged to a woman who's family comes from a long line of magical priests and priestesses from Central America.

His wife's family could trace their linage back before the founding of the Aztec empire. He's lucky to have had the chance to met her, let alone be engaged to her, but that, of course, didn't mean much since the majority of the European magical communities just saw her skin color and her slight accent. *But then, what can you expect from a society stuck in the age just before the Victorian age?*

A dog barking causes him to glance up and come out of his thoughts. If he was going to do this, he best get on with it, particularly as the make up and other effects were becoming uncomfortable. No magic went into the creation of his disguise, although the fairy tale concerning this spell about to be casted clearly stated that the sorceress had used magic to alter her appearance. *Perhaps Liz is right and she used an illusion spell to appear beautiful before applying the curse.*

Leaning slightly heavily upon the cane, he finally arrives at Draco Malfoy's manor, one that his father had given him a month after the

war trails were over. He had a vague idea of who was in attendance as he walks up to the door of the house. Coughing slightly, he raps his knuckle upon the door.

A house elf appears seconds after such an action. "Jolly is under orders to only allow those with invites into the house." The fragile being says.

"I am a poor fellow down upon his luck. I hope to ask the owner of this fine manor for a room for the night." He says in a soft voice that he hopes will keep anyone from identifying himself upon hearing him.

"Jolly will fetch master then." The house elf states and pops away.

He waits at the door for thirty minutes before rapping his knuckles upon the door once more. Again, the house elf appears. "Master says that yous got to leave the property or else." Jolly the house elf says.

He smiles inwardly upon hearing this. "Perhaps he'll be interested in purchasing this rose for a few coins? With the coins, I can at least purchase a room at an inn. This night is fairly chilly for someone like me." He tells Jolly, holding out a rose stem as thick as any wand, sporting a bud that sparkles like fire in the light of the porch light.

Jolly stares in wonderment at the rose and remains so for close to two minutes before popping away. *With that, the trap is baited.* He thinks to himself as he moves the rose back into his sleeve.

The door jerks open within the next four minutes to reveal a very disgruntled Draco Malfoy. "My elf says you are selling a pretty rose. Well? Get on with it! I don't have all night!"

The rose sparkles magnificently in the light supplied within the hall. Draco's face displays awe for a few seconds before a sneer gets fixated upon his face. "Might I see it? The light here is rather poor." His old rival asks as politely as a Malfoy could.

"I better get my coin if you, my good sir, finds the rose to your liking." He murmurs before handing the rose over. Malfoy steps back from the door and holds it to one of the torches and it's clear that Draco enjoys how it sparkles like fire within the light provided by said torch.

"My coin, good sir? This night is not getting any warmer." He says after three minutes.

That stirs Malfoy out of his admiration and the man merely sneers and with a wave of his hand, the door slams shut upon his face. "Then you shouldn't have let me hold it, you fool." Draco replies.

He waits a few seconds as he feels magic surge about him before it rushes into the house. As all of the lights get blown out and Draco begins to scream, he finally allows himself to chuckle under his breath before it becomes full blown laughter.

"I had hoped you enjoyed what seeing your reflection one last time, Draco! For I doubt after this night you'll find it as appealing as you once did. You should have remember your manners or given thought of entering into verbal contracts! Enjoy your new perspective on things, for I believe you'll have the rest of your life to get use to them!" He calls out while Draco's screams become that of kelling beast.

Once he's out of the gate, Draco howls in rage while a chorus of other screams ring through the night. He turns about and watches as the curse's magic transforms the wall and the gate, causing it to take on a more sinister appearance. In time, the human screams die off, he wonders what fate those guests of Draco's were but doesn't care, be they become enchanted furniture or take on ghostly attributes, they're fate was decided when they attended Draco's party.

With a soft crack, he vanishes from the cursed manor and appears at his home. "And?" Liz asks as he begins to take off his outer wear.

"Like a charm. We shall see who missing in the morning or later. For now though, I hope you're willing to help me in a little venture

concerning restoring my good looks to me." He says to his wife, their wedding had happened earlier that day. It had sadden him to find so few people at their wedding.

"Of course, my husband, I wouldn't want to be seen in our wedding bed with a man clearly not my husband." Liz says as she moves to aid him in taking off the layers of rags that he put on to add to his disguise.

Four Days Later . . .

"Huh, I never would have guessed..." He murmurs as he catches sight of a head line concerning a list of absentee government workers, their families, and other such people which, sadly enough, included certain branches of the Weasley family.

"Master Harry, there are some people here to speak with you." Kreacher says with a sniff of disdain. It's clear that the old house elf didn't particularly like his visitors.

"Thank you Kreacher. I take it they're in the dining room?" He asks the house elf and Kreacher nods.

"Could you inform my wife of this, please? I rather not want her to stumble in on this meeting without at least having a cup of tea or coffee." He says to Kreacher.

With a pop, Kreacher vanishes after nodding in understanding. One transfiguration later and he's sitting in the dining hall with Neville Longbottom and Susan Bones. "I take it you've heard about what happened at Draco's party?" Susan finally asks after a few minutes of silence upon their finishing their greetings.

"What about his party?" He asks, wondering what part of it they're inquiring about. "My wife and I began our honey moon activities that night." He remarks and the two flush slightly, likely knowing just what they had been up to then.

"He became a beast and the party goers began ghostly." Neville says. "So, congratulations, Harry. You manage to recreate a spell everyone thought was destroyed." His ex-dorm-mate says.

"So, am I under arrest?" He asks and the two shake their head.

"Did you know there's a law concerning how to define an Animagus and a beast?" Susan asks him and he shakes his head, frowning slightly as he gets the feeling it's one of those anti-werewolf laws.

"It's that if an Animagus can return to their human form within thirty seconds, then they're a being but if one can't..." Susan trails off with a slight mischievous look upon her face.

"They're a beast and thus, can not claim rights of a being, even if they are capable of speech. After all, any animals can mimic speech." Neville says.

"So, since Draco can't regain human form within thirty seconds after the transformation, he lost his status as a wizard." He summarizes and the two nod with smirks.

"Then he lost that status in our fourth year." He remarks and the two look slightly confused before they snort in amusement. "After all, he was a ferret for at least a full minute and I'm sure he really would have liked to be human instead of a ferret at the time."

"Yes, I see what you mean. It would be such a shame for such a law to remain with that loop, wouldn't it? So many people could take advantage of it and we wouldn't want that now would we?" Susan muses.

"But, a last, without a Minister of Magic or a full meeting of the Wizengamet with thirteen members or more, we can't fix that law, can we?" Neville says with fake sympathy.

"And being that we have less then nine members, it will take time to find people to fill those seats and then to elect a new Minister of

Magic. That is, unless we approach the Queen and appeal for her to give the changes to the law for her to review and approve." He muses, rather stunned at how that simple mission to apply that fairy tale curse could have such far reaching effects.

"It's so sad that so many survivors from Tom's second terror war attended Draco's party. Sadder still that they'll never get a chance to pass this new law in the council chambers." Neville says, placing a folded bill upon the table. "They had just finish signing it at that party too, darn it."

He gives the two a questioning look but they didn't seem to mind so he pulls the bill over and begins to read it. If he were a canine Animagus(unsurprisingly he's a bat Animagus), he would be growling at the contents of this bill. To summarize, they just made it illegal for a mix couple to marry unless they get approval from the Ministry of Magic and that it notes his name at the top of a list of those in violation of this new law.

Oh, Liz is just going to love that. I almost pity those that signed this. He thinks to himself, her family has special methods concerning death and benefiting from it or even controlling lingering spirits.

"Honey? What's got you so riled up?" Liz asks upon entering into the dinning hall. He hands the unfinished bill over to his wife and it wasn't long before she's cursing up a storm in Spanish, Portuguese, Latin, English, and her family's native tongue.

"That's rather... colorful." Susan murmurs an observation. Neville nods while looking rather pale.

"Liz is fluent in over ten languages. Give her time and you'll hear her curse in Hebrew and Chinese." He says before calling for Kreacher and has the house elf to bring them all some tea.

"I hadn't known she spoke so many." Neville says as Liz finally stops cursing and seems to gaze out at some random point in the room. It's more then likely she's reviewing her spell lists to find ones to use.

"I take it that as Draco's guests sport ghostly attributes that they are considered dead?" He asks, he assumes that they've gone the ghostly route or else he'd hear about who became what as the curse took effect.

"What was the other opinion?" Neville asks while pouring some tea that Kreacher made.

"Getting transformed into enchanted items, like an animated candle stick or a coat rack." He answers. "Oddly enough, Disney had a film featuring that opinion." He adds.

"Huh, might have to see that one, sounds fairly interesting." Neville confesses while Susan merely hums her agreement as she drinks from her cup.

I wonder what kind of a future we'll be building now? And how will we come up with ways to keep the rot out of this new government? So many things to plan. So many mistakes to avoid. He thinks to himself before wondering if Liz would want to hold off on the honey moon in order to properly curse the signers of that bill.

The End

2 Year, Cold and Kanga Go To Hogwarts

I don't own Harry Potter nor do I own Dimars! Dimars are (c) to Dee Dreslough!

He sets the little wooden puppet down and then withdrew his hand. Within seconds, the wooden snake shakes itself before moving across the counter's surface. Between the wooden segments a orange light escapes while the wooden snake's red tinted eyes glow. He built the wooden snake puppet using what their summer tutors had taught them while at the community learning center.

As the wooden snake puppet moves along the edge of the counter, trying to find a way off without falling off, its magically charged batteries die. The orange glow is gone and the crimson gaze of the snake's eyes die. Taking of the wooden ring that would feed the puppet some of his magic to recharge its batteries, he picks up the two inch long snake puppet with a frown fixated upon his face, after all, the puppet wasn't suppose to move unless it received orders from him.

Back to the drawing board it seems. He thinks as he pockets the puppet. He heads for the fridge and grabs a bottle of apple juice. Closing it, he glances up to find his mom making a bee line for the coffee maker.

"Harry dear, could you bring a plate of pancakes over to the table?" His mom asks him after taking that first sip of coffee. "Sure, mom." He says as he puts down his juice bottle to grab one of the plates with a glass cover.

He takes the whole of it over and then pulls the enchanted glass that sports a stasis spell upon it away. His mom hums and relying upon her necklace foci to summon a fork and other condiments. He

returns to drinking his juice while he stares at the calender with a frown.

Today is Neville's birthday, which means that they'll be using a Port Key to return to Britain and remain there for the rest of today, tomorrow, and then return to this hotel room to finish off their summer vacation. He, personally, see the point in celebrating their twelfth birthday in Britain or for doing what they did last year either.

"Morning!" Colin chirps upon arriving in the kitchen unit of the apartment style hotel room. He glances at Colin's wrist to see those tiny rune that have been painted on like a tattoo. He had given his elder brother tips on which runes to use but ultimately, the rune design that Colin had painted on using specialized temporary tattoo ink is his own.

He had tested Colin's design and found that on a bright day, alters slightly to keep Colin from getting the full blunt of sunlight. He applauds his brother's forethought and creativity on the matter of painting the rune scheme directly on a part of him, but didn't like the idea that anyone can see it and thus duplicate it. *It's Colin's problem not mine. I have other things to occupy my time with.*

"Morning honey." Their mother says while Colin pulls out a bottle of orange juice. With a shrug, he finishes his bottle and puts it by the sink as Colin grabs a plate with waffles on it before walking over to the table.

He grabs another bottle of apple juice and then moves over to the plates with prepared dishes. After a few seconds thought, he grabs one that sports scrambled eyes, bacon, and hash-browns. Unlike the two at the table, he balances his un-open bottle onto of the glass covering in order to grab a fork and knife.

As he takes the enchanted glass off his plate, the fourth member of the Potter family shows up. He might not see the rune scheme upon his dad's body, it doesn't mean that it isn't there, just means that his dad likely put the stencil of Colin's some place like his shoulder or

chest. It's likely that if it's on their dad's shoulder then their mom likely helped by painting the ink upon it.

Like Lilly, James makes a bee line for the coffee maker but unlike Lilly, their dad wakes after drinking his first cup. "Just think, our boys will be twelve tomorrow." Their dad says and he shares a look with Colin, it seems that this is about to turn into a mushy family moment.

"You think Sirius and May will tear themselves away from each other to attend our party tomorrow?" Colin wonders, trying to change the topic. After all, it had come as something of a surprise when, seemingly out of the blue, Uncle Padfoot not only arrives over with a woman, but declares that she's his wife within days of their summer holidays just getting started.

May Grace Vila nee Black is a spell researcher who accidentally used an ancient stone known for bringing soul-mates together, although it had a range of five hundred kilometers. Well, May kind of used this stone while it was on a magical recharger. Next thing Sirius or May knew, May had teleported into Sirius' room and, well, as a bonus of the stone teleporting May to Sirius, it also kind of super charged some, they ended up, well, doing things.

Then, during a breather, still a little drunk on the extra bit of magic done to her from the stone but trying to fight it, May says that they've got to end it as she feels as though they should marry before continuing such activities. Well, with that, Sirius pops the question which lead to them finding a nice chapel, some random guy off the street to serve as witness to their marriage, a few charms, a priest, and one bit of paper later, they were married and they teleported back to Sirius' room to continue with their activities.

Even with that magic worn off, neither Sirius or May seem incline of getting a divorce but they were taking the time to grow use to each other. Oddly enough, May does sport one canine animagus form, she has a total of five, but the canine one is an Akita Inu, which could likely explain they're not considering that option as they're both loyal.

Although he does recall Colin asking permission to do research into bedroom actives and considering their parents' reactions to it, he plans to steer clear of that until he has to bring up the topic. Colin is wearing some kind of charm that keeps him from seeing that kind of information, be it from books, TV, and accidentally hearing about it or walking into the act, although the charm will fade when Colin is fourteen years old. And he's not going to get into trouble trying to satisfy his brother's curiosity on the matter.

Even so, he's been researching how to break said charm just encase his parents thought to cast it on him before they return to Hogwarts. He thinks he's got a rune scheme that could absorb the magic, so making it look as though was successfully cast on him when in fact, it hadn't. It would be a bit before he finds a rune scheme capable of neutralizing all kinds of spells being send in one's direction.

He becomes absorbed in his thoughts that he doesn't really pay much mind to the conversation taking place between his parents and his brother. He cleans off his plate and then goes on to finish his second bottle of apple juice. With that done, he excuses himself from the table to take the empty bottle and plate over to the sink.

With that done, he heads for his room to take a shower before they leave. He's sure to take out his snake puppet and the ring to charge its battery. He won't be taking it with him as he won't have the time to himself to work on it and he rather not let his parents know about his experiments since they believe he's only learning the theory behind golems, after all, few magi have any real understanding of that fine art and it's more typical to enchant something to move as directed then to create something that's much more capable of taking orders and carrying them out without you being around.

And yet, that's what make golems so dangerous. He thinks as he undresses until only his boxers and leather bracelets remain. With that, he heads out of the room to shower in the bathroom.

- [T] -

"So this is where you two are holding up in." Fred muses while holding the yurt's cloth door while George pokes his head in under Fred's arm. "Is that TV working?" Fred asks with a hint of awe while finally walking into the yurt.

"What? No happy birthday Kanga?" Neville asks the pair, beating him to say it. He snorts while un-muting the sound, the commercials are still running, although he could have fast forward the tape, he hadn't since Neville and him often continued their conversations while they're playing.

He had bought the recorder by the end of Christmas holidays and managed to set it up, only he hadn't set it to record anything. He did leave Flare with the instructions and the house elf has used it to record daytime shows that Flare wanted to watch but often finds himself too busy with his duties.

Before he left Hogwarts, he had installed another recorder with that entertainment center to record certain programs with certain words in the title. He won't know if it had until they returned for the new school year. He's rather hopeful that it had worked and the memory space isn't much of a problem as the memory is enchanted to expand as needed.

"Oh, right." George says. "Happy birthday Kanga!" The twins chime in together before they move to sit upon one of the bean bags that rest around the center of the yurt while their eyes never leaving the TV screen.

Neville and him share a look as the movie, The Guyver. They are watching the part where the hero, Sean, is battling the Zoanoids in a warehouse. "Is this real?" Fred asks and for a moment, he forgot that the twins have never seen a movie before.

"Think live theater only every moment of it captured on a painting. This is entitled The Guyver." He answers while the twins only hum in acknowledgment, likely not really listening to him.

He had given Neville books concerning television, films, and special movie effects so most of Neville's questions likely had been answered during Neville's reading of the books. It wouldn't have surprised him if Neville had also owled Hermione to learn more or to answer his questions. *I wonder if Neville will be using the TV at my other yurt...*

As the movie comes to an end, the door opens to reveal Colin. His elder brother pauses and about before his brother's gaze landing upon the TV. "So this is where you set yourself up in, Harry... Kanga." Colin says, using his preferred name then his birth one upon him sending a hooded look his brother's way.

"So... How is it that the TV works?" Colin asks as his fellow birthday boy comes to rest upon his bench bed while he returns his attention to stopping the recorder.

"Ward's are the thinnest at this point of the property. Don't worry, Flare's set up other kinds of wards, ones that won't interfere with receiving a TV signal." He answer while mentally adding, *Of course the signal receiver is a good mile off the property anyway thus the wards don't interfere with the signal that gets sent from it to the TV set through a matching set of a rune scheme.*

"What are we going to watch next, Kanga?" Neville asks while Fred and George read the titles of what has been recorded. He hums before grinning at seeing a certain movie that Flare had recorded.

Moving the highlight down until it covers the name, he presses the enter button on the remote and within a few seconds, the recording begins. The theme for Star Wars begins and he hears Fred wonder, "How can stars have wars?"

"Interesting choice, little brother." Colin says and he sighs, but doesn't raise to the bait as the only time Colin ever use the term little brother is when Colin wants to have an argument. He does wonder who riled up his usually calm and level headed sibling that drove Colin not only to search for him but with the desire to pick a fight.

- [T] -

"Have you seen your brother?" Hermione asks upon arriving opening the door of the compartment. Neville and himself glance up from watching their illusionary fighters battling it out on this cardboard mat that's hovering between Neville and himself to look at the still bookish witch.

"Haven't seen him after Ron dragged him off to the side for a chit chat." He replies. "And I thought you out grew your fascination concerning Cold."

His winged wolf howls in pain and he glances to find Neville's spine boar chopping down on the wolf's tail. The winged wolf snarls while moving to attack the boar's face, teeth managing to grip the boar's eyebrow. The boar bellows in out rage, allowing the winged wolf to leap away from the spine covered boar.

"What kind of game is that? It's rather violent isn't it?" Hermione asks as though just seeing the hovering board and it likely is that it just registered in her mind as well.

"Just a way to 'flex' one's magic. Cold and I used it to create our own cities and then had them fight. That's a little complicated so I thought this way, Leander gets the feel for using the board while also entertaining us during our train trip to Hogwarts." He explains to Hermione. "You want to give it a go, Kyden?"

Hermione shakes her head while backing out of the compartment. "I think I'll continue my search. I believe the Weasley twins are trying to prank some Slytherins." Hermione says, it's clear that Hermione planned to tell somebody about Fred and George's plans.

The door closes before Hermione walks away. "She really needs to loosen up." Neville remarks and he nods in agreement.

Neville and him return to watching the two mutated beast duke it out. The two beasties had back away from each other and had been

standing still. Feeding the board magic, the two beasts once more engage in combat, his wolf being nimble and often taking to the air to evade the charges from the boar.

Upon one of the beast losing, they vanish while Neville and himself think of their next set of fighters, causing silver fire to float at the ends closest to their side of the board. Neville creates a feline sporting a mane of fire while his creation is a hovering weasel sporting a white glow about its form. The two wait there for a few seconds before they charge each other with either a growl or a snarl.

- [T] -

Hermione scowls while glancing between Fred and George to Neville and himself as, unlike every other student, they weren't wearing their school robes. *Yea, like I want to be another ram in the flock.* He thinks to himself, he guesses that it might have been a bad idea to gift that ritual to Hermione since she seems to feel much more vindicated concerning her attendance in the United Kingdom's Wizarding Community.

Although, it could be because we've brought our own food for the sorting... He thinks as he sips hot chocolate from his space enchanted thermos while eating some gummy crabs from Mexico, their flavor is crab apple. Neville is eating some mini donuts that he placed between them.

He vaguely notices that Colin and Ron weren't sitting at the table, which causes him to wonder where they are. *Ron must be holding him up.* He concludes while studying the latest defense professor. *What an idiot. Talk about a male version of a Goldilocks.*

Finally, the doors open and the new group of students arrive. He watches as awe settle upon their faces at the sight of the ceiling. And then the hat sings its song, he rolls his eyes while chewing on a mini doughnut that's covered in brown sugar. *If you're looking for school unity, you'd expect the house of badgers to be the glue to bind us all*

together. After all, loyalty is key when it comes to creating friendships.

The last student gets sorted and Dumblies begins his speech. With the coming of fried food, he collects his gummies and donuts before putting the thermos into the bag sitting under the bench. Flipping about to have his legs under the table, he waits for the food to arrive.

As the feasting is over, he heads to speak with his head of house. "Professor? Professor! Have you seen Ron or my brother? They seem to have missed out on the feast." He asks Minerva McGonagall just as she heads out of a side door with the headmaster.

"We're just about to speak with them now." Professor McGonagall says. "Now, run along, I'll be sure to send to send him along."

He frowns as he watches as the staff head off. He pats his pocket and feels his shrunken trunk. He uses an illusion to hide himself. Once it's clear, he takes the trunk out and expands it. It takes a few seconds to find the tiny golem that's capable of flight. Putting on the headband over his eyes and feeding it magic, the golem activates and takes to the air while he sees through its eyes.

He then activates the tracking enchantments and it flies after McGonagall. He feels his stomach flop as the golem just zooms through the air until it catches sight the McGonagall. The dagonfly golem lands on the professor's hat and after a few minutes, the golem is in the headmaster's office, where he activates its listening charms, he catches the bit about Snape saying something about expelling the pair for flying the Weasley's magical car about London uncloaked.

He has the dragonfly golem fly to one of the book shelves and stay there, even when everyone leaves. Dumblies sits for a few extra minutes before consulting with one of the silver instruments. "So he did send it along. Good good, I almost thought he wouldn't." He hears Dumblies murmur out loud before the paintings of the previous

headmasters and headmistresses begin to dig into the still living headmaster about how fatal allowing the Basilisk to haunt the halls once more.

"And why allow that diary in when that Diadem is just sitting in the Come and Go Room?" One of the Ravenclaw headmasters asks. *Oh, this is just so juicy...* He thinks and in the end, all he learnt about was that Voldie made a bunch of Horcruxes, which is why the Dork Lord is still hanging about and that, as of now, there are three Horcruxes within the school.

He has the dragonfly golem hide in a cloud of dust that's resting on top of the books. With that done, he stops feeding magic to the golem and then takes off the headband, drops it down in the open trunk before packing it up. One charm later and he's heading out of the castle, he can only hope that Dumblies doesn't find that tiny golem any time soon.

What's a Horcrux and what spells would one use to ID them? He wonders to himself. He'll spend time writing a letter and focusing upon those memories to send to his mother, he's fairly sure that she'll be interest in this as it does effect the family.

- [T] -

"Young Master Kanga! Mistress Lilly wanted Is to give yous this in person." Flare says upon him arriving in his yurt. It's been close to a month since school started and he's more then a little relieved to see that his mom didn't trust any kind of bird to deliver her reply.

"Thank you, Flare. I hope this isn't interfering with your free time." He says as he takes the letter Flare is holding out to him.

"Its Is job to serve the Potters, Young Master Kanga." Flare says before popping away, leaving him alone within the yurt. It wasn't long before the letter in his hand is opened and he's rereading what his mom had wrote as a reply.

"Shouldn't be too hard to summon these using a ritual. Might take a bit to get the proper stones prepared but do able before November." He muses out loud. He walks over and puts the letter in one of this Fidelius hidden chests, he has seven of them and he's the secret keeper for all seven.

Once the letter is in one, he begins to undress to have his shower. He wants to check on his cameras that he placed about the forest. Two weeks into September, a certain bushy haired witch informed him that he needs a more constructive hobby then hunting giant spiders, gathering herbs, or just generally hanging out with Neville so he decided to try creating a documentary about unicorns. He had been rather surprised to find that cameras with tracking charms on them often lose the unicorn herd so he decided to create a network of cameras throughout the forest in hopes of capturing their comings and goings.

He couldn't funnel the raw footage to his yurt, he really didn't want Dumblies to pick up on the feed and turn it into something else, so he took a map and sectioned off various areas. Each section has its own memory box hidden in a semi-dimensional pocket that he has the 'keys' to. He hasn't told anyone of what he's doing as Gred and Forge seem to be creating some kind of arcade in one of the abandoned classrooms, Hermione is busy helping the first years with their homework(although the smart first years of the house paid the ten galleons to get the outlines for first year's course work, homework assignments, and what questions are typically used on tests), and Neville is busy with his portable glass house. He doesn't pay much mind to what the others are up to, he does know that Colin is finally trying his hand at pranks though.

Once he's dressed and brings out the flight frame, it's got all the enchantments that one can find on a flight broom. Actually, the wooden bike like frame has a few extra spells on it to keep it hovering in the air for up to thirty minutes without anyone on it. He's engraved weather control schemes upon the inside panels to keep the temperature at a comfortable degree. Another enchantment he

has on it is this map feature that allows him to navigate throughout the Forbidden Forest and, of course, there are a lot more useful enchantments upon it.

As he gets within sight of Hagrid's hut, he finds a young Ravenclaw stroking thin air, until something blows in the blond's hair. "Thestral?" He asks the witch who seems a bit startled from hearing his voice.

"You seem them too?" The young blond, who he finally IDs as Luna Lovegood. He shakes his head while he lowers the wooden flight frame down in order to approach the blond.

He notices where Luna's hands were and slowly feels about in that area. It didn't take long before he feels something warm under his hand. "I know they're living in the forest from using detection spells." He then adds as he strokes the leathery feeling horse, "I know they're what pull the carriages. Not many place that can boast a herd of trained Thestrals."

"They're not as pretty as unicorns though." Luna says wistfully and he snorts softly, which seems to cause the Thestral to give its own snort in reply to his own.

"Few things in the world are or ever will be as beautiful as a wild unicorn." He says. "Even capturing them on film doesn't do them justice."

Luna turns to study him before saying, "I didn't know you have a camera on your person." He doesn't say much while moving to see if he couldn't find the Thestral's neck to pet.

"I'm actually on my way to collect the film. It's a muggle technique. You leave the camera at the angle you want and then set up this triggering pad so that when the animal steps on it, the camera snaps its picture." He explains to Luna, it's just a little white lie about what kind of camera he set up or about what kind of film he's going to collect.

"That is a rather good tactic to capture those that don't like people." Luna admits. "I'll have to mention this method to daddy, I'm sure he would be thrilled to use it for our paper."

They don't say much else for a few minutes. Then, with a sigh, he gives the Thestral one last pat upon its neck before pulling away. "I should go collect it while there's still light out. I won't be that stealthy if I need a light to light my path for me." He says and glances over to Luna. "It's nice seeing you again, Luna. Perhaps when I'm done with this project, I'll invite you to be among the first to view it." He muses before adding, "As long as it doesn't alter your schedule too much, after all, you are a hard nose reporter, aren't you? You're likely busy writing about how Snape's role as Potions Teacher is affecting the number of graduate looking to become Healers or about the bullying going on between houses, how the point system is encouraging the students to have little to no contact with students from other houses."

Luna blinks as her expression turns thoughtful. "I doubt daddy would want such trivial matter to be in his paper. Sounds more like something the Daily Prophet would sport." Luna says and he nods his head at Luna.

"Well, I'm not really connected to the media the way you are. Still, it's a shame that nobody thought to write about those facts. But then, maybe that's because we don't have a school paper. Muggle schools have such things, although most of those schools are high schools so they likely stick to newsletters." He says. "Still, you would think that Hogwarts students would like to have their voices heard, or is that printed?"

He notices Luna smile. They then say good bye to each other and he heads over to pick up his flight frame. Once he's in the trees does he activate it, it hovers low enough for him to walk into it, and then he lowers it before sitting upon the seat. Once his hands touch the steering wheel, the sides of the frame suddenly sprout doors and a floor 'grows' under foot just after the flight frame raises another two feet in the air.

He shifts the lever from park to flight one. The steering wheel's dash panel comes alive to show a map while the steering wheel suddenly extends itself, allowing him to lean into the back of the seat. He turns a dial and the cloaking spells take effect. With that done, he pulls down upon the steering wheel, causing the flight frame to raise into the air. Once he's about twenty feet in the air, his right foot lightly touches the pedal that appeared when the floor did, causing the flight frame to move forward. He based the controls off of a go kart.

It's not long before he's once more gets a feel for the controls and flies to retrieve the first of the raw film from a recording box. Shielding charms upon the flight frame ensures that nothing can hit the frame from any angle. It also protects him from wind coming right up to his face or the weather to hit either him or the wooden flight frame.

Sure, it wasn't a broom or riding a winged animal, but he created it and thus its something he values. *I am so going to pass my driving test the first time around.* He thinks as he has the flight frame park itself next to the massive branch so that he can climb out to get the film from the recording box.

It's close to nine when he's collected from the last box and is prepared to head home. He does notice, once again, the lack of spider webs about the forest, which is likely due in no small part of what happened last winter. It's very likely that the centaurs have also been destroying what egg sacks remain in the forest as the sacks lack adult protectors.

He doesn't feel an ounce of guilt about destroying the Forbidden Forest's colony of Acromantula. That particular spider race just isn't native to the UK and had been killing native species. It wouldn't surprise him that, in time, mundane animals become a much more common sight within this forest. He's pretty sure that the centaurs will like to have more meat in their diet.

- [T] -

"Happy Halloween!" He groans and gets up onto his elbows to glare at Neville. Then he blinks at what Neville is wearing.

"We brought you your costume!" Colin adds and he glances over to see what his brother is holding. He slowly blinks before sighing.

He sits up and then swings his body to the side. He ignores them as he heads for his potions cupboard. It unlocks upon him touching it and within seconds, he has three potions. He studies the symbols for a seconds before downing the one that seems to featuring a bear paw. As black fur sprouts about his body, he downs the one featuring an open mouth. He feels his teeth alter and then downs the third, this one featuring a rainbow of blue shades. The last alters the black fur to adopt a blue shine.

He glances at his hands to find them sporting claw shaped nails, then at his feet to see them sporting a four toes with the big one kind of riding up his leg. With his tongue, he checks his teeth. With a hum, he finds another potion bottle featuring an open mouth and this one causes his skull to alter while his hands and feet get finished.

He moves to stand before his mirror and sighs at the still unfinished sight of his ears, muzzle, and tail. He goes back and downs another potion with the open mouth symbol upon it. He stands once more before the mirror and then hums in satisfaction at the 'werewolf' staring back.

He picks up a leather necklace sporting tiny brown, black, and red wooden beads and a painted skull of a raven. Once it's on, he turns to this two 'guests' and says, "Now this is a costume." His speaking is unhindered by the muzzle.

"I would have thought you'd go another root." Neville, dressed as a druid, muses while looking a tad envious of his altered appearance, the jester costume resting on his bed now. He flickers his ears while turning to glance at his knight of a bother.

He studies the two before sighing. He moves back to the cupboard and after a few seconds, takes out two. "Here, drink these. One will elongate your ears while causing them to end with a point. The other will get rid of that spare tire." He says as he hands the two over to Neville.

He studies Neville as the potions take effect. With a nod, he takes another two and hand them over to Neville. "One will sharpen your features and the other will add a tan to your skin." He says and once they take effect, he nods and motions for Neville to stand before the mirror.

Neville gasps and touches his own ears and cheek. "An elf, nice." Colin says while Neville glances questioningly over to them. "Cosplay potions. You brewed them yourself, didn't you?" Colin asks and he nods as he turns to glance at his potion collect for a few seconds.

"Huh?" Neville grunts but he's already studying his bother with a critical eye. He hums as he walks around his brother, trying to think of what race would suit. "What's Cosplay?" Neville asks while he being to take a few potions from the cupboard.

"Cosplay is role playing, err... acting. You've seen muggle movies right?" Colin asks Neville.

"Oh! You mean, instead of being casted in a role by somebody else, you create your own character!" Neville exclaims.

"Yea, that's pretty much it. Although, with Cosplay, you can dress up as your favorite character from movies, games, shows, manga, and novels." Colin adds and he sees Neville nodding as he hands the first potion to Colin.

"So, what do I get to be?" Colin asks and he replies, "Undead."

"Undead huh? Cool, err... it won't hurt, will it? The potions I mean." Colin asks and he replies, "Do you think I'd hear the end of it if I

endangered your life? Mostly they'll pale your skin, cause a slight odor, and, of course, cause parts of you to become transparent, like your ribs, arms, and ribs. You know, pretty much make it seem as though you're a walking death knight."

"Oh, ok then." Colin says and downs the first. It takes a good five of the transparency potions to get the right effect, leaving Colin's face and back untouched. He watches as Colin touches his arms and mid-section. "I can still feel my stomach being there." Colin says.

He snorts and closes the cupboard before walking over to pick up the camera. After ten minutes of posing for the camera, they leave the yurt. He has his book bag hanging over his left shoulder, it carries not only his wand but also cloths for when the potions wear off in about four hours.

A lot of people would stop and stare at them. Many were pointing at Colin while a few girls would blush and look away from Neville. He merely grins at their reactions, his tail waging lazily behind him. He does note that none of the other houses were dressed up for Halloween, but then, that's not much of a surprise as the Weasley twins were the ones to put in the request.

As they enter into the dinning hall, almost everyone stops to look in their direction. A new murmur engulfs the student body as they approach their house's table. "Neville? Colin? Harry?" Hermione, dressed up as a nun, asks as they sit down and begin to eat.

"Yes Hermione?" Colin replies politely. "Is something the matter?"

"Your bones are showing." Hermione replies faintly, she looks a bit green. "How can you be alive?" He hears her murmur but is rather busy carefully eating his breakfast.

"It's a little thing called magic, Hermione, M-A-G-I-C." Seamus says while rolling her eyes. He's unmoved by Hermione's plight as the witch hasn't grown as much as she should have since the incident with the troll.

While everyone at the table is questioning Colin and Neville about their additions, he's busy thinking about the results of that summoning. *At least I don't have that scar any more... But why did I have the soul bit? Could it be that I'm the one that Voldie tried to kill that night?* He thinks to himself but, in the end, decides to remain silent about it, as it no longer matters.

I wonder what mom is doing with those items... Hopefully they won't be damage, after all, most of those are historical items. He thinks to himself as he is slowly chewing what's in his mouth as best as he can since he's unfamiliar with eating with a muzzle.

Soon, breakfast is over and they file out to spend attend the grand opening of the Weasley's arcade. They watch as the Weasley twins lead a parade through the halls with Gryffindors doing their part. The music for the parade is Hungry Like the Wolf, with him at the semi head position as he is dressed up as a werewolf.

The few professors that were in attendance clearly didn't like the noise or the decor. He didn't care as he moves to use the pool table that's by the drink bar, it serves not only butterbeer but also different flavors of soda, likely from mundane sources. He doesn't see a menu so he guesses they just serve drinks.

"How do you play this?" Luna asks while he's selecting a pool table que. He explains the rule while playing, he makes sure to mention how two players can play, so he's not that surprised when Luna asks, "Can I play a few games with you?"

He nods and helps her pick a que. Over time, Neville appears as does his elder brother. They take turns playing each other, although Neville did need to have the rules explained. As he plays against Colin for the second time, he notices that George is standing behind the drink bar.

"Hey Forge! Could we get four butterbeers over here, please?" He calls out and George nods, it wasn't long before they each have their own mug of butterbeer. It wasn't long before George finds himself

busy serving drink, Lee Jordan soon gets recruited to help behind the bar.

Four hours later and he heads out to change before the potions wear off as he was nude when he drank them, once in his cloths he heads for lunch which everyone leaves to eat. Upon returning to the arcade, they play a few of the games but return to the pool table when more and more of the students return to play the game. Very few seem interested in playing pool, they seem to be more interested in watching then anything else.

When supper comes, they head for the Great Hall but after wards, he mentions watching some movies back at his yurt. He even goes so far as to invite Luna, seeing as she seems rather reluctant to return to the arcade without them. Ron almost singles Colin out but Fred grabs a hold of Ron's shoulder and speaks with him.

"So, what movie are we going to watch?" Neville asks while Luna looks rather interested in the TV. Colin digs about his veggie and fruit crate as he replies, "How about The Monster Squad?"

"Why not some cartoon? Like It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown?" Colin asks. "Or some comedy like Teen Wolf?" Colin adds while finally pulling out some carrot sticks and walks over to take a seat.

"Teen Wolf good with you, Leander? Luna?" He asks and they just shrug while Luna sits down.

By ten o'cloak, Luna looks like she's about to curl up and fall asleep while Neville looks rather jumpy as they watch Predator. They continued to eat and drink from what he has stocked up in the yurt. *Guess they're going to be spending the night.* He thinks as he doubts that Neville will have recovered enough to venture out in the darkness.

"Luna, you can have my bed. It's got some charms on it to tune out the TV." He says, he had added them when he began getting visitors

only interested in watching the TV set during the weekends.

Luna jerks awake and shakes her head. "No, I'm fine." Luna says and he frowns. He summons a blanket and puts it over Luna's shoulders. "There you go." He says and Luna blushes but wraps it more about her body.

"Thanks." Luna says. It wasn't long before Neville and Colin summon their own blankets, it seems that it's getting rather cool in the yurt, not that he notices. *Or perhaps they're just getting tired and want to sleep.* He mentally muses as Colin yawn and gives himself a shake to wake himself up.

He sighs and continues to read Jurassic Park by Michael Crichton. He's already got a book lined up to read after he's done with this one and it's Howl's Moving Castle by Diana Wynne Jones. *Huh, I wonder if there aren't rituals so we can view the lives of the dead using only a bone that belonged to subject of the vision.*

- [T] -

"Looks like Kyden has been spurred by the girls again." He says as he notices the slight puffiness upon Hermione's face. Hermione hasn't spent much time with him this year but then, it's likely that Hermione's previous beliefs got reinforced since she learnt about some old family whom's vault she inherited and, likely, feeling very vindicated about her place in this community by that.

"She really is all over the place this year." Neville observes. "You really didn't do her any favors when it came to that Christmas present." Neville remarks and he merely sighs.

"It seemed like a good idea at the time... I thought she could use the confidence boost." He defenses himself. "She's such a teacher's pet. You'd think she would have gotten over it seeing as it hasn't done her any good."

"Some people just don't want to be saved from their mistakes." Neville sums up and he nods in agreement. "Hey Luna." Neville says and he glance to find the young blond behind him.

"Hey Luna." He says and Luna responds by greeting them, "Hello Leander. Kanga."

"Have you manage to catch any of those dimensionally displaced creatures on film yet?" He asks curiously and Luna replies, "It is rather hard to get them to stand still long enough to get a clear focus on it before it moves."

"The light waves aren't helping either, are they?" Neville asks and Luna nods in agreement. "Perhaps you should try using a fairy wing to filter the image. After all, they're more then able to alter space and time." Neville suggests.

"Such messy business concerning how they constructed Time Turners. So many lives wasted, all they had to do was brush some of the powder from their wings, give them a drop of healing potion before setting them free." He muses with a shake of his head.

"Perhaps I will try using using a thin strip of Thestral wing." Luna says but before they can continue their conversation, something happens to Luna that causes her to become a rabbit. He glances around and upon spying a group of giggling Ravenclaw students, he marches over.

"Undo it." He says in a very cold tone. "Or I will do worst to you." He threatens and the girls glance around, gaining confidence that there's too many people about for him to follow through with his threat.

"No. Loony makes such a nice rabbit, doesn't she?" The leader of the clique says.

He smiles and three spells later, he moves away from them and returns to Neville. Neville has picked up Luna the rabbit from the

ground. Sudden screams of terror and murder echo about the platform just as the whistle in the distance sounds.

"Now what's going on here?" Demands Hagrid and the clique point in his direction while exclaiming, "Harry Potter did this to us! He and that Loony Lovegood!"

As the train arrives and McGonagall comes over. "I don't know what these girls are so hysterical about, I never used my wand on them! Check my wand if you don't believe me!" He says as his head of house comes near him.

"And they transfigured Luna Lovegood into a rabbit though! See?" Neville says and after McGonagall does indeed check his wand, finding the last few spells to be a shrinking charm, a light charm, and a hovering charm.

Then McGonagall checks on the rabbit. "Please put Miss Lovegood on the ground, Mr Longbottom and everyone step away." The Transfiguration Professor says.

Once Luna is back to normal does McGonagall herd the clique of Ravenclaws towards the castle. "I believe a talk with your parents are in order." McGonagall says, not bothering to listen to their cries.

With that over with, they head onto the train. He's sure to place a protective arm around Luna's shoulders, guiding her to a compartment. Once they're in, he asks, "Are you ok, Luna?"

"You didn't have to do that for me. It'll only cause them to be meaner the next time they do something like that." Luna says and he scowls.

"Are you saying that you've spoken with Professor Flitwick about being bullied?" Neville asks and Luna nods. "And they only got worst?" Neville asks once more, with a touch more anger then before.

"They think I'm loony." Luna says as though that explains everything. He sighs, he's rather frustrated about a head of house not being able to stop the bullying going on in Luna's life.

"There's nothing wrong with you." He says ferociously. "Don't let anyone tell you differently! And if you're bully in Ravenclaw dorms then get your father to buy you a magic tent and live outside of the castle! None of the professors seem to notice that I'm not living in the Gryffindor's dorms." He says.

"I'm sure Kanga won't mind if you use his bathroom cabinet." Neville pipes in and he nods, although he's already drawing up a list of things that would make Luna's tent more bearable. "That way you're only in their company during classes and meals." Neville says.

Luna nods and then Ginny arrives. "Luna! I just heard! Are you ok?" The youngest Weasley says, giving Luna a hug.

"Thanks for standing up for her, Harry." Ginny says, nodding to Neville. "See you guys!" The red haired witch says while pulling Luna along behind her, leaving Neville and him alone.

"Good to see that Luna has at least one girl friend." Neville observes and he nods with a sigh. "So... We going to, you know?"

With a snort, he grins while bringing out the shrunken board. It wasn't long before they're building their own settlements at opposite ends of the board, War Fog hiding each settlement from each other. He's not sure what species Neville has created but he's using beast people. The peons are rodents, grunts being badgers, scouts being canines, range units being reptilian, shock troops being rhinos, and flight units being bats.

- [T] -

"Wow... He looks almost solid..." Colin says as they stare at the reconstructed soul of Voldie. The soul glares balefully at them but the soul can't do anything as the various rune schemes keep the

soul hovering in a secure place. "So that's what dad and our uncles were hinting about when they mentioned finally getting rid of him for good..."

"Actually, we're bringing in a few specialists to examine him. This is a rare opportunity to examine a soul. We do know where the rest of him is though. We might collect him later but for now, we'll leave what out there alone." Uncle Moony says and he nods in understanding.

"So... how did you find all of the bits, Kanga?" Colin asks and he merely gives his elder brother a grin. "Do you really want me to answer something so obvious, Cold?" He asks his brother who just rolls his eyes.

"Now, now, boys, is that the holiday spirit you're suppose to be having?" Moony asks in a teasing tone. Colin and him share a look.

"You know, we were just acting like brothers. Nobody ever said family has to get along, right Uncle Padfoot?" He says, glancing over to Sirius, who just arrived with a cup of hot butterbeer.

"Eh? Ah, yea, families don't always get along I guess." Sirius says. Remus stares at Sirius, which causes Sirius to wonder, "What did I do wrong *this* time?"

Colin chuckles while he heads off to work on the few projects he left behind. He does wonder if his parents got any new information concerning what Dumblies is up to, after all, his mother had wanted the headset to control that dragonfly golem stationed in the office.

Hopefully I'm not in trouble for creating that little golem... He thinks to himself before musing, *I wonder if I shouldn't practice flying in my Dimar form... I haven't transformed into it since school started.*

In the end, a few feet from leaving the basement, he transforms into his Dimar form. The base color of his fur is a bright teal with silver stripes. The under fur is black in color while his mane is a dark silver,

his coloration for his wing membrane is a deep purple. His horns are dark crimson color, the red shows up when the light hits it. His eyes remain the same color.

With his wings folded, he trots through the manor, heading to the room he claimed as a work room. His claws click upon the floor, he moves out of the way of May and his parents. "Perhaps we should get a bell for you to wear if you're going to be spending a lot of time as a Dimar." His dad says as they turn to look at him.

"A Dimar? I've never heard of somebody with that as one of their animagus forms." May says while admiring him in his current form.

He shifts his weight back and forth but does stretch his wings so that May can get a better look at them. "Colin is still human when I left the room." He says as he closes his wings and they each head off to different points in the house.

- [T] -

"... I can't believe it!"

"I know but..."

"... to Fawkes before they..."

He sighs, it wasn't that surprising that everyone is talking about Dumblies getting arrested by the ICW. Of course they had to force a burning day on Fawkes to keep the phoenix from teleporting the headmaster out of their custody. They even confiscated the man's pensive along with all of the silver instruments.

The reports of the silver instruments reveals that a lot of them are illegally keyed to Colin and a few other people. They also managed to break the charms upon Fawkes. They had also located the Chamber of Secrets and have teleported the huge Basilisk away into the care of some country's zoo. It's unlikely that anyone cares about the giant serpent, not when Dumblies is still in custody and will be

getting a trail, although it's unlikely that anyone knows what the trail is going to be about.

I wonder when the ICW will start rounding up ex-Corpse Eaters and other members of the Ministry and the Wizengamot using the evidence in Dumblies' pensive and testimony... He thinks to himself. *Hopefully before they get wind of their arrests.*

"Guess you've heard about Dumbledore getting arrested, huh?" Neville asks upon walking over to Colin and him. "Heard they killed Fawkes too."

He rolls his eyes while Colin sighs. "You can't kill a phoenix that easily. Besides, they likely only forced a burning day to keep Fawkes from teleporting Dumbledore away from their custody." His brother explains.

"But why did he get arrested?" Neville wonders out loud but neither Colin and himself were willing to answer that, after all, it's not their play to gossip about such things, so he replies, "Must have done an audit or something. You know how it is, governments are very money driven."

Those listening in quickly move to circulate a new rumor using that tidbit of information. *I'll make it up to him later, when we're in a secure location and after the hype dies down.* He decides as they get around to boarding the train.

"I wonder what school will be like, now that he's gone?" Colin wonders to him before Ron pulls Colin away from Neville and him. *Likely the same old stuff until the end of the year.*

Ending the Chapter Here

Theory of Werewolf Magic: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter

Harry studies Greyback as the werewolf tries to wriggle out of the chains keeping the furry bastard from moving. The chains and bindings had adjusted to fit the more beastly looking version of Greyback. The flumes of the puddle made out of a potion he made sure to pour upon the floor just a foot from the infamous werewolf.

"He sure makes me look like a saint, doesn't he?" Harry muses out loud. The two adults couldn't reply as he casted a spell to keep them quiet. "I doubt he's house broken though..." The twenty-one year old says.

Turning to the pair, Harry grins wolfishly. "When I put out that reward bit over three years now, instead of bringing me Greyback's head, they brought me the most infamous werewolf to me alive." The very much changed Potter explains.

"I wanted to skin him alive, particular since he bite Remus, causing so many of Moony's problems but then, it dawned on me of the research benefits studying him could reap!" Harry says, grinning. "The irony it would be if because of Greyback, I could come up with a cure for this ancient, magical curse!"

"It wasn't hard to contact others around the world to see what they've learnt concerning this curse. Sure, it was fragmented, particularly as they each research was only interested in different parts of the curse and guarded each of their research rather jealously." Harry continues on to say.

"Of course, if you have enough money, you can buy just about anything." Harry remarks. The wizard pauses, reminiscing about everything that's happened since he toured the mine.

"Once I had the majority of their research, I began to compare it and slowly, I learnt not only to delay the transformation but how to sped it up like I just did." Harry says finally, nodding towards the struggling werewolf. "I recently came up with a theory about something but I didn't know how to test it out."

He pauses before looking over to the silenced pair, Harry notes the wet stain upon their underwear. The raven haired wizard is sure that if they could, they would have fainted from the moment Greyback's limbs started to pop and crack. Their braces keep the pair from being anything but conscious and memorizing everything he's saying.

"Then I recall some bank statements made out to the pair of you for my... keep." Under his emerald gaze the pair paled even more. "As you've already been paid for a task, yet you didn't fulfill your side, I figured that I'm within my legal right to call you on your debt to me. So you're going to help me with my research. I've already submitted forms to formalize my collection of this debt, making you two my legal, indented servants for the next sixteen years, of course, I doubt you'll survive to see the end of your indented serves."

"Oh, don't worry, nobody will miss you, after all, you've been legally dead since two am yesterday morning. It seems that Vernon here had a little too much to drink and drove right into a gun shop. Huge explosion as the fat idiot flickered a cigarette onto a bin of bullets. Shame that his wife was sleeping in the back, drunk too and sleeping it off." Harry says, savoring those memories of using a pair of mice to aid in 'killing' his 'loving' family.

Harry moves two feet from his perch, being sure to bring the stool along with him. Touching something within a pouch hanging from his jeans, bars suddenly shimmer into existence. 'Bite them once, no killing.' Harry says in a mid African dialect.

With a howl, the chain give and Greyback charges forth. Greyback paces between the two before taking a mouthful of Vernon's belly. Greyback licks the wound after swallowing the chunk of belly from

Vernon. Harry watches as Greyback bites Petunia upon her inner thigh.

"Moon or no moon, the curse should be passed onto you two." Harry says lightly while Greyback rages against the bars, not touching them, likely sensing what they were. Before Greyback could return his attention upon the two bitten members of the Dursley family, bars appear and this causes the beastly Greyback to howl in outrage.

Harry's watch beeps and the effects of the potion flumes causes Greyback to take on his human appearance. With all of his lab 'rats' human, the emerald eyed wizard touches his watch upon his left hand and the three vanish with a soft pop. Touching the item within his belt pouch, the silver bars shimmer out of existence and with a wave of his wand, everything gets cleaned up, nothing remains, not even the stool the former Boy-Who-Lived had sat upon.

Glancing about the suddenly smaller basement, Harry vanish without a sound. *If this works as I theorized, the 'worlds' will never be divided ever again.*

Three Months Later

"The collars, Master Harry, they be active." The elderly Kreacher informs Harry upon arriving with Harry's breakfast. Harry sinks back into his chair as he considers this turn of event.

"Only took three transformations to install a core, huh? I would have thought it would take more, all things considered." The raven haired head of the Potter family murmurs to himself out loud.

"Shall Is give them cloths?" Kreacher asks the twenty three year old. Harry shakes his head and Kreacher nods before popping away to do other duties, likely to over see the other house elves at the other properties that he's regained, those forcefully taken from him by the previous members of the United Kingdom's magical community.

After the dust had settled, it became well known that he's the reward postings and it wasn't long before everything that had been stolen from him had been returned. Harry had finally gotten to honor Hedwig and to put her body to 'rest'. Sure Harry didn't get his monies back or the stuff sold to international buyers, but with the mine back in operation, money isn't a problem any more.

Harry glances over at one of the files from his own bank, he got back at the goblins by opening and funding his own bank as he has just so much money that he rather see it used rather then sitting around, gathering dust. It helps that his loans didn't have the same 'bite' as the goblins and the terms being much more agreeable. The goblins had been rather slow in reacting to his appearance upon, what used to be a goblin only scene, and thus, weren't quick enough to keep a lot of accounts from switching over to his bank.

While he doesn't know the first thing about running a bank personally, it wasn't hard to find mundanes with some thin connections to the magical community to hire to run it in his stead. Harry knew that his bank manager is have the time of her life molding the bank into her own image and is slowly becoming something very different then either the mundane run banks and the goblin ones. After all, Harry is still feeding the bank gold, thus the bank won't be running out of money any time soon.

And now, if only I can speed up the process of installing magic inside of a mundane before their first transformation by moonlight, then I'll be able to sell magic to a much wider market. Harry thinks to himself before recalling that he's got breakfast in front of him and he begins to eat it before it become totally cold.

The raven haired wizard mentally files to use feed the two permanent polyjuice potions to cure the pair of being a werewolf. If they keep their magic, well, at least he knew that his theory pays off but he would need a new mundanes to work with to learn how to speed up the causing magic to bloom within them. It also means that he won't need the Dursleys any more, which kind of suck until Harry

wonders if he couldn't alter the wolf base of the curse to some other animal.

As Harry finishes his meal, the wizard feels the hairs on the back of his neck raise up. With a sigh, the twenty-three year old teleports to the mine. "It seems you lot have yet to learn your lesson." Harry muses while standing in the shadows of a earthen ledge, staring down at the team of goblins and magi.

With a grin, Harry touches the fire ruby upon his wooden pendent and those goblins that survived Greyback's attack suddenly begin to wriggle about on the ground. Five months ago, he fed a special potion to Greyback before releasing the werewolf upon the previous group of raiders, he had ordered the werewolf to be sure to bite each goblin, knowing that they would be sent on a future attempt to learn the secrets of the panned out mine.

The humans among the raiding party look on in bewilderment as changes begin to be wrot upon their tiny employers. Their leather armor strains under the pressure the changes to their body are undergoing. Some goblins grew scales instead of fur, a few grow horns or spines, the cursed goblins become mutant wolves, some might even go to say hell hounds.

Once the wolven goblins have shaken themselves, they soon attack each other and the humans among them. The wards prevents them from fleeing from the mine. Harry watches the carnage from the safety of his prepared look out, just one of many located throughout the mine in case invaders every make it pass this area.

The goblin-wolves raise up upon their back legs and howl their victory over the humans before they begin to feed upon the bodies, they shove each other about as they fight over the choice parts. As they're about to turn on each other in an all out bawl, Harry pulls his hand away from the fire ruby and with that, the spell of the curse fades but the memory likely remains every clear in their minds.

"I told you lot to shove off but yet, here you are once more." Harry says, his voice echos through this part of the mine. "You might not change viva the lunar cycle but you do suffer from the curse and I have the key to activate it."

"Tell your masters that I have found a way to pass the curse onto your race. Tell them to leave the affairs of Harry James Potter be and I won't curse more of your race." Harry states before banishing the goblins away.

Seconds later, a pair of house elves arrive to collect the equipment while Harry doubts that this will be the end of things between the goblins and himself. *Perhaps its time for a counter offensive? I grew tired of always defending little over three years ago and here I am, following that same pattern once more.*

Harry sighs and massages the bridge of his nose as he recalls the relic he found in the mine back during his first visit. It's hard to forget as it caused his eyesight to be corrected and that it seems to have numbed his emotions, even now, Harry struggles to feel anything but shades of emotions. Even after looking through any records he has that once belonged to the Black family, Harry still doesn't know what the energy ball is nor what it is capable of doing.

He wonders if the device has changed since he last saw it before putting it in that repaired vault but Harry refuses to go check as he rather keeps his exposure to it at a minimum. Harry doubts anything he has can protect him from the devices' effects. "I really need to widen my search for the answer..." Harry murmurs out loud before vanishing back to his previous location to continue through his mail before heading for the underground lab to see the results of using the permanent polyjuice potion to return the Dursleys back to their previous genus and solve the answer as to whether or not doing so will rob them of their 'seed' of magic.

Five Years Later

Harry sighs and wonders just how it was that he got into this particular mess concerning him becoming the true power behind the Ministry for a brief moment before snorting at the thought and laid the blame squarely where it belonged, upon the previous generations of United Kingdom magi and focused upon the results of the last year, particularly after the incident with that raiding party where he forced those goblins bitten by Greyback to transform within the mine.

Sure, the Britain has been quarantined due to an out break of a deadly case of rabies. Of course, the magical communities around the world isolated Britain because of a reporting of a altered werewolf curse, one reported by the goblins, as this new version of the werewolf curse, that it effects non-humans now as well.

Sadly, the only thing that potion did was increase the power a werewolf's infect bite so that instead of a one in twenty chance of their bite affecting a non-human to a hundred percent, same as a human when the werewolf is transformed. The now ruler of Britain thinks to himself while watching the news upon the still experimental, organic television that consists of a wooden frame with cotton cloth stretched over the frame.

Any day now, Harry expects some team from the outside to arrive to check on the situation, not that it matters much as they now have a much more secure and safe way to 'install' magic into mundanes. It didn't take long for those few intellectuals that got left behind to research and experiment with their new found abilities, particularly when they got their hands on text books talking about transfiguration and runes.

As all of magi native to Britain fled, refusing to be left behind with the werewolf epidemic, and as they were in a rush, they didn't take everything with them. Which he easily handed over for examination and dismemberment as Harry had been the only one of the magi to remain behind, thus granting him rights of everything left behind by those fleeing to escape the 'epidemic'.

"And yet, despite the number of more qualified people, I got voted to lead... Or is it because I'm the one that had the needed resources and contacts with those races left behind?" The raven haired twenty-eight year old wonders out loud, after all, the house elves weren't ordered to follow their masters out of Britain and, being the only natural wizard among the population that got left behind, it seems to be the reason why they looked to him out of all of the humans left. It likely helped that he's famous for being the Boy-Who-Lived and Kreacher quickly began ordering them about.

Sure, those that remained resented the fact that he's the cause of the quarantine but they sure loved the ability to preform magic that the curse granted them. It also didn't hurt that there is an easy cure for the lycanthrope cure too, with or without the permanent polyjuice potion. Actually, that potion is likely the reason why those that had once been over fifty are once more in their twenties or thirties(typically whatever age the hair used for the potion was cut at), thus granting a path to immortality as the potion can be safely used again after the drinker took it ten years ago. It also didn't remove their ability to use magic so it's a very valid route, not that it looks like he'll be needing it.

Harry's left hand goes to the center of his chest, to where the device's key component resides now. While he doesn't know what its really capable of, it had granted him the ability to polymorph into any living being as well as to alter parts of his body, similar to a Metamorphmagus but at the same time, not the same. Primary though, the core of the device seems to grant him the ability to take the form of a spectral humanoid sporting unearthly beauty while glowing a silvery blue light.

Harry's unsure if this hosting the core within his body will affect his ability to have children as he has yet to find somebody to marry. Soon Harry scowls and glances at the clock, not particularly happy that his mind has wondered down memory lane for as long as it had as there is a future to build and a world to be ready to face when the

lands beyond Britain finally decide to visit to see how they've dealt with the out brake of rabies.

The End

To Readers: This is a kind of sequel to Heart of the Mine.

Wilderness Shadows 1

I don't own Naruto.

The newly turned seven year old turns the package this way and that, rather reluctant to ripe the gift wrap for fear of triggering some kind of trap. Finally, Naruto does so, his curiosity getting the better of various lessens upon caution on strange gifts left before his door. Upon seeing the image upon the box, the young blond forgets to breath for a good thirty seconds.

Shaking his head, Naruto narrows his eyes at the box containing the most popular game of the year, although it did come out just after last year's school year. *Better not get your hopes up, there's likely nothing good in it.* The wanna-be ninja thinks, preparing himself for the disappointment he's about to suffer. Even if there is something within the box, it's likely a trap of some kind.

Naruto holds the box as far away as possible while using one hand to opening the box. It doesn't escape the blond's notice that somebody had already slit the tape to keep the lid closed either. Slowly, the blond uses an old chop stick to open the lid of the box.

The young blond flinches as the lid fully opens but then, not thing happens, which causes the child to frown. Slowly, the blond pokes the contains using the chop stick and yet, still nothing. Naruto walks over and puts the box onto the couch before moving to take a look.

The blond just stares at the undamaged game and game system. The birthday boy drops the chop stick to pick up the stuff still in its plastic wrapping. Seconds tick away as Naruto turns the game system this way and that while it's still in its wrapping. He then lowers it down onto the ratty couch to take out the cardboard that held the game system in place.

After about an hour of looking at everything without taking anything out of the plastic. Naruto couldn't make heads nor tails of the booklet that came with everything, which only causes his inability to read the printed word all the more irritating and depressing as it means he didn't know how to get the game system to work or how to play the game.

Not that it'll stop me, just slow me down. The birthday boy thinks to himself, focusing on other emotions then those that have always haunt him, that fuel nightmares. It takes a few minutes to get everything connected, Naruto's just glad that only certain plugs could fit in the right places or else it would be a big long guessing game.

Placing the head piece onto his head, the ear pieces slide over his ears while a something with a padded ball rests next to his mouth. Some words flash before his eyes and then, with a, 'oh yea', the blond puts in the game. This action causes the words to vanish, leaving a white area to engulf his vision, a strange lighten grips his senses.

Suddenly, images play before him and seemingly around him, as no matter where he turns his head, he sees images of canines, felines, and other beasts done up in crazy pattern of unrealistic colors. All those within the images are four legged ranging from small foxes and cats to huge bears. A few seconds and words hang before his eyes, without thinking, he reaches out to touch the words, which causes a flash to erupt, taking him somewhere that seems to be a clearing but at the same time, it wasn't as there's this big flat rock platform at the heart of the clearing.

"Welcome to Wilderness Shadows! Please say name of an animal to begin." A woman's voice says from almost nowhere and yet everywhere.

"Ah... crow?" Naruto asks and suddenly, a gray blob in the shape of a crow appears. This time, a board featuring colors, patterns, and a scroll with a brush hovering over it.

A few touches of the panels shows that they affect the crow model hovering over the rocks with slightly out stretched wing. Slowly, Naruto learns how to alter colors independently. He comes up with an all orange crow and was ready to go for it but pauses as that would be advertising who he really was in life, which means, he won't use orange as a color and he also erased Ramen from the scroll.

With a sigh, Naruto begins to alter the eyes, changing them from blue to purple. The beak to a black and then worked on the layers of feathers. Upon having a rainbow colored crow, the seven year old snorts and once more makes changes. Upon his seventh design which features the tips of his primaries, secondaries, tertials and tail feathers sporting bright crimson colors while the rest is a dull yellow. The whole back and back of the head are also the same yellow. The under side of the head, chest, and under wing feathers are white. Eyes are green with the beak and legs being a stormy gray.

Naruto puts Hikage, Sun Shade, which he thought was a good name as the crow certainly got enough yellow on it. Rolling up the scroll, two round spheres appear, one is green with this circle in it and the other is red with two intersecting lines. The child touches the green orb and suddenly, he's being pulled towards the crow model.

Blackness greets him and when Hikage opens his eyes, the crow finds himself in a tree. Getting to his feet, Hikage first studies himself before studying his surroundings. Moving out from under the main part of the trunk, the fire style crow gets a better view of the meadow about the tree.

"New?" And the crow looks down to finds a cheetah sporting a royal blue coat with purple stripes. The cheetah's silver eyes peer up at Hikage.

"Guess I am." The crow says while studying the cheetah with his green eyes. "You waiting for somebody? Or are you just trying to nap?" Hikage asks the cheetah.

"Mostly here to greet new comers, like yourself." Then goes on to add, "My name is Indigo."

"Hikage." He says to the cheetah named Indigo. Indigo chuckles softly.

"Sounds like you've got ties with ninja." Indigo says and the crow shrugs his shoulders. "Could be but I've never heard of a village called Hidden Sun, have you?" Hikage asks Indigo.

"Might have been at one time. The wars likely wiped it out." Indigo muses darkly and Hikage didn't say anything, after all, it's not like he can read any history books to prove or disprove that statement that the other guy has made.

"You got something against ninjas?" Hikage asks after a few seconds. Indigo looks away from the crow.

"I'm not thrilled about them." Hikage admits. "Only reason why I want to be one is so I can protect myself from them."

"Yea?" Indigo says, looking up at the crow with new interest. "Guess I never thought of what it would be like, growing up in a ninja village. Never visited one either." The cheetah says thoughtfully.

"I got a lot of pressure to become one. The old-man use to talk about the good that ninjas did. Not that a ninja's ever been helpful to me... I guess you'd have to be part of their forces to be accepted." Hikage continues to explain.

"F'eh, guess if it don't work, you could always go Missing Nin." Indigo adds, likely trying to lighten Hikage's mood. That does cause Hikage to considers it what little he knows of rogue nin.

"So, mind showing me around?" The crow asks the cheetah. "I might as well get to try these wings out, right?" Hikage says, spreading them wide.

Indigo laughs before moving from his sitting pose. "Sure, why not!" To which Hikage launches himself from the tree branch, it takes a few flaps for the crow to raise up into the air while following after the loping feline.

Now this will take getting use to! Hikage thinks as he flies after the blue and purple cheetah. "Anyway, this meadow is call the Welcoming Meadow, the tree you were perched on is often referred to as the Greeting Tree."

Gaara stares blankly down at the box, at age eight, the youngest son of the Kazekage has been the target for assassination plots since he was six. And yet, since that period began, the young red head kind of misses getting gifts. Sure, the shop owner toss the strange game at him, begging Gaara to accept it instead of his life, but it counts.

The eight year old recalls that his elder siblings possess the same game, which causes him to pull the box to his chest as he walks to the house that contains the majority of his possessions. The voice of the demon he houses has moved on from scolding him about allowing the man to live to ranting and raving about what a poor 'son' he was to it. Gaara's use to the noise of the chakra demon, it had grown louder since that day...

Gaara suddenly picks up his pace, hoping to leave the street before he gives into the thing's rants and kills some random person. Although, lately, the red haired child hasn't had much of a problem with that behavior...

Leaning upon the door of his house, Gaara sighs and looks up at the ceiling, allowing his head to touch the door. Then, Gaara mentally shoves the blood thirsty thing within him into a corner, it was only a temporary measure but it'll allow him to concentrate upon playing the game he now owns. His chance to finally have a friend, even if they never met in the real world, it was still better then the existence he's living now.

Gaara heads for his room, eager to give Wilderness Shadows a try. Sitting upon his bed, the eight year old uses his sand to slice the tape so that he can open the box up. His hand trembles while holding just one piece of the device but a few breaths help calm his emotions while steely ignoring the presence of the chakra beast within him.

It wasn't long before everything is connected and he's read the booklet. Once everything is ready, he engages the power of the system and suddenly, Gaara feels like something is suddenly missing while the various image panels show scenes. He comes out of his thoughts when the menu shows up.

Once selecting the only option and a greeting is given to him, Gaara is trying to decide which animal to pick. *Hm... I could always go with a feline... Nay, nor a canine. Weasel? No badger either... How about a bear?* "Bear."

It wasn't long before a gray model of a bear hovers at the center of the clearing, over the big, flat stone. With a sigh, Gaara says out loud, "Otter." And the sleek, muscular body of that beast hovers where the bear had been.

"Status of species?" Gaara asks and the female voice answers, "Twenty-four otter avatars exist within game."

Gaara goes through most of the large breeds, be they feline or canine, before going into the herbivores. The red head sighs, there wasn't many impressive creatures to chose from that would stand out, that would turn heads and get people to be interested in him. "Vulture." Gaara says before adding, "Status of species?" He didn't recall if birds were forbidden as avatars or not.

"Zero vulture avatars exist within game." The voice says and so Gaara names a bunch of other bird species, the answer remains the same until he said crow. "One crow avatars exist within game."

At that, Gaara blinks. "Names and activity status of crow avatars." The red head says and the game replies, "Hikage. One year and eight months."

So, not a recently created avatar. Gaara muses but, still, it would suit his purposes as it means that means people did know of a crow avatar. It didn't take long for him to put Karasu as his name and to have the crow avatar done up with the wings and back being a copper, the head and tail being primarily brass in color. The beak is red while the legs being the typical black. The eyes, Gaara decide, would be a standard blue.

Trying to submit the avatar, Gaara couldn't as it seems that Karasu was taken. With a roll of his eyes and wrote Aragane. That gets accepted but then, with the board out of the way, something causes the avatar to move and suddenly, Gaara is pulled right into the body.

Aragane wakes within the branches of a tree. The metal colored crow stretches his wings and then angles them this way and that before moving from the main trunk. Aragane glances around the meadow to find a pair of wrestling beasts, one of which seems to be a white leopard with red spots and the other is a gray fox with neon green socks with the back of the ears and tail tip being bright red.

Sure, the fox isn't as large as the leopard but being smaller, the fox seems to be able to dart out of the leopard's reach. Aragane watches this for a few minutes but is startled when the crow realizes that a certain voice is absent. The crow is struck dumb for a few seconds before Aragane decides to experiment with his wings, pushing that matter out of mind for now.

With wings and shoulders hunched, the crow's body tenses and once leaping into the air, Aragane keeps flapping his wings while jerking about. It takes Aragane a few seconds to right himself and for the crow to circle about the meadow, allowing Aragane to spot at least three other pairs about the place.

Then, Aragane catches sight of some kind of billboard and the crow lands down upon the ground in order to read the notices. A few of them seem to be recruitment notices for packs and prides with a few being messages for certain people. But what catches his attention is the notice for an anti-ninja meeting being hosted by Hikage and Hydra, it seems to be held in the neutral valley that is called Waterfall Cliffs.

Ninjas, think the only good one is a dead one? Then this is the meeting for you! Come and find good reasons to hate these mercenary forces hidden throughout the Elemental Countries. Newcomer or not, all are welcome! Co-Organizers are Hikage and Hydra

"Interesting..." Aragane muses out loud. The crow turns to study the map that's at the bottom, trying to figure out whether to fly there or to just teleport there using the mushroom ring.

"Which one?" Asks a voice and the crow glances around to find the fox and leopard sitting behind him. Aragane blinks before answering, "The anti-ninja one."

Both wrinkle their noses at the mention of that post. "Oh please, it's just hate propaganda. Not every hidden village is terrible." The fox states and the leopard nods in agreement.

"It doesn't tell you of all the good things ninja do either." The leopard remarks. "They do escort and guard missions, even been known to be rescue parties." The feline adds but Aragane mentally snorts, it's clear they want to ignore the assassinations, sabotage, and thieving missions.

Aragane tunes them out, it's clear that they're as pro-ninja as the poster is anti-ninja. The crow wouldn't mind finding others reasons for hating ninjas and the best place seems to be this meeting being hosted by Hikage and Hydra. Finally, Aragane manages to get away from the pair and takes to the air, heading for the mushroom ring to

teleport to Waterfall Cliffs, thinking that maybe there are a few early arrivals at that meeting point.

"Wow... A feathered brother." Aragane hears someone say and turns to find another crow to his left, this one yellow with red tipped wing and tail feathers, although the belly and part of the lower head is white. *Ah... I get the sun part at least.* The metal hue crow thinks.

"Nice to meet you, Hikage." Aragane says and the other crow chuckles softly.

"Guess I am rather famous, aren't I? Up until you showed up, I was the only crow in the game. As you know my name, could you be kind and give me yours?" Hikage asks.

"Aragane, my name that is." Aragane replies and Hikage nods. They move out of the mushroom ring before they continue their conversation.

"So, how did ninja ruin your life?" Hikage asks and Aragane takes a few seconds to organize his thoughts.

"My mother died because the Kaz... because the leader of our village wanted to seal something into a babe." Aragane says, wondering if it matters to hide his village's name since he let a big clue slip. "Then there's these almost daily assassination attempts going on in the village... It's not pretty and it's like I don't have a say in what direction my future is going! They are all pushing me to be a monster and I never wanted to be one!" The metal hue crow rants while Hikage nods, likely in sympathy.

"Yea, most of the core group shares that out look." Hikage puases before continuing on to say, "My old man signed me up for the academy, only reason I never complain is the fact that I doubt I'll ever get taken on as an apprentice in an actual trade." Now it's Aragane's turn to nod in sympathy.

"If you're having trouble with some branch of jutsu, just show up a few hours before the actual meeting and there will be people around willing to help. Although, a lot of those around are from some new village that's seems to be settling upon the name Hidden Sound and, well, they do specialize in sound base jutsus, so, just beware of that when you're practicing in real life." Hikage says and then spreads his wings. "Come on, I'll give you an aerial tour of the valley."

Aragane spreads his own wings and leaps up after Hikage. The metal hue crow's mind is a whirl of what it would be like to preform an actual jutsu instead of him just mentally controlling his sand without any real effort on his part. Aragane notes the way Hikage flies and begins to mimic the other crow's movements, which does actually help steady him in the air. *Must be all that practice he's had.* Aragane muses while following Hikage in banking right, heading for one of the waterfalls that pour into the valley.

Enjoy

Readers: Ok, so maybe I've been spending a little too much time role playing on the BlackBlood Alliance Forum... Although, to be fair, I only got three characters there, 2 of which are sabers(Nardo and Stormcoat) and 1 is a wolverine(Anang).

The Looping Soul P1: Buffy

I don't own Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

"Oh this is so going to rile up the Slayer, you know." The possessed weasel/ferret puppet muses, none but Casper could hear. The greater spirit residing within the wooden doll moves from the mage's left shoulder to the right before leaping off onto the book case. *"I'm going to find a better vantage point for this."*

Casper watches as the possessed puppet races and climbs, leaving the sixteen year old alone. The dirty blond teen merely sighs while finishing setting the the trip wire. The hair growth potion waiting up high, waiting to pour down. It was only the ten minute version, so hair growth will be shed faster then the standard version of the potion which typically lasts for three to eight days.

Once everything is set, the time looping soul retreats out of the library, leaving the possessed doll behind, but Casper knows that destroying the puppet won't harm the spirit that's 'riding' it. Besides, Casper's many experiences during this time period, the mage knew that nothing important is going on with the slayer and her gang, so, no harm done really.

About twenty minutes later, Casper feels some get triggered and touches the stone in his jacket pocket. The stone is slightly warm and stroking the rune carved upon the stone, the heat vanishes. *You know, one of these days I'm going to figure out how to clean this whole town of demonic energies without causing a massive explosion.* He thinks to himself as some demon got lured into his trap that he created to weed out certain types of demons.

As the mage leaves the school gates, the dirty blond feels the trigger in the library activating. Casper begins to whistle a tune while he walks off to clean of trap of bloody remains of a demon.

First Time Loop

Nick, although to use the name from his last life, Xander, couldn't help but stare about the class of kindergartners. Particularly at the younger version of Xander Harris. That really drove it home that he can't really be Alexander Harris as there already is an Alexander Harris.

*Then why do I still sport memories of **being** Xander Harris? And where does this leave me?* Nick/Xander wonders to himself as he returns to the drawing he has been working on since the teacher left, likely to go for a smoke. *And why put me in some other body other then Xander? What's the point of me relieving my childhood if I'm not me?*

Nick/Xander is at a lost of what to do in the mean time. Sure, Nick/Xander plans to do what he can to change things for the better but that's years away. *I wonder if it's time to see if some of my more, unconventional ideas about slaying demons and vampires to work?*

Turning the sheet over, Nick/Xander begins to make a list of things he'll need to construct that pencil launcher. It's child's play to get a water gun and to get a priest to bless some water, so there's other projects that the time looping soul could work on.

Current Loop

Casper wipes the back of his hand against his forehead. The hyena puppet's back is finally repaired. The mage places his tools down upon the bench before taking some sand paper to take the roughness off of the wooden body of the hyena puppet.

The hairs along the back of Casper's neck raises up and he says out loud, "Just let me put some polish on the spot and then you can use it." Out of the corner of Casper's eye, a ghostly image of a snake can be seen.

"The legs... I am not terribly familiar with them." The nature spirit says. *"Although, I do confess, it was a unique experience. I'm glad I came to this plane, even if it's too close to the fell dimensions."*

"You would be surprise how many of your fellows try out serpent puppets." Casper says, rather relieved that the snake spirit seems to be in a good mood. "Water dwellers enjoy flying types while the flying types enjoy the puppets based off of water dwellers..."

"Having wings seems like a lot of work. I believe I shall wait a while before giving them a try." The spirit replies. *"It is rather curious as to why a young human such as yourself, has come to own so much land, particularly considering what lies within the ring of properties."*

Casper presses his lips together, it's not often that he's been asked about how he's acquiring the land around Sunnyhell and he think over a few answers before finally saying, "I wanted to become a farmer, once. I mean, it would be rather easy for me to use those aging spells on plants, good money to be had."

"As you've noticed, Sunnyhell being what it is, the land around the town doesn't have clear owners. It took a bit of time but I found the various deeds, most of the owners are dead but the papers themselves are being held in old lockboxes that some how, found their ways into various pawn shops." Casper explains. "Those that I didn't purchase that route came from making private deals with their owners."

"As I have tried to house anything about the properties, certain parties of the world have noticed my acquisition of said land." The dirty blond says while mentally adding, *Of course a certain Mayor likely notices but doesn't seem to care as long as I don't use them for training camps for, well, anything.*

"And thus, why you let us have the run of the properties." The snake, a rattler if Casper manages to glimpse the details right, muses.

"It's good for raising wood to make these puppets." Casper points out. "Although, I should work on using magic to make them look a bit more... eye pleasing."

The snake doesn't reply, which likely means that the spirit is done chatting him up. Likely due to the fact that he just finished putting the polish on the back. A second later, the hyena puppet's eyes gain color and as it raises up, the puppet quickly becomes organic, with fur sprouting while lungs grow.

The possessed puppet giggles as an ordinary hyena does before walking about the room. As the spirit gains confidence in moving the puppet about, the hyena breaks into a lope, the spirit gets tripped up but gets up and try again.

As Casper puts stuff away, the snake spirit takes the hyena puppet out of the workshop and out into the night through the ramp that leads out of the basement workshop. Hazel green eyes glance along the rows of wooden heads, he sales them as fake head trophies, pictures of living representatives of said trophies resting next to each. It brings to his mind the early loop where he managed to make it into teen-hood.

Casper muses for a few minutes upon those early loops, they had to be a good solid sixty something loops in which he died just by trying to give early training to the trio consisting of Jesse, Willow, and the other Xander. Those memories not only help Casper to recall why he picked the name Casper and came to conclude that he had to give up his previous role of protector of 'his' girls, leaving it to the other Xander.

Enough! Reminiscing of the past won't do me any good, I have research to continue. Particularly in the realm involving space and time. Casper thinks to himself while heading for a special room that's a few levels down from his carving workshop.

The three levels before that room consist of illusions really. The one right under the puppet workshop sports a miniature town. Tiny

people go about their business, mimicking their real counterparts. The illusion magic updates every half a second from the visual tracking wards Casper had created to animate the small town.

The second level sports illusions of various breeds of demons he has encountered during his loops, hovering about these illusions are orbs containing memories of those encounters. Those sporting a red glowing base means that he doesn't know much about them beyond the dead bodies he's examined/cut into. Yellow base means that he's got more information about them beyond their physical nature. Blue base means that he knows pretty much everything there is to know about the breed.

The third level sports illusions of weapons that Casper himself have either made or used in the past. The labels next to those not designed by the teen himself typically have the name of the current owner as well as the location. The same tracking wards used for the small, illusionary town are used to display the labels.

Finally, the fourth level under the puppet workshop is the one that he wants to use. The room contains a chair that's tilted back with a foot rest, not unlike the chars one encounters at the dentist office. *Guess I won't be making it to school for the rest of the week.* Casper muses as he walks through the various paper walls sporting Asian paper spells painted upon their surfaces, certain cultures often got attracted to certain magic types and the spiritual magics were what the teen uses to progress his understandings of space and time.

Before Casper activates the spells, the young teen creates a body clone and then places a temporary tattoo upon the clone's body. The clone lacks a mind and the tattoo grants the clone a copy of his mind. The tattoo also links the clone's mind up to a memory orb so that Casper can learn what the clone has done during his absence. When the tattoo vanishes, the clone's mind will as well.

Once the clone has exited out of the room, the clone's awareness will occur once the clone has arrived at his current body's parent's house. The clone doesn't sport any particular memories beyond that

he has programed the spell to grant the clone. Casper rather not have a copy try and kill him in thinking that such an action would make them real.

It take taken the time looping soul ages to find the original cloning spell. The original just clones the body perfectly, it doesn't grant the clone a mind of its own or becomes a house to a soul, unless that soul use to be housed in the original body. True, the clone body won't last very long without somebody programing it to breath or for it to under a stasis spell to be used at a later date, which is why nobody in the world uses the original spell as the produce can't function without somebody monitoring it. Mostly, Casper figured that the clone body is rather perfect for harvesting organs and other such gruesome things.

Although, if I can hook them up to a computer and have the computer be their brains, I'd have a rather effective labor force at my command. Casper muses to himself as he sinks into the chair. *At least it's Wednesday night instead of Sunday night, I doubt that the programing will pass inspection for a whole week, a few days yes, but not for a week.*

The enchantments upon the chair awake as Casper feeds it magic. Slowly, almost sluggishly, the rice paper walls that exist within the room begin to float in the air while beginning to rotate around the chair. Suddenly, the magical wards no longer need to be fed as they now take from his magical reserve directly, without him needing to consciously feed them.

Soon Casper feels heavy then, suddenly, his whole being is light before being dragged through this shimmering portal that could only be seen in astral form. Then the looping soul lands inside of a body, a demonic looking one that does sport trace amounts of his current body's blood. It hadn't been that difficult to create this demonic body nor to send it into other dimension.

Nose wrinkles at the smell of dung and as Casper opens his new eyes, all five of them, to find that a battle had taken place recently.

The paper spells become ashes as soon as he woke up within this body. Grasping the pack that's acting as a pillow, Casper gets to his cloven feet.

Where ever Casper looks there are young demons feasting upon the bodies of the dead. The mother of the brood is circling lazily over head. It wouldn't surprise Casper that the mother had been a late comer to the battle and killed the weaken victor.

With a thought, a tail grows from his rear end and at its tip is a formidable bone blade. Casper takes out a wooden disk that is rather thick and places it over his chest. Bracing himself, Casper hits the center of the wooden disk to his chest and suddenly, like in a certain anime/manga that he had seen once upon a time, the wood seemingly melts and engulfs Casper's whole body before hardening into actual armor.

As Casper moves to exit from his position, the brood of demonlings notice him and the bold among them decide that he's a better meal then the dead flesh all about them. Casper kills at least seventeen before the demonlings decide they're better off with the cold, dead flesh then the living flesh in their mist. The mother of the demonlings never gave any signs of coming down to deal with him, likely due to the fact that the brood consists of over a two hundred demonlings so such a small number of seventeen dead doesn't stir the mother into action.

The enchantments upon the wooden armor allows him to move unhindered out of the range of the dead demons and the demonlings that are eating the dead bodies. The feather light spells work just as well as the air filtering spells as Casper finds a few lingering spots of poisonous mist and the few demonlings that ventured into said spots.

After putting kilometers between demonlings and himself, Casper focuses upon dismissing the wooden armor. Soon the wooden disk has reformed before his chest and falls to the ground while his vision swims. As the effects fade and he mentally vows to work on the

spells upon wooden Guyvers. The problem was, the armor is either covering him or in its disk form, unbonded from him, allowing pretty much anyone to use it.

Once the wooden Guyver is back within his pack, Casper takes out a stone with a simple location spell upon it. "Guide me to the closest master of magic." Casper states out loud in one of the common demonic tongues. His current body isn't well equipped to speak most human languages, it likely has to do with the fact he has a beak...

Casper had drained what resources he could in learning magic in his home dimension as the paths that he hasn't explored to be rather... scarring in a different sense, as in scarring the soul and the memories. Casper isn't prepare to sell his soul either as is all he is in the end, just a ghost moving from one body to another, haunted by his past in a vastly different sense then just mentally.

Casper has a good three months in which to seek out whatever magic users he can find and convince them to teach him. *One way or another.* Casper thinks to himself as he heads off in the direction the stone floats towards.

One Hundred and Fifty-second Loop

The current African-American teenager studies a certain Halloween store. The youth walks up to the store hoping that what he's about to do will wake at least one of the three up to the dangers of the world in which they're now living in. *And hopefully, this minor change will be over looked.* The soul who would one day settle upon the name Casper muses to himself as he enters into the store.

The owner wasn't around, which is why he picked this time to enter into the store. His right hand enters into the pocket holding the slips of paper with minor descriptions, one of which has the name of a slayer who had lived in the same time period that Buffy's costume typically has her transforming into. What little he had gathered upon this particular slayer, he hopes, will help Buffy deal with what's

coming, particularly with a certain right of passage that the Watchers arrange.

One of the slips will be places within the toy gun a certain member of the Scooby gang picks up without failure every loop unless he buys it. The few times he did that, well, he learnt that somebody among the 'higher ups' want Xander to have the knowledge of a soldier and not whatever else the other Xander finds within that bin. *Just how did they manage to arrange those stampedes?*

The final slip goes into a certain ghost costume. That slip is meant to give Willow certain poltergeist abilities. It wouldn't surprise him if it also causes her to develop a bit of a temper or something while the spell is in effect.

He knew from other experiments that putting little information slips and hiding them upon generic costumes does effect how the spell is applied. The only problem is, he's never tried for any specific person before. Sure, he's caused those dressed up as magic users to be more talented in a specific type of magic or a soldier to have more specific set of skills, but never taking the generic costumes and turning them into persona ready costumes.

With the slips in place, he purchases a few costumes, he had won a bet that allowed him to pick their costumes, and left the store. He, of course, would be wearing some other costume that didn't come from Ethan's, not because he fears that the magic will mess with his memories but because the effects of him wearing a costume typically remains(AKA powers, skills, knowledge, and looks) with him for the rest of the loop, which often draws way too much attention from the 'higher ups'. *That and I've grown bored with the selection of super heros that I can dress up as without anyone asking for details.*

It's rough whenever he decides to dress up as fictional characters whom's series haven't been released yet. Although, he did enjoy the powers and the looks he got from dressing up as Sephiroth or Cloud from Final Fantasy VII, Nora from Nora: The Last Chronicle of Devildom, or Obito Uchiha from Naruto. Upon experiencing and

using chakra, he found himself interested in Asian magics and he's been studying how to craft their paper spells as they seem rather easy to undo compared to most of the magics he's come across during the time loops.

It'll be interesting to see the results of the slips of papers cause. The current African-American thinks to himself before mentally reviewing that slips of papers to put on the costumes that he bought for his 'crew'. He purchased five knight costumes, one priest, and one wizard. *Looks like I'll be reviewing those table top role playing books for ideas. Wouldn't be the first time I've used cheap make up and paint to active a desired effect.* He had spent at least three loops working in on movies, learning a bit of how to make his own masks, fitting teeth, and some knowledge concerning how to use make up to paint the masks up so they look real.

Although, he did wonder how much effort Ethan goes to for this single event. Not that the time looper has any plans to learn magic beyond paper spells. He's has too many bad experiences with magic to want to learn it out side of knowing how to counter certain spells.

Halloween

Flexing his toes, he shifts his weight from one leg to another. The home made stilts seem fine even with the modification he had done to switch out one set of goat furry leggings for a cheetah pattern with four toes at the end. He created the tail and has it connected to a very simple computer that causes it to move the tip of the tail as well as have it swish side to side. The motor that powers these actions is long and thin, allowing him to wear it like a belt around his waist.

The stilts add about a foot and a half to his over all height. A rather simple mask, one that had been inspired by the Lion King the Broadway musical. Considering what's about to run rampage this Halloween, he figured at least this way, the 'heroes' won't attack him as they can see that he's human.

Once his costume is all done up, he heads to the meeting place. The necklaces and such clink and clanked as he walked out of the house. Unsurprisingly, he's the first one to arrive. And so, he turns off the belt motor so that he can sit down without his tail moving around, getting in the way.

"Yo, Even!" Cries one of his crew and 'Even' turns to look over at the approaching knights. Each sports a furry face with markings belonging to either a badger or a raccoon. "Nice shaman get up! Funny looking way to wear a mask though." Rus adds as the lead badger takes a few second studying him.

"You're tails are look like they're about to fall off." He remarks as he stares at one of the raccoon tails that fell onto the ground. Rus and Cassie decided to be a badger while the other three picked raccoons.

Soon the remaining two arrive, both had decided to be foxes. Crissie picked the priestess robes while Vincent found himself being the magus. Crissie's coloration is white while Vincent's coloration is rusty red. Vincent sports a wand and while Crissie is the one with the staff that he had carved when he was like, nine years old in this loop.

"Nice legs, bro." Vincent remarks upon giving him a thoughtful look. "How did you get that effect with your legs?"

"Professional secret." 'Even' sums up. He then glances up at the sky, trying to judge just how much time they had until the spell takes hold.

As they head for some grocery store to load up on eggs and toilet tissue, the spell causes his crew to become rather dazed for a second or three before they straighten up to glance around in bewilderment. Soon the seven murmur among themselves before those dressed as monsters begin to attack the group.

He manages to sneak away, leaving the group to deal with what's about to go down until the spell is ended. 'Even' has another group to watch this evening and he's fairly sure that his crew will do fine.

After all, with a mage and a priestess among them, they'll stay healthy and be able to deal with whatever strange magic that gets released this night viva those that dressed up as witches and mages.

It didn't take long before he arrives at the Summer's house and finds a spot to observe it comfortably. It takes about two hours but the four he's been expecting arrives. Willow's body being carry by Buffy instead of Xander. Willow soon exits out of the house a few minutes later, likely to go find Giles.

I wonder if Angel will visit? 'Even' wonders and sure enough, cries of vampire echo out of the house. He is rather surprised to see Angel getting thrown out of the window and then the en-scrolled Buffy yells out threats as Angel runs away.

I'm going to remember this night fondly for years to come. He decides after a few minutes of recovering from what he just witnessed. Sure, he knew it was the costume talking but it had always been a dream of his to witness this.

He then glances around but nothing seems to be wrong, which means that there might not be anything out to kill him for causing Buffy to act like that to Angel. He knew that there were certain things that typically cause those on another plane to off him in rage of 'interfering' with their plans.

One of these loops I'll turn the tables on the one who keeps offing me... He mentally vows to himself as he watches the house, waiting for the spell to end so it's safe to return home.

Months Later

'Even' jerks his head as something overhead ripples. He doesn't even get the chance to cry out as a vortex opens up over his bed. As he's pulled up into the vortex along with a few other items, a voice thunders, the time looping soul quickly realizes just who's voice it was as well.

"You worm! Do you know what you've done? Angel is dead because of you! Enjoy your stay in a hell plane!" Jasmine's works echo as he travels through the vortex.

Landing upon a large rib cage, he holds his breath while looking around at his new surroundings. He manages to grab a binder that holds a few art supplies. Quickly opening it and using the brush, he crafts a paper spell for barrier upon it.

Slamming it down, a energy barrier springs to life about ten foot sphere. Expelling the breath he's been holding as soon as he finishes writing an air purifying spell, he breaths easier. He sighs, knowing that he only has so many blank pages.

Then an idea strikes him and he takes off his shirt. Painting another paper spell upon another page, he then take it and presses it onto his chest. This one is to purify the air, hopefully, it'll allow him to breath the air without any trouble.

After ten minutes, he takes the page off his chest and discovers that the spell seems to be fused with his skin. He pokes at the spot but nothing rubs off. While confused, he shakes his head as he puts the brush away before putting his shirt on.

He then tries to locate more stuff that got sucked into the vortex. He flinches as it suddenly begins to rain down glowing lights. The tiny lights didn't hurt or anything, they just seem to get absorbed within his body. *Huh... How strange, I feel a bit more energetic though.* He muses as he drops down to the ground.

He sighs in relief that a few of his daggers had passed through. It didn't take long before he has placed them upon his body. Now armed, he looks around for other things that he can make use of. He is sure not to let his thoughts drift to imagining how bit the demon had been when it was alive as such thoughts would serve no purpose.

At least I finally have an idea of who to blame for all my previous deaths... He thinks as he finally gets ready to move away from the skeleton. He's unsure if he'll make back to Sunnyhell be it by resurrecting once more in the body of another babe or in his current body.

Current Loop

Casper growls at the sight of a very familiar face, the only name he's able to use is Tai'Jynn. Unsurprisingly, Tai'Jynn doesn't spot any of the scars of their last encounter, heck, Tai'Jynn actually sports both wings! The demon seems rather taken back by his reaction for a second before the twenty foot winged demon grins in a feral fashion, mandibles clicking against each other in excitement.

Tightening his grip upon the bone handle of his newly forged sword, he take up a defensive stance while Tai'Jynn takes out only one pair of swords, leaving the other half of the set of swords in their sheaths. Casper mentally smiles at this overconfidence, the last time they faced off, he came out on top and that's when Tai'Jynn was in his prime as a mercenary.

He never did learn just how old Tai'Jynn was during their previous encounters but all of the other times had Tai'Jynn missing a wing. Tai'Jynn had been the demon that sent him to his death when Jasmine first sent him into a hell plane. He managed to live to the 'ripe' old age of thirty-one when Tai'Jynn hunted him down and brought him to that meat dealer who sold him to be feasted upon alive.

Why do I always come up against him whenever I'm in a hell dimension? Casper wonders while a few money lenders start a betting ring about who's going to kill who. The time looping soul is rather use to this behavior but Tai'Jynn typically glares at those that put money on Casper instead of Tai'Jynn.

He manages to keep his tail from twitching from side to side. As the betting dies down, a ticked off Tai'Jynn finally gives his total focus

upon Casper. *Let's see if I can manage to kill you again.* He thinks as he struggles to keep himself from moving from his position, trying to keep his limbs loose and yet ready to take a blow from Tai'Jynn's swords.

Tai'Jynn makes the first move and he hurries to block while using his tail to cause Tai'Jynn to bleed. It wasn't long before Tai'Jynn tries to use his wings to baffle Casper, not that it works as he could make out Tai'Jynn's movements in his sleep. Although his blade's edge continues to find their marks upon Tai'Jynn's body while he also deals with the few scores that his opponent manages to get in.

He manages to get behind Tai'Jynn and he slices along Tai'Jynn's spine, causing the other to scream in pain. Casper winces at how high pitched it was compared to their previous encounter. While Casper is pushed back by the wings, the human within a demon's body manages to get to the right side and beheads Tai'Jynn while Tai'Jynn tries to bring out his other set of swords.

With the death of the younger Tai'Jynn, the demons move to collect their winnings while Casper wonders if this wasn't a hollow victory since this particular Tai'Jynn just didn't have the same experiences as the previous incarnations. With a flick of his tail and a shrug from his shoulders, he moves to preform the traditional looting of one's opponent. It likely won't be long before Tai'Jynn's body gets taken away and sold by a meat dealer.

You would think that after so many encounters with him, I would be thrilled to know that I could win in a straight out fight against him. And yet... yea, not much sanctification in killing Tai'Jynn at such a young age. Casper muses to himself as he finally leaves the body alone, he has taken Tai'Jynn's swords and various hidden pouches, including the two that Tai'Jynn put within his actual body.

Hopefully our next encounter, he will be older and more experienced and then we'll know which one of us is the stronger. Casper mentally thinks before trying to figure out how much time he has in his current body before he's called back to his human one located in Sunnyhell.

To Be Continued

Wilderness Shadows 2

I don't own Naruto.

Not bad, could be better but it works. The eight year old blond commonly known as Naruto or to use his other name, Hikage. A yellow circle ringed by spikes point outward while the yin-yang image is within the circle upon this red vest. The blond uses his index finger to trace the sown pieces before putting the vest on over his washed out orange T-Shirt sporting a red painted swirl on he front.

While orange is his favorite color, him wearing red causes fearful reactions among those living in Hidden Leaf. At least when he's wearing the color. The response had caught him off guard during the supposed one time Naruto was to wear it but the boy found he privately enjoyed that reaction so has taken to wearing it more often. It also helps that yellow and orange also go with red, so at least the child got to wear those colors too.

Maybe I should continue to practice sowing... I'm sure it's easier to get cloth then getting actual made cloths from the shops. The blond thinks while turning to study what the group of water clones have been preforming in their own attempts at sowing the sun symbol upon the other jackets, hoodies, and upon certain types of pants.

Perhaps I should paint it on my shirts too? Naruto wonders as he glances at the pile of untouched shirts. With a slight hum, the blond takes out this pocket watch, he took it off a dead Uchiha while they were taking the bodies out of the Uchiha district to check the time.

The blond closes it and with a thought causes the done water clones to head for this apartment's bathroom to dispel. Naruto waits for the few remaining clones to finish up with their tasks before sending them to follow the others. The blond glances around this apartment, once again wonders why the building wasn't condemned or under

repair as while this apartment wasn't as bad as his actual one, it still has its issues.

Hmmm, if I didn't have that one plan concern faking my death, I'd give burning this place down in the hopes of getting a better place in a second. The blond thinks to himself. *It would be something to see the Third actually do something to improve my situation instead of sitting back and watching the abuse hemp up on itself.*

Is it any surprise I help found that anti-ninja group in Wilderness Shadows? Or contribute jutsus typical of used by Leaf ninja? Naruto thinks to himself. *It wouldn't be right learning what they had without adding my own jutsus to the group.*

Soon the remaining water clones finish their job and with a mental command, they head for the bathroom to dispel. With the water clones gone, Naruto heads out of the apartment and down the stairs to the main level in order to leave. He's got two hours to kill and with the system on him, Naruto knew just how he wants to spend them, but not before he's within the academy.

Hikage shakes his wings before moving from his nest in Waterfall Cliffs. The brightly colored crow moves out of the center of the next to the stone ledge. With wings half spread, Hikage falls off the ledge and as the water comes rushing up, Hikage snaps open his wings to their full length and comes out of the dive.

The crow then begins to flap his wings to raise higher into the air while heading for the usual meeting place. Hikage croaks in delight, one of his legs drops down for a second before returning to its usual spot. The crow, once high enough in the air, begins to do aerial stunts just for the fun of it.

Hikage notices movement down below and angles his body to get a closer look. As the crow gets a better view, Hikage finds a shy looking doe sporting autumn colors. The doe's head turns to face the crow, allowing Hikage to notice the bright blue eyes, the light hits

them in such a way that seems to cause them to appear to appear white.

Hikage calls out, "Nice scenery, isn't it?" The crow circles the doe, deciding not to land as the doe is a stranger and there could be any number of reasons why the doe would come here. The group lives in fear that somebody would learn what they were doing and they'd all face persecution, particularly those who live in the village that discovers them.

"Breath taking." The doe replies before add, "I hadn't known bird avatars were an option." The autumn coated doe's ears twist while the head stays in one place, likely due to the doe's eyes being on either side of the head.

"It was the first animal that came to my mind." Hikage admits. "Just about three months ago, another made a crow too." The crow adds as an after thought.

"I see." The doe replies calmly. "This whole game... It's not what I was expecting." The doe admits as the autumn colored doe moving to stand close to the ledge. "It's as though I can smell the water coming from the waterfalls..."

"I wouldn't know, crows don't have much in the way of smelling things or taste." Hikage admits before adding, "You'd be surprise at how a lot of newbies jump into the water thinking that they won't sink into it. Of course, their struggles to get out of it isn't much of a joke, particularly when the shore line is a few miles away from their spot."

The doe reacts by turning to looking to the left with ears going backward. "Do they drown?" The doe asks and the crow replies, "No."

"I see." The doe murmurs before leaning her head over the ledge, moving it towards the mists raising up from the waterfall. Hikage lands upon the ground, to the doe's right while cocking his head so he can watch the doe's reaction.

The doe giggles a bit, causing the doe to seem younger then her previous manner had portrayed her as. A beeping rings out and the crow sighs but before taking to the air, Hikage says to the doe, "Perhaps I'll see you around at a later date."

An ear flickers towards the crow and with that, Hikage takes to the air, heading back to the nest before logging out of the game.

Konoha-Aki follows the crow's flight path for a few minutes until the unusually colorful crow is out of sight. *Perhaps this game won't be a waste of time after all.* The doe muses before beginning to walk along the edge of the land island.

This land is only the third place Konoha-Aki has visited upon registering with the game. The doe had read an old notice about an anti-ninja meeting and had been curious about the place that is their meeting. The crow had been the ninth other avatar that Konoha-AKi met since entering into this game world. The crow also had been the only one to withhold their name, but then, the doe hadn't offered a name either.

It shouldn't be too hard to learn his name if what he said about there only being two crow avatars in this game. The doe muses thoughtfully to herself. Konoha-Aki's tail flickers back and forth as the doe wonders what it would be feel like to run while within this avatar body.

Finally, the doe's tail holds still just a few seconds before Konoha-Aki rears up while twisting so that the front hooves are facing towards the other end of the meadow. With ears against the skull and heart seemingly pounding, Konoha-Aki sprints forth as quick as the doe can.

It wasn't long before the doe trips and lands upon the ground in an indulgent fashion. The doe begins to laugh while moving to bring wayward legs under the doe's body. Minutes pass until the laughter

dies down, leaving Konoha-Aki feeling only slightly drained and yet, in high spirits.

"When was the last time I laughed like that?" The autumn colored doe murmurs out loud. The doe sighs before getting up off the ground. There were other lands to visit and other people to get to know, so with a flick of a tail, the doe walks over to the mushroom ring to teleport to another location.

Konoha-Aki shrugs off the thoughts of shying upon this anti-ninja group. After all, the doe reasons, there are likely just a bunch of civis needing to release their negativity in regards to ninja and their 'carefree' life style. *Besides, the Kages likely already have spies among the ranks.* Konoha-Aki thinks as the ring activates.

Gaara stares at the orb of water. The skin of the orb is the red head's chakra. The water frightens the child's demon, which Gaara comes to view as unsurprised as sand turns into mud when wet, which is really difficult to manipulate. Not that Gaara is worried about falling in, not when he knows how to walk upon it and is slowly coming to get the 'feel' of the water.

Gaara unknowingly sticks out his tongue as he pours chakra over the orb in order to create two smaller orbs. The eight year old has been at the beach for close to three weeks now and while progress has been slow in regards to him getting comfortable using water, he's enjoying the new scenery and the fact that few of the people around the port seem to be overly interested in him. As he doesn't wear a headband, none of the people knew he's capable of using chakra or that he's killed over twenty assassins.

They saw the eight year old red head as a street urchin and not their concern. Considering the usual reaction he causes back in Hidden Sand, their attitude come as something of a welcome relief. It helps that the demon within him is more interested in getting away from the ocean then in having him kill somebody.

Gaara scowls at having two uneven orbs of water but is rather relieved that he managed to keep the water together instead of splashing about like his previous efforts result in. The red head gives the two orbs a thoughtful look and then decides to see if he can't merge them together once more. The result has the smaller orb floating around within the larger one, much to his amusement.

"Wonder if I can repeat this effect?" Gaara wonders out loud while using his other hand to brush his bangs from his face. *Or substitute using water for paint... I'm sure Hikage will love to know if this control exercise could be applied to other kinds of liquids.*

In the few months that Gaara has know Hikage while being Aragane, the eight year old learnt that Hikage's got a pranking streak over a kilometer wide. The only thing that dwarfs that streak is Hikage's creativity when it comes to applying jutsus to every day use. *Which reminds me...*

A few handsigns later and a small army of water clones march into the ocean to bring back clams, oysters, and eatable kelp. He wants a change of pace then fish, lobster, and crab that he usually has his clones retrieve. With that done, Gaara heads off to go collect drift wood for a campfire, retracting what chakra he can from the two water orbs. The water orb splashes all over but Gaara didn't care.

Although, the wayward third child of the Kazekage does check this watch to see what time it is. Skeleton has something to share with the group tonight and he doesn't want to be late to learn what Skeleton has to say or think of as news.

Skeleton blinks and raises up from the ground, heading out of the earthen den. The coyote's white and black coat is slightly dirty, more from inactivity then from the den's dirt. Skeleton heads for the small pond just a few feet from the current lair that Skeleton constructed less then a month ago.

Once the dip in the water clears the dirt from Skeleton's coat, the coyote heads for the mushroom ring to head to Waterfall Cliffs. Unsurprisingly, Skeleton arrives to find Hyrda and Hyorinmaru waiting for the coyote. "Hydra. Hyorinmaru."

Skeleton nods towards the brown and green genet known as Hydra before nodding towards the water hued otter known as Hyorinmaru. "Skeleton." Hydra states as the forest coated genet flickers their tail before walking into the mushroom ring, the otter follows a second or two behind Hydra.

From what Skeleton has managed to gather from conversations with either, the coyote comes to conclude that the pair know each other outside of the game and were close. Their names has caused Skeleton to also conclude that the pair are ninja from Hidden Mist, but then, considering certain policies, it's not that odd that Mist ninja weren't happy with their village, much less who's running it.

Typically, the two switch concerning lending their knowledge of chakra control exercise, tips concerning taijutsu, genjutsu, and ninjutsu. They did seem rather interested in the current research concerning using the standard storage seal to see if one can seal a living thing using it and then release it without the being in question suffering from being sealed. *Concerning the sentiments of ninja attending these extra group activities, is it any wonder that most are looking for ways to fake their deaths?* The coyote muses as they walk out of the ring upon arriving at their destination.

I wonder how many Kages would have a heart attack if they knew that most of their genin and academy students are looking to escape military service? Skeleton muses as Hikage comes hopping towards them. Skeleton could only guess what Hikage's real position is in their village, the coyote highly doubts somebody as charismatic, sneaky, and bright as Hikage is to be a mere academy student.

Might be from a lesser village. Skeleton muses while turning to watch Hikage greet Hydra. The coyote smiles as best as a coyote can as the crow uses a wing to alter the genet's direction, heading

off to some secluded area to speak about how to manage tonight's members. Hyorinmaru soon gets called over by a group of sabers and leopard for help about some argument.

"You don't mind if I land on you're back, do you Skeleton?" The coyote looks up and within a few seconds, spies the second crow of the group, Aragane, circling over head. With a shake of a head and a few seconds later, the metallic hued crow lands upon Skeleton's back.

"So, how have you been, Aragane?" Skeleton asks as the crow leaps off of the coyote's back and lands upon the ground. Skeleton has grown rather fond the shyer of the two crow avatars as Aragane brings to the coyote's mind a certain younger sibling.

Skeleton knew that said sibling had long since erased the avatar they had used before what happened to cause their partying, but that doesn't mean that Skeleton doesn't hope to encounter them within this game. "Been good, though water is still giving me trouble. It's so difficult to get it to do what I want it to." Aragane admits.

"That might be because you're leaning towards Earth for your element." Skeleton says upon sitting down. "Have you tried any earth based jutsus?" The coyote asks and the crow shakes their head.

"I think I want to continue giving water a try before I move onto another element. It's not like I have anything better to do in the meantime." Aragane remarks before some group arrives to ask for Skeleton's help in regards to using a genjutsu to improve one's smell when they haven't bathed in a week or two.

Two hours later and those that weren't ninja or studying to be ninja begin to show up. A half an hour after everyone is settled, Hikage and Hydra greet the group. The meeting goes onto have those in attendance to tell their latest stories about why they hate ninja before calling on certain members to share their current findings about

kidnappings going on concerning goods, children, or of power shifts going on within their country.

Once all of these have been addressed, Hikage calls upon Skeleton to address the 'assembly'. Many heads turn towards the black and white coyote as said avatar moves from laying down to sitting up. "The news might surprise and horrify many of you, but what I'm about to say is true." Skeleton says slowly.

"I'm sure some of you know of the nine demons?" Skeleton asks and a few pipe in answers about the one tail and the most famous, the nine tail. "During my travels, I heard of a group looking to capture those hosting the demons."

A lot of those in attendance explode, most tossing out certain villages they don't particularly like as culprits. It takes a few minutes for Hikage and Hydra to get everyone to be silent so that the coyote could continue. "I don't know much about this group. I only heard a few Rain ninja mention this group but they seem to believe that there is a host for the nine tail demon commonly referred to as Kyuubi."

That announcement causes a lot of chaos, especially since many of those gathered still held Hidden Leaf in high regard. It takes much longer before the coyote can continue, after all, it stands to reason that some of the demon hosts manage to get their hands on this game and game system. As they have more then enough reason to hate ninjas, it stands to reason that a few were likely part of this group.

Now they've been warned. Hopefully, they will prepare for what's to come. If not, well, I'm sure the Kages will try to keep a closer eye upon their 'weapons'. Skeleton thinks while saying, "I did not get any more information from these ninja as I was more focused upon evading detection. Whether or not Hidden Rain is behind this movement doesn't matter, what does is that Hidden Leaf has lied about how the Kyuubi was defeated and can't help but wonder what else they've lied about."

Ok, so maybe Skeleton is a 'bit' sore about the order to kill his clan and the treatment of said demon container. *The boy's parents are likely regretting every sacrifice they've ever made in regards to Hidden Leaf. Their son is considered scum, not even worth being taught any way to control his massive reserve of chakra. It's doubtful the boy's education could be salvaged now or ever.* Thinks Skeleton as while envisioning Minato and Kushina with looks of contempt at Hidden Leaf.

Enjoy

Hidden Societies: Naruto

I don't own Naruto.

Two Weeks After Wave Mission

"Hey! Where do you think you're going?" Naruto pauses to glance towards the owner of the voice. The young genin points to himself while this talking cat steps out of an alleyway.

"Yes, you! Get over here before somebody sees you!" The gray pelted cat snaps who's wearing a ratty brown vest. The blond genin hurries over to the feline.

"And drop that Henge! You won't fit otherwise!" The old tom says and Naruto stiffens slightly, mind racing but it's clear from the look in the old tom's eyes is he can't spend any more time and so, Naruto transforms into the first thing that comes to mind.

The tom cat gives him just nods before turning back into the alleyway with Naruto current transformed as a off white fox sporting two tails, the usual black markings are light blue and wears an orange vest sporting the leaf symbol in white upon the back. Naruto blinks as the tom cat stands up and places his paw upon this red spot upon this stone wall.

To the genin's amazement, a portal opens in what Naruto had thought was a solid wall. Without needing much encouraging, Naruto darts through the opening, relieved that he managed to fit through and then slips upon something, causing him to slide down. The old tom come sliding down after the two tailed fox.

Just as the slide comes to an end, Naruto finds himself to be at the beginnings of some kind of under-city, only for animals then for humans. Naruto manages to get out of the way before the old tom

cat bumps into him. The current fox shaped genin stands by the rail to gaze around at the lower levels of this strange place.

"Well, well, handsome. You can grace my den anytime." A silky voice says and Naruto glances to find a black furred vixen who's also sporting twin tails with gray socks and tail tips.

"Please keep your mind out of the gutter, Akiko. This one was strolling down the street without a care in the world." The old tom says while grabbing a belt with a few small pouches.

"I'm just passing through." Naruto protests, his team is only here to grab some package then they're heading back to Hidden Leaf. Naruto's ears flicker backward as the old tom glares at Naruto.

"Then you should hurry on your way out! Haven't you noticed the lack of crows or pigeons around here? That should have been the only warning you needed!" The old tom snaps at the current genin posing as a white two tailed fox.

"Don't mind old Takahiro here. He over dramatizes things." Akiko pipes in while one of her tails brush against Naruto's noses, causing to the twelve year old to sneeze slightly. "Some new restaurant rolled into town and instead of buying their meat, they've been trapping any small beast to use for their meat dishes."

"They are serving crows?" Naruto asks in alarm and feels suddenly ill as he recalls that Sakura wanted to try the latest restaurant for tonight's supper. "How could they live with themselves?"

"Likely by keeping their hand on the money." The old tom, Takahiro remarks dryly. "Perhaps you'd like to give a tour to..."

"Ah... the humans call me Naruto but Tatsuya is what I use among my own kind." The genin says, after all, if he'd ever met up with another demon container, he just might ask for them to call him Tatsuya so it's not a lie per say.

And so, another one of Akiko's tails rub along his jaw line while the black furred vixen sways her hips while walking down the ramp. Feeling rather embarrassed, Naruto follows after the vixen. The disguised genin cocks his head to the side as he follows the vixen, wondering if she's just being a teasing or being serious.

Ah well, at least I'll get to see sights that the others won't. Maybe I might even find a Ramen vendor down here... Naruto licks his lips at the thought as Kakashi has been trying to break him of his 'addiction'. "So, how many foxes are in these parts?" Naruto asks, deciding to make conversation with the vixen, being sure to pick up his pace as he notices a few squirrels eyeing him from what looks to be a bar.

Mission: Paw Encyclopedia!

Naruto eyes the cat ears being offered. *I'm sure they'll be willing to let a fox in.* The blond genin thinks to himself before putting them on, he'll make a shadow clone once he's alone before heading to the fortress in the disguised as the two tailed white fox Tatsuya.

The blond does create a clone and then uses the replacement jutsu to appear in the surrounding forest. With a sight puff of smoke, Naruto transforms into his fox disguise but instead of wearing an orange vest with the leaf symbol, he's wearing a black vest with an image of a blue flame on the back. With a flicker of his twin tails, Tatsuya heads off towards the trail of cat scents.

The guards keep Tatsuya from entering ahead of other cats so the disguised genin is around to see his clone and team-mates approach the bridge. "Hey now! Am I going to be let in or not?" The disguised Naruto asks the guards as the last pair of cats enter.

"Ah fox?" Tatsuya hears Sakura murmurs to the others. The guards glance over at Tatsuya before waving him in, much to his relief. Standing up, Tatsuya bows to the two guards before walking pass them.

A few minutes later, alarms sound and guards rush the gate. Tatsuya watches as Sakura and Sasuke manage to get pass the rush while his clone is held at point. Tatsuya couldn't help but feel a slight headache come on at the fact that the guards continue to mistake Sakura and Sasuke for cats. *Unless this is all a set up...* Tatsuya muses while a guard frisks him.

Then, as soon as Sakura and Sasuke leave the courtyard, the cat guards apologizes to Tatsuya about his treatment, which, Tatsuya accepts. And so, Tatsuya finds his way to the mini market. "Welcome good sir! Perhaps you'd like a tour of our fair market?"

Tatsuya glances up to find a bat hanging from the welcome sign. "A generous offer but I'm merely here to say that I've visited this famous fortress." Tatsuya explains but the silver furred bat sporting brown kanji for guide upon, sniff, his font.

"Ah! But that doesn't mean you can't get the lay out of the market!" The bat says upon letting go and taking to the air. The disguised genin bobs his head while the bat bobs up and down in the air before him. "Besides, it's a free tour, although tips are appreciated!"

Tatsuya sighs before waving one of his forearms while saying, "Well then, honored bat, lead the way if you will." The bat chuckles, which is rather high pitch clicking.

"My name, honored fox, is Naoto." Naoto the bat replies. "My name is Tatsuya." The two tailed fox replies and with that, Naoto begins to take point while Tatsuya drops to all fours before following after his flying guide.

A large boom causes everyone in the market to pause, glancing in the direction of the sound. "Sounds like Itachi's younger brother is having a blast." Somebody says dryly.

"I was wondering why the guards would let humans in while they were wearing such flimsy disguises. Are you saying that it was all set

up for this younger sibling of this Itachi?" Tatsuya asks while Naoto drops to the ground.

"Aliyah! Of course! You think we can't sniff a human out if we put half a mind to it? Just because we're not famed for our noses doesn't mean we can't smell the differences between a human and one of our own!" Grumbles one of the cats around Tatsuya.

Well, you learn something new everyday. If Itachi set this up years ago for Sasuke, then, does this mean that Itachi never meant to kill Sasuke? If Itachi cared back then about Sasuke, then what changed? The transformed Naruto wonders to himself as Naoto is in the air once more and everybody returns to their business.

Soon, Naoto begins to point out the various sights and Tatsuya puts the mission out of his mind, confident that his shadow clone has fulfilled his position until he gets out of the fortress.

After Kazekage Rescue Arc

"How did you talk me into this?" Gaara wonders while Naruto just rolls his eyes. "Particularly, how do you expect them not to realize that you left a shadow clone as my replacement?" The red head asks the blond as Naruto pulls Gaara into an abandon building.

"Shh!" The blond hisses at the Kazekage of Hidden Sand. "You do know how to do a Henge jutsu, don't you?" Naruto asks after a moment's thought and then narrows his eyes at Gaara gives him a blank look.

"Oh for the love of... Just do these hand signs while thinking of an animal!" The blond genin from Hidden Leaf says and does the Henge jutsu handsigns slowly to give Gaara an idea of what signs to make before a puff of smoke erupts and vanishes to reveal Naruto in his fox disguise, Tatsuya.

Gaara stares down at the white furred fox for a few seconds before preforming said jutsu. Tatsuya's ears go back at the sight of a

primary red furred tanuki sporting green markings and a mini gourd upon the back. "Ok, just follow my lead. By the way, call me Tatsuya too." Tatsuya says before heading to the next building's basement.

The basement smells overwhelmingly of feline and bird. Slipping through the window, Tatsuya waits for the tanuki to come down before heading for the secret gate. Standing upon his back legs, Tatsuya presses three seemingly random spots and the brick wall begins to moving inwards before parting.

Beckoning the tanuki forward, Tatsuya waits until Gaara is pass him before entering as well. Gaara stops before the ramp leading down and gives Tatsuya a look before heading down the ramp. Tatsuya shakes his head and pats the pouch upon the belt around his waist to be sure that he's got money for the bar the disguised genin is taking the Kazekage to.

Dropping down upon all fours, Tatsuya walks about two feet behind the red tanuki with green markings. Twin tails move up and down independently of each other. About ten feet down into the ground, the ramp opens up to reveal the tops of buildings and another five feet before the ramp comes to an end.

"Pretty neat set up, huh?" Tatsuya asks his companion. "The bar isn't far from this entrance." The disguised genin adds while taking point. A bewildered Gaara follows after after a few seconds.

About three blocks from that entrance stands the Man-Eater, a bar run by a weasel. Behind the counter is a black furred squirrel while the four waitresses are a ferret, ground squirrel, and a cat. "Are all the back rooms filled up?" Tatsuya asks as he places a coin upon the counter.

The bartender signals for one of the waitresses to attend to them after taking the coin from the counter. "This way, gentle beasts." The ground squirrel says, motioning for them to follow.

Once they're in a room, Gaara the tanuki asks, "What is this place?" Tatsuya takes a seat upon one of the couches instead of answering.

"I wondered that myself, actually, a few years back. Some old tom hissed for me to come to him and then told me to drop my Henge. Not knowing what else to do, I Henged into the first animal that came to mind." Tatsuya says while picking up one of the menus.

"You know how animals sometimes teach themselves how to use chakra and to speak human?" Tatsuya asks while looking at the lists for beverages. "Well, a lot more animals do so then what show themselves to humans. And guess what? Some of those pair off with others who did so and their children could follow in their parents' paw prints and so on until you got countless generations do so."

"So they build places like this under the noses of humans?" Gaara muses and Tatsuya nods. "Just how many places are there like this?" Gaara asks.

"It depends more upon how the country. Fire Country has two thirds of their cities and towns sporting these kind of places while in some countries, maybe one eight of the cities and towns sporting them. The more proven to civil war a country is, the less you'll find refuges like this." Tatsuya answers.

"And you generally use this particular disguise to walk among these places?" Gaara asks and the fox nods with a shrug. "Why not? I mean, they do have members who go around pretending to be human, so why not a human pretending to be one of them? Of course, you really got to watch out, these women are very different then human women."

"Meaning...?" Gaara asks and Tatsuya lowers his menu to give the disguised Kazekage a fox equivalent to a raised eyebrow. "..."

"They got fangs and claws, they're not shy about using them if they don't like your pursue. Although, they can be very persistent when it comes to a male they like." Tatsuya finally explains.

The waitress arrives with a grilled fish appetizer and takes their drink orders. Tatsuya places a few coins to ensure that they keep their privacy before picking up one of the wooden skewers that has diced fish and veggies speared upon it. Gaara follows suit after seeing Tatsuya taking a few bites from his.

"You know, I've never visited a bar before." Gaara admits after the waitress brings them their drink orders. "Oh, I've been in them to grab wayward ninja, but never really to sit down and relax in one before." Gaara explains. "I kind of like this."

"Yea, well, bars like this one typically have up to fifteen back rooms. Considering their senses, can't really blame them. The most human bars have is one, three if they're owners are rich enough." Tatsuya admits. "I should know, Pervy Sage spent a lot of time in them."

"At least you got trained." Gaara murmurs while picking up his fourth skewer. "All I know how to use my chakra for is to control sand."

"Bummer. You know, I'm sure I can teach you the shadow clone jutsu. We both have more chakra then some kage level ninja out there. Maybe that way, you'll be able to spend time looking through jutsu scrolls and practicing them." Tatsuya muses. "I sure as hell plan to use them when I become Hokage." The disguised genin pauses before saying in a low voice, "Although, I've been working on a seal array that's suppose to mimic the brain part of shadow clone jutsu. If it works out properly then this brain array will not only read and sign the stuff, but send it to where it needs to go."

"That sounds like it could be very useful seal array, for office work at least." Gaara admits and Tatsuya's ears flicker backward. Tatsuya takes a sip from his clay cup before continuing.

"Don't you mean it could be useful in spying upon an enemy's office. I mean, I've figured out how to get it to copy what's in its box, but it's getting the seal array to think about what it's looking at that's the problem. Sure I can have it on sign, but then, it doesn't really read what its signing, which is rather useless as the document could be

some sneaky law about cutting the influence of your office upon the village or it could be some clan looking to block out a rival family from some business." Tatsuya says.

"Heck, do you really think about any of the paperwork that passes through your office? It must get fairly tiring work, reading scroll after scroll. A lot of it likely blurs together." Tatsuya muses. "Privately, if you got enemies within the village, what better way to keep you busy then generating paperwork for you to go through? They then know where you are and what you're doing, they might as well chain you to the desk!"

The tanuki slowly nods while taking a sip out of his own clay cup. The waitress comes back with another plate of fish skewers. With more food upon the table, they change the topic to something, less personal and threatening. They spoke of policies of their respected countries, comparing the laws of their land against each other, then discussing laws they both find rather bizarre while they continue to drink and eat.

Finally, after a good three hours, Tatsuya and Gaara were ready to return to Hidden Sand. Tatsuya is sure to add a few extra coins as a tip as they stagger out of the room. Once they're out upon the street, Tatsuya manages to get directions to head upside.

By the time they're out of the underground city, Tatsuya is sure to teleport them both back to Gaara's house. The Henges get cancel as they stagger into Gaara's room. Naruto did wonder if its such a good idea to let Gaara doze, but figured that without a certain demon, Gaara sleeping wasn't going to cause an uproar.

Leaving Hidden Sand

"Just where did you two go to get smashed?" Sakura shouts, which causes Naruto to wince. The blond might not have a hang over but he's still rather sleepy.

"We just went to a bar in disguised. Besides, Gaara's never been in one and I thought it was time for him to experience one." Naruto says while the rest of the ninja of their party remain silent. *Sure as hell doubt you'd believe just what ran the bar, let alone the fact that they're stuff is superior to anything you'd find in most bars.*

This is going to be a long trip back, isn't it? Naruto thinks while Sakura harps upon why he shouldn't have taken the Kazekage of Hidden Sand out to a bar. *Is it too late to give up my human life and live the rest of my years as Tatsuya?*

The End

To Readers: I was watching Sasuke's Paws Encyclopedia when I thought this story up. I can't help but notice that some beasts in Naruto's world seem to learn how to speak, these beasts also typically know how to use chakra. So, I decided that breeding between two of these speaking, chakra using animals could, in time, result or already have resulted in some hidden cities build strictly for themselves. I'm sure some of you have seen the episode Animal District, which kind of introduces this kind of idea.

Digimon Side Adventures 1

I don't own Digimon.

Interesting... Thinks a young Gigimon while staring down at this odd being who's kind of like a humanoid Digimon. The crimson in-training Digimon moves away from the head to check and see if the strange not-Digimon is bleeding from another point.

Other then sporting rips and mud upon the green cloths, nothing seems to hint that the being is bleeding from another spot other then their head. Gigimon glances around before moving to the not-Digimon's side and tries to roll them upon their back. Gigimon gets a better look at the head injury.

Gigimon sits frowns and rips some cloth off to put it by the bleeding spot and tries to keep it pressed upon the wound. After a few minutes, the not-Digimon groans and opens their eyes, revealing blue eyes with an unfocused look in them. "Mom?" The not-Digimon croaks out before falling back into unconsciousness.

Suddenly, a flutter of wings signal the aerial arrival of a Digimon. Gigimon glances around and finds a pair of Angemon accompanying a Seraphimon. Gigimon gulps at the sight and while the in-training Digimon does so, one of the Angemon says, "What shall we do with it, sir?"

"Bring him along. Gigimon clearly is concerned about the human." The mega muses after a few seconds, causing the crimson in-training Digimon to jerk a bit while the spoken Angemon replies, "Yes sir."

Suddenly, the not-Digimon and Gigimon are engulf in a light as the two Angemon hold out their hands. The light causes the two of them to raise in the air. The three holy types take to the air with the human

child and Gigimon floating after them. Gigimon clings to the not-Digimon's chest.

What's a human? Gigimon wonders upon recalling what the mega Digimon had said about bringing him along. Gigimon spends much of the trip thinking and having his imagination go into overdrive. After a long time, a castle comes into view and Gigimon comes out of his thoughts at the sight.

A patrol of Pegasusmon and Nefertimon come to greet the mega and his escorts. *What's so important about the not-Digimon? Will they heal him?* Gigimon wonders as they land upon a balcony and a group of ultimate holy types come to greet the mega while a Gatomon comes over while wearing a sling.

"Move!" The white champion snaps at the young Digimon. Gigimon jerks away while the champion begins to inspect the make shift bandage that Gigimon made. Gigimon just stands off to the side and watches in bewilderment at the Gatomon's actions. *Why not have one of the more evolved Digimon use their healing programs upon him?* Gigimon wonders.

"How is the human?" Asks Seraphimon to the Gatomon currently attending to the human. Gigimon notices the number of those surrounding them and quickly moves to the human's side while the digital cat Digimon reports.

Gigimon didn't really get much out of the report of the human's injuries, only that the human will be fine with some rest and food. The master of the castle, Seraphimon then orders that they'll be taken to a room. One of the Angemon causes them raise up off the floor and they're taken through various halls and stairwells until they stop before a set of doors.

Once they're hovering over the bed, they are lowered down. The Angemon leaves the room, closing the door behind them. Gigimon glances around the room before glancing at the hurt human. "I hope you get well." A brief pause. "Still, I don't see what's the fuss is over

you being human." Gigimon says to the resting human before snuggling next to the human's side and falling asleep.

"I hope you get well." Who's that? "Still, I don't see what's the fuss is over you being human." What are you talking about? If I'm human, what are you? He shifts a bit, before opening his eyes.

His vision is hazy but as he blinks his eyes, they clear. His body aches and he's got a massive headache. He turns his head and finds sunlight coming in from the window. "Morning! Although, it's more like lunch though..."

He blinks at the sight of this red plushie toy speaking to him and blinking their yellow eyes. "Hungry?" The same toy asks him.

"Starved." He replies with a frown. His mouth is rather dry and he adds, "What are you?"

"Me? A Digimon." The creature that looks like a stuff toy replies. "So, you're a human, huh? What kind of special attacks do you possess?" The Digimon asks him and he can't help but stare at the crimson Digimon.

"Huh? What are you talking about? Special... attacks?" He replies but before the red Digimon could form a reply, the door opens and into the room walks an angel.

"Here, let me help you sit up." The angel says and he gets a good view of the angel's pink cloths. The angel kind of reminds him of someone... someone important but thinking about it only makes his head hurt worse.

The pink robed angel then puts the tray with the soup upon his lap. "Thanks." He says as he takes the spoon from the tray to begin eating the soup.

"Not a problem at all. I'll be back in an hour to take it away." The angel says upon putting down a bowl containing a fruit salad upon

the bed, right where the red Digimon is standing. "Thanks!" The Digimon cries out before beginning to eat the salad.

"You're really weird." He can't help but say at the sight of the Digimon enjoying the large bowl. The creature's tail wagging back and forth, he shake his head and begins to eat his soup.

The Digimon finishes his salad long before he manages to finish his soup. He had to pause at times since his hand would ache and he's switch to his bad one. In the end, he picks up the bowl and drinks it as soon as he is sure it's not too hot.

"So... am I in heaven?" He asks the red creature sharing his bed. Yellow eyes blink up at him looking throughly puzzled.

"Heaven? Oh! No, we're just in Seraphimon's castle. We were brought here two days ago. You must have hit your head really hard since you were bleeding heavily from your head. I kind of ripped your shirt to try and stop the bleeding."

"Oh..." He murmurs and lifts a hand to feel the head bandage. "Ah... we never met, have we?" He asks as the Digimon invokes familiarity to him.

"No, heck, before I found you, I didn't even know humans existed!" The crimson Digimon says before cocking their head to the side. "So... You got a name I can call you by? Gigimon is what I go by, at least until I evolve."

"Name?" He murmurs before frowning while trying to think of not just his name but his memories of what happened to him. "I... I don't remember." He says with fright. "I don't remember who I am!" His voice raise up in panic.

"Hey, hey, hey! Calm down! Just cause you don't remember now doesn't mean you won't later!" Gigimon cries out while moving to stand on his legs. "There are plenty of ways to recover memories!

So... just... calm... down." Gigimon states and as trying to move quickly causes him pain, he reluctantly remains upon the bed.

He takes deep, calming breaths and his vision slowly returns to what it once was. "You going to be ok?" The crimson body of Gigimon comes to stand by his face with a worried look.

"No. No I'm not!" He says with tears beginning to well up in his eyes. His headache is becoming unbearable and his sense of balance is like it doesn't even exist. It wasn't long before he's cuddling with Gigimon while he's crying. Gigimon is saying smoothing things and, after a while, he finds himself drifting off to sleep.

"Reizo! What's over that ridge?" He calls out to the Guilmon that's already at the top of the hill.

"Just floating rocks in a great chasm like that pack of Gabumon had said we would find. The cavern is likely somewhere close to the magma." Reizo replies while looking over to him.

That pack sure wasn't kidding when they mentioned seeing liquid fire. He thinks upon gazing within the great chasm. "Impressive, eh Maro?" Reizo the Guilmon says, nudging him gently in the side.

"Rather beautiful, in a dangerous kind of way." He says while glancing at the floating islands of rock. "There's some crystals down there." He says as he gesturing to a stone pillar that's real close to the sluggish magma. "The vault has to be on our side." He adds as he turns to glance almost straight down from where he's standing.

"Makes you wonder what kind of artifact could do something like this, huh?" Reizo muses while the rookie moves to the edge of the ridge and glances downwards as well. "We'd get a better view if we climb down to that ledge, although I won't know what we'd do for food and water."

"We'll collect what supplies we can tomorrow and the day after that before we begin to climb down." He decides. "I've waited five years to find this fruit tree, I can wait a few extra days." He fingers the thin, plastic red bracelet sporting a half an inch coin.

Glancing over to the Guilmon, he studies the matching item that binds them together, a green necklace about Reizo's neck with a larger device hanging down from the plastic band that makes up the chain. His coin sports the symbol that's on Reizo's chest while Reizo's coin sports the symbol that means Hope in the various Digital Worlds. The coins allows him to channel energy into Reizo, allowing the crimson Digimon to Digivolve up to his ultimate stage of WarGrowlmon.

"So, we're camping here or back down there?" Reizo asks him and he glances around the ridge before glancing back down the trail that sports a meadow and a few berry bushes. "Might be safer to camp in the meadow." The Guilmon murmurs after a few seconds of looking at the meadow.

He nods in agreement although he does find a spot to sit down before walking back down. "Just give me a few minutes to rest. We have traveled a long way, after all." He says to his friend.

"Sounds good to me." Chimes Reizo and the rookie Digimon takes off the pack he's been carrying to eat a berry loaf that's likely already going bad. He watches Reizo's actions fondly, still amazed that they've been together for little over five years.

They had their share of arguments, certainly, but they remain together throughout whatever has been thrown at them or placed before them. For their first year together, they believed that his memories would come back on their own. Then they spent the year after that one studying up on various methods Digimon have used to recall their previous life before they reformatted as eggs.

Finally, the last three years have been them chasing down leads. They've located various artifacts and respected Digimons, they didn't

do much other then prove that some methods were only meant to be used on Digimon. *This tree though... It's ancient so perhaps it'll be able to restore my memories.*

While no longer feeling as empty as he once had, he couldn't help but wonder. The wondering is sometimes the reason why he can't sleep some nights. He looks away from Reizo to look up at the sky.

"Ready?" The Guilmon asks and he nods as he brings his gaze back down. He hikes up his pack before getting off the rock.

They walk back down the trail in silence with a few insect type Digimon flying over head.

Four Days Later

"Oh look, a Birdramon." He couldn't help but say dryly from his position above Reizo. "So, how much do you want to bet that they're the vault's guardian?"

"Oh please, there's no takers for that one." Reizo pipes in while the fire bird champion Digimon let's out another screech. A spot about two feet over head is where the champion Digimon's attack hit, making him glad that he has yet to grow during his stay here in this world. *It also allows Reizo to carry me when I get tired of walking around too.* He muses while Reizo and him begin to hurry their pace downwards.

Reizo fires off a few attacks at some of those floating rocks, causing them to ram into the angry champion Digimon. Birdramon shakes those off rather quickly but the lower they go, the larger the floating islands of rock there are. Many of them interfere with the guardian's attempts at getting at them.

Suddenly, the rock he's griping comes loose and he begins to fall, only for Reizo to snag him out of the air. He quickly finds new holds upon the rocky wall so that the crimson rookie could let go of him. They also begin to notice crystals upon the bottom of the various

floating islands and he risks a glance down to find a large ledge made totally out of crystal.

"I think we should just fall." He says. "Yea, well, good call as we've got incoming!" Shouts Reizo and he doesn't even look, he mostly feels the impact of the incoming floating islands that Birdramon sent at their position.

They fall just a foot before the raining wall face. Reizo quickly moves to cover him as that rock rains down, shielding him nicely from the rocky debris. Without a word, Reizo collects him up and bolts for the entrance of the vault.

After a few moments, Reizo lets him down and he brushes his cloths off. As he finishes, Reizo has a torch going, lighting up the crystal passage fairly nicely. "Hopefully, there's another way out then that one." Reizo grumbles and he nods in agreement as they walk down the tunnel.

A few miles in and they arrive before a massive gate that's seen better days. There are cracks large enough to them to slip through the metal door. "Wow... That's one huge tree." Reizo murmurs, they're standing more then a few kilometers from said tree and they can't see the top of it.

"That must be that dimensional gate." He says as he squints at the base of the tree. "Not sure if it's in one piece though, not with the tree being so close to it." He remarks.

"Well, look on the bright side, at least we got hover boards now." Reizo says after causing dust to raise from picking up a flat carved disk. The disk sluggishly begins to glow white before Reizo would let go of it, it hovers about a foot in the air.

He steps onto it with a grin and with both feet upon the flat surface, a compass design flares up with him at the center of it. "A rather old design." He muses while Reizo picks up another for his own use.

With each of them upon a hover disk, they raise a few feet height into the air before they fly over the rest of the collection that stands between them and the tree. They weren't here for anything besides the fruit from that tree, at least until they learn if the fruit will restore his memory, then they might take a look at the collection that's stored away within this vault.

Upon reaching the tree, he raises up to one of the branches with Reizo following suit. As he studies various examples of the fruit, Reizo muses, "Hmmm... If my nose is working right then none of these are ripe."

He glances over to Reizo but before he could form a reply, a woman's voice says in a soft tone, "You're friend is correct. None of the fruit on the outer branches are ripe." Glancing sharping at the sound, they find a ghostly image of a temple priestess.

"Though, I must admit, I had not yet had the pleasure to meet a human child before." The ghostly priestess bows at him, causing him to feel embarrassed. "Though I am rather puzzled as to why you wish to eat one of my ripen fruit."

"I have amnesia." He confesses after a second. "We're hoping that eating one of your fruits will restore my memories." He adds and the ghostly priestess studies him for a few minutes.

The priestess' gaze drops to his red plastic bracelet that sports the coin. "I take it this Guilmon isn't your actual partner then? No Digivice manifested even after all the time you have spent together?" The digital image asks and they could only nod.

The ghostly priestess' eyes soften and she brushes her hand upon his left cheek. "I fear that upon eating this fruit, you may forget your time in this world as well as be transported back to your own world. It is not uncommon for Digimon from other dimensions to lose their memory upon arriving to this one. If they continue to be dissatisfied with their time in this world, they would come to me and eat of my fruit." The ghostly image says and he swallows upon hearing that,

particularly as he really doesn't want to forget about his time with Reizo or what he's learnt during his time in this world.

"But he's human, right? Doesn't that mean that perhaps, just a thought mind you, that there is a chance he could remember?" Reizo asks and the priestess looks thoughtful.

"There is that, but it would likely be your presence that would spark his memory. It is rather doubtful that you'll be able to follow him." The ghostly priestess explains. "And he is needed in his world. He has a destiny to fulfill and you are not a part of it."

"And yet, here I am. I helped to bring him here and thus, I have helped him to return to that destiny." Reizo huffs, folding his arms over his chest. "Sure, he could have befriend another Digimon but I'm the one that's here with him in the here and now." The Guilmon states and he smiles, everyone always said that Reizo didn't act like a typical Guilmon and the looks upon their faces upon realizing it always proved to be rather humorous, this ghost priestess isn't the exception either.

"You are rather odd for your species. You sound more like a Gallantmon then a Guilmon." The ghostly priestess muses after recovering from Reizo's out burst.

"Could I please get a fruit?" He asks, swallowing before he asked that. His mind a whirl of questions to ask this being about this destiny he's to be returning to, but couldn't pin down one long enough to think of asking it.

And so, the priestess image guides them to the center of the tree. The fruit hanging upon this part sparkles with the torch light upon it. He pauses and glances over to Reizo, but the rookie just gives him a half smile while sporting a look of sorrow.

Turning away and fighting the urge to cry, he takes hold of one of the large fruit and yanks on it, successfully snapping it off after two

minutes of yanking upon it. *Bye, Reizo...* He thinks before biting down upon the fruit.

Bye, Maro. Reizo thinks as a sparking glow engulfs the human child. Within seconds, even the fruit that Maro had taken a single bite out of vanishes. Soon, only the crimson rookie and the ghostly image of a fictional priestess remains.

"How odd..." Murmurs the image and Reizo glances to find that only a pack remain upon the hover disk that Maro had stood upon. Then looking back at the hovering image, the rookie Digimon realizes where the tree's consciousness is looking.

Reizo's hand claw goes to the coin hanging from the necklace about the Guilmon's neck. "That should have fallen off... I don't sense his bracelet with the belongings either..." The digital image muses and Reizo smiles slightly as the rookie realizes what that means.

Till we meet again, Maro. The red rookie Digimon thinks while moving forward to collect the fallen pack. "Is it alright if I stick around here and take a look at what else the vault houses?" Reizo asks the projection.

"Guilmons are viral types..." Guilmon? "What's wrong with viruses?" Plenty things are wrong with them. "They have a tenancy to be rather territorial." That's putting it lightly. The garden is unbelievably beautiful but he can't see every detail clearly. Not even his companion with whom he is speaking to.

"They have a hard time letting go of those they regard as theirs." "Well, I guess I'm not much better then. He's become my dearest friend. I can't imagine my life without him." Did I really say that? He struggles to see whom he's talking to, the voice suggests a woman, almost like Angewomon but different.

"If you truly feel like that, then here. These will allow you to channel energies from yourself into Reizo so that he may achieve his higher

evolutions." Reizo? He can almost feel the weight of something dropping down upon his hand. *That's that bracelet!*

"What you got there?" "Something to help us on our quest. Guess they're to symbolize our friendship since I'll be able to help you Digivolve." "Its not like we'll run into much trouble. It shouldn't take us more then a few weeks to find Wisemon." Wisemon? He knew the scenery has changed as he can see this particular Digimon with ease.

The Digimon is red with a white belly that sports black markings that were dead on for the symbol upon the coin that's on the bracelet. The Digimon towers over him and as the Digimon looks down at him, he sees yellow eyes and ears oh so similar as Patamon's own. *Has to be a champion.* He thinks, although, he feels as though it's not correct.

"Hey look! Mine's becoming green and sporting this sun raise or is it setting symbol?" He watches as the white plastic becomes red and the coin's surface glow as the metal raises up until the symbol from the red Digimon's chest is on the coin. *"I guess a little piece of me for you to carry around, huh?" "Guess so, Reizo, guess so."*

"TK! Wake up!" Patamon says while hopping up and down upon his chest. For a half a second, he thought of a small red Digimon was hopping upon and down on his chest.

"I'm up, I'm up!" He murmurs before yawning and sitting up. He's careful to scoop Patamon up before he sits up. He shakes his head before glancing at his clock. He yawns once more before turning to get off his bed, he puts Patamon down before he stands up.

"TK... You were struggling in your sleep again." The orange rookie says and he sighs, his hand going to the red plastic bracelet that he saw in his dreams. Ever since that adventure in America, he has been plagued by strange dreams, last night's dream is the first time that he's hear a complete conversation and saw at least one of his dream companions as well.

"Patamon... Have you ever heard of a Guilmon?" He asks after a few seconds of silence. He fingers the coin, his thumb moving over the surface of it.

"Not really. Why?" Patamon asks him and he stares at his dresser, not really seeing it as he brings to his mind the red Digimon he had been talking to before waking up.

"I was talking to somebody about Guilmon type Digimon. Then, before you woke me, I was talking to one." He informs his partner. What he didn't say is that Guilmon is a virus type or that for some odd reason, the Digimon goes by the name Reizo.

He continues to stare down at the bracelet and then, puts it on while Patamon says, "Maybe we can have Izzy ask Gennai about this species of Digimon." He nods as he moves to get out of his PJs.

Once dressed, he's sure to check his school bag to see if his homework is in it. He checks his desk calendar to see if any scheduled tests for the day. "You want to spend the day here or hanging around the school?" He asks his friend and partner.

"School since that's where the others will be." Patamon says while coming to land upon his shoulder. For a brief moment, he feels rather ashamed about the fact that the Digimon don't have much to do during their school day. *It must be boring having to stay out of sight and only get to watch us instead of being with us...*

"TK?" Patamon asks questioningly, startling him a bit. "Sorry, it just struck me how boring you guys must be while we're attending class." He explains as he brushes his bangs into his hat before leaving the room.

"Yea, it kind of is but at least we know you're safe." The orange rookie replies while taking to the air and following him to the kitchen for something to eat. It wasn't long before he's got an omelet cooking on the stove while he's getting some plates out for them to use.

For a moment, he studies Patamon while mentally seeing his partner's mega form, Seraphimon. *"So... am I in heaven?" "Heaven? Oh! No, we're just in Seraphimon's castle. We were brought here two days ago. You must have hit your head really hard since you were bleeding heavily from your head. I kind of ripped your shirt to try and stop the bleeding."* He looks away from Patamon while wondering where that came from while a hand of his moves to his forehead, almost expecting to feel a bandage.

Jerking his hand away, he hurries to the stove to get the omelet. He flips it before turning the element off. After about a minute, he takes the pan off the element and while walking over to the table, cuts the omelet in half. He puts one half on the plate before Patamon and the other on his own. He takes the pan to the stove and puts it on one of the elements he hadn't used before returning to the table to eat his breakfast.

Soon they finished their breakfast and once the plates are in the sink, Patamon gets into his back pack. With his keys, he locks the door but even as they reach the elevator, this minor headache seems to be blooming into something more. Flashes of scenes and of book pages often obscure his vision, making it hard for him to focus on what's happening around him.

A dull splashing of waves slowly becomes louder. His sense of balance fades and everything around him vanishes. As he blinks, he finds himself standing before a beautiful ocean. He looks off from shore but glances down when he feels something pulling on his shirt.

He can't help but be alarmed at the sight of an eight year old version of himself, only dressed very differently then he usually dressed. "You can't be me..." He murmurs but the young blond merely looks bemused.

"I'm complied from the memories of the five years we spent with Reizo in a different dimension." The child with oddly old eyes explains. "I woke when you were de-aged in that confrontation in America. You can call me Maro."

"Maro?" He muses and the child replies, "Amnesia. Couldn't go around being called human, you know."

"You said we spent five years... How come you're not older then eight years?" He asks, suddenly suspicious of the child.

"Just how many months did you spend in that one Digital world before time between the two became synchronized? How come you didn't age during those few months?" Maro counters and he never thought of it like that.

"Who knows, if you spend a whole year in the Digital World, maybe you'd find your growth stunted. There likely haven't been many studies of the effects of a human living for years in the Digital World." The child states calmly and he sighs.

"So now what?" He asks the boy and Maro simply says, "Now, we wake up for we are whole."

His eyes flutter and finds a concerned Cody standing over him as he hears Yolei saying something to someone. "How long was I out?" He asks the youngest Digidestine of the new group as he moves to sit up.

"You shouldn't move, TK." Cody cautions him but he does so anyway. "It was just a delayed effect of what happened back in America. I'm fine." He tells Cody, giving Cody a slight smile.

Not that Yolei would have any of that since as he moves to stand, it seems that Yolei finished with her call and is already ordering him to lay back down on the ground. He tries to reassure them that he's ok and just has a minor headache, but Patamon joins Yolei about him needing to go to the hospital.

How troublesome. He couldn't help but think while rubbing his thumb over the coin upon his bracelet. *It's not as though they'll find anything wrong... Knowing the others, they'll want Izzy to take try something to find out what's wrong.* He thinks to himself.

After School

He can't help but find himself to be rather bored. The doctors want to keep him overnight to be sure that he won't have a relapse and a rather worried Matt had shown up around lunch but had to leave soon after to return to school. He almost wished he had taken his older brother up on his offer to grab him a book from the store as he became rather bored playing games on his D-Terminal and listening to the music he has on his phone before being told to turn it off.

Currently, his dad is speaking with a doctor about the results from the tests that already got completed and there's nothing on television that he wants to watch. His father had showed up with a can of soda and a candy bar before heading off to get the run down from which ever doctor he could find. There had been an E-Mail from the others saying they can't come as there's an emergency in the Digital World but he did get one from Sora saying she'll be over as she doesn't have practice after school.

He glances over to where he can hear soft snores from his partner Digimon and friend. He had given his lunch to Patamon as he didn't feel that hungry. *At least one of us can nap.* He thinks fondly with a slight smile upon his lips.

He presses deeper into the pillows and mentally reviews his memories of those five years while being Maro. He wonders what Reizo's been up to since they parted and if Reizo has or hasn't been reformatted. It kind of hurt to think that so many years have passed that Reizo has likely became a mega or died in a battle.

"I wonder what would happen if..." He trails off with a frown but that train of thought is totally dismissed when Sora arrives. He sighs in relief, finally, somebody he can visit with and perhaps, confide in.

"Sora!" He says with a grin. "How has your day been?" He asks as she drops her bag next to his back pack in which contains his sleeping partner.

"Good to see you too, TK." Sora says as she moves to sit on the other chair. "It's been rather typical, although I can see you're bored already."

"Stir crazy." He agrees. "I should have taken Matt up on his offer to grab me a novel or something from the gift shop." He admits. He then begins to think of a way to tell Sora of his time in that other Digital World, although speaking about it in the hospital might be a bit too public for his liking...

The End

An Owl's Human: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter.

November 1st

"Why are they leaving him there like that? I mean, your humans didn't want them left there, at this address!" He says to his mother while stretching out his wings every so slightly. "Can't we do anything?" He asks but his mother merely clicks her beak while looking away.

"Humans, even magical humans, do the strangest things for the strangest reasons, Talan." His mother answers finally. "I know you had hopes of claiming Harry as your human, but it's likely you'll never see him after tonight." He glances sharply over at his mom, feathers raising up in alarm.

"But after what happened, shouldn't there be post to be delivered to him?" He asks while focusing on causing his feathers to sleek down. His mom takes to the air and he glances back towards the young human before following as best as he can, he's yet to be fully mature.

"That breaded one set up wards to keep Harry's post from getting to him, my son. It's best to move on and set your sights on another magical human." His mom states.

As they fly away, he can't help but vow to himself, *I'll be back. I'll find his post and if I can't deliver it straight to that house, then I'll deliver it when he's out of it.*

Five Years Later . . .

He screeches as one of the furry menaces tenses, ready to pounce. With his wings spread out, he gets ready to leap into the air. A

growling echos behind him and just as the feline before him pounces, a human shouts, **"Go on! Get!"**

The cat's bolt away and he relaxes to turn to look over at the human he's waited years to meet again. He straightens and screeches meaninglessly at Harry and the six year old pauses before turning to look at him with a baffled expression. He hopes off the rather large package he managed to steal from a tower room at a certain magic school. Moving behind it, he uses his head to nudge it towards Harry, cooing as best as a barn owl could.

Unfocused eyes squint at the package. **"It this for me?"** Harry asks and he says, "Yes!" He bobs his head up and down.

Harry bites his lower lip but the child does pick up the package. He watches as Harry softly reads the address upon the package before opening it up. **"There's a letter and... But I'm not allowed to..."** He cocks his head in a questioning manner but Harry begins to read the letter without much encouragement, even though the six year old stumbles over words or a turn of speech.

"But my parents... they never died like that, did they?" Harry wonders and he looks away from the young human. **"If I don't eat these now, I'll never get to eat them... Not with Dudley stealing my food, not sure why he does it, he's got more in his lunch kit then I do..."** Harry grumbles after a few minutes of silence.

Harry moves into the small alley and begins to dig into the chocolate eagerly. He hops after the boy and then, seeing enough room, leaps to perch upon Harry's leg. The boy turns his emerald eyes to him and swallows what's in his mouth before speaking, this time, addressing him. **"Don't you need to go return to your owner?"**

He clicks his beak and fluffs his feathers. After a few seconds, Harry quickly wipes his hand upon his pants before reaching out to touch him. He regards the out stretched hand gently grips the out stretch index finger with his beak for a few seconds and then releases it. It

takes a minute before Harry gathers his courage and touches his breast with said index finger.

He half closes his eyes as Harry continues to stroke his breast feathers. It wasn't long before Harry returns to eating the rest of the package. Then, Harry just sits there, looking at the letter once more. **"This letter... it's rather old, isn't it? Why didn't it get delivered the day it got sent out?"** Harry wonders and he clicks his beak a bit before preening.

"I don't suppose... I mean, it's rather foolish..." He turns to regard Harry's face. *He wants to know if there's more like that one.* He realizes and with a screech, he leaps into the air, determined to wrestle another parcel or even a few letters from that room.

"Where are you going? You'll be back, won't you?" Harry cries out and he shouts, "I'll be back! Just you wait!"

It doesn't take long to arrive at Hogwarts, not with certain magics placed upon him to help speed him along to deliver mail and the like. None of the owls or crows seem incline to do anything more then give him a glance. He lands upon the ledge sporting an opening large enough for him to fit through.

Once within the stone walls of the school, he flies through the halls, none noticing his passage at all. *Owls are known for their silent flight after all. If I were any other kind of bird, I'd be heard flapping my wings within minutes!* He thinks as he goes directly to the room holding Harry's undelivered mail.

Slipping behind the tapestry that hides the hole over the door of the room, he waits until his eyes adjust to the room before picking out another parcel that he feels he'll be able to slip out of that broken corner of the window. It takes a few minutes and perching upon other spots throughout the room before he spies a small one next to a bundle of letters.

Without a screech, he launches himself from his perch and manages to grab the parcel before spells start flying through the air. *Looks like they're weaker then they were during my first time here... Makes sense, unless somebody comes through the door, the wards won't alert that man concerning what's happening within here.* He thinks as he gets pass the tapestry and then flies through the hall to the broken window.

By the time he finds Harry, the boy is huddled in some bushes. He screeches as he gets within a mile of the boy. Soon enough, he's on the ground before the bushes feeling very proud of himself, particularly as Harry crawls out of them. Harry stands up and wipes his hands upon his pants before picking up the parcel he brought off the ground.

"Another one? Is that why you left? So there's more of them?" Harry asks and he allow his wings to open slightly as he nods yes. **"Thanks."** The young wizard says softly before reading the address upon this parcel.

The parcel contained a healing potion and instructions to owl the person if Harry wanted any more. **"I guess instead of a postman, it's owls that deliver the mail, huh?"** Harry asks and he clicks his beak.

"Well, I think I got a crayon... You won't mind taking a message to this person?" Harry asks and he clicks his beak once more. Then he looks at the potion in Harry's hand and screeches a bit, startling Harry a bit but the boy looks at the potion.

"I should drink it, shouldn't I?" Harry muses and he clicks his beak. With a sigh, Harry takes the cork and downs the potion. **"Ick!"** Harry says making a face but he can hear bones cracking and popping within the boy's body.

The potion is done with Harry growing an inch. **"My wrist... My shoulder! They don't hurt no more!"** Harry says in amazement

and if he sported the factories, he would have frowned upon hearing that from his human.

After a few minutes of Harry poking parts of his body, the boy finally gets around to writing that note. Harry pauses and wonders out loud and addressing him, **"Do you think I should mention I just got the parcel today?"**

He clicks his beak and bobs his head. **"Well, you would know better then me, I guess..."** Harry decides after a few seconds and he clicks his beak in agreement. Once the letter is written, he holds out the foot sporting the leather strap sporting leather strings. It takes Harry a few seconds to tie the message upon his foot and he gently holds onto Harry's index finger for a few seconds before taking off, towards America it seems.

Harry

He remains in the park, determined to wait for the white owl to return as it seems to him that something likely kept the bird from coming to him while he's at his aunt and uncle's house. As a clock chimes midnight, a whistling sound erupts and suddenly, a screech rings out and he glances up to find the owl coming towards him.

"Harry Potter?" A woman's voice asks as the owl lands upon his out stretched left arm. It's talon trying not to press too roughly upon his arm.

"Who are you?" He asks and the brown haired woman crouches down to look at him viva the same eye level. "How did you get here?" He manages to ask but his voice breaks up although the owl makes this sound that seems to be a coo.

"I'm Sarah Naomi. I'm the one that send you that healing potion back when you were but a babe." The woman says, moving away from these other two adults, men if he's to judge as they haven't spoken and he can't see them properly. "You mentioned you haven't received any post before today?"

"Yea. This owl just showed up and was getting attacked by a pair of cats when I scared them off. It seemed to be determined to give me the first package. Then, after I ate the chocolates, it flew off and brought me your package." He says. "It didn't occur to me to send a thank you to the previous package and when it did, the owl was already gone." He admits and out of the corner of his eye, the owl gives him what appears to be a startled look.

"Just what kind of owl is it?" He asks after a few minutes, he might not see very well, but it's clear that Sarah is frowning. "Hmm? Oh, he's a barn owl. A very clever one at that." Sarah says and the barn owl puffs out his chest in pride, causing him say, "Oh..."

"Harry, would you mind if a friend of mine sends your owl to where he got your packages from? He's rather keen on seeing if he can't bring you the rest of your mail. No offense to your owl but, the number of people who written to you over the years... There would be too much for him to carry." Sarah says but he is rather confused.

"Why do you keep calling him mine? I never met him before today!" He says and Sarah smiles while the barn owl seems to be a bit put out.

"You're mother had a barn owl as her post owl. It wouldn't be that unusual if he's that owl's son." Sarah says. "It's likely he hatched a bit before you had your first birthday. It's not that unusual for the chick to decide that they belong to their parent's owner's child." The woman explains and he blinks while ohhing.

The barn owl clicks his beak, which means that he agrees with what Sarah had said. "I guess that means that my parents gave him a name then? I wonder what it is." He admits as he regards the owl perched upon his arm, he doesn't wince as the talons kind of poke him a bit more sharply as the barn owl shifts his weight as the wind blows.

"If he wants to do so, I don't have a problem with it." He says after a moment and the barn owl clicks his beak before leaping into the air

to land upon one of the out stretched arms of the men.

And so, once the barn owl is flying away, the men come and introduce themselves. It takes a bit before they convince him to lead them to his aunt and uncle's place. Luckily, none of them seem interest in speaking with his guardians, just looking at the property while the men grumble about the shitty wards around the place.

In the end, the grown ups tell him that they just need a bit of his blood and they'll send a copy of him to continue to say with his relatives while he can come with them away. While they also want to get him check over in a hospital before they proceed with any more plans since they need to know what kind of home life he had lead while staying at the Dursleys.

They soon use something called a port-key to leave to be at that hospital.

Talan

He's glad he at those two mice that Sarah had summoned for him as it is, he's strength is rather stretched out. *Just one more visit and all that mail will be transported out of that room. They don't have any reason to keep it from him, beyond screening to make sure nothing sports a curse or hex.* He tells himself as he gets within sight of the castle.

Once he gets upon that ledge next to the broken window, he yawns and finally scratches that spot behind one of his ears before glancing into the halls. He then pulls his head out and glances around outside of the castle. Puffing his feathers out for a few seconds, he yawns once more before slipping into the Hogwarts viva the window.

With ease, he flies through the halls once more. None of the chatting paintings in this tower seem to notice him silently flying a few feet below the ceiling of the hall. He lands, his talons land upon the cloth, thus no sound rings out to cause alarm. He quickly gets to the side of the cloth and push his way between the tapestry and the wall.

He hunches and leans down towards the pile of mail, cocking his head this way and that, trying to hear if something else is within the room. He glides to different positions once more and as minutes tic by, he finally works up the courage needed to land upon the mail and to screech to activate the port-key that his sports about one of his legs.

He takes a moment to untie it and to grip it with his left foot. Taking a deep breath, he launches himself from his position and once upon the pile, screeches. The magic takes effect just as he gets hit with a spell.

He wakes to find a concerned Harry looking down at him and he gives a weak screech before once more, blacking out. The next time he wakes, he finds himself on his back. He yawns and struggles to stand but once he does, he fines Harry resting upon the bed to his right. The boy is sleeping fairly soundly and he fluffs his feathers a bit before looking around for something to eat.

He finds this odd mouse looking item at the foot of his 'bed'. "Go on, eat it. It's a nutria-mouse." He glances up to find screech owl perched upon Harry's other side. "It's safe."

He returns to looking at the thing that looks like a plastic mouse but decides not to argue. It goes down in one go. "How long was I out?" He asks the screech, moving to face the other owl.

"About a day. More from stress and exhaustion then from the stunner." The screech reports and he relaxes, glad that it hadn't been for long.

"Is there a reason why you're here?" He asks the screech. "I mean, they don't exactly let our kind into these places, not unless delivering mail." He adds.

"Mostly because the boy didn't want you out of his sight. The port-key had some minor interference so instead of arriving in the basement, it arrived over top of him." The screech explains,

chuckling as only an owl can. "I'm told it was rather funny sight, it all coming down from the air, hovers there for a second, and then ploop! It just drops down, almost at the same rate."

He stares at the screech before deciding to take a look at his surroundings. *Well, at least Harry's safe, take that mom! An owl finally won one over a wizard!* He thinks, his chest puffs out in pride and satisfaction at a job well done.

The End

A New Beginning: Bleach

I don't own Bleach or Pokemon!

A de-aged Ichigo sighs while laying down in a hospital bed. Upon arrival in this world, the substitute Soul Reaper found himself under attack by creepy black balls with faces at the heart of purple mist and this huge purple stuff toy looking thing sporting red eyes. Without certain items, the orange haired six year old hadn't been able to exit out of his body to do battle with the ghostly gang, particularly when one of them licked him.

The dimensional traveler's rescuer had been a twelve year old girl who caused some fire horse to appear and then went on to give the beast commands, causing the things to be driven off. The animal trainer then picked him up and carried Ichigo away. Although, if it weren't for the fire horse, they would be taken unawares by the next gang of ghostly beings. The girl had been forced to release a huge canine sporting gray fur and black mane that goes all the way towards the tail when a third encounter with these things made themselves known.

With the canine with them, they didn't encounter any more of those ghost like creatures and once in town, they went straight to the hospital. They did give Ichigo something and he fell asleep. The girl had mentioned Gastlies, Haunters, a Gengar, and used the name dusk a lot too to the doctors while Ichigo was getting onto a stretcher.

Ichigo is just trying to come to grips about what happened not being a dream and that he's not only stranded in an alien world, been attacked by alien creatures, and worst, Ichigo is once more a kid again. The previous teenager soon begins to wrack his memories for how he ended up here in the first place. Nothing really comes to

mind beyond Yuzu watching some show and he was just walking pass the television while Yuzu is busy in the kitchen.

I wonder how long until somebody notices that I'm gone? Will they think I ran away? And what about my duties as a Soul Reaper? Ichigo wonders until his stomach reminds him that he's yet to eat.

The six year old glances over to the oatmeal that's been placed on the table to his side. Ichigo moves and pulls the rolling table to bring the bowl over to him. Taking the warmer off the bowl, Ichigo soon digs into his breakfast. He hadn't eaten supper last night.

With that gone, he sinks into his pillow upon pushing the moving table away. The warm meal and boredom causing him to drift off to sleep, although he does fight it. Ichigo wakes to a scream and finds a nurse surrounded by a group of purple balloons with a pair of larger ones sporting red markings at the bottom.

"Where did all these Drifloons and Drifblims come from?" Some new arrival demands. "Someone get a trainer over here! Particularly one with a dark type or even a normal type!" A third orders.

Trainer? Dark type? Normal? Ichigo wonders while the balloons move away from the doorway, almost like they want to get away from the others and yet, they didn't seem to mind his presence. *Could they be attracted to my spirit pressure? But only Hollows can sense that and hunger for it...* Ichigo thinks with a frown upon his young face.

"Chase them off, Crow!" A young sounding voice orders and soon a black bird charges through the doorway. The some of the balloon beings flee, phasing through the walls and ceiling.

Those that remain team up on the huge black bird. "Helping Hand, Pro!" And in comes what seems to be a primary yellow furred, red marked mouse sporting a cross for a tail. The little mouse claps and the black bird cries out before fading from sight.

Before appearing again, a few of the balloon beings cry out as something hits them. "Good work, Crow! Pro!" Ichigo look back to the door to find a twelve/thirteen year old sporting blue dyed bangs.

The bird, ironically called Crow, gets hit by a series of black balls coming from the balloons. Crow manages to shrug a few of those hits off and the bird again fades from view, causing damage to the balloons before reappearing. It's then the mouse's cheeks spark and with a cry, electricity snakes through the air, hitting many of the balloons.

One of the larger balloons seems to be paralyze and the others' nerve finally vanish, causing them to flee. The preteen by the door tosses a ball at the downed balloon and to Ichigo's surprise, the balloon glows before vanishing. The ball lands on the floor and shakes for a bit before stilling.

The mouse moves and picks the ball up off the floor after sniffing the ball a few seconds. "I've never heard of Drifloons and Drifblims showing up in town. Let alone in a building..." The preteen mutters while moving to take the ball from the little mouse.

"They generally are rather harmless compared to most ghost types." One of the doctors agree. "Although..." The doctor glances at Ichigo while sporting a thoughtful look. "The young lad here had been admitted yesterday. The trainer who brought him in mentioned getting attacked by two other different gangs of ghost types after rescuing the boy from the first."

"Don't look at me, I didn't do anything to cause them to attract them." Ichigo says in his defense. *Other then breath or exist.* The orange haired kid thinks to privately to himself.

"Still pretty strange though. You are the common theme in these instances." The doctor muses. "Particularly as we can't find any record of you in any country."

"I really don't know what happened. One minute I was home then, I was in a field and..." Ichigo finds to his embarrassment, he's voice breaks and he begins to sniffle. It seems that just because he has all of his memories doesn't mean he'll react like he's use to.

In the end, the nurse comforts the six year old while the doctors and trainer leave, likely to continue the conversation else where. The nurse asks Ichigo for his name and the child gives his name. Before the nurse leaves, the kindly woman causes a section of the wall to go from black to some soap opera.

It didn't take long for him to grab the remote and flips through the channels, looking for a documentary to begin gathering information. Of course, being six and slowing beginning to act that age, Ichigo finds a cartoon marathon featuring space colonies, aliens, and combining giant robot Pokemon to form some ultimate hero. While Ichigo knows it's corny, he still couldn't find it within him to change the channel though.

Two Weeks Later

"Hope you like her, Ichigo! Go on! Let her out." Doctor Shirley says to the orange haired six year old Ichigo while the ex-teenager is examining the tiny ball. With a frown, Ichigo touches the button and the ball expands.

Touching it once more and a light escapes, taking shape of a beast. As the light fades, Ichigo stares at the Poochyena, the dark canine, who in turns gazes at him. "Ah, don't you need to be ten to train Pokemon?" The orange haired child inquires while the Poochyena points her noses up and sniffs the air.

"You need to be ten to keep more then one Pokemon. Everyone can own up to one Pokemon, it's when they want more then one that they need to acquire the proper license." Doctor Shirley explains. "And considering how often ghost types keep showing up around you, we knew you'd need a Pokemon that's capable of driving them

off. Typically, the more common pet types wouldn't do and Eevees are rather rare as they're so popular."

"I guess I should give her a name." Ichigo muses while watching the dark dog sit down, looking at him once more with her red eyes. "Gin is a little too obvious... Ranae. I'll call her Ranae." *An ironic name, all things considered.*

Ranae's ears flicker back, it's clear that the canine seems to be considering the name. Ichigo holds out his hand and Ranae's nose twitches for a few seconds before the canine leans towards his hand. Ichigo smiles gently at Ranae, moving to scratch behind Ranae's ears, causing Ranae's tail to beat up and down upon the floor, eyes close in pleasure.

"There's a park a few blocks away. Why don't you two run along and enjoy the fresh air, hm?" The good doctor says and Ichigo glances up from Ranae to point out, "I don't have any cloths that fit, remember?"

"Ah, that explains why this bag of cloths and a pair of runners are doing by the door, doesn't it?" Doctor Shirley muses and Ichigo blinks at the sight of the cloth bag next to a pair of white runners. The doctor leaves and he grabs the bag, Ranae follows him into the washroom, where he then proceeds to put on the cloths, a yellow shirt featuring a large red lightning bolt and black pants.

Once the socks were on, Ichigo and Ranae leave the washroom. Slipping the runners on, they soon head down the stairs, heading for the main level. Once outside, Ichigo sighs and smiles widely before taking the map out. Two blocks away and they arrive at the park to find kids playing game like soccer or playing with a Pokemon, typically with a Rattata or some small bird type.

It didn't take long for them to find a spot to play fetch using some random twig that Ichigo found on the ground. About a half hour later, Ichigo and Ranae grow bored with the game so they move off in search for something else to do. The orange haired child notices

some play equipment where a bunch of kids playing tag and with some Pokemon.

A Growlithe barks at Ranae and Ranae turns her nose up at the orange with black stripe furred canine. Ichigo glances between Ranae and the fire dog with a bemused expression while they walk pass. He reaches out and pats Ranae on the back, Ranae leans into him, giving Ichigo a chance to scratch behind Ranae's ears, causing the Poochyena's tail to wag.

Suddenly a black ghost Pokemon appears that's holding this golden mask rock with its tail. Ranae is suddenly between them, barking something at the ghost Pokemon. *Just what kind of attacks does Ranae know?*

Ranae

Ranae is still rather ticked at the nerve that that Growlithe to think she'd be interested in him that when the Desumasu suddenly appears before her new owner, she quickly moves to stand between Ichigo and the ghost Pokemon. ("Back off!")

("Hey now! I'm just seeing what's generating all of those vibes. Don't mean much harm.") The Desumasu says, moving up a foot into the air. ("How strange, he's the source huh?")

Ranae's ears flatten against her skull as she uses Astonish on the Desumasu. ("You still plan to harm him! It's my duty to keep you from harming him at all!") She snaps.

"Yumi! Stop that!" An adult comes jogging over and the Desumasu, Yumi, pauses to turn towards the incoming human. "Return, Yumi!" And with that, the ghost Pokemon vanishes into their ball.

"Sorry about that. I've never had him run off like that before." The older human explains.

"It's all right, I've gotten use to having ghost types show up at random times." Her own explains. "It's why I have Ranae." Ranae wags her tail, glad at that Ichigo is happy to have her.

"Really? How strange..." The trainer mutters then somebody call out to the adult. "Again, I'm sorry for Yumi. I'll be sure to keep him in his ball for the rest of the time we're here."

Ichigo nods and soon, it's back to being Ranae and her owner. "Guess we should head back to the hospital, Ranae. It's been a while since I've been outside and I'm kind of exhausted." Her owner says and Ranae merely licks one of his hands, it wasn't long before Ichigo is scratching behind another one of her ears for a few seconds before they began to walk, heading for the street they walked in from.

End of the Month

Ichigo

The teen-turn-child just blinks at the papers before him, not sure what to make of the fact that he's to be adopted by the sister of Doctor Shirley. The woman owns a Pokemon Ranch a day or so away from Celestic Town in the Sinnoh region. Ranae whines and Ichigo blinks owlishly upon looking at the young Poochyena sitting at his feet.

Ichigo reaches down and scratches behind Ranae's ear, his mind finally rebooting over the papers. "What do you think, Ranae? Would you like living on a ranch?" He asks and Ranae stands before wagging her tail.

"Any place is better then living in a hospital," *Bad enough over a clinic.* He muses. "And I'll be able to keep my last name too." Ichigo adds out loud as he gives thought to the benefits of the move in not only in town but in region. He's become rather famous in Dew Valley for attracting ghost Pokemon.

Never owned a pet before Ranae. She's not like a normal animal either. He muses thoughtfully. *A lot of papers support that claim, particularly when psychic types get to the point where they can project their thoughts into human minds.*

Ichigo sighs and begins to wonder how he'll be arriving at said ranch. "I wonder how Celestic Town got its name..." The orange haired child wonders out loud.

He feels slightly guilty about not having the discipline to study ways to leave this world or how best to fit in. He's been rather busy just taking care of Ranae or watching the TV. It's not as though he has much of his own stuff to keep him entertained. It's not as if he expected it to take this long for the Soul Society to do something concerning his disappearance.

Celestic Town

Ranae

Well, that proved restful. The Poochyena mentally muses while stretching her body, being sure to be careful of the many people moving around her owner and herself. As they were traveling, few ghosts bothered to track them down to take a look at Ichigo or to suck up some of her owner's dreams.

As Ichigo doesn't know much about being a trainer, Ranae found it rather awkward to battle without a human giving her commands during those confrontations between those ghost types and herself. *Although, without humans, it does makes the battles from being predictable. I've gained a lot of experience without needing to follow orders.* Ranae muses, she's still got a long way before she can evolve but she will likely evolve before Ichigo could become a trainer and she doubts that as a Mightyena she'll be allowed to attend classes with Ichigo.

"Over here, kiddo!" ("Hurry up! It's too crowded here for my liking!") Ichigo and Ranae turn to find a cart with a Rapidash stallion

harassed to the light, two wheeled cart. Without much more prompting, Ichigo and Ranae approach.

"Miss Shirley?" Her owner asks and the woman snorts before replying, "Call me Dash! And this here is Blaze."

("Greetings, Blaze. I am Ranae.") She says in way of introduction before joining her owner in the back of the cart. "And this must be Ranae? What a well groom Poochyena you got there. You must take real good care of her, ah?" Dash, Blaze's trainer, muses while peering at Ranae.

"Really? She wouldn't let me really touch her tail too much with a comb." Her owner admits and she just flickers her ears at that.

Dash chuckles while Blaze begins to move, pulling the cart along. "Don't worry too much. My Tobi was the same when he was a Poochyena." Dash explains with a touch of humor. "Just take comfort in the fact that she even allows you near her tail with a comb. Means she trusts you a great deal."

"Will I be home schooled or will you be bringing me into town to attend school?" Her owner asks after a few minutes of silence as the cart moves down the street. Ranae watches as buildings slowly pass from her view, the cart smells strongly of medicine, food, and, of course, Pokemon. The rocking of the cart and the steady rhythm of Blaze's hooves upon the street, slowly but surely, Ranae drifts off to sleep while resting next to her owner.

Ichigo

He slowly strokes sleeping Ranae's back while the cart pulls away from the town. Once out of the town, more like small city, Blaze's pace begins to pick up while Dash chuckles causing him to glance over at the fire horse. While he's not a good judge of animal behavior, he couldn't help but think that Blaze seems to be prancing as the fire type is being sure to step high.

"Ok, ok, Blaze! Hold your horses." Dash says, chuckling when the stallion snorts. "Hold on tight to that Poochyena, kiddo! This is going to a rough ride!" His new guardian says and he quickly gathers Ranae in his arms as Dash seemingly causes the reins to crack.

With that signal, the Rapidash whinings before suddenly breaking out into a run. The cart jerks and Ichigo moves to hold Ranae with only one hand while the other grips the rope that's along the rim of the bench. The jerk of his body also alarms the canine in his arms, Ranae growls, likely expecting some ghost Pokemon appearing but Ranae's growls transforms into a questioning whine.

"Blaze has been given the go ahead to go all out." The orange haired dimensionally displaced ex-teen explains to Ranae. Blaze makes a throaty rumble, not sure if the fire stallion is agreeing with that or merely swallowed something like a fly and is trying to get it out. Ranae stops whining and moves to place her head over a shoulder.

It wasn't long before Ranae's tail is wagging while the wind whips about over and through the Poohyena's furry head. Ichigo smiles while shaking his head slightly to either side for a few seconds. Ranae suddenly howls and Blaze nickers a reply before picking up a bit more speed.

Well, at least this mode of transportation doesn't produce any pollution. The ex-teen muses dryly. *Most do seem to prefer Pokemon as mode of transportation, specially considering that the larger flying types are used to fly from one city to another.*

As the ranch comes into view, Blaze's pace slows. The ex-teenager gets his first glimpse of the many Pokemon that his new guardian owns, particularly as a flock of various fliers circling overhead, at the head of the flock seems to be a Charizard. Ranae howls a greeting and he turns to find a huge dog racing along side the cart, the canine sports an orange coat and black markings.

"Hey there, Varg! Guess this means Sam's waiting for me at the house, huh?" Dash asks Varg the Arcanine.

Varg glances over at Ichigo and Ranae before glancing back over at Dash. "This is Ichigo and his Poochyena Ranae. Ichigo, Ranae, this is Varg, he belongs to my neighbor Sam Benoit." Dash pauses before adding, "Sam's an old friend and we use to travel together during our first year as Pokemon Trainers. Sam is one of the breeding farms that supply Growlithes to the police forces. Varg, here, is a prized breeding stud."

He just blinks, trying to connect the few Growlithes he's seen to the huge Varg. "Hello." He finally says to Varg and the canine barks twice, to which Ranae responses with a bark of her own. The great canine seems satisfied with whatever Ranae had said as the large fire dog picks up his pace and passes Blaze, heading for the house while Blaze slows to a trot and heads for the barn.

Finally Blaze comes to halt and it takes him a few seconds to recover his balance, although Ranae has already leaped over the side of the cart and gone to greet the welcoming committee that seems to be organized by the Charizard. Dash lowers the back of the cart, which allows him to get off without any trouble as he doesn't feel like climbing over the side of the cart.

"Thanks." He says and Dash responds by ruffle Ichigo's orange hair. "No problem, kiddo!" Dash says, it's clear to him that Dash must have been one heck of a tom boy growing up.

"Seems like Ranae's already introduced you to the welcoming party too." Dash says and sure enough, the Pokemon seem to regarding him with curious and yet measuring looks. "This is Ichigo Kurosaki, I am now his legal guardian and he'll be staying here at the ranch until he passes the test to become a licensed Pokemon Trainer." Dash addresses the group of twenty or so Pokemon, placing an arm about his shoulders.

Well, at least they're not out to eat me. He thinks as Dash tells the Charizard, Forge, to keep an eye on Ranae and him as they explore the ranch while Dash goes to see what Sam wants.

First Day of School

With Ranae curled up in his jacket, Ichigo's orange hair whips about as Blaze races across a field, normal bugs erupt from the grass at Blaze's passing as does a few common wild Pokemon. He clings to the saddle tightly, even though he's gotten use to riding upon the Rapidash during the spring and summer, he's still possess a fear of the fiery mane and tail burning him by accident during a ride.

Soon, his surroundings change and Blaze's hooves click upon the tar road. Blaze slows from the break neck speed to something close to the speed limit of the town. With that, Ichigo pulls the zipper of his jacket down and help Ranae to stick a head out from the collar, Ichigo feels Ranae wagging her tail.

About thirty minutes of navigating around the town, they arrive at the school. He gets down from Blaze before he lets Ranae drop down onto the grass of the court yard. He checks the time from his wrist watch to find that he has about forty some minutes until the first bell goes. "Thanks Blaze!" He says politely to the stallion, stroking the Rapidash's muzzle.

A moment later, Blaze is heading for the closest Pokemon Center. Blaze will stay there until school is over to come and pick Ranae and himself up. Ichigo turns to regard the school's front for a few minutes before heading towards some play equipment, making a beeline for the swings with Ranae following after.

Slowly the school yard gets filled with kids from six years old to eleven years old. A few kids did take note of Ranae and some tried to get close enough to the Poochyena to pet her, but Ranae kept moving out of reach while also keeping him in her sights. Some of the kids give up and head off to do things with their friends with a few hanging about, giving Ranae longing looks.

Soon, the bell rings and he gets off the swing, with Ranae hot on his heels, he follows the stream of kids heading for the gym where they'll learn which class they'll be in. Most of the kids give Ranae and him space, most of the older ones snort and roll their eyes, it's clear they believe that he'll be asked to send Ranae home or get in trouble for having her here with him, but as none of the teachers possess Pokemon on their person or own one that's an experienced fighter, Ranae's place by his side will remain secure.

Ichigo finds a place next to a corner, trying to find a secluded sport to sit down. He finds a spot and Ranae sits next to him, a few of the surrounding students glance their way but didn't do much other then whisper to their neighbor, nodding in their direction. Ichigo struggles to keep an aloof expression upon his face, which is rather hard as his nerves seem to be all afire and his pulse is racing.

Being around all of these kids though, that really brought home the fact that he misses his friends, both among the living and among the dead. He had known he would be among kids that appear to be his age but that didn't do much to prepare him for being among them. He had spent certain mornings studying what text books Dash has in her study and had also managed to get access to a computer to learn more about what kind of subjects schools in this world teaches at their schools.

Ichigo glances at his teacher, Mr Baker, upon hearing his name being called. The man appears to be on the oldish side as he can spy gray in Mr Baker's bread and buzz cut. As the principal begins on the other teacher's class, his fellow classmates stand up as Mr Baker walks towards the entrance/exit. He hangs back a bit before falling in line with Ranae.

The room they enter into is room nine and he finds an empty desk close to the teacher's own desk. Mr Baker gives Ranae and himself a glance before greeting the class. The teacher also out lines the lesson plan, not that most of the class is paying it much mind as they seem to be more baffled by the fact that Mr Baker hasn't addressed him about Ranae resting by his feet.

"Mr Baker! What about the Pokemon next to him? I thought we're not allowed to bring our pets to class." Some girl with almost silvery hair asks when Mr Baker asks if there were any questions.

"Kurosaki is a special case as he has something of a problem with ghost Pokemon popping in at unusual times. Hence why his Poochyena is allowed to attend classes." Mr Baker explains and this causes his classmates to murmur among themselves.

"Does that mean we can bring Pokemon of our own?" Boy sporting green streaks through his black hair. A lot of the kids murmur agreements to that question.

"As far as I'm aware, only Kurosaki is the exception, not the rule." Mr Baker says before asking, "Are their any questions about school itself?"

There were none as many of his classmates clearly thought that it's unfair that he can have Ranae and they can't have their own pet Pokemon here at school during classes. Which is likely why so many of them were glaring and giving him envious looks. *I wonder how many fights I'll get into by the day is out...*

And so, Mr Baker moves onto handing out their text books and some note books. They also go through their back packs for their pencils and other things that their parents or guardians had bought that had been on the supply list the school had sent out. They put the stuff into their desks while a sheet of paper goes around the room and they're expected to put their names upon it, allowing Mr Baker to know where each student is sitting.

He puts his name on the sheet before putting the sheet onto Mr Baker's desk. Once that is done, they do a series of tests to see what they retained after summer vacation, likely giving Mr Baker an idea on what he has to review before proceeding to teach them new material. He, of course, found the various questions to be rather easy, the only problem he has is with history, but then, they weren't expected to know a lot of it, only local history revolving around the

founding of the town and temples, he pretty much knew he wouldn't do well on that as he is new to the area in more ways then one.

Recess finally arrives and everyone is more then happy to bolt out of the classroom, heading for an assigned play area. Ranae and him follow the rest of the class out, only at a slower pace. Once on the play ground, he glances around while trying to find a place where he can let Ranae cut loose as she has been rather patient with laying upon the floor next to his feet.

Getting to a tree line, he takes out a ball from his back pack and tosses it as far as he can. Ranae bolts after the ball and manages to grab the ball in the air upon leaping for it. Just a second after all four feet touch the ground does Ranae head in his direction with the ball in her mouth, her Ever Stone pendant swaying as Ranae comes towards him.

When Ranae gets bored with catching and bringing the ball back to him, she leaves the ball about a foot away from where he's standing and runs off. It's around this time does this group of older kids approach, Ichigo can tell from their very familiar expressions that they mean to use force to have their way with him.

Some things stay the same, don't they? He muses while giving the approaching group a blank look. "Can I help you?" He asks the four.

"Yea, you can call my Poochyena over here." The leader of the four states and the other three are sure to sport threatening looks. "She's mine during recess, got it?"

"I'm sorry but Ranae is unlikely to agree with that." He says calmly. "She will if it keeps us from pounding on you." The leader counters.

He smirks in a very predatory fashion upon hearing that. "Who says you're going to even get so much as a punch on me? Now, why don't you boys go back to playing cops and robbers before you cause me to give you lot reasons to stay out of the public eye?" He says, feeling a great deal like his old self then he has in a long time.

Ranae has come to see what's happening and growls at the four, but stops when he say, "I can handle this Ranae." The Poochyena sounds out a questioning whine but likely remains where she is as Ichigo refuses to look away from the four boys before him.

The boys seem rather confused about him counter threatening them. They clearly didn't feel as confident as they had when they arrived. Unsurprisingly, some kids began to gather around, clearly expecting something to happen, but this also attracts the attention of the teacher supervising recces.

"Getting into trouble already, Stevenson?" The teacher demands, causing the four boys to jump slightly in surprise. It seems that they hadn't noticed the approach of the teacher.

"Just having a discussion with him, sir. About his Pokemon." The leader says, trying to look innocent before the suspicious teacher.

"Is this true, Kurosaki?" The teacher asks and he responds, "A rather heated discussion, sir. Although I doubt I got my point got across to Stevenson and his friends. They seemed rather stumped with my reply and had yet to respond to it."

The four glare darkly over at him while the teacher studies him for a second. "Just let me know if they try anything, Kurosaki." The teacher says at last and he nods.

The teacher glances once more over to Stevenson and the three before walking away. "Next time, Kurosaki." Stevenson says before walking away.

"Yea, next time." He murmurs as he finally glances around to watch as the other kids slowly head off as there wasn't a fight to entertain them. Ranae walks over and gives him a frown.

"I don't want you in trouble for harming another kid, Ranae. Their parents can get you banned from school by raising the issue of you

not being well behaved enough to come with me." He explains and Ranae gives him an 'Oh' look.

"Besides, as long as they throw the first punch, anything I do after that is considered self defense." He says upon kneeling down to scratch behind Ranae's ears. "You just focus on any ghost types that show up and leave me to deal with the threatening human elements, ok?"

Ranae growls softly but doesn't retreat from his touch. Once that's done, Ranae quickly goes off to hide behind a bush. The bell rings a few seconds later and when Ranae returns, they walk back to enter into the school. A few of his classmates watches as they return to the desk.

I wonder how many of them will try and sit with us at lunch? He wonders as the final bell rings and Mr Baker begins by having them do talk about what they did this pass summer. He can only sigh at this, but then, this was a class containing a few six year olds and seven year olds.

Week Later

The lights suddenly die and Ichigo sighs. "Ranae?" He asks and the Poochyena arfs while his classmates begin to panic.

"Where's the ghost?" He asks and he senses Ranae moving out from under his desk to circle around the desk. Mr Baker is out in the hallway, likely heading to find a flash light.

The door suddenly slams and the lights outside of the class flicker one before flaring so brightly that the glass tubes burst. "A Rotom..." He murmurs while the others crowd around the window of the door, likely in hopes of catching a glimpse of said Pokemon.

Ranae begins to growl just a minute before a girl screams. "And he's brought friends." The orange haired ex-teen murmurs under his breath. A few more startled cries ring out and a cry of a laughing

Haunter causes every single classmate to scream about some murderous, blood hungry Haunter here to drink their blood.

Ranae pauses in her growls and he sighs, rubbing a few fingers on his forehead while murmuring about the horror genre being the same everywhere. The lights begin to flicker, a sign that the Rotom has decided to enter into the classroom. It wasn't long before a giggling Rotom becomes visible, lighting up the room while giving him a chance to note the number of ghost types that fill the classroom.

He finds beyond the Haunter and Rotom to be three Sableyes and a Shedinja. Ranae howls before charging at the closest ghost type, a Sableye.

Ranae

She uses Howl before she charges the nearest Sableye to Bite them. ("Ouch! You little...") The Sableye cries out while the other cries out, ("Use Lick on her, Joker!")

She manages to evade the incoming Lick attack while the Rotom gives Thunder Wave a try. Though that electric attack hits, it did little to paralyze her because of her Quick Feet ability. She manages to evade a few attacks from the two Sableye.

The screaming children reminded her that their were others about the classroom. With a flick of her tail, she gives Astonish a try on the Haunter called Joker. The floating Shedinja uses Spite, which makes her feels a bit weak.

That one just needs one good Bite and they'd be out of this battle. Ranae thinks as she evades the twin Fury Swipes coming from the Sableyes. She tries to move either around or between the two as she wants to get to that insect that's just hovering there.

She Growls at the incoming Rotom while bolting under the electronic ghost. ("Where are you going? You're human is over here!") Taunts the Haunter as the Shedinja uses Spite once again.

She is hit with it but she does manage to get a Bite in, causing the Shedinja to fall to the ground. ("That's no nice! The poor guy wasn't very healthy at the best of times!") The Rotom cries out as sparks fly from the ghost Pokemon.

("Then you shouldn't have brought him!") She snaps at the ghost while evading the incoming Thundershock. The Haunter had disappeared while the two Sableyes comes at her with Fury Swipes. She takes a few hits from the two and uses Roar, sending the two fleeing away from her.

The Rotom attacks once more, causing metal desks to go flying. She notices that Ichigo had long since moved away from the fight and seems to have climbed up onto one of the shelves. With her owner bring fine, she focuses back on the battle between herself and these ghost types, once more intent on defeating them as quickly as she can.

She decides to focus on the Haunter, wary of that one's Lick attack as that type enjoys suddenly appearing out of nowhere and delivering an attack. She doesn't have much time to duck when Joker the Haunter makes an appearance right before her. Managing to duck in time, she quickly uses Bite on the Haunter.

Then she's forced to retreat as the Rotom flings an attack in her direction with the two Sableyes in pursuit. Ranae tries to guess where that Haunter, Joker, plans to make an appearance once more as she plans to give him a good Bite, hopefully to cause the other to flinch. ("Hold still!")

("You must be mental if you think I'm going to obey that.") She finds herself remarking before Roaring at the pair, sending them running while she uses Oder Sleuth to try and find that Haunter. Upon finding them, she manages to get in a few Bites and an Astonish before the other three come charging at her.

She Tackles Joker the Haunter before Biting the nearest Sableye. The Rotom's attack did land while Ranae's mouth is about the

Sableye's arm, thus the Sableye receives damage from the attack. ("Watch where you fling those attacks! You hit my brother, you light-bulb!")

("Not my fault she wasn't quick enough to let go of him! And don't insult me!") The Rotom snaps as she sniffs out a Oran berry that her owner had tossed her way at some point during the fight.

It wasn't long before she feels ready to continue with the fight a few seconds after swallowing the berry. "Looks like their partnership has soured." She hears Ichigo muse softly and she glances towards the door to find that it's open, one of the kids must have gotten it open and the class fled.

As Joker the Haunter seems to raise up from floor to do something, a Weavile makes an appearance by suddenly leaping from a dark corner, with a single blow, the Haunter falls back down while the new comer is using Night Slash on the Rotom. She charges forth and Bites one of the Sableyes again.

As the ghost types all faint, a trainer appears from the door and says, "Good work, Sleath." The Weavile salutes the trainer while the girl glances around the classroom with a touch of awe. "I just thought it was a few ghosts trying to frighten a few kids... They really did some damage didn't they?"

"Yea, they did. Ranae's pretty good at dealing with them when it's three on one but more then that..." Her owner trails off.

("You didn't do such a bad job.") Sleath says to her. ("The Rotom gave you the most trouble I take it?") Sleath asks upon getting onto the teen's shoulders.

("Yea. There's a good bit of glass about the floor. Not sure if I avoided it all...") She replies and begins to examine one of her paws, not that surprise to find that she does sport cuts.

She yips as she's picked up off the floor only to begin wagging her tail upon looking up at her owner's face. "Looks like you got some glass stuck in your paws, huh? Come on, there's likely somebody outside who'll want to take care of that." Ichigo says to her before saying, "You did great, Ranae, specially considering the site of the battle field."

Ranae snuggles against Ichigo, knowing that the rag tag gang could have done things very differently. Like have most of them distract her while a member of their group approach her owner before she'd be aware that they're there. *I hope nobody will blame Ichigo for my cuts...*

Next Day

Ichigo

With Ranae currently restrained to the bed for rest, his current protector is Tobi, Dash's Mightyena. He's lounging in the living room of the house when the door bell rings and is then followed by a knock on the door a few seconds after the bell rings. Tobi looks at him and he stares back before it dawns on him that he's the one with hands.

"Oh, right. I'll go get it then." He murmurs as he feels his cheeks heat up in embarrassment while Tobi just thumps his tail. Ichigo sighs, not particularly liking the fact that he should be doing something other then watching cartoons this morning like reading a book or to search for myths concerning dimensional travel. It happens regularly, some cartoon with explosions comes on or some action movie and he just loses track of what he should be doing beyond watching the TV.

I can't remember having this problem back home... He thinks to himself but then, he knew that back home he also had other diversions beyond studying like fighting Hollows and what new villain that decides to attack the Soul Society. He opens the door to find an adult and then three of his classmates upon the porch.

"Ichigo I take it?" The adult asks and the ex-teen nods while he hears Tobi coming up behind him. The three kids all to a quick intake, signaling that they've gotten a good view of the Mightyena. "Is Miss Shirley in?"

"Ah, I think she's out in the field mending a fence." The orange haired ex-teen glances over at Tobi, who moves to stand to his right. "If you want, Tobi can guide you to her."

The adult nods and before leaving say to the three, who's names are Harvey, Riley, and Ten, to behave. Then vaulting onto the back of a Dodrio, the man heads away from the house, following Tobi to find Dash. "That's my dad." Harvey states and then asks, "Is Ranae ok?"

"She's suppose to stay in bed. Her feet are still a little tender." He explains as he moves to let the trio in. "Come on, I'll show where she's resting." He adds while leading the three up to his room so they can pay their respects to Ranae.

Ranae's head snaps towards the door and she barks a greeting as he opens the door. He smiles softly at the sight of her, a flash of guilt flares up at the reminder of his failure of not being able to defend himself against these ghost Pokemon. *I really should have gotten in the habit of carrying those candies around.* He thinks while re-introducing the three to Ranae.

"We just want to make sure that you were ok." Riley says while Harvey just grunts an agreement. "That and to thank her for causing us to get a whole week off!" Ten adds with a wide grin. "Right Harvey?" Ten adds, nudging the silent Harvey with an elbow.

"I guess..." Harvey mutters and Riley scowls at Harvey. "You can't be upset that at the first chance you got, you ran out the door, can you?" The tomboy asks, it's clear that they've had this argument before as Ten seems to sport a rather bemused expression upon his face.

Harvey gives Riley a glare while he is sitting upon the bed, scratching behind one of Ranae's ears. *I wonder what my friends are up to now?* Ichigo wonders as the three kids before him remind him strongly of the friends he has back home. He can almost feel his eyes burn slightly after a few seconds of witnessing the pair argue with a sad sort of smile.

He feels Ranae snuggle closer to him as his hand moves to stroke the Poochyena's head and back. He manages to recover from his despairing thoughts before any of his three guests could notice anything wrong. He rubs his eyes before he picks up Ranae and cradle her in his arms.

"Perhaps you guys would like something to drink?" He suggests when silence had fallen between Harvey and Riley. Ten is the one to answer to their little group, "Yes please."

"Hey, do you get movies on demand?" Ten asks as they make it to the stairs. A bit puzzled by this particular question, he glances over his shoulder to reply, "We might. I'm trying to make it a habit not to watch TV, especially since there's a lot to do here on the ranch."

The three sport looks of horror, as if he just caused their world crashing down around them. "He's got to be a space alien! No way can he be human!" Ten murmurs and he's rather startled by this before he just rolls his eyes while shaking his head gently to either side as he walks down the stairs.

I should have expected something like that. He decides as the three go directly into the living room, likely following the sounds from the TV that he had been watching before they arrived. He stops and looks down at the gray furred canine in his arms for a second before turning around to head into the living room to put Ranae down before grabbing the drinks.

He isn't that surprised to find Riley with the remote and seems to be going through a list of movie titles. Grabbing a pillow, Ichigo then lowers Ranae gently upon it before heading for the kitchen once

more. The ex-teen finds the pitcher of strawberry-lemonade and takes it out before retrieving some glasses.

Returning the pitcher back into the fridge, he is careful on how he carries the four glasses. Taking measured steps, particularly since he doesn't want to spill on himself, he's more then glad when Ten gets up to grab two glasses from him. Ten hands one of the glasses to Harvey, leaving him to give one of the two he has to Riley while the opening sequence for a horror movie plays on the television screen.

Sitting down on the other chair in the living room, he is rather bemused to find that the movie they're watching seems to be a take upon the fictional Werewolf, only instead of having the main character transform during a full moon, it's the new moon and instead of a canine, the character becomes something based upon a Marowak slash Linoone. The Weremon stands about five feet while sporting the bone helmet and stance while the rest seems to come from Linoone, although the fur is more gray and black then two shades of brown. The curse is passed viva a wrist spur that is retractable, known to come out when the Weremon is about to be killed and it thrashes around in hopes of spearing someone with the wrist spur.

Not a very good stand in for a Werewolf. Ichigo admits to himself but it seems that the three guests were enthralled by the movie. He makes a mental note to see what other classic movie monsters have counterparts here in this world.

"I though it would be more scary then that!" Riley scuffs and he privately agrees, after all, having the Weremon out to fed off of a sleeper's dreams just didn't seem that scary to him, although considering there are moves meant to steal the health of a sleep, he guesses it works. "I mean, who wouldn't thought to use a steel to kill a monster?"

"Where I come from, the monster transforms during the full moon and is typically killed using silver." He says with a frown as he stares

down into his drink. "Of course there's a great deal more gore, particularly when they make the transformation look painful instead of like an Evolution." He adds and then looks up to find the three look rather intrigued about what he's saying.

"Really? What else does your Weremon do?" Asks Ten and he thinks about it for a second before seeing no harm in continuing.

"Well, for one, there's not wrist spur. If the beast bites you and you survive, you're cursed. In some movies, the victims of the guy take to haunting them as they can't cross over until the guy either gets cured or is killed." He tells them. "The cure is usual has to do with killing the one that had bit them."

He remembers a certain poem and recites it.

"Even a man who is pure in heart

and says his prayers by night

may become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms

and the autumn moon is bright."

"Wow..." Ten says in amazement while the other two look rather impressed with that little poem. It is rather better then the one the recently watched movie had.

"Although... Why a wolf?" Harvey asks and he says, "Well, for one thing, instead of Weremon, the monster is called a Werewolf, although there have been various types of animals used, you just take the Were and put the animal name behind it, like Weretiger or Wereleopard. Mostly they stick to some large, predatory beast."

"So, they don't use Pokemon then?" Asks Riley and he shrugs. "Why install unnecessary fear of a certain Pokemon type when there are other beasts that could be used? Besides, it gives them a way to make the transformation look painful and drawing it out then what

they showed." He answers, doubting that they would believe him if he told them that where he's from, they don't have Pokemon.

So, while they all want him to tell them what kind of movies he's seen featuring Werewolves, Dash and the adult walk. "Are you three ready to leave?" The visitor asks and grumbling, the three get up and head for the kitchen.

He follows them to the kitchen. "Ah... can't we stay just a little longer? We just started on an interesting subject, Dad..." Harvey grumbles and his classmate's father raises an eyebrow while sporting a bemused expression, likely surprised by his son's change in attitude.

"Come along, you three have some studying to do. I doubt your parents would be happy to know that I allowed you to skip your assigned reading." The man says. "I'm sure Ichigo has much the same to do today as well."

"See you, Mark." Dash says and Harvey's dad, Mark nods. He says his good byes while his three classmates do the same.

As the three exit out of the house, Dash turns to regard him for a few seconds. "Well, might as well see what assignments they sent along in that package that we got in the mail." His guardian says and he shrugs, he's not worried about it as he's fairly confident that he can complete them within the next day or so.

He does grab something for Ranae to eat and takes it to her before heating up something for lunch. Tobi seems more interested in getting a bowl of water then a bite of something to eat. Dash returns and seems to be reading through some of the sheets. "Hmmm... A lot of this stuff seems to be what we've already reviewed."

"Then it shouldn't take long for me to complete." He replies after drinking some more lemonade. "Did I get accepted by that online high school course?" He asks, he figured it's something he should

ask about since it's been close to three weeks since he sent in an application to continue his high school education viva the computer.

"Ah, I know I was forgetting something." Dash says cheerfully and it wasn't long before Ichigo's guardian returns with an envelop. "Here you go, it came little over four days ago."

Eagerly, he opens the envelop and after a few minutes of reading and rereading its contains, he smiles. *Well, looks like I won't idle during my time in this world.* He thinks, glad that he'll have something challenging to do, his attending the local school is more so he can be close to kids his current age then he has something to learn from the local school.

Soon lunch is served and he folds the letters back up, putting them back into the envelop they came in so that he can begin eating lunch. Ichigo decides to give the site a look after lunch, it'll be a bit before he'll chose which subjects to renew his studies with.

To Be Continued . . .

The Assessment: Bleach

I don't own Bleach or Naruto!

"Fairly interest to see the two of you sitting across from each other." Aozora remarks as he cleans up his quarters. **"You two could almost switch places, if you allow yourself to grow up a bit more."** Aozora muses in a teasing tone and he smiles a bit while gently shaking his head.

"I doubt we'll be seeing him much, Aozora. Besides, could you imagine what could have happened if he did find me during that certain period? No, we went our separate ways long time ago and it'll likely remain thus as well." He remarks to his Zanpakuto while he finishes putting his freshly cleaned dishes and cups away.

Pressing his lips together as he frowns as he recalls a few things his father, Minato, had let slip during their conversation. As he puts the dish cloths away in a hamper, he wonders if he's going to get more visitors, the sort from when he was alive. *Well, nothing for it, I guess. All I can do is wait for them to come out of the wood work, I guess.* He muses as he walks out of the kitchen, turning off the lights as he does so.

"You seem to find something depressing. Want to share? As they say, misery loves company." Aozora no Kemono muses while still resting upon a couch. It doesn't surprise him, after all, Aozora has been with him since he arrived in this afterlife. He turns to regard Aozora, once more struck by their relationship, particularly since somewhere down the line, he has come to find it strange to think that, once upon a time, he had considered Aozora to be nothing but an object with a mouth on it.

Not that I kept that impression for long, particularly since I hadn't been in the right frame of mind to try and connect with my fellow

students since I got dragged to the academy. He muses while he gets around to answering Aozora's question. "Well, I for one think that this is just the beginning of s string of visitations from people I knew while I was alive."

"Perhaps I should have expected this to happen after I got my memories back." He adds as an afterthought as he pauses by the door to his room. "Anyway, it's not something to fret about, I guess. There's just so much on our plate as it is without adding this to the mix." He says while looking over to his friend, partner, and killing instrument. "See you tomorrow, oh, by the way, I got you a set of wireless headphones for you, so you don't have to worry about waking me with the volume of your stuff."

Aozora jerks, clearly surprised by what he said while he just smirks widely, glad to see that shocked look upon Aozora's face. *Really, if he wanted that stuff, he could have asked me to get it for him instead of faking notes in my name to send those rookies on those errands.* He muses, although, to be honest, this likely wasn't the first time Aozora has done this, not that he's going to press Aozora about previous times.

Ichigo

He tries to relax but finds it rather impossible since he's about to met with a new captain from the Soul Society. Considering his usual meet and greets with members of this society, he feels he has every right to be. It doesn't help that his inner Hollow seems to be yappying his mental ears off concerning the many positions he wants the majority of the women he knows in and the kind of settings that would go with those.

What's got you so chatty all of a sudden anyway? he finally asks his Hollow half. This causes his Hollow to pause for a few seconds before replying, *Isn't it obvious? The new captain is a woman! I mean, think of how unbalanced the captaincy is, they got to be promoting some babes to fill the open slots.*

He shivers slightly upon the way his Hollow half said that phrase. He can't believe what a pervert his other half is but before his Hollow half picks up from where he left off, the new captain arrives. "Sorry I'm a little late. I had to deal with somebody who wanted to spar with me while three of his seats casually kept the gate staff at bay."

He couldn't help but only stare at the blond who steps out of the gate. *He's like seventeen years old! And... is that sword taller then him?* He wonders, his gaze moves from the blond's face to the hilt of the sword upon the captain's back. "It's like you're compensating for something..."

The blond chuckles and it's then that it dawns on him that he said that part out loud. "It's not that I can't alter his shape, it's more that I don't see any reason to. I've gone accustom to having Aozora like this. But since you seem to have your mind in the gutter... Perhaps this might give you an idea with your own Zanpakuto." The blond muses.

With ease, the blond captain takes hold of the sword's hilt and as he watches, the blond casually holds his Zanpakuto, Aozora, aloof in the air singled handedly. Then the sheath and blade seem to shimmer before, almost in a liquid fashion, alters to take shape of a typical Zanpakuto. With that done, the blond then slides the altered Zanpakuto into his belt.

"I know your name, but has anyone thought to give you mine?" The blond asks after a few seconds and he just moves his sight from the Zanpakuto to the owner's face. "I see. Anyway, I am Naruto Uzumaki, newly appointed captain of Ninth Division. I use to teach at the academy until the previous captain thought I would be better off on patrolling some place far from the Seireitei."

"You taught at the Soul Reaper Academy? For how long?" He demands and Naruto goes on to murmur, "Well, let's see... I was around when the academy first got started... I graduated... Hm... Then I would go on patrol for... Hm, that is a rather large number."

"Well, if you wonder if I taught Aizen and the majority of those you've encountered, then the answer is yes, I likely did have them in my class at one point or another." Naruto tells him. "Aizen got top marks, too. Although I didn't know how far his proficiency with illusions was, but I did know he could pull them off as he managed to snap out an illusion during a test. The only one of its kind too, not a lot of people were happy that I was trying to encourage thought in 'grunts'."

"Anyway, you're not here to hear me go on like an old man, but for an assessment of your skills." Naruto says while he closes his mouth, rather bewildered by the idea that Aizen had been a 'grunt' at one point. "But before we do that..." The blond captain muses, he then jerks as he watches as the chipper ancient blond takes out a scroll.

He watches as the blond bites his thumb and then smears blood upon it. "A gift a member of Zero thoughtfully sent me this morning. It should help with your assessment as we can't have the locals wonder how this part of the world got destroyed, now can we?" The blond seemingly chirps while rolling the scroll up.

"Zero? What do you mean by that? Is there a fourteenth division that nobody saw fit to inform me about?" He demands while Naruto slams the scroll upon the ground.

Suddenly, the scroll breaks apart and a kind of energy just explodes, covering not just the landscape but Naruto and himself. "What the hell was that?" He demands while pointing his Zanpakuto at the blond.

"Relax, kid. You're a bit high-strung, you know?" Naruto says with his hands out before him and holding the palms towards him. "And to answer your questions, Zero is often considered the Royal Guard, which means they don't take orders from the council. They're said to answer directly to the Emperor, so they're not usually hanging around the Seireitei."

He frowns, wondering how the blond couldn't know it while Naruto goes on to address his other concerns. "As to why nobody mentioned it to you, well, if I arrived wearing some typically attire that defines a sub-society, would you assume I know nothing of what the cloths stand for or just assume that I know how to fit in? Hence why we're meeting, I'm here to see what kind of holes you have in your education of what it means to be a Shinigami."

He lowers his sword, finding that Naruto seems to have a lot of good points. "Yea, I guess... But what did that scroll do?" He asks, stressing the word do.

"I'm sure you've seen most of the typical branches that Shinigami use in battle? That scroll, for lack of a better word, is like a program that becomes active viva being smeared with blood. This program that I just activated is kind of like a save. I just saved us and this landscape so that when we're through, hopefully before the five hours are up, the damage done after the save will be totally reversed, which means that I could cut off a finger and when the five hours are up, you'll have that finger back on your hand without a mark showing that it was ever gone. You get it?" Naruto watches as he slowly nods, rather stunned that the blond could get his hands on something like that.

"Ok, I doubt you've been given anything resembling a rule book or any kind of book from the Seireitei, so, let's move onto the physical branches, shall we?" Naruto says. "We'll start with hand to hand." The blond says while taking out his Zanpakuto and spearing it into the ground, a move he mimics.

Naruto

Ichigo is breathing heavily while he himself is just beginning to sweat. *He's not one for pacing himself, is he? But then, I am a stamina freak.* He muses to himself. He had been warned that Ichigo is a quick learner, but then, he's always been quick when it came to hand on lessons too. *I'm more interested in how he became a Visored though.*

He's never had spent time around those that had acquired Hollow abilities so his time with the orange haired teen is rather enlightening. He's been trying to get the feel of Ichigo's energy and hadn't put much thought upon those two energies co-existing, the last time he's felt anything like it had been... *When I had the Kyuubi in me and in a fight for my life.* He thinks to himself, a little bemused that he did manage to shave the teen's hair, although he doubts Ichigo has noticed the cosmetic job.

"And time..." He says with a sigh as Ichigo's hair suddenly shimmers into existence and the rips and tears of their cloths repair themselves as the landscape does as well. "I'll be sure to send along some books and scrolls, I'll be sure that some of them are about Kido." He tells Ichigo as he puts Aozora back in the sheath.

Ichigo sports a bewildered look, it's clear that the young teen isn't use to sparring with somebody. "But... who won?" The orange haired Ichigo wonders and he merely presses his lips together.

"Have you had formal training before?" He asks and Ichigo nods. "When was the last time you've sparred with somebody?" Ichigo doesn't answer and he sighs. "That long huh? Well, if you see either of my exiled students, badger one of them into becoming a regular sparring partner. You need safer ways to practice or pick up battle strategies."

"I some how doubt that it'll be that easy." Ichigo mutters while glancing around their surroundings. "Yoruichi seems more concerned with bedding me then teaching me."

He snorts upon hearing that. *If I didn't know better, I'd swear that Yoruichi is some kind of attempt at cloning a saner Anko.* He muses to himself as he stretches his limbs, checking to see if there's any stiffness or after-effects to the scroll his father sent him.

I wonder if I display my non-impressive skills in Seals will I get recruited by Zero Division? He wonders to himself before trying to muse upon an idea. ***"So, going to give the Fox Sage a try again?"***

I just might, all things considered. But then, these upcoming trials aren't about me, but about Ichigo and his friends. I've had my time in the sun, as it were, and I'm more then happy to take a mentor or teaching role in this then a direct one. He thinks to Aozora.

"Oh crap! Look at the time! I got to go!" Ichigo curses, suddenly coming out of his thoughts just by taking a look at the position of the sun. The orange haired teen runs away without so much as a good bye.

"Might want to add something concerning Flash Steps too..." He murmurs out loud and a few seconds later, the gate appears and he enters it, his mind going through its old teacher mode concerning his assessment of Ichigo Kurosaki.

Naruto and the Dragon Pearl

I don't own Naruto.

Naruto groans softly before trying to roll about only to find that he's trapped. Alarmed by this, the blond begins to do what he can to get out from the dry mud bank. As the Leaf Genin manages to pull himself out of the bank, the twelve year old then begins to look around upon expressing his dismay over the state of his cloths as they're ruined, in his opinion. The blond continues to try to work upon the patches clinging to his cloths while he walks towards this healthy, leafy tree in an otherwise desolate place.

Naruto begins to dig around in his various pockets to see what he still has on him. He closes his eyes and allows himself to lean upon the trunk of the tree, looking up at its branches while trying to recall just how he ended up here and if either of his team-mates got pulled along in that storm with him when they got ambushed by those ninja using a mud jutsu. Cursing loudly and violently, the blond genin looks towards the spot where he dug himself out of.

The pack he had been wearing is likely somewhere in that bank and if he want's a decent meal that's not covered in mud. Then his eyes light up and a clever grin crosses upon Naruto's face as he makes his familiar handsign. Within seconds, a hundred shadow clones pop into existence and with so many of them, they began searching about the mud bank for the pack or a hint of where it could be.

"Man, now would be a good time to use an earth style jutsu..." Murmurs one of the shadow clones after a few minutes of them all realizing that they don't have anything to use to dig into the dry mud bank. The various Naruto each curse up a storm while those few who weren't were focus on looking around for things that can be used to create a shovel or just dig into the hardened mud.

By the time noon has come and gone, the clones and Naruto hadn't found the back pack nor did it look like there's any water about them. "You know, there's something wrong with the fact that this tree looks as healthy as can be and yet, there's not a drop of water about." One of the clones muses out loud.

"If there was water around, there would be more green plants." Another clone murmurs in agreement while another adds in, "Maybe the tree's roots is edible?"

"Might find some underground mushrooms growing on the roots too." Another chimes in but another points out, "And how would we be able to dig up these roots or mushrooms? We're missing out on a shovel!"

"We could always use a kunai." The one that suggested edible roots. Naruto just watches as the remaining clones debate various points, counter-points, and then for it to get to the point where they're saying "Could not! Could too!"

I have a lot of issues. The blond genin thinks privately to himself while amused by how his clones are acting. After getting a minor headache, Naruto dispels the remaining clones before he begins to look about the bottom of the tree for some indication of loose ground.

The blond scratches his head as he finally realizes that it's not just the tree that's doing well, but the ground upon which the leafy branches shelter. Crouching down, the Leaf Genin runs a hand over the tops of the grass. "Huh, no flowers or bushes, just grass."

As night falls, the blond manages to find a small gap between the tree trunk and the grass cover ground. Lying upon his belly, Naruto reaches into that gap in hopes of finding some cash of seeds and nuts. With his tongue sticking out as he moves to the point where his shoulder is beginning to enter into said gap, his finger tips touches something cool and smooth. Sporting a concentrating look, the twelve year old focuses on the spot and once his fingers are about

the object as much as he could get them, he focuses chakra to his finger tips so he has a better grip upon the object.

It's slow going as not only is the object in there firmly but it's trial and error for him concerning using chakra to grip the pearl with only his finger tips touching it. Naruto doesn't care if the muscles of his arms are cramping and his belly is empty, he wants to find out what the object is and he won't pull out his arm until it's in the palm of his hand! Finally, something gives and it isn't his hand, the ground around the object crumbles after a series of hard yanks while almost rolling away from the gap.

"Got it!" Naruto shouts out and he wiggles away from the gap. Once most of his hand is out from under the gap, the blond sits up and gazes upon his prize with a rather confused expression upon his face.

"Huh." Was all the blond ninja could think of grunting after rubbing the ball like object upon his cloths. The object is the size of his fist and under the starlight, seems to glows dimly white. Then, by accident, Naruto's arm almost falls and almost automatically, the blond channels chakra to the palm of his hand in hopes of keeping the object from slipping off his hand.

This cause the smooth, ball object to glow not just blue but also green. The interplay of these to colors captivates Naruto's attention for a few minutes before his belly growls, his free hand goes to his belly while also gripping the ball with his fingers upon that hand. Without chakra flowing into the ball from the palm of his hand, it returns to its typical off white color.

Naruto glances around before putting the ball back into the gap, figuring that it'll be safer in there until he wakes in the morning. Though hungry, the blond ignores it out of habit as he rarely got a steady orphan fund before he became a ninja so going to be with an empty belly isn't a hardship, just something that happens at some point in the month. Finding a comfortable pose, Naruto soon fell into a relatively, peaceful sleep.

Unknown to the genin Naruto Uzumaki, what he had found is a dragon's pearl that was hidden long before the time of chakra using ninja. The dragon who once owned the pearl had been hunted throughout various kingdoms at the time, each leader of these mini countries believing that eating the meat of a dragon would grant one a body of agelessness, its blood would make them immune to all poisons and sicknesses, its bones to be ground up and bathed to grant one beauty, and etc, etc. Although, they never gave much thought of what the pearl could proved beyond it being something to be included into jewelry.

Once more, unknown to the blond genin, this desolate place is where the dragon had met its end. Three armies had joined forces to bring the dragon down had soon turned on each other for possession of the dragon's body. And thus the battle field became a cursed place as not only didn't the body of the dragon prove to have the qualities they thought it had, but lead to a major war between the three kingdoms that brought the downfall to them and their allies. Thus the story of the dragon killing was lost to the mists of time and history.

Many stories, myths, and legends would spring up concerning why the tree and the ground around it remains green. Most of the stories told of a kitsune making its lair under the tree, a couple say it's all that remains of a shrine with variations concerning what became of the shrine, since the founding of Hidden Leaf village a story concerning the First Hokage planting the tree circulated for a while, it's enough to say that there is a story out there that can appeal to a listener if you search for the right story teller.

So when dawn arrives and finds the preteen ninja sleeping, the pearl's magic causes water to flood the small gap under the tree. As the water flows out of the gap, Naruto begins to get soaked from the water. Within seconds, the blond wakes and looks around in bewilderment with denials ready to be spoken, only for the Leaf Genin to find nobody standing over him with a pail.

Naruto follows the path of the water and is rather surprised to find that it's coming from the gap. With a look, he bends down and sucks in as much water as he can from the gap. He finds the water to be very refreshing but the water vanishes as the sun is above the rocky ridge. Naruto sighs and after a few seconds, finally reaches into the gap and brings out the pearl he unknowingly freed from where the dragon had originally put it.

In the light of the sun, the pearl is a brilliant white, appearing to be very differently then it had under the light of stars. With a thoughtful hum, the blond channels chakra upon the palm of his hand and is rewarded with a much more brilliant display of colors then last night. Naruto couldn't help but smile widely at the sight, giddy with his new possession until it dawns on him that his 'ball' could belong to somebody and that smile fades to a slight pout.

"Well, I could leave it here or I can take it with me..." Naruto mentally debates as it's unlikely he'll ever come back to this place to find out if the owner has retrieved their ball so he'll never know who it belongs to. "But then, it had some grim on it so it's been there for some years... Plus, if it's the reason why this tree is so green, it's been here for some decades."

He regards the tree, then the grass before looking around. "Damn, this place is so depressing... And if this is the reason for the tree being so green then maybe I shouldn't take it? This place could use more things growing in it, that's for sure." He says out loud to himself.

Then, almost as if having a mind of its own, the pearl flashes brightly, catching Naruto off guard, while it also shrinks down until it's the size of a Soldier Pill. A bit alarmed but mostly bewildered, Naruto gazes down at the pearl for a few seconds and then puts it into a hidden pocket that had been untouched during his trial with the mud attack. The pocket is water proof and is where he typically holds some matches when he knows he's going to be spending time out in the wilderness.

Funneling chakra into his legs, the Leaf Genin leaves the ancient battle field behind while an unknown specter manifests itself. The long dead dragon hovers around the tree as it watches as the young human sporting a mighty burden heads away with its treasure. *How funny life works. He'll be a fine son when the time comes, which, hopefully won't be until he's an old man with a houseful of grandchildren.*

With a sigh, the dragon ghost allows itself to be called back to the palace where it'll start its life again as a hatching. In time, the dragon will work on creating another pearl and then leave the palace once more, to wander about until finding another world lacking a dragon, taking up the duty of listening to prayers and deciding how best to fulfill them. There isn't a doubt in the dragon's mind that the youth will be powerful, the question was if the boy will retain that spark that caused the dragon to entrust its previously gained power and status to him in the first place.

Inspired by the Story Xiao Sheng and the Dragon's Pearl

A long time ago, during the great drought, a boy named Xiao Sheng found a patch of lush grass that never diminished, no matter how often he cut it to sell it in the market as cattle feed. One day it occurred to Xiao Sheng that instead of travelling all the way to the patch each day to cut grass, he could dig it up and replant it at home. So he dug up the turf by the roots and beneath it found a wonderful pearl. Considering himself doubly lucky, the boy put it in his pocket and went home, where he planted the grass beside the hut he shared with his widowed mother and then hid the pearl in an almost empty rice jar where no burglar would think of looking.

Next morning they woke to find that the grass had withered and died, but the rice jar was brimming over. That was when they realized they had found a dragon's pearl, because it is a virtue of these gems to multiply whatever they are kept with, be it rice, money or the patch of grass where this one had been found. From that day Xiao Sheng and his mother lacked for nothing, but because they were generous to their neighbours, rumours soon spread as to the source of their

new-found prosperity. In time these tales reached the ears of the local landlord who soon turned up with soldiers to demand the pearl, claiming that it must have been found on his property (since he owned all the land in that region) and so rightfully belonged to him.

Rather than hand it over, Xiao Sheng swallowed the pearl. Immediately his stomach felt filled with a raging fire so he ran to the muddy trickled nearby which was all that remained of the drought-stricken river and drank and drank till it seemed he would drain it dry. And as he drank, he grew larger and larger and his form changed until the onlookers saw not a boy, but a mighty dragon which finally stopped drinking and turned to look around him with a certain wonder in his eyes. The landlord and his soldiers fled but the dragon flew swiftly after them and unleashed a flood which both drowned them and brought blessed relief to the parched land, so that the paddy fields filled and the river flowed strong and full again.

Finally, the dragon that had been Xiao Sheng took sad leave of his mother and swam away down river. To this day that stretch of it is called "Wang Niang Tan", which means the "looking back at mother bends" because when the dragon left the village through the river, it turned its head many times, and each time he turned, the dragon's massive body cut into the river's edge, sculpting the banks with his last farewell.

A Vampire of His Very Own: Buffy

I don't own Buffy the Vampire Slayer universe!

With the setting of the sun, they stirred from the nest. The vampire once known as Gab, now answering to Bilal, closes his eyes to listen to the thunderous beats of these drums that seem to be located all over the city. Though only fifty years of age, Bilal has never come across whatever song they're thundering out all over the city, only that it made it so easy to catch a meal as two leaders seem indifferent to the month long festival that the humans and some demons are holding in the city.

Moving through the vampire made caves, ones likely made by previous covens of vampires that settled in the city before they arrived. The youngest vampire in the nest did wonder, once more, whatever became of those previous covens and for a second, wondered if these festival might have something to do with them vanishing. Mentally shaking those thoughts from his mind, the demon operating the body of the long dead Gab continues forth, figuring that the coven elders' responsibility to make that connection as all he wants this night is a meal and to find a nice spot to listen to the music of this festival until dawn drives him underground.

Bilal finds that the coven is all group together not far from the entrance. The vampire frowns at the idea of a group hunt, Bilal weighs his options while Amar's voice carries through the night in a harsh tone, not that it matters that the leader is whispering, their hearing is far superior then their appearance shows so none of them had trouble hearing Amar over the beating of the festival drums. Just listening to Amar, Bilal could tell that the two hundred year old coven leader plans to keep going for a bit more, which he rather doesn't like the idea of since he's hungry now and wants to eat now, not when Amar runs out of things to lecture about.

With his mind made up, Bilal uses the memories left behind by Gab to sneak off. There are times where he's glad that the corpse he's living in use to be a thief as it made sneaking away from coven meetings like the one going on so much easier. Sure, Amar and most of the others will likely have more then some words for him for doing this, but then, Amar had turn Gab simply because Gab had discovered a secret entrance into this rival's lair, so Amar 'rewarded' Gab with immortality.

Upon raising, Amar had going put him through the ceremony of 'joining' the coven and even bestowed a new name to him. Once that had been done, Bilal had found himself being taught by the coven's demon expert which included explaining what a vampire actually was, a demon that can't live without existing within a dead human that has drunk blood from an already demon possessed corpse. Bilal had been rather surprised to learn that but had grown to accept it and move on.

Bilal successfully finds a meal a few blocks away from the surprsie coven meeting and with that, the young vampire heads for his usual spot on high. Laying down to view the stars and the full moon, Bilal kind of drifts off in a semi sleeping state, allowing his mind to think up scenes that would go with the music that's filled the night since the last full moon. It's when his reverse daydream ends does Bilal realizes that the music has ended.

The fifty year old vampire sits up and with yellow eyes glinting in the moonlight, Bilal finds fire all along the streets. What confuses him even more has to do with the fact that all of their hearts seem to be beating as one. Then comes the screams begin and he's confused since no blood seems to being carried by the gentle wind.

Then Bilal hears Amar and then the words, they killed him. That causes Gab's old reflexes to cause him to draw away from the edge of the roof before dropping down upon his belly while his mind race over what that means. Long after the torch lights vanish and the strange effect of the party goers turn hunters' heart beats beating as one vanish still finds Bilal upon the roof.

In the end, it's the threat of dawn's light that causes the ex-thief to get down but instead of going for the caves, Bilal heads for the closest warehouse. It takes the vampire a few minutes but he rigs up a hiding spot to wait out the day and when night returns, he'll then head for the cave to see if any of the rest of his coven survived the night.

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An older Bilal, now Ghazi's eyes snap open at the sound of the drums beating out a beat that he had heard only forty years previously. "Get up! All of you! Come on you lazy louses!" He snaps as he moves among his spawn, kicking those that don't automatically wake.

Now ninety years old, Ghazi is now leader of his own coven, which numbers twenty odd instead of the two hundred that his old coven had sported. The number was kept low for a reason. "What's the matter?" Murmurs more then a few of his underlings.

"We're leaving this city tonight. I hope you all remember the plan for evacuation cause if you're left behind, we aren't coming back for ya." Ghazi snaps and this causes his coven to stiffen, clearly remembering the various plans he had drilled into their heads concerning leaving the city.

Soon, Ghazi's children head off to check and recheck preparations for leaving this city. The slaves will soon be serving a new purpose once they're out of the city. Ghazi marches off to check his stores to be sure that they had enough food to feed the slaves they'll be marching out of the city with.

Hopefully, they won't come beyond the city to get us. Ghazi thinks to himself, ignoring the thoughts concerning the other coven that has shown up about thirty years ago. If what happened forty years back happens again, then when they return, the other coven shall be gone, leaving them to reign the night without contest once more.

Then, as Ghazi had managed to get a wagon loaded, something happens and the world spins...

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Ghazi wakes to find the chaos humming in the air and the panicking heartbeats of humans around him. Their fear so sweet but that isn't want occupies his thoughts, it's his surroundings like these metal torch posts, metal wagons, and the strange buildings that line the black stone road upon which he stands. The vampire is unsure what has happened to bring him here but he does freeze for a second as he feels something that he only knows about through Gab's memories.

Ghazi puts two fingers upon the side of his neck and feels blood pumping through his neck. Placing a hand over his chest, he feels a heart beat within the ribcage. His breath catches and then he coughs while he begins to panic about how he could be...

He stills himself and fights to control himself. Deep, calming breaths soon give him a chance to review what's happening around him instead of with him. *First things first, what can I do?* And with that, the vampire heads for the nearest house to get some answers from those that live within it, reasoning that since he's alive he doesn't need to be invited into the dwelling.

Ramming through the door, he pauses to listen for the heart beats of those that live in this house. Once that's done, he moves down the stair, only pausing every so often to take note of the strange devices that are placed about the house, things that somehow get names and descriptions popping into his mind as though slow remembering what they are. As he snaps the door knob off the basement door, he opens to find a cross thrusted at him, causing him to growl before reaching out and destroying the wood, some part of him wondering just how it was he still manages to keep his demonic abilities while in a living body, particularly as his kind of demon needs their 'host' to be dead and departed.

"Where am I?" He snaps in some new language that his mind now tells him to be English. "Answer before I decide to make a meal of you two." Ghazi snarls, although not the least bit hungry.

"Sunnydale!" Is the answer and he frowns at the name. "Which part of the world is Sunnydale in?" He asks and the answer is, "America!"

That brings forth a lot more information then Sunnydale did. Letting go of the man, he reviews what's revealed and is rather stunned to realize that he's in the future as the Persian Empire has come and gone as had the empire that conquered it and so on and so forth. Rubbing an index finger about a temple, he leaves without harming either of the two.

As he leaves the down stairs, he allows his face to revert to that of a human and once out of the house, some red haired girl arrives calling him Xander and that they need to find Buffy. More then willing to go along with the ghost, Ghazi follows to find this Buffy and within spending a few minutes with her wants to twist her pretty little neck to get some peace and quiet, it's not as though Ghazi is a particularly violent vampire but this Buffy is sure grinding away at his patients.

It didn't help that he had been in a foul mood before finding himself spirited away so he feels as though he can be excused with snapping at the girl in the puffy cloths. "Shut it or I'll see how many times that pretty little head of yours can be twisted around upon that neck before it'll pop off." To his relief, she faints, thus allowing silence to reign for a period of time in which he reviews the new amount of information he has concerning the 'timeline'.

"Buffy!" He turns to find some other vampire bending down to check the girl's pulse, which is he considers redundant as they can both hear the girl's heart beating. "What happened to Buffy, Xander?"

"She just fainted." Ghazi states calmly while regarding the current actual vampire with very little interest. If the other wanted to cultivate humans as contact, he's not going to interfere, particularly as he'll be

returning to his real existence if this Giles knows what's going on. It wasn't the first time he wonders why Willow never thought about questioning if he's really Xander or is just deciding to ignore that idea since he's being helpful.

A few seconds after he said that and while the other vampire regards him curiously, Buffy decides to stop playing dead, likely due to the fact that there's somebody here who's willing to play protector for her. "That man just threatened to kill me!" Whines the so call noble lady.

He's bemused how easily Buffy moves to place the other vampire between them. "I asked you to shut up twice since Willow left and you did not." He states. "Hence the third time came with a threat." Ghazi adds oh so helpfully.

"You're not Xander." The other states rather bluntly while almost becoming more protective of Buffy. He just smirks in an ironic fashion.

"Gee, I wonder what gave it away?" He says with a scuff in his tone. "Besides, aren't you a little cold to warm the girl's bed? I never could see why one of us would want to lay with a human. They're meals, not friends, family, or lovers. It wouldn't take much for one to worm something to bed and stick it in you." He muses after a few seconds. "Besides, if you play with your food, it has the chance to get away."

"Vampire." Buffy stutters after a few minutes of silence, clearly just connecting the dots, which proves that she's got a brain, even if it's full of fluff. Buffy begins to back away from them both with a look of terror upon her face, all he does is roll his eyes while turning to regard the ghost's former body.

Somewhere under Ghazi's magical skin, Xander struggles with laughter concerning the look of dismay Angel sported when Buffy began to back away. Sure, the teen hates that he accidentally dressed up as a vampire, he does consul himself that Ghazi doesn't seem to have a pathological need to kill every human that he comes

across. Xander's also more then relieved that Ghazi decided to follow Willow earlier, but then, what little Xander has observed, Ghazi was looking for something, anything really, to distract him from his current status of being alive and yet still possessing his demonic abilities.

What little of Ghazi's memories he's managed to review reveals that Ghazi is close to being a century, leads his own, to use Ghazi's word, coven, and is worried about some month long festival which concludes with the festival goers scouring around the city to kill vampires. Although, Xander did pick up on Ghazi's worry about the way their hearts beat in unison during that hunt as well.

And there goes Buffy. Xander think as Ghazi picks up the soft foot steps of Buffy heading for the back door. Angel chases after and a second later, Cordie comes down the stairs to ask, "Where's Buffy?"

Ghazi turns to regard the remaining, living, human and answers, "She and her... boyfriend decided to take a walk. I'm sure with him around, she felt safe with him watching her back." Cordie seems rather startled by this but in the end, the thin human moves to sit down while he returns to watching out the window.

"I can't believe you let Angel walk around with Buffy." Cordie finally says and Ghazi turns to look over at the young woman. "I mean, you've always been up in arms when ever Angel is brought up and suddenly, with all of what's going on tonight, you would trust to have her out of your sight."

"Who says I'm really Xander?" Ghazi decides to ask, rather curious as to why people mistake him for this human. Cordie seems to stiffen while her heart speeds up.

"If you're not Xander, then why help Willow find Buffy?" Cordie asks as casual as can be. He can tell that her pose has stiffen slightly even though she tries to be casual.

"Oh, I don't know, likely because I'm at a loose end and wanted something to do instead of giving into panic." Ghazi remarks calmly. "After all, this place is rather alien to me and it was a way to get my barrings. If you want to place blame, perhaps you should blame Willow for just making assumptions."

"Well then, why don't you tell me who you are? It's not like we have another way to spent the night." Cordie states and Ghazi snorts softly after studying her briefly. Then, the world changes once more...

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Xander sighs and then yelps for joy for finally being able to control his body. Until he realizes that he can hear something thundering in his ears and the clear scent of fright. Then he turns to look right at Cordie, it dawning on him that there seems to be certain traits left over from dressing up as Ghazi, a 'fictional' ex-thief turned 'immortal'.

Xander focuses on some other sound and is more then happy to head out of the living room to see if there anything he can do to return those kids home.

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Ghazi wakes to find himself among the crates. With a shake of his head, the ninety year old vampire moves to stand up, moving to the back to find that the wagon is moving. With ease, he jumps over the back and moves around to stop the camel. Glancing around, the vampire merely sighs, realizes what happened. He hobbles the camel before he goes through the crate, glad to find a huge tent, he feels confident about his chances of survival.

Once he's done going through the crates, collecting what he can sell at a future date, Ghazi decides to head for Rome, spend some time there before leaving eastward, heading for China where he believes he'll find a boat. Where he'll go once landing upon America, he didn't know, but he did know that if he wants to leave a lasting mark in this

world, it'll be in America, in a particular sunny place that would one day have a town called Sunnydale upon it.

With everything packed, Ghazi rides upon the camel, heading north, trusting that he'll come across humans during his travel. It's not as though he couldn't drink from the camel, sure his kind prefers humans but animal blood will do in a pinch and it wouldn't be hard to find animals to feed from considering they all have heart beats that he can hear.

With the full moon watching, Ghazi has unfinished business with Cordie and with Xander. He can only hope that he survives long enough to at least complete that business.

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"So, you are Xander." Ghazi muses having woken from an enchanted sleep when the sun had set. Xander stiffens to turn to look over at the vampire, his first thought is at how short Ghazi is and another was about why the vampire searched him out.

"I guess you survived that festival again, huh?" Xander muses while the vampire snorts softly. "More like my children took advantage of my state and sent me out of the city. Fools the lot of them, they didn't survive for long when the festival ended." The rather old vampire states while leaning upon the bar, studying the dancers.

"You know, I tried to find information about you from the Watcher diaries." Xander says and Ghazi frowns before turning to regard him. "You don't know what a Watcher is, do you?" Xander asks.

"I never heard of the Slayer until I spent some time in Rome and again in China. Never heard of a support group for the Slayer either, but then, I've never encountered one of them either." The vampire states rather calmly.

"You visited Rome?" Xander asks, he didn't get many of Ghazi's memories, most Gab's. "I visited when it still possessed a king. I left

for China after spending a decade there. Spent a few centuries heading for China, though, spent a few centuries in India, even payed an enchanter for a hibernating spell that was meant to end when a version of me appears in this world. Used it after finding a natural cave, stored my boat in it before breaking the charm that held the spell."

"Took me most of last night to break through the rocks that sealed the entrance." Ghazi adds helpfully. Xander could only stare at the vampire, not really sure what to think concerning this guy's dedication to coming to this time mostly unharmed.

"But... but... why? Why go to all that trouble to be here? To see me?" Xander can't help but wonder and the vampire turns to regard Xander with a bemused look.

"I never got the chance to learn about why you and I were so interchangeable in personality. Then there's Cordie wanting to know about me and it's not as though I have anything better to do once I knew how things ended from then until this point." Ghazi states.

"That's rather... honorable of you." Xander admits, although he didn't like being reminded that Willow had just taken it for granted that he wasn't affected by the spell. "Although, I thought humans were only good for meals." He decides to toss Ghazi's own words in his face, not a smart move he decides after he said it.

"I do prefer you as meals, you don't live for very long and if you do, you get mentally feeble." Ghazi states and he wanted to remark about them getting physically weaker until he realized that to a vampire, all humans were considered physically weaker then them. "Having a human owe means you have to cash it in within a couple of decade instead of at some point in a future century. That's a rather short time considering our life spans."

"And of course vampires have such long lives. It's not like you're allergic to blessed water or the sun." Xander finds himself saying only for the vampire to snort in bemusement. "I've never heard of a

vampire dying of old age, have you? I know demons die of old age, but never vampires." Remarks Ghazi.

"All a vampire does when they get older is begin to change to take on a more demonic appearance, becoming tougher to kill, 'smarter', and generally begin to dabble in magic." Ghazi states and Xander found he couldn't argue with that. "I take it you're surprised why I haven't taken offense to anything you've said?"

Xander nods and Ghazi regards him for a moment before saying, "Call it curiosity if you will, but for that one night, I knew what it was like to have a pulse. To breathe air and depend on that action to keep on living. That experience is mine own and not some memories I inherited upon slipping into this body." Ghazi motions at himself.

"Then there's the fact that something of you remained..." Xander muses and Ghazi gives him a raise eye brow look. "Ok, my senses seem to be more... keen. Not sure why, but then, as you said, your kind of demon prefers dead bodies. They can't survive in living ones and yet..."

"And yet, I had." Ghazi mutters, not in English. The bar tender would arrive, taking Xander's drink order while Ghazi just ignored the man in favor of watching the band, the vampire's head often nodding to the beat of the song, it's clear that Ghazi liked what he heard.

For a time, Xander stands by a vampire, one that just last night had inhabited his body for a few hours and yet, Xander found he didn't hate Ghazi. As odd as it sounds, but then Xander had kind of been in the vampire's head, Xander found something respectable in this soulless corpse and the fact that the vampire didn't try to change history kind of help him keep that respect.

Guilmon's Task: Digimon

Legendary Horses

I don't own Digimon!

Guilmon's Task

Takato watches as a colorful group of young colts and fillies try to race each other along some rocks that weren't far from beginnings of a mountains. The stallion's ears continue to face forward, straining to catch their words. Though the wingless pegasus stallion has been living in this low land area, complete with trees and open patches of greenery for the pass ten years, Takato still has trouble puzzling the language of these land bound magic horses. *It would help if one would allow me to approach them.*

Sure, these low lands provide plenty of food, Takato can't recall when he's been as stuffed as during the years living in this place but the stallion found the going to be too easy. The wingless pagasus truly misses the way mountains sported different level that demands one to have a good sense of balance and challenges the mind when it comes to navigating one's way around. He also has come to miss the way wind runs about the mountains and how there were few large ground predators to watch for.

Some filly or colt cries out in pain and Takato merely sighs, the youngling hadn't stepped high enough and a hoof tripped over a rock jetting up out of the ground. Ears going back, he raises his head up from pretending to graze to glance around to see if anyone comes running while the youngling whimpers and whines, what little Takato's able to make out, it seems that the youngling believe that they sprained something. The other fillies and colts ring about the fallen youngling, speaking softly to each other.

One of the grown suddenly shows up at a run before switching to a slower gate and then walking towards the fallen youngling while the rest of the younglings part. Takato strains to hear what the grown behorned stallion had to say while moving to graze in a different direction. Soon enough, the behorned stallion snorts and nudges the youngling to get up, the wingless pegasus decides that the youngling has been told that they're find but to be more careful.

As the stallion heads back for the treeline, the group of younglings try to regain their playful spirit but it doesn't work, so they follow after the other stallion, soon making a race of it to see who can reach some spot beyond the treeline. Once they're gone, Takato swishes his tail and begins to head for the mountains, suddenly wanting to be in a setting that reminds hm of home then the alien landscape and those behorned magical horses that call it home.

Rika watches as the strange stallion walks towards the mountains. She had been napping when young Renji had been screaming about his leg being sprained. The ruby coated unicorn mare hadn't moved from her spot as she hadn't seen a reason to hurry over to check on the young colt. It seems as though Senji thought something serious had happened as the unicorn stallion had teleport to check upon Renji, which Rika believes to be a waste of energy as there weren't any wolves in the area right now.

Likely hoping to win points in order to keep from being expelled from the herd with the approach of the Scattering Ceremony coming up next year. Rika muses to herself while trying to watch the stranger walking away. The mare reminds herself that it's not her problem, particularly as it's likely that the strange stallion is heading off to die, after all, the stallion has to be around fifteen years old, that's fairly old for a non-magical creature to live.

It has been close to ten years, hasn't it? Rika muses as the other seemingly vanishes from her sight, not usual as the strange horse is mostly brown in color and hard to track as most unicorns tend to be

brightly colored, easily seen at a distance. Dismissing such thoughts, the unicorn mare returns to trying to nap once more.

It take taken a few days to travel to this particular spot, Takato stands, once more, at the large gap that separates him from the way to return to his birth place. Various birds dart about, those that eat insects hunting for flies and such while an eagle soars upon the thermals that the mountain rocks produce with the sun beaming down. The stallion turns and heads north instead of south, back to the low land filled with those strange magical horses sporting colors of rainbows and a single horn upon their foreheads.

It will soon be dusk but the wingless pegasus stallion doesn't feel the least bit tired. Takato walks and walks until dawn arrives, at which point, the wingless pegasus rests under a ledge and waking as the dusk arrives. Thus it became a pattern with the stallion traveling during the night and resting during the day, there were times when Takato would find a place to graze and dew to suck off of rocks as the wingless stallion journeys northwest at times before heading east in hopes of finding a way to cross the divide.

Takato found it surprisingly easy to return to living in the mountains once more and the fat that the stallion had gained slowly fades into well tone muscles. The wingless pegasus stallion is glad to have something to occupy his mind with as he navigates through treacherous ledges. He even welcomes the storms that rain down upon the mountains.

Days turn into weeks, weeks into months. After a good ten months of traveling northward, Takato comes across something strange, stranger then those behorned magical horses. They stand up on two legs and seem to use their forelimbs in a manner that reminds him of a squirrel or some rodent. What disturbs Takato is that they seem to ride upon the backs of donkeys while having the spares carrying something else upon their backs.

Takato shadows these strangers, following them south for a few days. Upon the fifth, the stallion snorts and heads northeast in search for a passage to the eastern mountains that were his birth place. Finally, three months pass and Takato finds a bridge that will take him across. Bellowing in triumph that his travels weren't in vain, the wingless pegasus crosses over the mile long flat stone.

Once upon the other side, Takato rears up and whinnies loudly before galloping eastward. As the stallion looks for a place to rest, something comes down from the sky and snatches him up. "Put me down!" The stallion shouts and the being, Takato peers up to find a scaly ventage of a dragon, seems to falter slightly.

"You speak the tongue of Air?" The crimson dragon muses out loud, rather surprised that its meal could speak. "I was born wingless!" Is all Takato could say in his defense, not really happy to be snatched just after he found a way to head back to his birth place, to the range he called him since he had been a foal.

The mighty dragon lands and Takato almost doesn't manage to land upon his four hooves. "You seem rather big for a pegasus." The dragon adds upon getting a better look at him.

"Tell me about it. But the lack of wings is likely why I grew to be so big." Takato replies, if he hadn't been tired and irritated, the stallion would realize that he's talking with an actual dragon and the conversation they would have had would be rather different.

"Well, you have to admit, when we speak of pegasi, we generally think small and winged horses." The crimson dragon remarks and then, the fire-breather hums in a thoughtful manner. "Have you seen a party of men and a train of donkeys recently?"

Takato looks up into the amber eye of the dragon, rather puzzled about what men were. "I saw donkeys being ridden upon by strange beings that walk on two legs." The stallion answers before asking, "Why?"

"How long ago? How many men?" The dragon suddenly demands and Takato takes a few steps away from the dragon's lowered head while answering, "I believe there were eight of the two legged ones and about eighteen of the donkeys. They were following the western part of the mountains south."

The scent of the dragon's breath wasn't a pleasant smell and is relieved when the crimson colored dragon turns westward. "Damn, they're moving fast." The dragon curses and Takato's ears go backwards, not flatting upon his skull though.

"Renamon isn't going to like this... We had hoped they'd spend time at that vein to take some more samples..." The dragon murmurs while a growl underscores the dragon's tone.

Then the dragon suddenly seem to fold in on their self until something similar to the two legged beings stand a few feet away from him. As Takato watches, a mini cloud seems to form where the transform dragon stands. Suddenly, a new voice seems to thunder from a point before the altered dragon, the language wasn't that of Air and considering the magical beasts involved, Takato wonders if it might not be the language of Fire being spoken.

As the sun fully raises, the dragon finishes speaking with whoever they're talking with. The cloud vanishes and the former crimson dragon seems to be brooding. "Am I free to go?" Takato ventures to ask the great beast, who seems to be a bit startled by his question.

"I thought you left some time ago." The dragon says in answer. "Yea, sure, go." The dragon says, waving a forelimb at him.

"As long as you don't need anything, I'll go." Takato says, more then a little nervous to be around such a powerful predator but something... something didn't want to go, not if this beast could use some help with its task. "Are you sure I can't help you?"

"If they're on the look out for a dragon pursuing them and you're incapable of flying at all, even if you had wings you couldn't take off

with me on your back." The transformed dragon states and Takato paws the rocky ground a bit.

"So you're going to approach them in this form?" Takato inquires and that seems to give the dragon pause. "I doubt you'd be able to catch them like that. Also, you're not use to navigating from the ground, are you?"

"Are you offering to take me to this party?" The dragon asks and Takato pauses, not sure how to answer that. "I guess it wouldn't hurt, as long as you agree to take me east of that divide once your task has been completed. It took me about a year to find that stone bridge to cross over on my own." The stallion states.

The dragon's face alters as the lips turn upward. "Deal!" And then the dragon pauses to say, "Oh yes, I forgot. My name is Guilmon."

"Mine's Takato." The wingless pegasus stallion replies as he approaches the dragon shyly. "Nice to meet you, Guilmon."

"Likewise, Takato." Guilmon says and before they left, Guilmon takes some pebbles to create some riding gear, something that Guilmon said he needed as it would cause worst aches on both their ends if there wasn't padding between his back and Guilmon's own rear end.

Takato's more then glad that nothing like those vines are about his head. Although Takato does find it rather odd to have something upon his back, it didn't seem to do any harm so Takato heads south, knowing a quicker way to head that party off, particularly if they stop long enough to allow the donkeys to spend a day or two grazing. The only trouble that they encountered has more to do with the fact that the usual paths Takato usually takes on his own would unbalance Guilmon, which often leads to the transformed dragon to falling off.

It takes only seven days before they did catch up and that's with them only take a break during at noon and continuing at dusk. Sure enough, they got got their aches but they managed to get close to the humans, as Guilmon calls him, so that the dragon can kill the

whole party, including the donkeys, which Guilmon ate unlike the dead humans. The blood and such didn't sit right with Takato but knows that the dragons had some reason for killing off this party.

The riding gear soon returns to its original state of being tiny rocks. As night falls, Guilmon gets a 'call' from Renamon that, in the end, has the crimson dragon needing to leave without fulfilling his end of their deal but Takato assured the dragon that it wouldn't be hard for him to travel back to that rock bridge.

And so, Takato and Guilmon part, leaving Takato feeling oddly fulfilled and wondering if he made a friend in the form of Guilmon the dragon. Takato finds a nice spot to rest after eating his fill.

"Lord Megidramon! The humans, they're heading for the rookery!" Another crimson dragon, this one sporting a metal arm. "Their cannons and archers make it difficult for us to flame them with our fire! Their mages are working on getting pass our wards! What are your orders?"

The huge crimson dragon flares his seemingly tattered wings that seem more orange then red. "Drop the kegs of black powder on the lot. Once they're in the human mist, fire up the night flare. That should break up their lines. Get the younglings and whelp to hit the mages, they should be able to get pass their shields." This huge and ancient dragon orders.

"I'll deal with their siege engines." Megidramon says and then glances at the dragon sporting a metal arm. "Be careful, Wargrowlmon, we wouldn't want you to loose another limb, now would we?" With that said, the great dragon takes to the air.

"Do or die! My children! Don't let these magicless ones get through to the rookery!" Megidramon bellows upon arriving out in the air. "Our future lies within those stone walls!"

"Guilmon... Stay with Renamon's unit." Wargrowlmon says and a battle scarred Guilmon nods, though not looking very happy upon hearing this. With that, the dragon with a metal limb takes to the air, heading for some unknown place.

"Yes... grandfather." Murmurs a sullen Guilmon who sports a burnt symbol upon a breastplate. "Be careful down there, Takatomon." The dragon murmurs before moving to close the open gate.

Takato wakes and shivers while mentally replaying what the older Guilmon had said, particularly upon how the dragon had added mon to his name. *Why would I be involved in a battle between dragons and humans?* The wingless pegasus wonders for a while before trying to go back to sleep.

To be continued . . .

Different Gender: Naruto

I don't own Naruto.

Typical black locks swing as the wind blows over the naked twenty something year old as he stands before the open window. The naked man stares down at the city, marveling at the fireworks that continue to explode in the distance while the streets are alight by lanterns. The celebrations of the local lord's marriage seems to be going strongly within the city. If the man thought to turn to look into the temple courtyard, it's likely he would find the monks, priests, priestesses, and other workers at the temple drinking and eating happening.

"Itachi..." Slender arms snake about the man's waist and chest while a head moves to rest upon the man's shoulder. "Come back to bed. I don't believe we're done just yet." The silver haired woman says softly while nuzzling his neck.

"You are rather insensible, aren't you?" The man muses, his sapphire eyes moving to look upon the bandaged arm. "You always manage to have your dastardly way with me, don't you?" He sighs before saying softly, "You are married, Sachi, even if that man is an unemployed, drunkard."

Sachi sighs softly before pulling away from the man she named Itachi. He soon feels Sachi trace the tattoo of her nickname for him, a orange/red image of a weasel sporting a sickle for a tail. "You worry too much, Itachi. My husband only cares of about the connection to my cousin Samuru that I represent, nothing more." Sachi states and he turns to regard the woman who's been his lover for a solid five years.

"And how would your famous cousin react upon hearing that you've been unfaithful to your husband? Particularly with a priest of the local

temple?" Itachi asks. "Men aren't known to be kind to unfaithful spouses after all." Itachi adds as he follows Sachi back to the bed. "I fear that if we keep this up, dear heart, you will be killed."

Sachi's hazel red eyes soften upon seeing the concern in his eyes. Itachi grips Sachi's hand after it touches his face. "I'm sorry for causing you unnecessary worry, my Itachi, but I get the feeling that Samuru has other things to be concerned about, particularly as he's got all those people to train. It's highly unlikely that Samuru will be able to come here to do anything about us." Sachi tells her lover honestly.

"As for my husband, he rarely see anyone as he's too busy with reviewing records for his family's business." Sachi reminds Itachi once more. "He has never graced my bed for well over eight years now, nor do I see him doing so in the future." Then Sachi snorts as she adds, "It's more likely for the Jubi to be brought to heel by my cousin and his Mystical Art then my husband tearing himself away from his office."

Itachi merely sighs as he moves under the sheets to join Sachi in bed. He didn't want to continue the discussion, particularly as he wanted to savor his time with Sachi before they are parted.

Sachi walks through the streets, heading to the house her so called husband's relatives gifted them. Sachi closes her eyes and focuses upon reaching out to the body of the man she had been roped into marrying. Memories of what the body had done during the time she had last mentally reached out and review play out, once that is done, she allows the body to return to its tasks.

Then her mood sours as she recalls the morning when she woke to find herself trapped in a room and told that she had no choice but to marry what was suppose to be her one night stand or for the news of what happened to be released. The white hair woman had given in only because it would have set her back as Samuru. Fortunately, her husband proved to have no real defense against her slowly

expanding skills with combining Yin and Yang energies, thus she now has two bodies at her command.

Not that I wanted another body to command, particularly as just maintaining her 'cousin' Samuru was exhausting, particularly with the distance between us. Sachi thinks sourly to herself. It had come as something of a relief when her husband's relatives wanted to move them to the city of the local noble, which is about a day away from where Samuru's training compound is located.

Once they were away from the watchful eye of the man's relatives, she rarely had to worry about them noticing something off concerning him. So, she had the body be busy in the office with paper work while using her skills to craft illusions to hide the door, confusing everyone that entered into it and left it. After a few years, people did stop trying to visit her husband and the invitations to the local court also stopped coming. It's not that usual now for Samuru to receive them, particularly as Samuru was granted land upon which to build that learning compound around the time the visitors began to tamper off.

And then Itachi got transferred to the temple. Sachi muses while keeping her face relatively blank. Sure, that's not his name but it's the one she prefers to use. *It's been almost five years since he moved here, hasn't it? Time sure seems to fly by, doesn't it?*

It had been four years into the sham of a marriage she found herself in and with things looking up as Samuru, she began to focus on her personal life. It had been years since she shared her bed with a man, she didn't consider the empty shell to be a man nor did she allow it into her bedroom unless to maintain appearances that is. Within the last few weeks before Itachi moved into the temple, she had been considering ways to permanently place her mind in Samuru's body.

Sachi had heard a few of the local gossips mentioning that a new head priest is coming to replace the previous one. That one had challenged Samuru to a duel concerning which path is

superior, that of the traditional priesthood or the battle oriented one that she, as Samuru, preaches and practices. Deciding to size up the new head priest, Sachi heads for the temple under the pretense of bringing a welcoming gift.

It had been a faint spike but a spike nonetheless that set her on edge. Glancing around to be sure nobody is about, Sachi heads for where she feels the faint feeling. She stops as she finds a young man standing upon the water's surface. His black hair done up in a ponytail as he seems to be searching for something. As she watches in udder amazement, the twenty something year old crouches while reaching into the water for something.

I wonder if I could do the same? It shouldn't be that difficult if a priest could do it. **Were her thoughts concerning the man, as by then, Sachi has come to regard those of the temples with disdain for how often they try and sabotage her, as Samuru, attempts to teach the other way to use Yin and Yang energy. She didn't even think to study the priest beyond noting the cloths marking him as a priest.**

"Excuse me? What are you looking for?" Sachi asks upon reaching the edge of the pond. The priest turns to regard her while pausing in pulling up what seems to be a necklace out of the pond.

"Hmm? Oh, just noticed this crystal in the pond. I thought I should retrieve it as it might belong to somebody. Looks like it's been in there for quite some time." The priest says, holding the necklace out after standing up.

"That's it? That's all you set out to get?" Sachi asks in a suspicious tone. She didn't buy it, after all, the priests rarely displayed their skills in a manner they considering flirtatious as retrieving an old necklace.

Blue eyes study her in a puzzled manner while a slight frown mars the priest's face. "Pretty much. I didn't want to use a pole or something to get it as that would distress the fish." The priest says, waving a hand over the pond, Sachi notes the fish that are swimming lazily about.

"You were tipped off that I was coming, weren't you?" She states as soon as the young man is standing on solid ground. The priest looks rather bewildered about the accusation and cocks his head to the side.

"I'm Samuru's cousin. You know, the man who killed the head priest." She snaps and the priest looks rather surprised.

"You're his cousin? Really? Have you received training from him?" The young man asks and she scowls up at him, crossing her arms over her less then ample chest. Sachi just knew that he's making fun at her.

"Women aren't allowed to learn that particular Art!" She snaps and the priest just stares in surprise. "Really? When was that decided? And by who?"

Anger flares up and she slaps the priest before storming off.

Sachi sighs, it wasn't the greatest of meetings but then, it had been a while since she had come across a decent man while in her actual body. Its as though once she got married, the quality of men seem to go down hill. Was it any wonder why she found it hard to believe that Itachi was any different? Especially as he's a priest and they all seem to be snobs.

Then there's the fact that I learnt just how hard it was to walk on water. The balance of chakra had to be right and she had learnt that the soles of the feet to be rather hard to funnel chakra into. There's still a lot to learn about the new frontier that using Yin and Yang energy could open up to be used in everyday life.

I'm ending it here

To Readers:

How many stories do you see that has the Sage being a woman pretending to be a man?

Island of Dragons: Naruto

I don't own Naruto or Temeraire universe.

Naruto pouts as he watches as the various academy instructors direct groups of students of various age groups around. It's not his fault that the seal demonstration went wrong, Sakura and Ino were the ones who tossed him towards the seal scheme, which caused the eleven year old blond to smear one section of the kanji.

Sure, Sasuke wasn't at the academy because the Uchiha had gotten sick, complete with vomiting, but it's not like he had anything to do with the Ice Prince of Hidden Leaf that caused him to get sick. Nobody forced the Uchiha to eat that rotten tomato, which belonged to Kiba and was under Kiba's genjutsu at that. His part in it had to do with him betting to Kiba that he couldn't hold an illusion over the tomato to make it smell, look, and taste perfectly fine. They had only left the tomato on the table cause they both went off to get Chouji to see if his sense could pick up on the fact that the tomato was rotten, they weren't going to feed it to anyone either, they just wanted somebody known to know a thing or two about food and Chouji's clan is rather known for knowing what's good to eat based around smell and touch.

The blond's pout turns into a scowl. He's not sure how Ino and Sakura arrived that it's all his fault either. Kiba had equal blame, maybe more so as he's the one who brought the rotten fruit to school! Naruto's gaze drifts to the pair of girls, crush or no crush, the blond isn't going to forget what they did, particularly as neither of the girls were getting any blame for their part in sending him flying to that section of kanji.

And just why would Sasuke-teme want to eat a tomato for? Even worst, why would he eat a tomato he didn't know where it came from? The blond demon container wonders, his thoughts going back

to the source of what happened, as he stuffs his hands into his pockets, hunched over while turning away from the displaced building. Kicking a few pebbles, Naruto walks away from the displaced grounds, heading for the mountain cause he thought he's seen something odd flying over that way as he was waking up.

After putting some distance between the displaced building and him, Naruto's mood swings upwards at the idea that he'll be the first to really explore beyond the beach, which is about a kilometer west of their landing. The fading light doesn't do anything to dampen his spirits either, particularly as he does find a edible things as he heads for the tallest point in view, some mountain that's got to be a few days away from the academy. The idea of being the first to see things and having the right to name them rather appeals to the young blond as he takes to the tree tops.

Too bad that there's not way to get ramen around here... The blond thinks as he pauses to look down at a doe and her fawn for a few seconds before continuing on his way, too hyped up to feel tired, particularly as he had been the last to wake, although he had been rather confused about how he ended up on the roof...

Old Volcano

Naruto watches as something rather large lands on some rocks a mile or two away. He tries to make out details of the winged beast, he's seen rather a number of them as he got closer to the mountain. The blond had also left behind a trail of 'Naruto was here' at noticeable spots like a shallow lake that he's decided to call the Bowl or a stand of trees in the middle of a flowery meadow that he's mentally labeled the Peace Field.

Most of the beasts that he's come across typically sport dual colors, likely to break their form up in the surrounding forests. It's not that he got close enough to pick up on much detail as the blond typically stayed up in the trees. Naruto didn't dare get close to them, sure he's kind of a goof off but he knows when to leave sleeping beasts be.

At the bottom of the mountain, he knew that there would be little to no cover. Sure, Naruto's confident in his stealth capabilities but he didn't have a change of cloths, even if his orange hoody is rather dirty, sporting various juice stains as well as sap, he had taken to sleeping in trees as he had seen other predator tracks about beyond those belonging to these strange winged lizard looking creatures. He rather not end up on the wrong end of a tiger or leopard.

It hadn't taken long to weave some reeds together. What proved harder had been adding the leaves onto the one side before making some glue from tree sap and bones he found around the bottom. He put this on the leaves before putting that side upon the dirt. It takes a bit for it to dry and then do it again on the patches where it didn't take but it's worth it as the stiff cloak hasn't brought any unwanted attention to him as he travels up the side of the mountain as the cover is a bit over as tall he is and at least thrice his width.

The winged beast seems to be done looking around and then heads for this cave. A few minutes later, another of them exits out and then take off. *What is it that they're guarding?* Naruto wonders to himself, he's been in this position for the last two days, his goggles help keep the dust that the wind picks up from getting in his eyes.

With a soft sigh, the blond slowly crawls towards the entrance, something he's been slowly doing since he spotted the changing of the guard as it were. He's unsure if any of them spotted him during his travels but he's certain that they spied him during his time around the bottom of the mountain. So far, the blond has come to conclude they did possess smarts, as evidence of the changing of the guard he's witnessed over the last two days. They change during dawn, mid-day, and dusk, no activity during midnight, at least none he witnessed during the one night he managed to pull an all nighter.

Once at the entrance, Naruto eats some tiny berries that he picked back during his time in the forest. It's too early in the season for seeds so he's had to make do with smoked fish, berries, and previously cooked meat that he has stashed away in some bark container that he had hastily created. He's just glad that he's come

across some tiny ponds, likely prints filled with rain, but it works to keep him hydrated. With the last of his third handful is gone down, the blond then begins to hug the wall, using the straps at the edge to curl the edges of the cloak.

Naruto slowly shuffles through the tunnel, making sure not to raise his feet up. Sure, he got sand in his sandals but it didn't much in the way of noise. At time, he would pause for a few heart beats before continuing down. Slowly the temperature raises noticeably when something moves from deep within the mountain.

Soon, the beast passes by him. He had done what he can to slow his heart rate when shuffling dirt moves and low pitched noise echos through the tunnel. Once the guard is gone, Naruto picks up his pace before the replacement comes. He arrives in a chamber that is stifling. He slowly walks around the edge of the chamber, as the replacement arrives, he is already climbing up the sides. A soft breeze plays with his blond hair and he cautiously tries to determine where the breeze is coming from.

It takes hours of climbing up and down the walls, the guard doesn't seem to be listening for anything as the guard seems to be more interested in murmuring into the chamber. Only when the guard is asleep does he finally venture beyond the sides of the chamber and finds a bunch of eggs about it. Touching them, he finds some to move, likely ready to hatch while others not so ready.

Then he finds one that's slightly raised up on this stone slab. He finds this egg to be a bit bigger then the rest. "I wonder what your parents grew to be. I doubt I'll be around to witness that." Naruto muses to the egg as he kneels down to press an ear to the shell.

Naruto hears a heart beat within the egg. "Well, you seem healthy enough, but then, who am I to judge? What do I know of eggs?" He murmurs out loud, it's been a while since he had spoken out loud and he glances towards the soft snores of the guard.

"Well, since you seem to be such a captive audience, I'm sure you're dying to know what I'm doing here instead of being shunned at the academy?" The blond didn't know if he'll be able to get out of here and has become rather lonely, after all, it's not like the hatchling within the egg is aware of what's going on outside of the shell, right?

Naruto feels drained, both emotionally and physically and the heat within this chamber kind of makes him feel sleepy. So, to keep himself awake, Naruto softly whispers about what happened that brought the academy to this place and then goes on to tell of his exploits as a prankster. Naruto is kind of dozing when the guard changes.

The blond feels his stomach tighten and with a sigh, gets up to eat something a little more fulfilling. With some of the dry fish in his belly, Naruto gets up and once more tests the air. He says good bye to the egg before heading to the wall he hadn't been able to get to due to some holes. Climbing the rock face, he feels a burst of cold air, which heartens him.

Upon finding a hole and it's his size, he quickly takes out a kunai and stabs at some point above the space. He then hooks the reed cloak onto it before crawling along the smaller tunnel. It surprises him to learn that it's a lot shorter then the main tunnel that those winged beasts use as after what feels like an hour, he's poking his head out into the sun shine.

He then works at opening this wide enough for him to get through. With that done, he stretches in the opening. Glancing around, he leaves to find something to drink as he's thirsty. Once that's done, he finds a shady spot and finally falls asleep.

Month Later

There isn't any guards in the chamber any more, so he doesn't feel the need to whisper in the chamber. The likely reason for this is because the adults don't seem to see a need to have a guard to hang over the hardening eggs as they had only done so to be there

for the hatchlings that come out of their shells and to quickly take them out of the cave to begin feeding them. Naruto had made sure to be away when those eggs began to crack as he didn't want to deal with protective parental beasts seeing him as a quick meal to feed the hatchling or as a threat to said hatchling. He's seen them come out with hatchlings riding upon their backs and adults bringing in boar, deer, geese, or anything larger then the hatchling in question.

Over the time he's spent in the egg chamber, the blond had got into the habit of speaking out loud in the cave. Naruto has even recited lessen plans he had attended, going so far as to mimic the instructor's tone and pronunciation. It had served as an eye opener to the blond to realize just how many lessons he retained, but there's only so much the blond had memorized from the academy classes, which is why the blond would talk about myths and legends he over heard, dirty songs he learnt during the few times he infiltrated bars in disguise to popular, proper sing songs he learnt from traders unloading their goods, what little poetry he knew, to what gossip he overheard before the accident with the seal, and to made up stories that the blond clobbered together using bits of other parts of stories he had learnt.

Being unskilled in the written language pretty much is why the blond didn't know too many stories to share to his 'captive' audience. And since telling jokes got old without anyone doing the other part, it left Naruto with a lot of time to focus on making things out of some mixture of volcanic dirt and water, he's not sure if it's clay but it sure didn't crumble when he put them in a campfire, it might not be a potter's oven but it does work.

He had also spent time building a thin shed to smoke whatever creatures he manages to catch. Water wasn't hard to find and as such, Naruto sticking around a spring proves to be a simple enough strategy as it brings what mountain dwelling wild animals to him instead of him having to spend a lot of time wandering the mountain side or heading down into the forested area around the base of the

mountain. The young boy still uses that cloak as cover as he still doesn't want to wind up a meal for the winged, scale beasts that claim this island.

But with little over a full lunar cycle have come and gone, the blond wanted to return to the academy in hopes of seeing familiar faces and maybe, telling them of this egg chamber. Although, the blond is hopeful that they will accept his offering of clay pots and smoked meat to forgive his absence. *At least the meat will add to the stock pile of food, even if it won't win my any good tidings.* The blond thinks to himself.

Shaking his head, the blond then picks up the large pack and begins to head down the mountain, heading towards the place he had left little over a month ago. Naruto doubts that the academy has moved since he left, after all, it's not like the building will grow legs and walk away.

The Academy

"I don't think we're home yet, sensei." Sakura says while staring as this swarm of cat size spiders fling themselves at the window. Most of the students tighten their grip upon their weapons while the teachers wonder what went wrong.

Naruto-kun... Hinata thinks sadly to herself. She wished that the blond hadn't stormed off. Although, Hinata did wonder if maybe she shouldn't have followed her first impulse and followed him away from the building.

The young Hyuuga begins to blush at the idea of them alone on the beach. How the blond prankster would take her into his arms to comfort her about the fact they might never return to Hidden Leaf as they weren't there for when the teachers and students participated in the seal scheme in hopes of returning home...

Naruto

After searching around for some sign of what happened, the blond would give up after a solid month of searching. With a sigh, the eleven year old makes the best of his situation to begin turning his hand at leather working as his cloths have seen better days. It helped to hunt from the tree branches as the deer rarely notice him that way, although since he only has a limited number of kunai, the blond has decided to take as good care of them as it's unlikely that he'll be able to get more.

Naruto is rather torn between sticking around at the spot or traveling to the base of the mountain to set up a base. With a sigh, the blond focuses on the here and now instead of what ifs and what could have been. He's set up traps around to catch small animals and even set up a smoking hut to smoke them.

The young blond had a lot to do and not a lot of time to do it either. The days slowing just blurred together until Naruto woke to find at least eight of those winged beasts ringed about his camp. "Ah, you're wake. You seem smaller then we thought you'd be." Says the one sporting blue forehead stripes.

"When did you guys learn to speak?" Naruto asks as he tries not to yawn or make any sudden moves. *I wonder if I'm dreaming... Although, I don't see any giant bowls of ramen yet, but can't rule that out though.*

"From you chatting while we were in our shells. You had a lot to say in that time period too." The one sporting red at the tip of his muzzle, this one had a slight different tone.

"So, did you guys want anything in particular? I mean, you do look pretty mature enough to fend for yourselves." The blond points out, he couldn't help but be curious as to why they came to speak with him though. *Not that I can't use the company.*

I wouldn't have done any harm to leave a note saying good bye. The blond thinks with a slight scowl gracing his face while he listens to

the one with blue stripes to finish speaking, "We want to see these jutsus you spoke about."

"Oh! Um, sure, just remember, I haven't master many of them." Naruto says as he stands up and walks to stand about two to three feet from his sleeping mat. Forming a single sign and a puff of smoke later and a tiger sporting orange coat and dark red stripes. A second later and Naruto returns to normal with smoke puffing away.

His audience murmur among themselves, their tones seem to indicate they where impressed. With a grin, he preforms that substitution jutsu with a vase of water. They quiet down and look around for him only to find him leaning on a tree trunk.

Well, they seem to be enjoying this. Naruto muses after he tries, yet again, to create some clones. The eight of the beast make this sound that he just knew was their version of laughter, not that he blames them as the crowd of clones he created seem rather off with some having extra arms and fingers or lacking an arm and two eyes. He rubs the back of his neck in embarrassment at the fifteen clones.

"They lack a scent." Muses one of the eight while one tries to touch a clone, causing it to puff away. It wasn't long before the rest of the clones mimicked that one.

"So, what are you?" The one with blue stripes asks and Naruto blinks before answering a few seconds later. "I'm a human, a male at that."

"What about you guys? What are you and what's your gender?" He thinks to ask as he moves to stand by the old fire pit, sure it brought him close to one of the beasts but the young blond doubts they're looking to turn him into a meal, not yet at least.

"I'm a male." The one with blue stripes states. "I'm a female." The one with some red upon their nose. As they all chime in their gender, the consensus is two males in the group and the remaining six are female.

The blond, though, is rather puzzled when they hadn't mentioned what they were. "You don't know what you are, do you?" He asks but the one with blue stripes responses by answering, "Well, it's more like a lack of translation."

"Oh, that explains it." The blond muses before deciding to introduce himself, "I'm Naruto, Naruto Uzumaki!"

"Tora is the one I chose." The one mainly black male that seems to be the main spokesmen for the group. "I picked Hokori." The one mainly brown with red at the tip of her muzzle and leg socks.

"Kuma." Rumbles the other male, Kuma is much bulkier then Tora and sports yellow under his jaw and belly. "Bara." The female with red upon her back and wings, she sports a lot of spines.

"Karyuudo." The female primarily green while sporting brown spots. "Kanki." The female with black and splashes of green.

"Yasei." The female with brown and splashes of yellow. The last female, a brown with green splashes gives, "Eikou."

Naruto does note similarities of features, like horn placement, muzzle shape, and size between Karyuudo, Kanki, Yasei, and Eikou. At least two of them share the same base color while the other two don't. While he couldn't see their tails or wing shape to compare them, he figures they must have something similar going one.

"Nice names." Naruto says while trying to think of something new to talk about. "So... what do you guys eat besides deer and boar?" The eleven year old blond asks the eight as he tries to ignore his own hunger.

The Academy

Hinata sighs at the viewing of the familiar beach front while her cousin stands scowling next to her. The last world rather shook them all up, it wasn't enough that they had been racing against a horde of

ape-people and a volcano erupting. Any minor changes to the beach and surrounding area is put down to some large storm swiping through.

They all found it hard to remember the details of the original world upon which they landed but the location seems to confirm they were upon the right world in which to find Naruto. It helps that they used some of the blond's hair, although many of the students can't help but wonder why the adults among them suddenly wish to retrieve the prankster. Many of those belonging to a certain fan club are still sore about Naruto's part in causing Sasuke to get sick.

A few more observant students figured out that Naruto held part of the key that would lead them back home. Although, that would mean that the blond has a permenant seal upon his, which begs the question as to why the blond would have something like that. The two Hyuuga hadn't been asked about it, while Neji wouldn't know the answer as he never bothered to study the prankster using his family's bloodline limit as for Hinata, most wouldn't think she would know as the girl is rather shy and many would find it hard to believe that she had ever thought to use her bloodline limit upon her crush, sadly they would be wrong as Hinata had spent a lot of time trailing her crush around and overhearing whispers that should have never be uttered, even under ones breathe.

As the instructors and students exit out of the academy building, particularly after they have rested, it was about late afternoon when they did so. Everyone is nervous even though both Hinata and Neji have pronounced they are in a safe place. Considering what their two weeks have been like, few would blame them.

And so, as shadows suddenly cover the ground, they all look up and their grip upon their weapons tighten. The beasts that land, while not the strangest they've encountered were still up there, particularly as the smallest stands, at the shoulder, ten feet tall but proves to be longer in the body.

"Huh, I was wondering where you guys got too."

Cliff Hanger... Maybe.

The Ghost and the Fox Ch 1: DP

I don't own Danny Phantom or Naruto.

"Sometimes I wish I can forget about all of this! To begin a new where my power's wouldn't be noticed as different!"

"You sometimes act like you're a little kid, Danny! I think you wish you were one again!" The line dies.

"As you two have wished it, so it shall be!"

Naruto blinks and then runs as this green light flares up not that far ahead. Soon the ten year old blond student slows at the sight of this young kid laying upon the ground butt naked. Scratching his head, Naruto looks around as he rather not get caught so far from Hidden Leaf or that he's found ways to get beyond the wall without anyone knowing about it.

Tension seems to hang all around the blond for what seems like hours. As the typical noises of the forest begin to fill the air, Naruto's muscles begin to relax and his alarm is slowly giving way to curiosity concerning the black haired kid laying on the forest floor. The ten year old moves to sit in a more comfortable pose while still doing sweeps about the surroundings for a few seconds before his gaze returns to the little kid down there.

With a sigh, the ninja student drops to the ground and approaches the shivering boy. As Naruto brushes back the kid's bangs, the boy murmurs something that didn't make sense before the kid's eyes opens and two different shades of blue meet for a second before the younger boy blinks and stiffens. The blond moves back to give the other some room.

The black haired boy's body shakes violently, it's clear to Naruto that the boy needs something to wear. With a sigh, the blond takes off his yellow shirt with a red image of a flame and holds it out to the smaller boy. The child blinks and sits up for a second, studying the older blond for a second before grabbing the shirt and putting it on, not that it fits as it hangs over the child's frame like a night shirt.

Naruto tries to engage the younger boy in conversation but the other merely gives the blond a blank look. When the black headed boy says something, again, the blond can't make sense of it. In the end, the blond points to himself and repeats his name out loud, "Naruto."

It takes a few tries but the younger boy does manage to repeat the name perfectly. Then, when the ten year old points to the black haired boy with a questioning expression, the child bites his lip and begins to tear up a few seconds later. Naruto doesn't know what to do but it wasn't long before the younger moves in close to the older boy and holds onto the blond as though the blond was a life line.

While bewildered, Naruto mimics what he's seen others in this particular position do and begin to rub the younger's back while putting an arm about the unnamed boy's lower back. It wasn't until the younger seems to have fallen asleep while clinging to Naruto's neck does the blond notice that dusk has come and gone.

With a soft look, the blond picks up the smaller boy before heading for that super, secret passage way into his home village. *So... what should I do with you now?* Naruto wonders while walking through the streets of the village, keeping to the back streets so nobody will think he's up to no good with the boy in his arms.

Though hungry, the blond decides to head for his apartment to put the boy into his bed before eating anything. Although Naruto did wonder if he shouldn't head to find the Old Man and get report the younger boy, but the memory of the boy's face as something seems to dawn on the other causes Naruto to pause.

"I guess you're goin' to stay with me, kiddo. I wonder if this means I'm your dad now?" The blond wonders thoughtfully while heading for his apartment building. "I mean, I'm the man of the house, that kind of makes me the father, don't it?" Naruto wonders out loud even though silence is his only answer.

T (=] - N

The five year old wakes to the bright light beaming onto the bed. The amnesic Danny Fenton rubs the sleep from his eyes upon sitting up and yawning widely. Once the boy is fully alert, Danny hurriedly gets out of the bed and heads for the bathroom to do his business.

Once that's done, the amnesic halfa tries to get up wash his hands only to find it's too high. Without thinking about it, a pair of rings causes a transformation and the now white haired boy floats into the air to get at the sink. With that done, the rings appear once more and the five year old returns to being human once more. Wiping hands upon a towel, Danny then leaves the bathroom a minute before the blond from last night gets up off the couch to use it.

It's then does the five year old becomes aware of the apartment. "What a mess..." The teen turn child mutters while slowly moving towards the fridge, being sure to move about the stuff on the floor.

Pausing before an open book, Danny stares down at the characters upon the page with a confused expression. Then, slowly, a frown grows upon the five year old's face after picking it up and flipping through it, only to find nothing readable upon any of the pages. Finding a scroll, Danny picks it up and unrolls it a bit to again discover more of those characters upon it.

In the end, it's his rumbling stomach that causes the ex-teen to continue towards the fridge while still carrying the two items. Then, upon opening the fridge, Danny can't help but stare bewilderingly into the almost empty appliance. "Where's the food?" The current five year old wonders out loud.

Then the blond says something that Danny couldn't understand while approaching the fridge. The five year old moves out of the way of the older kid, watching as the blond picks up this milk carton and gives it a sniff upon opening it. The blond murmurs something while Danny moves to sit upon a chair while watching as the older boy moves to put the milk on the counter before bringing out bowls and spoons.

Danny's nose wrinkles up as the bowl of cereal that the older boy, Naruto, put before him. Looking up, the amnesia Danny finds that Naruto is digging into his own bowl. With a sigh, Danny gives his own a taste and while it has this odd after taste, it didn't do much for his stomach so the five year old eats what he can stomach.

As Naruto takes and puts their bowls in the sink, Danny glances around, trying to figure out what about this place is off to his sensibilities. Danny snaps out of it when the blond Naruto says something and Danny gives the older boy a blank look. The blond looks around and picks up a pair of boxers, which causes Danny to realize that he's not wearing underwear.

Naruto's eyes show the older boy's bemusement while he just scowls, his arms crossing over his chest. With a sigh, the blond snaps his fingers and dives into a ratty box. Oddly enough, the older boy tosses some cloths that are clearly smaller then the shirt Danny's wearing. In the end, the five year old Danny picks what he wants to wear while the blond seems to curse upon looking at the clock.

Naruto then points out the window while speaking rapidly and moving his hands about. With a final look at the clock, the blond rushes out of the apartment, leaving Danny pretty much alone and unsure what to do. A few seconds tick by and the five year old spies a tv, but it doesn't do much other then show white static.

With a sigh, Danny once more transforms into a ghost and floats through the wall of the apartment. Oddly enough, the five year old's stomach feels much better while looking down at the street below.

The current invisible, flying Danny gives the apartment a look before flying towards the faces on the cliff. The appearance of the village baffles the child but turns to awe when he views it from one of the four heads craved into the cliff.

"Wow..." The white haired Danny murmurs, the cloths' colors were inverted from their previous colors. It doesn't take long before the halfa to pick out a park and heads for it, sure he might not know who he is or who his parents are but for now, it seems as though there's a lot to see and do before worrying about such things.

Never once did the five year old wonder about the transformation between human and ghost or about the powers he's displaying. After all, to the young amnesic ex-teen everything he does, he does without thinking about it for it just comes naturally to him.

] - N

Naruto heads for the Old Man's office to fill out forms to adopt the five year old, after all, the blond always wanted a family and the ten year old sees this has his chance to get one. Most of the day, the blond's mind had been reviewing what to do in regards to the kid and didn't like the idea of the boy winding up in a cell being investigated. Naruto can still recall the green light as it reaches up to the sky...

It likely didn't help Naruto in that the teacher was reviewing measures concerning unauthorized personal managing to sneak into the village without going through the proper channels. If anything, it only added fuel to the ten year old's mental imagines of what could happen to the five year old. More then likely the instructor noticed subtle ques of worry from the blond and thus changed the lesson plan on the spot to add to the demon 's worry, not particularly caring about what could be bothering Naruto either.

It wouldn't be until Naruto is within sight of the tower's walls when it dawns on the blond that maybe, just maybe, he should use a henge to push through the adoption papers as he's not very well liked in the village. With a frown, the blond takes a few minutes to debate this,

it's likely if a certain instructor hadn't been droning on and on about what happens to enemy spies, the blond would have proceeded straight to the Hokage's office and demand those papers but as it stands, Naruto is very much aware that if he doesn't do this *right* then the kid will end up in a cell.

With a shake of his head, Naruto focuses on what kind of adult to henge into. In the end, the blond's hands slowly but steadily goes through the hand signs for the jutsu and with a puff of smoke, the blond appears to be a thirty something year old with typical black hair and hazel green eyes. The cloths were dull in the ten year old's opinion but they should allow the blond to vanish in the faceless masses if it comes down to it.

Upon entering, Naruto is directed and then redirected throughout the building for a good hour before the blond finally grabs a chuunin and asks, politely, about where he needed to go to get the necessary documents needed to adopt his orphan nephew. The young woman's expression softens a bit before she gives him the right directions. Naruto says his thanks and follows them.

But the henged Naruto finds that the office is about to close and once he makes it clear what he wanted, a bunch of sheets are thrusted into his arms and in a minor daze, the disguised ten year old finds himself outside of the door of the office. With pressed lips, Naruto takes a look at the sheet and while he can only make out a few of them, is confident that they're right.

Before releasing the henge, Naruto decides to grab a few things before heading back to the apartment. It proved to be a rather awkward experience as the ten year old blond student is so use to having people watching him like a hawk when ever he's out in the market place that the henged blond's nerves are slightly fried by the time he's at the cashier with a lot of groceries which includes prime looking veggies and fruit to some small toys.

If it weren't for the papers and the cashier glimpsing them, it's likely that the cashier would have been weirded out and called for the

police about how suspicious the disguised blond is acting. In the end the man reminisces about his time being a father while ringing Naruto through. When asked about which kid he's adopting, the blond sticks to his story concerning his newly orphaned nephew, who just arrived with the news of his little sister and her husband's death.

Naruto is glad to get out of the shop while mentally noting to remember what features he's wearing in order to use this particular disguise for any future shopping trips, particularly when he's shopping for kid stuff. Dropping the henge a block before the building, the blond then picks up his pace, wondering what the kid had been up to since he left him alone in the apartment.

"I'm home!" Naruto calls out as the door swings open and the blond picks up the bags he had to put down in order to open the door. The five year old is startled and quickly gets up from the couch to follow the older boy to the kitchen.

The five year old speaks in that odd language while watching as the blond unloads the bags and then put the stuff away. Unsurprisingly, the kid picks up an apple, asks something, to which the blond nods, and then washes the apple before eating it. "Guess you haven't eaten all day, huh?"

Naruto feels rather guilty about that but it doesn't seem as though the five year old had suffered from it. With new milk, the blond takes the old one to the bathroom, unloads it into the toilet and then flushes it. Tossing the carton out, the blond ten year old continues putting the stuff away until there's only the papers.

Taking those over to the table, the five year old peers at the top page with a frown. Naruto hums a second before looking around for that dictionary. It's slow going but the blond does find the definitions needed between the various options. When it asks if he's head of his clan, the blond checks it since as far as he knows, he's the only Uzumaki in the village, well, not for long if these papers go through the blond muses while trying to get what the next question is asking.

The five year old seems to be rather busy toying around with Naruto's tv set before looking through some of the junk he has in his closet. By the time Naruto is done, the blond finds that the five year old has hooked up this strange thing to the tv and seems to be having fun moving this controller back and forth with a tongue sticking out. The blond's pen taps upon the table top while trying to come up with the kid's name.

As the young ninja to be watches the five year old, he thinks up and discards a lot of names. One of the names is Ichiro, a second name is Kaito, a third name is Kenji, and finally, Mizu. After thinking about it, Naruto smirks at the thought of Mizu Uzumaki. *It has a certain ring to it.*

And so, for the name of the child slot, the blond writes Mizu, leaving the clan slot empty as Naruto doubts that the five year old would know his last name if he can't remember his first. The blond then reviews the papers before putting them all together, he'll skip morning classes in order to see these papers pushed through. *Might be a good idea to bring Mizu along too.*

] - N

The amnesic Danny pauses the game as Naruto seems to be reading the back of this box. *When is the parent getting home? I'm starving!* The halfa thinks to himself, glancing expectantly towards the door, sure, he might not understand a word of the written language but the ex-teen deduces which of the choices will allow him to play or advance.

Danny sighs and gets up to use the bathroom. The child enjoyed his explorations throughout the village. Sure, he might not understand a single word but there were some gestures that just transcend language. Although the halfa is rather confused about the cardboard weapons he had been handed before the game begun, seeing what they're for had helped Danny know what they're for. The throwing stars reminded him of ninja weapons which did cause him to wonder if the game had been playing ninja.

By the time the kid exits out of the bathroom, he finds some microwave dinners set out. Then Naruto calls Danny over, the amnesia child is curious as to what Mizu means and so, upon sitting down, he asks, "Mizu?"

Naruto jabs a thumb at himself and repeat his name and then points to him and repeats Mizu. Blinking, he points to himself and says, "Mizu." Naruto nods, grinning widely at him as it dawns on him that Mizu is now his name. *Not like I had one before.* The ex-teen thinks while climbing up onto the chair to eat supper.

Danny had been happy to find that game system, ancient though it seems, as it means that there is some technology in this world. The halfa did begin to wonder what's in those other boxes he had found in the closest. Danny wonders if there's a VCR machine and movies to go along with it or games for the system he recently hooked up.

Once clearing off the box of food, the amnesic boy heads back to his position before the tv. The older boy seems to decide to do the dishes, which is fine by him. Still, as it grows late, no adult comes to the apartment, which causes the current five year old to wonder what kind of adult Naruto's parent or parents are, leaving their son alone for close to a whole day. *Poor ones, in more ways then one it seems.*

Having grown bored, Danny saves the game before turning off the system. Naruto seems to be done clearing up the apartment. A few bags are by the door, the books and scrolls are resting on the table or counter top, and then the throwing stars and strange knives are on the couch. The five year old looks back to the couch and stares at the collection of stuff on the couch. Getting up, Danny picks up one of the knives and is surprised by the weight of it.

Putting it down, the amnesic Danny Fenton picks up the wire before one of these tags. Naruto yelps and seemingly is standing next to him holding that tag, saying something in that strange, alien language while picking up the rest of the stacks of paper tags, stuffing them into a cloth pouch. The five year old puts the wire down

and when Naruto is away from the couch does he pick up one of the throwing stars, careful of the edge.

Naruto glances his way and he drops it but the blond doesn't come to the couch to put those throwing stars away, which means that something about those paper tags makes them more dangerous then the rest of the stuff on the couch. It causes him to make a mental note to beware of similar paper tags. *What kind of parent leaves potentially deadly weapons around their house where kids can get at them?* Danny thinks with a scowl as he, again, picks up one of the knives and gently uses an index finger to touch the point of the knife.

"Kunai." Naruto says and he blinks, slightly startled. Danny looks at the blond for a few seconds before he realizes that's either how they say knife or it's what this particular knife is called. "Kunai." He repeats a few times while staring down at the knife.

Then, as Naruto finishes putting everything that's off the floor away, mostly in the various cardboards in the kitchen, but then, as Danny looks around, it's not like there's any extra dressers or shelves to put such stuff into or onto. Yawning and struggling to stay awake. In the end, Naruto tosses him a shirt and directs him to the bathroom to change.

Naruto then tucks him into the bed next to the window, the lights of the apartment is out. Danny looks out of the window, noting for the first time, if sleepily, that the faces upon the cliff looks rather different then during his time about the park. They don't look as though they're looking down at him and a few minutes later, the ex-teen has fallen asleep.

T (=

Naruto seems to be rather nervous about something as the five year old Danny Fenton, now Mizu, exits out of the bathroom. The blond seems to be going through the various pouches before putting them

on. Naruto looks up at him and the blond's facial features become fixated, a few seconds later, the blond nods thoughtfully.

And then the blond did something and then, there's this adult standing where Naruto had been. The transformed Naruto picks up those sheets off the counter and then calls him while motioning for Danny to come over. This kind of causes him to be rather bewildered since Danny had been expecting the same routine as yesterday, only instead of leaving the apartment, the five year old wanted to spend the day looking through those boxes in the closest.

Huh, I wonder if this has to do with those papers he had brought home. Am I going to be registered for school now? Is that where we're going? Danny wonders while walk next to the changed blond.

They stop at a restaurant for breakfast before they continued on their way. Danny hadn't under stood a single thing Naruto had said to the waiter but the food wasn't what he had expected. Fish, rices, pickles, and stir fried veggies weren't what he would call a breakfast but they did hit the spot. Danny is glad that he got juice instead of tea as it was something familiar, although it didn't taste like orange or apple juice.

Their destination is this tower where people wearing green vests stand guard. They also sport headbands sporting this spiraling leaf that's on the metal of the cloth. The guards didn't stop them, allowing them to continue on. Naruto did seem to know where to go and yet, the disguised blond does seem a bit nervous but seems rather determined to see this through.

They arrive at an office and Naruto knocks before walking through the door. The woman behind the desk glances up at them and soon, the two are speaking. Boredom quickly over comes the ex-teen and he glances around.

Oddly enough, ten minutes later, they're done, he gets his picture taken and that's that. Naruto seems rather happy and relieved that it's all done. What they did next was go on a shopping spree in which

he got new cloths, sandals, and toys. They then spent time at a furniture place where the blond bought some kind of rolled mat.

They ate lunch before they headed to the apartment. Whatever Naruto did to take on the appearance of an adult gives once within it. Once the stuff is on the couch, Naruto quickly takes off, leaving Danny alone in the apartment.

"I wonder what that was all about..." Danny wonders before heading straight to the closest and the boxes within.

] - N

Seeing Uzumaki upon the report before him, the Third Hokage focus on the report, reading and rereading it before taking a look at the photo, which didn't get developed very well, making it hard to know what Mizu Uzumaki looks like. Taking out his pipe, the current Hokage muses about it for a few seconds before just approving it since it's likely a prank done to Naruto by someone within the village.

Ah well, at least this way I can send him more money, being an underage father and all. The Hokage muses. The Third had seen this particular prank before, some group of students recruit a young academy student to pretend to be the target's kid from the future. *Ah well, no harm no foul.* The Third muses before dismissing the matter.

T (=] - N

Naruto is rather relieved at the cheque that came in the mail. The money will help to pay for the renovations to the apartment as well as pay for their stay at an inn. Sure, it means that he has to take everything that marks it as Naruto Uzumaki's residents but it will give him his own bed once more. The couch isn't that comfortable, which probably means that the ten year old needs a new one, among other things.

"Mizu! We're moving out for a few days. The cheque came and we can push through the renovations." Naruto tells Mizu, sure, the kid

still doesn't seem to understand much of what's being said but the way the blond see it, the more he speaks to Mizu, the more Mizu will try and puzzle out the various words.

The five year old blinks before shrugging and going back to playing with that remote. The blond had been rather surprised to find that Mizu knew how to hook up the VCR and the game system, not that Naruto felt the need to sit in one place and focus on a certain thing. He has always found it hard to sit still for more then a minute, he's always vibrating with energy but it had been worst when he had been around Mizu's age.

"I wonder why I didn't get a request for Mizu to start going to school... Maybe the Old Man knows he doesn't speak a word of our language?" The blond student muses while putting stuff into boxes that will then be taken to the basement for storage.

Sadly, it didn't take long for Naruto to pack everything up, although Mizu had been slightly grumpy about the fact he packed up the tv and the other stuff. Giving Mizu a picture book while he then focuses on taking the boxes down to the basement. "Go. Outside." Mizu says upon coming back from his third trip.

"Dusk." Naruto states slowly and Mizu nods before leaving the apartment. The blond pauses to pack some cloths for them both before continuing to take the boxes down, it's tiring work but the blond recovers after spending at least ten minutes of sitting down and drinking some water.

"Times like these, I wish there were more of me." Murmurs the blond while laying on the couch after carrying the tv set down to the basement. His sore arms and shoulders resting upon the back of the couch while staring up at the ceiling until the aches vanish so he can continue with moving the boxes down stairs.

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Danny realizes it's been at least two weeks since he found that game system and then hold up in the apartment. In those two weeks, Naruto had slowly been helping him get familiar with the language, spoken at least as he's at a lose on the written one. The five year old had transformed shortly after getting to ground level and takes off through the village in search for another park to visit then the one he previously visited.

As Danny flies through the air, the amnesic halfa catches sight of a masked squad running about the roof tops. Curious about what's going on, the current five year old tails the squad of four. Danny almost loses them in the forest but suddenly, there's twenty of him and he's seeing things from all twenty of them.

In the end, it was the explosion that allows the five year old to locate them, all twenty of him combine together once more. Slowly, Danny realizes that he's witnessing an actual ninja battle, although the attacks that are flying remind him of magic. Seeing as one of the masked leaf ninja were about to lose their head, Danny flies into that ninja and suddenly, the current ghost boy turns his focus inward, wondering if he can find something to help him understand the language.

The halfa finds something and just as Danny grabs it, the current ghost boy is flung out of the body. Quickly realizing that he's been seen, Danny vanishes from view and goes into the ground. A few miles away, the ghost child floats out of the ground and stares in bewilderment at this glowing green orb. With a shake, the current white haired kid works on absorbing the energy.

Suddenly a huge headache graces him. As Danny recovers, the kid thinks about his name, Mizu, and snorts. "Water..." Danny muses and then the kid glances around before cursing. Vanishing from view, Danny flies for the village as fast as he can, heading for the apartment.

"I'm back!" Danny says after transforming back into a human. At this Naruto glances sharply at him. "Mizu?"

"Yea?" Danny says. "What's wrong?" The current black haired five year old asks until it dawns on him that he's speaking that same, alien language. "Oh..." The current child muses, trailing off.

"Huh, what happened?" Naruto asks him and after giving it a thought, he just answers by saying, "Well, there was this enemy ninja and I kind of bumped into him, got a headache and I then I realized what Mizu means before racing back here." It's as honest an answer as he's willing to give, not wanting the older blond to know that he chased after a group of masked ninja for the hell of it.

"Must have been some jutsu then. Anyway, we better get going. I need to cash this before I can contact that company to renovate this place." Naruto says before asking a second later, "Did anyone see you?"

"If they did, they didn't stop me from fleeing the scene." He answers before deciding to ask something that's been bothering him since he woke up here. "Ah, do your parents know you're renovating this place?"

"I'm an orphan so the apartment is mine. Also, I filed adoption papers to make you an Uzumaki so you won't get taken away and put in a cell until they figure out where you came from." Naruto explains and this causes Danny to be rather stunned as it means that either Naruto claimed him as a brother or as a son.

Before Danny could form a reply, the blond ushers him out of the apartment after grabbing some ratty bags. Once on ground level, Naruto does a henge jutsu to take the appearance of an adult before heading away from the building. He just decides not to press the issue now and follows his adopted relative through the village, likely to visit a bank before making arrangements for a crew to remodel the apartment. *Well, if he's sure it'll keep me out of trouble, I guess I'll just go with it. It's not like I know a thing about my real parents, my real family.*

To Be Continued . . .

Summoning Horror Story: WarCraft

I don't own Naruto or the WarCraft universe.

It had just been a shallow bite upon the wrist. Boar frowns while staring at the blood dripping from the fanged muzzle of the wolf creature that had been summoned just last week. None knew just how the humanoid beast managed to escape from the cell but as they back track, they found carnage of at least three Lightning chuunin before the unsealed door.

"A rather messy killer." Ox muses but Boar doesn't respond as the ANBU bends down to get a better look at the neck of one of the enemy ninja. "You're rather lucky. Only a flesh wound."

"Go see the medic, who knows what kind of things lurk in the beast's mouth." Orders Deer upon hearing the report of how they felled the beast. Boar doesn't bother to salute, only nods sharply, if stiffly before darting away from the scene.

Boar merely tries to push the memory of having the beast lunging at him and how the monster seems to, for a split second, hastes, allowing Boar to pull him body away before the monster could rack its claws across his chest. How the monster recovers and lunges head first at the arm he was a little too slow to pull out of its range. Boar tries to ignore how those glowing red eyes switched to amber eyes for a second before returning to their usual red, Boar tries to ignore the expression those amber eyes had given him while gazing up into his own, the emotion of pity that had been housed there just as Ox uses the butt of their sword to knock the beast man out.

And yet, as Boar gets off his shift, the ninja can't help but feel as if something is worming its way up from the bite. Slowing wrapping itself about his very being. Boar reminds himself that there's nothing

wrong as the medic had spent close to an hour making sure that nothing infectious about the bite Boar had received.

It's just a minor flesh wound, nothing more. I just need to get some rest, things will look better after wards. Boar thinks to himself as he walks through the street with the sun raising over the walls of the village.

Two Weeks Later

A snarls causes a young academy student, a twelve year old named Naruto Uzumaki to pause. Then a scream erupts behind Naruto, which causes him to turn and charge, vaguely noticing that it's a girl from his class is who he's rescuing. The monster's head snaps towards Naruto after Hinata's been racked on the shoulder viva the claws.

"Get away from her!" Naruto roars with kunai in each hand and leaping at the large wolfish human wearing tattered cloths that barely hang upon the beast. By the time Naruto's kunai kind of sink into the back of the strange beast, the beast has its teeth into Naruto's left shoulder and has arms coming in to embrace the blond.

As Naruto howls out in pain and his grip upon the kunai slips, allowing him to brace his hands upon the monster's chest as the wolfish man continues down. Naruto panics and tries to kicks out with his feet a second before his shoulders hit the grassy ground. The beast man lets go and Naruto's hands move to upturn the snout of the brown furred man-beast sporting glowing red eyes.

"NARUTO!" Screams Hinata, causing the monster to pause to look up from the pinned blond. Not knowing what else to do, Naruto goes for another kunai while reaching for what whiskers upon the muzzle that he can, pulling them while shouting, "Get out of here!"

The beast-man's attention is back on Naruto, particularly as Naruto manages to get a firm grip upon the monster's lip, twisting it this way. Naruto doesn't have a clue as to how to get himself out of this

creature's embrace but is sure that some patrol will come. He tries to ignore the fact that his shoulder sports a rather deep looking bite and that he's endanger of dying from the blood loss.

As the beast kind of lets up, likely to free its own arms from being pinned, Naruto crawls out of the gap. In hand is a thing of wire and as quickly as his fingers will allow him, Naruto ties it before charging at the beast-man, slightly confident that he's got an advantage as he's the one standing up. The loop of wire goes over the muzzle and Naruto pulls upon the wire, causing the muzzle to close.

Suddenly blood sprays about while the beast-man collapses without a head. Naruto just stares with a very pale face while noting the masked ANBU seem rather rugged in appearance. "That makes eleven!" Mutters one of the special forces. "Where do they keep coming from? We sent the original home three days ago!"

"Shut it, Hawk. That's classified intel you're sprouting about." Snaps a woman's voice. "Ram, see to the bite." The woman orders and soon enough, the squad vanishes with the body, leaving Naruto with a bandage shoulder and a little shaken by the experience.

Feeling rather light headed, Naruto heads for his apartment, suddenly deciding that he's had enough action for the day. Although Naruto did pauses a bit away to glance over to the site of the attack, wondering if that monster had attacked somebody before him. "None of your business, just go and grab some ramen. Yea, that will work. Pork? Or beef? Oh, sea food special!"

With that, the student heads back into the village, trying to ignore the urge to glance about upon hearing a rustling of leaves or a twig snapping. Most of all, the young blond ignores the strange sensation of something wiggling into him viva the bite. Or the sudden burning sensation that's coming from his middle.

Academy

Naruto rubs the still bandaged shoulder bite. "Is it bothering you? Maybe I could change the bandage for you, Naruto-kun." Stutters Hinata and Naruto tries to smile at the girl he saved last night but it doesn't seem much of one.

"I don't know... Is it common for bite wounds to burn?" Naruto asks Hinata, within a second, the girl shakes her head.

"We got to go to the nurse's office. It sounds infected." Hinata says, surprising Naruto so much because the Hyuuga hadn't stammered at all. Which is why when Hinata pulls Naruto into the academy, he doesn't struggle against her.

Naruto almost stumbles onto the bed as he suddenly feels everything around him being very overwhelming all of a sudden. As he collapses upon the bed, Naruto kind of hears Hinata calling out his name but he just found his focus some place else. Something seems to be building up within Naruto, just waiting for this final push.

"It's the bite... That's how... Hinata... you got to... they need to know! It's the bite! It happens to those that are bitten!" Naruto suddenly shouts as last night's conversation between ANBU finally make sense, horrifying sense but sense none the least.

"Go! Get out of here! I think... gha..." Naruto flips onto his right side. Chakra engulfs the blond and as he struggles to pull the chakra back in, it doesn't work. Naruto snarls instead of saying something.

Hinata is running at the sound that exits out of Naruto's mouth. Her mind is a whirl as to what her crush means but she knew that she had to tell someone. Pausing for a second, she pales at the sight behind and to her left of the changes Naruto's whole being is undergoing.

Hinata makes it outside and shouts, "We have to get out of here! It's claimed Naruto! It's not safe!" She shivers as a beastly howl erupts and then a crashing sound.

"Hinata! What's wrong? What did the idiot do now?" Some random student asks but Hinata just shakes her head and pushes pass, running as fast as possible while funneling chakra into her legs. Already a roar of outrage sounds from within the building before high pitched screams follow.

Hinata is happy that her range isn't that great as it means that she doesn't get to witness more of what the thing that Naruto had transformed into tears into Sakura and, perhaps, some other Sasuke fangirl as Hinata knows that Ino was among the crowd that came to question her. Hinata doesn't stop only moves to take the roof tops, heading for the Hokage Tower. Tears run down Hinata's face, the guards manage to intercept her as she collapses at the gate.

"I have to see Lord Hokage! It's about Naruto! Please! It's important!" Hinata says, one of the chuunin feed her a soldier pill, which helps restore a bit of her chakra as they carry her to see the Third Hokage.

Two Months Later

The blond furred Worgen's ears flatten against his skull while he rests. Once more a battle rages on within Naruto's mind, the boy vs the combine rage of the naturally brutal Worgen form grants and that of the imprisoned Kyuubi sealed within. Most of the other Worgen have given the transformed Naruto a wide berth, instinctively knowing that the smaller Worgen is much more dangerous then his size hints at.

Once more the scene plays out, the newly transformed Naruto managing to break through the closed door. The sight of Sakura-chan and some other Sasuke fangirl coming stormily down the hall. They're eyes widening at the sight of him and Naruto roar in outrage before they scream, the other girl backing away but not fast enough.

Distracting him from Sakura, a welcome distraction that even the trapped human part is glad for in a guilty fashion as Naruto really didn't want Sakura to die by his hand. A few bounds and the blond furred Worgen is mauling the non-pink haired fangirl. Just as the

mauling has begun, Sakura decides to give the role of heroine a try but just as the transformed Naruto bats Sakura away, Mizuki and two of the other instructors arrive.

Naruto stands and snarls in a threatening manner while the chuunin murmur something about being satisfied to see him as he truly is, a beast. Not that his raging mind cares, all it sees at the moment was new play things...

The sleeping Worgen shivers in memory of how many students and teachers it managed to bite and claw at that day, before the masked ninja arrived. Claw hands flex while the muzzle opens and closes, as if physically reenacting the mauling that Naruto had done at the academy. If it hadn't been for those fellow Worgen answering Naruto's summons, it's more then likely that would have been the end of Naruto Uzumaki's life.

"This sucks! Sure I feel guilty about what happened or since then, but if I had been in control none of it would have happened!" The boy rages at his current tormentors. *"Besides, Hinata must have gotten the message through, we haven't seen other kid size of us around. They must be in cells or in the basement."*

"I'm so going to figure out how to seal the two of you together and see if prison will alter your view of each other!" Naruto bellows while struggling to get out from under the paw of the huge warped wolf standing over top of him. The demonic fox snickers from its cage, the bars are all bent with a few snapped off. The paper seal at the middle looks very worn and the word's black ink is more a light brown with some of the edge kind of fading.

Naruto shutters to think of what kind of monster he'll be transformed into once the fox is free. Then there's always the possibility that the fox will gain its own body and reek terror as it had done before it had been sealed within him. Naruto knows he's making progress with slowly getting out from under the wolf creature's paw, the problem had always been how quickly the wolf realizes he's manage to wiggle out.

Which is why compared to the previous times, Naruto is taking it slow, not that he's sure that he'll be prepared to fend off an attack from the wolf to keep from getting pinned again. Naruto has always hated being forced to stay still for more then a minutes upon minute when he could be doing something more. The wolf had learnt its lesson about trying to swallow Naruto as the blond had spent a few minutes dangling from the dangly thing at the back of the throat, causing the monstrous wolf to spit him up.

Same goes for laying on him viva the belly. Sure, it had been dumb luck to find that while crawling under there but Naruto had done a rather nice job twisting and pinching it or else the wolf creature wouldn't have moved to pinning him down with a paw. Although, Naruto would have preferred one of the back ones as all the beast had to do was look down. *Can't forget the fox's role in alerting the wolf either.* Naruto muses with a scowl, glancing over to the cage which holds the crimson beast.

In the end, is wasn't if Naruto could get out from under the wolf, it's whether he can do more then get nabbed by the beast once more. It's rather a rather tall order as the warped canine is like taller then the Hokage Tower and is just plain huge. Naruto also has a sneaking suspicion that the massive beast is growing bigger too, how he doesn't know but he just can't shake the feeling that it was all the same.

Gods, I almost wish something would present itself to distract the two so I can get out from under here! Naruto thinks and as if in reply, something loud goes off in the real world, waking the sleeping blond furred Worgen that is Naruto.

Within seconds, the Worgen within the area are charging towards the explosion, all eager for a taste of whatever is making that noise. But as the pack get within a mile, a trap is sprung that results in all of them getting knocked out. "Looks like we caught the brat in this lot." Muses Ox upon coming upon the small beast-man.

Within seconds, a certain Toad Sage turns the smallest of the knocked out Worgen onto his back and checks the seal. "Damn it, we don't have much time. The seal's strength is waning too quickly. I'm taking him away right now, you deal with the rest." Jiraiya says as the others begin to release capture cages from storage scrolls.

As Jiraiya arrives outside of the Hokage Tower, he heads for the prepared seal room. None of the guards try and stop him, they all received orders about not hindering Jiraiya if he's carrying one of the transformed. Most of the guard head off to report to various heads about the demon container finally getting trapped, one in particular heads off to gather their supplies for the task before them.

It wasn't just the hope of keeping the fox demon sealed within Naruto, it's that they hope that the seal will give them clues they need to create a seal to help restore the minds of all of the transformed, as unlikely as it sounds. They had already encountered a few of the Hyuuga branch members among the beast and how ineffective their seal upon their forehead are since transforming into these beasts. If it weren't for that vital bit of information that Hinata had brought two months ago, it's likely the whole village would be over run with the transformed and spreading out into Fire Country.

As Jiraiya is putting the restraints upon the blond Worgen, he has to knock the child out once more as it looked as though Naruto was about to wake. With the restraints in place, Jiraiya activates the seals upon the chains to make it impossible for them to come out of the floor. Minutes tick by and the members of the preassigned squad to aid in the seal strengthening arrive.

Once the final members are within the room, the room is sealed off from the outside. By this time, the transformed demon container is awake and testing the chains, trying to get them to give so he can attack the human occupants within the room. Jiraiya grimly stares at his godson, realizing that this wasn't the way he wanted them to meet face to face but then, none of them expected some freaky transformation virus to elude them, it doesn't matter how you treat

the bite or at what stage you try to stop the transformation, it's like chakra doesn't even touch it or can do anything to halt it.

As they go try to strength the seal, the blond furred beast that is Naruto Uzumaki begins to glow a fiery red, it's more then likely that the demon within knows what's happening and is trying to sped up the process. Though risky, they decide to waste no time in sending in members of the Yamanaka clan into the subject's head, everyone is relieved when they don't come out a few seconds afterwards.

"Hey! Watch it! It's quick for its size!" Naruto shouts while struggling to get his legs out from under the paw. It doesn't help that the giant wolf monster is now standing on all fours. Naruto gets some help in getting out while the crimson energy flows out of the demon's cage.

None of the mind walking ninja seem keen on lingering on the floor where the demonic chakra is hanging out. Naruto is more then happy to get out from under that paw but this gives the wolf a reason not to stand in one place any longer. As Naruto glances from the spot he's clinging onto the massive wolf and the cage, Naruto decides to cling to the cage, hoping that throwing himself at it will, hopefully, delay the decay and perhaps, the opening of the seal too.

It wasn't long before Naruto realizes a pitfall of that particular plan but decides it's too late to change his mind. And so, as those new comers fight off the black and crimson tainted wolf, Naruto stands steadfast at the cage, his arms hugging where the two doors meet in the middle, doing his best to ignore the laughter of the fox and its murmurs of his efforts being for nil. Naruto closes his eyes and focuses on keeping the doors closed.

As odd as it sounds, as the seconds tick by, Naruto desperately tries to find something, anything, to help keep the doors closed. Then a tickling sensation on his arms causes him to glance out, he finds chains on his arms and thin cords of blue energy slowly coming up his arms. With a shake, Naruto balls his fists, as if to grab those thin strings. Ignoring everything but the blue cords, Naruto tries to breath

them into him, his efforts are clumsy but a minor gasp and the cords seem slightly thicker.

Naruto tries again and again, the cords grow larger and more power seems to flow into him but it wasn't enough. And so, Naruto strains to see something, something he knows is there, connected to the wolf that's in him. Upon finding those weak strings, Naruto attempts to re-channel the energy he's getting from those in the room with him into strengthening those frail ties.

It seems like years, decades but finally, those ties allow him to harvest energy from those on the other end. Then, Naruto finds himself back hugging the cage. Grinding his teeth, Naruto pours energy into the cage. He dimly notes that the fox has stopped laughing and that the crimson mist of the fox's energy is slowly being forced back by another mist, a blue one.

With the withdraw of the crimson energies, those other ninja seem to recover. Naruto feels more then sees them drinking in some of that blue energy but Naruto doesn't care, just as long as they keep the wolf from noticing him, from pinning him, he's confident that the cage can be repaired. Naruto continues to breath in that energy and it seems as though some blocks are giving way, allowing for more to come into him.

Naruto isn't even aware when the area of his mind has become overflowing with blue chakra but not only is the chakra done fixing the fox's cage, it seems to be removing the crimson color from the wolf's coat. Without the fox's own rage to add to the wolf's power, the canine seems to be shrinking and its mutations reversing. Soon, the wolf only appears to be ten feet high but it seems that those mind walkers are spent.

Naruto feels more confident in his chances of taking on the wolf. Naruto lets go of the cage and with that gesture, those connections that he's been taking chakra from. Somewhere in the fight, Naruto and the wolf finally call a truce, the wolf moves to lick its wounds a bit away, leaving the boy to be in the driver seat as it were.

Once more, Naruto is staring at strange marking written upon the floor. The chain's braces fall off rather easily and Naruto sits while running a hand through his blond hair, frowning at how matted it feels to him. "Man... does anyone have any mouth wash? I got this taste in it and I really don't want to know how I got it." Naruto says and within seconds, he's being bombard with all sorts of reactions.

Kind of cranky and exhausted, Naruto finally puts a foot down, demanding a meal before he answers anything. Although, before they leave the room, one of the men take off their shirt and gives it to him to put on. It's about then does Naruto realize he's rather naked and is rather glad to have something cover him.

Stifling a yawn, Naruto watches as the door appears. He struggles to walk down the hall, Naruto's limbs feel alien and he finds it rather difficult to keep his eyes open but some how, Naruto does manage to make it to a break room and within a few minutes, he's eating his second sandwich, mentally trying to organize his thought for the upcoming Q&A session.

The Ghost and the Fox Ch 2: DP

I don't own Danny Phantom or Naruto.

Looks like they earned their pay. Although, now we have to go shopping for a furniture for the new rooms. Naruto thinks while moving about the newly expanded and renovated apartment. "Is that a hot tub?"

Blinking, the blond heads for the master bedroom and finds a rather large ofuro in the connecting bathroom. "Oh, so that's why they had to take the outer wall out... I guess now I know why nobody wanted it and it was just sitting there, gathering all that dust." Naruto muses while Mizu climbs into the ofuro.

It had taken over fourteen months since Naruto had commissioned that company to renovate the apartment. It would have been completed sooner but upon inspecting the apartment, the company reported that the building wasn't up to code, which meant that the building had to be brought up before any kind of work could be started on the apartment. Things got found out and within two months since Naruto hired the company, the whole building was being striped bare and rebuilt from scratch, although for some strange reason, the Old Man stepped in and bought the apartment from the absence owners as nobody knows how to contact them as it seems that they left the village about seven years earlier and nobody noticed.

During that time, Naruto saved himself a headache and just kept using that Henge whenever he wasn't at the academy or training out at the train fields that are approved for academy level students as the blond didn't want to be kicked out onto the streets with Mizu in toe but the eleven year old's attention snaps out of reviewing his memories with Mizu saying, "And all my bathroom has is a shower..."

The black haired six year old is currently laying upon the bottom of the ofuro.

"At least you have a bathroom connected to your room. Most kids have to share with their parents." The blond remarks to the six year old.

"Yea and most kids your age don't have their own place, *dad* ." Mizu remarks from the ofuro while the blond merely sighs and leans at the frame of the door. There were times when Naruto gets this feeling that Mizu seems older then he appears which could be a result of some ninja village using genjutsu to teach kids academy lessons at a very young age, although, considering Mizu didn't understand a lick of his language seems to throw doubt upon Mizu being a child jonin.

"You're still sore that I wouldn't buy you that handled game for your birthday." The eleven year old muses with a soft snort. "As though you need any more excuse to hang around inside. There aren't a lot of kids interested in electronic games here in Hidden Leaf."

"Well, who says I want to be a ninja?" Mizu grumbles while climbing out of the ofuro. "You said it yourself, not everyone who attends the academy goes on to be a ninja." The younger of the two remarks.

"Maybe I should see about getting you to attend the academy anyway. You need to go out and make friends your own age." Naruto muses while moving out of his new bathroom after turning off the lights. "I know you get lonely." *I know I am and I'm among my peers almost everyday.*

"I don't want to make friends with those of my age group. They're just so... childish! When I'm in the park, I get reminded of puppies or kittens." Mizu snaps, not for the first time Mizu's eyes flash green and it seems as though the temperature lowers a few degrees.

The green retreats and Mizu's normal blue eyes are glancing away. "Well, it's not like you can rough house with kids taller and more physically stronger then you. I don't want to see you get bullied." The

blond says while running a hand through his blond hair. *Because that sure isn't want I want for myself let alone for somebody I care about. It's not like anyone has ever taken my side in anything and I doubt anyone will do so on Mizu's behalf when they learn that he's my son.*

In the end, Mizu marches to his room and slams the door. It wasn't the first display of Mizu's frustrations coming to ahead nor will it likely be the last. "There are times when he reminds me of Sasuke..." Murmurs Naruto while the blond moves to the kitchen to unpack a few groceries that he had a Genin team go out and purchase while they packed up a cart with their belongings they've gathered over the pass year of living in said hotel room.

They each had stuff to unpack now that they brought it all the way up here. It'll likely take a few days to unpack everything within the boxes too. Although they'll have to wait a week for the latest cheque to come before they can purchase a couch and a bed. It'll take a few months before the apartment will look like somebody lives in it instead of visiting.

As supper rolls around, Mizu comes out of his room and sits at the old ratty desk that's now serving as a kitchen table. A pair of old bar stools serve as the chairs too. The previous stuff that had been in the apartment had been tossed out and the Old Man only replaced the one bed and the appliances. It's up to the eleven year old to find replacements for the rest.

"Do you remember which of the boxes has the tv and the other stuff?" Mizu asks as goat stew is served, Naruto found it easier to make stew out of the various cookbooks he purchased then most of the more delicious sounding recipes. But then, Mizu is still helping Naruto with his reading and written skills, which are much improved considering where they were thirteen months previously.

"Yea, I put your name on them." Naruto informs the six year old. Mizu groans, it's clear that the child did the same to his own boxes which means that Mizu will need to check each and every box with his name on it in order to find it. The blond rolls his eyes when Mizu

mutters something in his native tongue, from the tone, Naruto could guess what the six year old is cursing about.

"Are you going to go train at a field after school tomorrow?" Mizu asks as Naruto is filling Mizu's bowl for a second helping of stew. "Doubtful, we do have a lot of unpacking to do." The blond informs his adopted son before handing back the bowl now filled with another helping of stew.

"Ah." Is Mizu's reply while stirring the stew with a spoon. Naruto frowns slightly before focusing on eating his third helping of stew.

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Hinata stares over at her crush, Naruto Uzumaki while letting out a soft little sigh. The eleven year old Hyuuga is rather confused as to why the eleven year old blond is using a Henge to be with that odd little boy who's chakra paths weren't only odd but sporting green energy. Hinata wanted to ask about it but doesn't want to cause Naruto any undo trouble either. The very idea of speaking to her crush let alone asking him something so private causes her to panic and almost faint at the very thought.

I wonder if Neji and Hanabi's investigate has turned up something... Hinata wonders, it's been close to two months since her little sister inquired about what's bothering her, more then what's usually bothering her and had managed to worm it out of her. Although Hinata is glad that some of the pressure is off, she is a little dismayed at the idea of her little sister investigating something she herself should have the nerve to do but also managed to roped their cousin into helping her too.

"Hinata... We have learnt who the child is." Neji says, startling Hinata a bit as it was lunch. "His name is Mizu Uzumaki and from what records we've managed to get our hands onto, he's Naruto's adopted son."

Hinata just stiffens while her mind races about what this means and more importantly, if it means Naruto isn't available. "We didn't find any medical reports and the picture we obtained, it's rather impossible to make Mizu out. Nor do we know where he came from, it's like he appeared out of thin air but as Lord Hokage hsa approved the adoption, there's a good possibility that Mizu's origins are black sheeted." Hanabi reports, her eyes glinting in contained excitement about this intel gathering operation, seeing it as ninja practice.

"He's also capable to altering his appearance with his black hair turning white and blue eyes going green. This transformation also effects any cloths he's wearing with their colors inverting." A pause. "It's clearly a bloodline limit, a superior one at that also grants him the ability to fly, phase through objects, and become invisible." Hanabi finishes.

"We have not confronted the boy to see if there are other special ability the boy may possess concerning his natural green chakra or have seen him preform any jutsu." Neji states blankly. "Although, there had been an incident where a kid matching the boy's altered appearance interfering with an ANBU operation little over a year ago."

Hinata nods, her mind a whirl at the idea that Naruto's involvement with this boy... this Mizu means that it could be something of a secret and if the Hokage entrusted Mizu to Naruto then they should stop their investigation at once. Although, as the eleven year old Hyuuga looks between her sister and cousin, Hinata becomes aware that perhaps they're not going to quit for those reasons. It's clear that Hanabi sees this as a way to put all those skills their father has been training her in to practical use while Neji will most likely continue to assist Hanabi, willingly or not.

"Are there any listings for Mizu's god-parents? Or adopted mother?" Hinata stutters, deciding to at least continue this if only to take the fall for involving Hanabi in all of this.

"None listed. There's no paper work for Mizu to attend the academy either. None of the listings for missing children matching Mizu's description have been found before the adoption or after." Neji explains before Hanabi could say anything and Hinata just nods.

"I highly doubt father will be pleased by the Hokage hiding such a powerful bloodline like this, let alone letting the current sole heir to remain out of school." Hanabi muses, pretty much saying something that Hinata had thought upon the revelation of Mizu's highly unusual abilities. "Particularly with having the boy get mixed up with Uzumaki... On that note, did you know that he's got the Kyuubi sealed in him?" Hinata's sister adds and Hinata glances over at Neji, only to find her cousin to be just as startled by this revelation too. "But we can't say anything to anyone about it because the Third created a law in hopes of keeping Uzumaki's status a secret, not that those involved are very good at keeping it a secret..."

"That certainly explains why Uzumaki can't control his chakra very well. Though, you would think that Lord Hokage would assign someone to teacher him chakra control." Neji states, it's as close to a rebuke of the Third Hokage's authority and judgment that her cousin will likely get.

"He might be hoping that his jonin instructor will catch on to Naruto's problem and set about correcting it." Hinata says in defense, although it's slightly hollow as Naruto's inability with chakra is hurting his chances of graduating to be a genin. The clone jutsu continues to be a thorn in Naruto's side, the blond has the other two down well enough but Naruto just puts too much chakra into it.

"Well, it sounds like you've got reason enough to speak with him, doesn't it Neji?" Hanabi remarks almost cheerfully at their cousin. Hinata can only guess when the usually emotionless mask will once more appear upon her little sister but for now, it seems as though Hanabi is enjoying not keeping her emotions under strict control, for the moment away.

As lunch ends, Hanabi stealthily vanishes from the academy courtyard, leaving Hinata alone with Neji. As Hinata heads to her spot at the back of the classroom, she wonders if Hanabi wasn't right about her having an opening in which to get to know Naruto in close quarters. It did cause her to wonder when, not if, this little investigation reaches her father, what steps he'll take to try and bring the matter before the council, after all, Naruto is rather young to be a father.

T (=] - N

"Sir, there's the head of the Hyuuga clan here to speak with you." The Third Hokage looks up from a ANBU report to watch as Hiashi Hyuuga walks into the office. Hiruzen Sarutobi mentally tries to recall reasons why Hiashi would wish to speak with him.

"Hokage, I wish to know what qualifications young Naruto Uzumaki have of being an adopted father to the boy known as Mizu." The head of the Hyuuga clan says to the Third Hokage. The old man blinks while his mind brings up the adoption papers Naruto filed about a year ago.

"Ah yes, I recall seeing papers to that effect little over a year ago." The elderly man says to the clan head. "I would have thought you would have recalled Iruka's little prank during his last year at the academy." The Hokage muses.

"Yes, I do seem to recall that particular prank. A rather thought out one but that does not explain the boy, Mizu, living with Uzumaki." Haishi states and this causes Hiruzen to stiffen while a number of things race through his mind.

"How old is this Mizu?" He asks. "Seems to be the same age as my youngest, Hanabi." Answers Haishi, which translate that the boy with Naruto is six to seven years of age.

Pressing a button, Hiruzen summons his secretary and asks her to have Naruto and Mizu Uzumaki escorted here.

] - N

Danny glances between the two masked ninja, while the halfa didn't want to be seen as weak, the amnesic ex-teen grasps his adopted father's hand. It helps him slightly with his nerves but it didn't stop the thoughts of being ripped away from Naruto and put through torture in order to learn whatever secrets he has. Somewhere in Danny's mind, torture and dissected became very interchangeable.

"Mizu?" Danny is startled out of his horrific thoughts to find Naruto looking very worried at him. His legs kind of refused to work and with a soft sigh, Naruto bends down and picks him up. His arms go about the blond's neck and feeling the eleven year old's arms wrapped around him causes him to feel safe, after all, Naruto has never harmed him and though he's given the blond trouble viva tantrums and such.

After a few minutes, Danny feels more then ready to walk and lets it be known, although he does keep hold of Naruto's hand, refusing to relinquish his grip upon it. They weren't far from the building and as they go up the stairs to get to the office of the Hokage, the six year old halfa wonders just how this particular encounter is going to result in and grimly prepares for the worst, although Danny really didn't want to leave Naruto, after all, the blond is the only one he knows and trusts in this world.

The first thought Danny had upon seeing the elderly Hokage had been, *Geeze he's old, ancient even.* And then the young halfa notices the few other adults in the room, one in particular sports white eyes, causing the amnesic boy to wonder if the man is blind. "Heya, Old Man! What's up?"

"Naruto, perhaps you can tell us how you came upon your... son." The geezer behind the desk says. The authoritative way the elderly man spoke, it kind of reminded the halfa of somebody, somebody also kind of on the oldish side of life.

"Well, ya see, I was coming in from a training field when I saw this green pillar of energy. It died and upon arriving at the site, I found Mizu laying there, naked and out of it." Naruto explains. "In the end, he wakes, I give him my shirt, then engage him in conversation only it kind of fails, he begins to cry, he clings to me, falls asleep, and I bring him back to my apartment."

Danny rather didn't want to be reminded of the moment it dawned on him that he not only woke without knowing his own name but not knowing a thing of the local language or customs. The amnesic ex-teen feels measuring look upon him and Danny swallows his embarrassment to not squirm under their looks. Even after a year, nothing comes to mind concerning his name or why he's here. *Likely due to not being in familiar setting.* The halfa privately reasons to himself.

"Then where did the name Mizu come from? If he has lost his memory?" The blond with his hair done up in a ponytail asks Naruto.

"Well, the forms needed a name and after thinking about it, I thought Mizu Uzumaki had a certain ring to it. Not that Mizu seem to care about what I decided to name him. Kind of seemed happy to have one." His adopted father explains and Danny privately thinks that last part could have been left out, not that the ex-teen feels like tossing in his two cents before a panel of strangers.

Kind of surprising that he's not nervous about it though. Danny muses, sure he might think of Naruto as a little slow when it came to books but the blond is the one who's feeding the both of them, making sure they had clothing, and manages the money. The amnesic Danny didn't know if he'd have the same restraint with money that Naruto shown to have.

At something, Danny had noticed how immature Naruto is for his age and yet when it comes to some of the more important aspects, Naruto's shown he's far more mature then his age. *He's been forced to grow up too fast, which could be why he holds tightly to certain childish actions to try and capture his childhood at the same time.* He

thinks, rather stunned at this particular insight concerning his adopted father.

"And you, Mizu, what do you have to say?" The old man behind the desk asks him, which kind of startles Danny from his current thoughts to think of an answer that will, hopefully, satisfy them. "I don't know how I got here nor has anything here jogged my memory. I also get that I'm kind of a burden and that Naruto's way too young to take care of me, but since I got here, he's done a real good job of it, even though he's got school and other things to do in order to prepare for his graduation into a genin." Danny says, pausing to bite his lower lip for a second before continuing, very much aware that every adult in this room is paying him the utmost attention.

"The thing is, I feel safe with Naruto. He's the only one I really know here in this village and I've grown use to the idea of him being my adopted father." Danny admits, very much aware that he's still holding onto Naruto's hand. "He's the only family I have right now and I'd like for him to continue to be family."

Danny couldn't help but feel as though some of the tension hanging in the air kind of vanishes. "It's been a bit over a year since the adoption took place and it seems as though neither of you have suffered during that time." The man behind the desk muses. "But you both need adult supervision."

The geezer nods to himself, as if deciding something. "But until the one I'll have to supervise you both, I believe Haishi will be happy to fulfill that role as he's the one to bring this to my attention." The Hokage says and it takes Danny a few seconds to realize that the guy with white eyes is Haishi, the halfa mentally files that away.

"Inoichi is head of the Yamanaka. They have family jutsus capable of accessing the mind. I am sure that with his serves, you might be able to regain your memories." The old man says, pretty much volunteering the ponytail blond for such a thing.

Gee, isn't that subtle. Danny can't help but think while finally letting go of Naruto's hand, feeling relieved that it appears that nobody is objecting to his continue living with Naruto. *Does this mean I have to attend the academy now?*

T (=] - N

Naruto found it rather odd that he's in this office and yet, he's not in trouble. Mizu seems to be more interesting to staring at some point behind the head of the academy while swinging his feet. The blond looks away from his adopted son to glance over at a certain pervert leaning on the wall by the door, clearly more interested in what's written upon the note pad.

It's been four months since the incident where Ino's dad found that trying to enter into Mizu's mind is like running straight into a stone wall. Although, they did learn that Mizu is capable at possessing people, just not in the typical Yamanaka way but by phasing right into their bodies. *I didn't even know he was capable of that stuff. Or that bloodline limits can cover so many different things, but that could have something to do with his chakra.*

"We do believe we know why Mizu has been acting out." The academy headmaster says and Naruto wonders if he's going to get blamed for it. "He possesses knowledge in most of the subjects taught here with the exception of history, chakra usage, and physical aspects of ninja life."

"He's going to advance a grade then?" Naruto asks while Mizu sucks in a breath. "Or is he entering into an apprenticeship with somebody?" The blond thinks to add.

"He's going to be placed in your grade. It'll give him a year to catch up on the aspects he'll need to graduate." The headmaster answers and Naruto just blinks, not sure which emotion he should express, pride that Mizu is that much closer to graduating or dismay at how easily Mizu trumps his accomplishments.

"Wow... and to think he has only been attending for close to four months." Naruto says, settling for pride. "We might even end up on the same genin team too." The blond says and Mizu finally looks away from the spot behind the headmaster.

The tension in Mizu's shoulders give way and the young six year old falls onto the back of the chair. It seems that he said the right thing, if Naruto's to go from Mizu's reaction, not that Naruto really reacted to get Mizu to relax... "When will he begin attending the class?" Naruto asks.

"Tomorrow." Answers the headmaster and a soft giggle comes from Jiraiya. With that, Naruto places a hand on Mizu's shoulder while walking to the door. The Toad Sage follows them, the blond haired boy and black haired boy out of the office.

"And to think, you're going to be turning seven soon too." Naruto muses while Mizu adds, "I'll be following in the foot steps of a few famous ninja too. Sure, a few of them graduated when they were younger then me but, well, if I had started attending after the adoption, I might be a genin already."

"And here I thought you'd still be opposing to become a ninja." Naruto muses, recalling more then a few times when Mizu throw a tantrum, ending it by saying how he won't become a ninja, all the Toad Sage did was hum. "So, where do you want to go to grab a bite to eat?" The blond asks before remarking with a sly grin, "Jiraiya's buying."

The man hums, clearing not realizing what he's agreeing too. Mizu snorts softly, but that doesn't cause Jiraiya to wake to the outside world. Naruto merely shakes his head, not for the first time wondering if the Old Man really expects the pervert to be a proper role model for either of them. Considering how incline Mizu is to spying on the women only places, the blond shutters to think about what kind of influence the toad summoner will have on the impressionable Mizu after years of exposure.

It's one of the reasons why the blond is trying to think of ways to get Jiraiya out of the village as Naruto doesn't want Mizu to become a miniature pervert. The idea of Mizu treating women the way Jiraiya does. *He'll be worst though, particular with his ability of flying, turning invisible, and allowing Mizu to phase through things.* Naruto thinks with a scowl upon his face while imagining Mizu giggling while flying out of reach of enraged women.

As Mizu steals a few bills from Jiraiya's pouch, an ANBU suddenly appears and informs the toad summoner that he's needed. "Well, supper will still be on him." Mizu says and the blond smiles while nodding in agreement.

To Be Continued . . .

Time Loop: Celebrations: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter.

The drums beat seems to cause the very air to tremble while a multitude of voice sings a song about All Hollow's Eve. Sure, Halloween is about eight days away but Harry didn't care as he rides upon the back of a massive wooden golem that's shape is a cross between an elephant and a ram. The majority of those participating in this parade as it snakes through the Forbidden Forest, heading to Hogsmeade before setting up camp across from the Hogwart's own lake.

All of those flying phantoms are actually tiny illusion generators, which is how they appear to move through the various objects, mainly trees but also certain incoming spiders and their webs. Although the fire that erupts when one of the specters go through an Acromantula is very real and boils the magical spiders alive. Although, if one of the Acromantula do end up in close quarters, one of the golems within range of said spider would quickly kill it before resuming their place in the parade.

The spells covering the various golems all work to allow the parade safely through the forest, seemingly causing a path to open up just a mile before the first part and seemingly closing back up a mile after the end part. Each golem acts as a magical amplifier taking a tiniest amount from him and magnifying it to ensure various effects of the spells they're carrying upon themselves. Not that it's a drain for Harry, after all, Dumbledore is the one who's been missing with time magic, causing time to loop for him, though why, the old man keeps sticking his nose in Harry's business, he really doesn't know nor really cares.

This whole parade is a result of spending hundred of thousands of loops as Dumbledore's little puppet before the Obliviate spell no

longer worked on him. *The subconscious mind can only suppress so many experiences before bits of information begins to migrate back into the conscious one or when the magic builds up to the point that binders might as well not exist either. Sure, you can put binds on so I can only access an eighth of my magic but if my magic keeps growing little by little with every time loop without any adjustments to my growing reserves... Some genius, he shouldn't have stopped looping and relying upon his previous experiences to keep me enslaved.* Harry thinks as Hogsmeade comes into view.

Harry's sour mood and thoughts get pushed aside at the sight of the small number of inhabitants the village seem to come to the edge to see what's happening. Not that it remain uplifted as the sight strongly reminds him of how Dumbledore allowed the Magical Communities to decline so badly. *He should have ramified the taxes to encourage families to have as many children as they can, it would have helped keep the bloodlines diverse.* Then he shakes his head, banishing that kind of thinking, after all, Dumbledore's own time looped experience have been Oblivated every time time resets itself, it had been difficult bit of magic to work as the magic need to remain anchored in him but so worth it as Dumbledore's plans are now very predictable and much easier to counter.

The song's volume goes up as they begin to repeat the song anew with the golems beginning to preform their various acts before the watchful eyes of the local town. Their marching is a tad slower in order for the various acts to go through their routines but the looks upon the townfolks' faces were well worth it. As his section reaches the crowd, Harry begins tossing fake gold down into the thin ranks of the town's residents.

As they leave the town behind, some headed to their houses as those fake gold coins transform into fliers for a carnival being hosted by Harry James Potter. Unsurprisingly, none of the folk knew him on sight, although it likely didn't help matters that he's disguised as a handsome devil with bronze appearing skin, bright copper locks done up in braids, glowing purple eyes, appears to be an adult, a

four foot tail sporting overlapping scales, and finally, sporting black antlers and horns while black leather pants cover his lower body, although glimmering jewelry graces his upper body and his antler prongs.

The volume of the parade increases and to his eyes, he spies that the fair grounds were already set up. The parade encircles the school and he's very pleased to find students rushing out of the castle to get a better look. He could only guess what look Albus is sporting at seeing this parade.

Now for the grandest spectacle yet! He thinks as the parade begins to march to the hidden fair. Harry closes his eyes as he reaches forth to transfer the spell upon the fair to place it upon the parade, the flying illusion generators seem to buzz in his ears as they begin to work overtime creating the illusion of the parade morphing into the various tents containing a wide range of features, although most of them serve as inns for international guests, typical food booths, a temporary goblin bank, open arcade grounds that are enclosed with only three entrances, and, of course, rides and haunted houses to entertain and thrill kids.

With the disguising spell successful employed, Harry gets down from the golem carrying him. With that done, he begins to select which golems will work the fair while directing the rest into the still disguised, expanded tent where they can remain until November first where there will be another parade signaling the end of the fair. He takes a few minutes to straighten out the clustered necklaces and bracelets before dismissing the illusion hiding him from view.

Within minutes the international guests begin to pour out of the various port-key booths. He had done extensive advertising beyond Europe as the whole fair is covered in networks of spells, one of which is a powerful language spell to allow those from different languages to pierce the language barrier so that language won't cause a conflict within the fair. He's most satisfied to see how quickly the various golem employed in the fair are already taking the guests

to their booked rooms or directing them to the check in desks if they hadn't made arrangements back in August.

As the guests settle in, teachers from Hogwarts come barreling down upon the fair grounds with some students following them, although unlike the teachers, the students seem awestruck by the fair. One of the golems head the group off, likely the one with the assignment of being the organizer that had been 'hired' to make this fair happen. Harry already knew what kind of arguments the teachers and Dumbledore will likely use to get rid of all of this fun. He merely shakes his head and walks off to tour the fair grounds to be sure that it was constructed as he had envisioned it.

By the time noon arrives, families are already out and about. Harry even spies those students from outside of the UK walking around accompanied with their teachers, after all, he had constructed at least three museums, five theaters with their own theater group to enact their plays, four movie theaters with eight movie rooms, an indoor market for certain companies to set up their own booths to sell their wares, and two zoos where one features actual magical animals and one containing muggle animals. He would have included pools and wave pools but Harry just made sure that each of the motels sported them, none of the animals were fake, Harry just replaced those from muggle zoos with golems while he captured like the basilisk or rented like the various breeds of winged horses, although he had to use illusion magic so that the Thestral could be 'seen' with the naked eye. He got the idea of using illusions to make Thestrals visible from watching The Last Unicorn.

Sure, that seems a lot but between expansion charms upon the tents. Magic is such a wonderful thing when used with a clear purpose in mind. Lamp posts line the streets of the carnival, ready to be used for when night comes. Ads boards are up, each sporting posters for the various companies that have rented space in the indoor market as well as posters for the various theater groups are there too. Each visitor is given a magical map that allows them to

track other members of their party as well as where they are in the carnival, they also alter when they're within the various tents too.

Harry does get hungry as his nerves settle and he sighs before setting off to find a vendor selling breakfast style food. He doesn't need to pay for the food, although he does give the illusion of paying by handing over fake money. Noticing that he's close to a live theater, Harry enters and again 'pays' for a ticket. He's sure to keep to the darker area as he could be mistaken for a worker as he's still appears in his devil costume.

I wonder if my Winter Celebration will have the same or greater attendance? Although instead of little over a week it'll be around for two whole weeks. I might even see an increase of businesses and maybe restaurants looking to get a piece of it too. The problem will be what kind of design I want to use and if I want it all under the same roof or not. Harry muses before heading off to get out of his costume.

Not that Harry's in a rush to get called to the headmaster's office and have a discussion concerning his organization of this event without permission. Not that he particularly cares as the man had signed off on allowing him to throw his own parties for the holidays. *It just so happens I like to throw huge ass parties that involve everything from classic carnival rides to zoos and museums.* Harry thinks before mentally adding, *And I'm the one funding this party and not Hogwarts. Gee, you'd think he'd be happy with the positive publicity for Hogwarts and the UK in general.*

The last time he threw a week long party, Albus had been very clear that such things aren't allowed within the castle. Harry smiles as he recalled how trashed Hogwarts was after that party. He had thrown it wide opens and made very good use of a certain room. *Just what kind of limits are there to how big it can get? I think last time, I got it to be the size of London fairly easily. That was the largest water park in the world though. I wonder if I can get it to appear as a prehistoric jungle complete with dinosaurs? Now that would be something.*

T (+

"So, just how much did you make from that celebration?" Neville asks as they rest in the hot tube that Harry thought up while walking thrice before the door. "I mean, as profit."

Harry hums, not sure how to break it to Neville that he bought pretty much all of the material from muggle sources. Then he had an army of golems take the bulk raw cloth and other such things to create what he needs for the coming celebrations of various holidays. "Probability more then what you'd expect."

"Those games you had were pretty fun." Neville says, changing the subject after about fifteen minutes of silence. "Earning those tickets and turning them over for special prizes that you can chose, so wick! Although it took me close to the whole week to get enough for one of those movie orbs. That's some fancy spell work, particularly when you have them under your pillow when you sleep."

"Yea, I know." Harry says smugly, sure, he's suppose to be a first year student. Even now, he's not sure why the Sorting Hat keeps sorting him, after all, it's not as though he's mentally an eleven year old. "You know, a lot of people wanted to purchase those while a few of the companies wanted to know who I ordered them from." He says to his best friend.

"Did you give them the name of the person?" Neville asks and he replies, "The maker wanted to remain anonymous."

"You know what would be great right now?" Neville asks after a few minutes. "Something cold and sweet."

"Oh? Is that all?" Harry muses and presses a tile that causes a mini fridge to pop up. The drinks were summoned from beyond the castle, though he's fairly sure that they won't be missed because that was the conditioned for them to be summoned. "What will it be?" He asks, causing the mini fridge to swivel to face Neville.

Neville slowly shakes his head but selects a root beer. He closes the mini fridge after selecting an Nestea. "You know, I am planning a Christmas festival." Harry says after drinking half of his drink.

"Is it going to be similar to your Halloween carnival?" Neville asks. "Not that I had a problem with it, but, well, gran wasn't thrilled at how much I spent on tokens for those games." The usually clumsy preteen adds.

"It's going to have a different style then Halloween. For one thing, no rides or as much theme styles either. Most of the buildings will be made from ice and snow, although there will be wooden posts that will be enchanted to hold it together. Might create overhead tunnels so nobody has to go out into the cold unless they want to." He then goes on to describe the various contests and activities that he has arranged, although he did admit that there will be more stores and likely actual restaurants instead of simple food booths.

Neville helps by evaluating those ideas and even helps tailor them a bit. Neville remarks about indoor gardens and he kind of likes that idea. "Hey Nev, how would you like to be in charge of this green touch project for my Christmas Celebration? I'm offering ten gold a week and an unlimited budge to take your designs and make them real." He says to Neville and his friend just stares at him with a touch of fear and awe.

"You can even keep the plants too, just remember that non-magical types work just as well as magical." He adds, sure he doesn't know if Neville's up for the responsibility to do something like this but he's more then willing to lend resources and golems to see if Neville has it in him to do so. "I can get you books on the subject and arrange for you to speak with those in this particular business too."

"All that just because I made that suggestion? That's a lot of responsibility, Harry, I'm not sure I'm capable of doing it." Neville says humbly.

"Ah, come on, Nev, you're being groomed to take over as the head of your family. You should be more then qualified to direct hire help to place a bunch of plants about a small and medium size courtyard." He says in encouragement. "You have until the second week of December before construction begins on creating the buildings."

Neville didn't seems to be able to form words after that and he's mentally making a list of things to send Neville's way.

T (+

Considering the 'lashing' Harry received from the Halloween Carnival set up on school grounds, he came up with a different way to host the Winter Festival. Though it took a lot of spell work to float those base plates. It proved to be a great test of his sunlight to magic conversion spell, pressure resistance spells, and for wind sphere. As the plates had been rather rushed, he didn't have many of them, which means that there's only one tower to act like a motel, a tower for the contests, and the third acting like the ultimate mall sporting not only restaurants and shops but also museums, movie & live theaters, a water park, and a zoo with mostly magical animals.

The third plate floats the lowest out of three, but that might likely have to do with the number of expansion charms upon the tower. The competition tower floats the highest out of the three, leaving the hotel tower to float between them. The three towers are connected viva charmed ramps that also sport smaller plates that sporting a few of the gardens Neville designed, which also sport those shielding spells to protect the wind and from being so high up in the air. The smaller ones could be found within the hotel and mall tower while larger ones could be found within the competition tower.

All of the towers float over the previous fair grounds, which is why Harry has warded to keep the Hogwarts teachers from coming up. Actually, he had wards about to prevent marked followers of any 'dark' group from visiting the towers. *It's a good thing I got Dumbledore to sign that document agreeing that as long as none of*

my holiday celebrations happen on school grounds, he won't complain about the parties.

"Isn't that breaching that contract you signed with the headmaster?" Dean asks and he replies, "Not really as Hogwarts can't own the space over the ground, just the ground itself and as you can see, they're floating over the ground, there's no touching of school property."

"How are they staying up there, though? It must take a lot of magic to power whatever enchantments that allow them to hover there." Seamus adds while they wait to be taken to the train station, not that he needs to visit London, nay, it's just that once he's at the train station, either of them, he's officially not the responsibility of the school and he can use that port key to appear at one of the port key booths of the tower.

"The anonymous spellcrafter continues to wish to stay anonymous." He answers and knows that all of the other students with them are listening in. He could only guess how ready to burst Hermione.

With the extra security, aka wards keeping marked followers from visiting, Neville's grandmother relented in allowing her grandson to spend the majority of the winter holidays with him. Neville has the room to the right of his room and he only hopes that his best friend will enjoy his experience away from his grandmother's thumb. Though, Neville will be spending Christmas day with his family.

Soon the Thestral drawn carriages come to take them away. Being so close to Neville, he hears his friend take a sharp intake of breath at the sight of the Thestrals. Only a select few of the first years pause before moving to climb into a carriage. They weren't that unexpected as their history hasn't changed much unlike his own as he tries to vary his routine from loop to loop.

The carriage ride is rather uneventful and upon arriving at the train station, Harry pulls Neville to the back of the horde of students. Once they're out of sight, they take out their port-keys and within seconds,

they arrive at one of the port-key booths. It takes them a few seconds to get their trunks onto one of the levitating carts before they follow their guide to their rooms.

Once within his rooms, he walks over to the bed and just lies upon it after kicking his shoes out and taking off his winter jacket, muggle made at that but then, muggle cloths were just cheaper and typically warmer even without some kind of temperature spell upon them. *Now if I can just prefect that automatic transfiguration enchantment, I won't have to worry about buying wizarding robes of any sort. Never again will I have to worry about switching between muggle cloths and wizarding robes.*

Hmmm, it's rather funny how much I've come to resent the magical community as a whole. I get that they like their tradition but they just seem to be totally disconnected from just what magic is capable of. It's like they're neutering themselves without realizing it... Muggles would make better use of magic then they do, it's because their imagination isn't imparted. He muses before wondering if any other magical community is like the UK or Europe.

You know, it would do me some good to explore other countries. I mean there are other countries out there that have been around for as long as Rome had fallen, so they must have their own traditions and magical practices. I mean, not all of the various communities invented wands to preform spells and to focus their magic. Harry muses to himself as he gets up to answer the door.

Neville is standing on the other side, holding a token bag in his left. "You want to come to the arcade with me?" His friend asks and he agrees, he heads to pick up his own bag of tokens before putting on his shoes and jacket once more.

T (+

Maybe I should have given flying mounts a try... Might have made travel between the three towers a bit simpler. Aw well, I'll just do set

it up for the next holiday. Harry thinks to himself while looking over the report of profit he accumulated through this holiday.

"Might want to use golems instead of living ones... Shouldn't be hard to engrave the necessary rune schemes to hold the illusions to make them seem alive." He muses in the Chamber of Secrets, reclining upon the couch in the renovated chamber.

Ever since he's learnt to grant golems a limited AI. He's also learnt how to rope a golem into monitoring wards, which helps when he's trying to grow highly dangerous magical plants. Mixing metal, stone, and wood in golems allow for them to endure various kinds of secretion from said plants then if he just one of the three, at least back before he created that magical skin for protection.

Groaning softly, Harry once more turns his thoughts away from various feats he's managed to preform using magic. He focuses back to his plans for the next holiday, which is St. Valentine's Day. The various plates continue to float in the air but the building material has been taken away after the decorations, in particular the plants. He's currently working on plans on creating a castle using those plates already up in the air, he'll wait until spring to add more large ones.

Various clippings and sheets sporting various designs for floating castles litter the desk before Harry. Many of the sheets sport his drawings from various movies that have not been made and other from his own mind. As he pushes the images off to the side, he is sure to put the report into a drawer before grabbing a few pencils and a fresh sheet. Upon this, he began by drawing the plates that are up in the air with the large three making a triangle.

It takes close to thirteen tries but finally, Harry has the basic plans for creating a castle, including a love tunnel ride, although the boats will be flying through the tunnel instead of floating upon a river or some other water way. The only trouble Harry foresees is the creation of the material he plans to use to create the castle. He plans to try and make the castle seem to be constructed out of clouds, which will

need to be soft and yet solid enough to keep people and objects from going into the floor or into a wall.

He's still getting the rune machine constructed in order to begin creating that material. He got the idea of rune machinery from the few times he visited a machine shop during the few times he's determined to learn how to sabotage his uncle's car. He would go on to purchase more books upon the subject and would move onto engineering text books, even taking a few university classes.

His previous rune machines work not unlike a computer program oddly enough as the runes in each part take raw material, typically water, sand, or random garbage really, and turning into something surprisingly permanent. Harry's working to funnel carbon from the air into the machine as raw resources as it would serve to clean up the environment by taking out a portion of green house gases.

With a snort, Harry leans back in his chair and glances over at a holo-picture, mostly just a simple ward connected to his memory to display a picture of Hermione, Ron, and himself using illusions. His emerald gaze studies Hermione's face, bring old memories to the forefront. Closing his eyes, he breaths out before looking up at the ceiling as a frown graces his face as he muses upon how often Hermione ignores her muggle roots for magic, something that someone might think he's done too, but the difference is, Hermione at least could intermingle with her classmates and achieve good grades without worrying about getting locked away by getting a better grade then a cousin of hers or being singled out by wearing that same cousin's discards. As such, Hermione and his experiences before Hogwarts were very different as Harry's never had the chance to experience life beyond chores under his aunt's watchful eye.

"You'd think she'd be disappointed after a year at Hogwarts... It's not like those fantasy books or comics, which is a pity really. Those works are very inspiring." He muses to himself out loud. "You'd think all muggleborns would try and aspire to the marvels that crop up in muggle fictional works."

In the end, Harry shakes his head, he'll follow that thought through at a different time, for now, he needs to snack on something before working on what kind of decor to use for the outside of the castle and how corny they will be as well.

T (+

Feburary first, noon is signaled by the port-key booths flaring to life. Harry knows this by the face that his collection of leather bracelets on either wrist seem to vibrate just before they seem to shrink tightly at his arm. Because of his reserves, he doesn't feed the drain that the bracelets have started in earnest.

When he gets the chance, he walks out of the castle and looks up at the castle he created. He'll visit the castle later tonight to check on the wards to be sure that nobody is trying to tamper with them or add anything to them. He knows that many of his fellow students are looking up at the castle, although unlike him, they're faces likely sport longing and awe.

Dumbledore had tried to put his foot down upon students visiting that castle but in the end, he pointed to a clause in their contract and that ended Albus' latest argument concerning how he likes to celebrate his holidays. He's sure that if Dumbledore could, the man would try to overturn last summer's decrees that he's slipped pass the bunch of moronic men. He would call them old but save for the fact that he has lived through thousands upon thousands of years, which means that he's older where it counts, within his mind.

"I can't believe you're still getting away with this, Potter!" Shouts a certain first year blond. "Guess we all know who's the favorite of the school is." Pipes in Draco and Harry merely gives the three a look before moving off to his next class, not feeling the need to respond to the coward and the two bookends.

A clucking echos after him, it seems as though the three thought to try and send spells at him once more. *It's one thing to transfigure somebody into animal, it's another to cause minor transfiguration*

while having the subject keeping their human appearance. Harry muses, it's not as though Draco and the two are the only ones he cursed with that bit of spell work, there's plenty of annoying habits and attitudes that he's come to be rather intolerant of over the course of the loops.

After all, nobody or anything will change unless he does something to change it. Trying to reason with the lot just isn't worth the breath anymore nor trying to argue with and threaten them. *One of these loops, I'll have to be sure to stop erasing Albus' experience and entrap him in a magical contract so he can show me where all his back up sites are and ID his programed minions. Then show me his various traps too, although, all of that will likely take more then a single loop and a great deal of patience, not that I possess much of the later at this point.* Harry thinks to himself as he walks down the halls of Hogwarts, his own personal hell.

T (+

You would think the ministry would have something better to do then to confiscate those plates to destroy them. Harry muses, very much aware that Albus had pulled majority of his favors for this particular operation. Not that it matters to him, not when he's just finish taking the last of the N.E.W.T. examines as with Dumbledore's attention else where, he's managed to slip into the various examine.

He's hoping that the fact that he took those examines, he won't be expected back next year. He's currently on his way up to the book to see if his name has moved from the category of student to graduate. Harry's tried to take his N.E.W.T.s plenty of times in the past but Albus always pulls a bunch of strings so that they get missed placed or destroyed.

I highly doubt that group will be appearing until autumn arrives. He thinks to himself. Considering magical stasis spells exist, it hadn't been that hard to set up a trap where a whole room would act like a time limited freezer or fridge, keeping the group alive but mentally

knocked out until the timer on the 'freezer' beeps, signaling the stopping of the spell.

If this course of action allows me to graduate from Hogwarts, so much the better. Harry mentally adds while taking a moment to click his heels, activating a bunch of enchantments upon his shoes and cloths, he walks up the side of a wall before walking over the gargoyle without giving it a password. Soon enough, he's in the headmaster's office, all of the paintings didn't even look at him or acknowledge him in anyway, but then, that's likely due to an enchanted plastic that he talked a few old Potter house elves to place over all of the magical paintings in Hogwarts to help preserve the paint. The magic upon the plastic and the various enchantments upon his cloths render him invisible to all of the paintings covered with the plastic.

Once he got the information he came for, Harry left, his mind going over what he plans to do in the coming, Hogwarts-free years. He's got almost a good three decades before time restarts and he plans to make the most of them.

The Ghost and the Fox Ch 3: DP

I don't own Danny Phantom or Naruto.

"There isn't anything to report concerning Mizu. The kid displays that he's had been through an advanced class training but nothing concerning physical or chakra training." Jiraiya reports before they get around to why he was summoned. "The kid is relatively harmless, although he hasn't gone out of his way to befriend any kids his own age. Basically, Mizu's only reason to stay in Hidden Leaf is because Naruto's here. There's the typical friction you'd expect from kids learning their boundaries but in the end, Mizu does seem to look up to Naruto as a parental figure, as unbelievable as it sounds for a six year old to see an eleven year old in that particular fashion."

His old teacher nods while leaning forward upon the desk. "There are a few clans within the village trying to get me to dissolve the adoption. Many prominent clans wish to take the child in." The Third Hokage informs Jiraiya and he merely sighs, not really surprised that the clans were trying to 'step in' and 'save' the kid from the 'Kyuubi'.

"I doubt taking Mizu away from Naruto is any way to gain the boy's trust. He is very much capable of taking off and depending on a few things happening, I think Naruto will join him." Jiraiya goes again, just rewording a few things while adding the bit about Naruto leaving to follow after Mizu. "Mizu is rather mature and it's not as though the kid really needs a lot of parental involvement either. After all, for little over a year, Mizu was content to spend his days alone in the motel room playing video games and watching those movies Naruto scavenged from the summon discard pile."

His teacher sighs and he watches as the Hokage rubs his temple with one of his hands. That alone gives him an insight to what kind of pressure the various elements within the village were weighing

themselves upon his former teacher. "Mizu can become a security risk and trying to use Naruto to control him..." He adds, shaking his head, while not particularly liking that image knew that there's a really good chance that it'll happen in the near future.

Jiraiya just watches as the Third Hokage looks his years. It isn't very heartening to think that within the coming months, it's likely that his godson and Mizu will likely be on the road away from Hidden Leaf, likely pursued by Hunter Nin.

T (=] - N

Naruto can't help but shake his head as Sasuke and Mizu face off. Ever since Mizu began to take classes with their grade, the Uchiha seemed even more moody then before and had oddly gone out of his way to snipe at his adopted son. *Just what is his problem? It's like he's jealous of Mizu, but why would the 'Mighty' Uchiha feel that way towards a six year old kid?*

The girls in their class seem divided concerning this fight, many of them had found Mizu to be adorable and in need of being protected which is now coming into conflict with their 'love' for Sasuke Uchiha. Most the boys take Mizu's side more because they don't resent the six year old as much as they do Sasuke. *Yea, like it's really hard to see Sasuke as a bully after the last month of watching the Ice Prince go out of his way to knock Mizu over or verbally put him down.* The blond eleven year old thinks to himself, he would love to step in but for the fact that his son's eyes are sporting that glowing green color, meaning that if he stepped in, it could only enrage Mizu even more then he already is.

Besides, it's not like Sasuke can hurt Mizu even without my son transforming. He's got enough control over his abilities that he can phase through, fire energy, and turn invisible while still sporting black hair. Just means it drains him a little more then it would have if he sports white hair. He thinks, wondering just how Mizu will end this as Naruto knows that this fight is very one-sided, even if few of those here knew it.

"Hello Naruto. How are you today?" Hanabi asks and he glances to his right to find Hinata's little sister standing there. Hanabi and Mizu do get along, he just won't say that they're friends though. During the time Hanabi and Hinata's father took to checking in on them, the man decided they needed to be instructed in manners and had them attend lessons three times a week until Jiraiya arrived to take over.

"Rather ticked at a certain Uchiha for starting this." Naruto answers politely. "How have you been today? Learn any new moves from your father?" He asks while noticing Neji and Hinata coming out of the building with Iruka's teaching aid, a gray haired chuunin named Mizuki.

"I have been fine and I've almost mastered Water Walking." Hanabi answers while Mizuki doesn't stop the fight but decides to referee it, much to his chagrin. "Shouldn't he be stopping this?" The six year old girl asks him.

"You would think, won't you? After all, the fight isn't going to do wonders to a certain somebody's ego." The blond boy retorts. *It'll only cause Uchiha to get more pissy and broody. God, for somebody who's supposedly not interested in the people around him, Sasuke sure expects to remain center of attention.* Naruto muses while neither Hinata or Neji come to join Hanabi and himself.

Silence hangs between them when Sasuke moves to strike Mizu, it seems that whatever rules of the fight have been explained. "Its sad when the heir of a founding clan stoops so low as to attack a kid half his age to make himself feel superior." Hanabi states calmly while Sasuke's attacks go right through his adopted son's body.

"You'd think he's trying to prove something to someone by arranging this fight." Murmurs the blond, trying to ignoring the murmuring threats from those girls within ear shot. Naruto is rather tired of getting beat on simply by speaking his mind. *Don't I have a right to free speech?* He wonders while frowning as he studies the horde of girls, they vary in ages and yet they're all crazy about the prick of a heir.

Actually, it's just tiring to be the center of so much grief at all, from either the girls and the villagers. The blond mentally admits while the 'fight' begins as it seems Mizuki has finished speaking. As the hand is lowered the volume of the horde of females only increases as they, as a horde, decide to take Sasuke's side, likely having convinced themselves that Mizu desires getting beaten up by a kid twice his age.

I doubt I'll ever get the mind of a girl. Naruto thinks, nodding wisely to himself while the cheers turn into outrage. Not that the blond particularly feels sympathy for their plight, as it is.

The blond notes how Sasuke grows more and more frustrated as nothing the older boy could do seems to connect. After a minute of this, Mizu vanishes just as Sasuke's hands begin to form hand signs and being startled, the Uchiha stops to look around but is blasted a few feet backwards by Mizu, who appears in the spot he had occupied since the beginning of the match.

"How dare he!" "I know!" "Sasuke!" "He cheated!" And so on, each of the witnesses couldn't believe what had just happened before their very eyes. Naruto merely sighs while out of the corner of his eye, the blond notes the look of disdain upon Hanabi's face. It wasn't long before Mizu has made his way towards them, Hinata and Neji arrive before the amnesic boy though.

Mizu looks rather peeved and one green flash later, the six year old addresses those girls. "Shut up your yaps, you harpies! I am younger then the guy you were cheering for! He's a bully and he had it coming! He's had it out for me since I joined your class and if you can't see it, then you're all better off never graduating because that just shows me and everyone that counts that you lot are all mentally defective and therefore MIAs waiting to happen!"

Then Mizu turns to regard Sasuke, "And if you try anything funny against me, be it a tip or a verbal remark, I'll find a way to stick you in the hospital, one way or another." Then as if remembering

something, his son adds, "And that goes for Hinata Hyuuga and my dad, Naruto Uzumaki."

With that said, the black haired kid phases through the stunned crowd of girls to join the collection of three Hyuuga and Naruto. Without needing Mizu to say anything, the blond places a comforting hand upon his charge's shoulder while leading the way. The three Hyuuga encircle them, making it clear that the horde of upset fan girls would need to go through them to get to either Uzumaki.

T (=] - N

Well, here goes nothing... Naruto thinks while checking and rechecking his pack which is packed with various storage scrolls. He sighs, but there wasn't much to it, after all, he failed his third try to make it as a ninja. "I'm going to miss this place."

"I still can't believe they let that prick graduate but not you." Mizu murmurs angrily, sandal sole rubbing upon the floor. "You filled the class with those clones too! Sure, they were warped but they were clones."

The twelve year old merely sighs while moving the already sagging knapsack up. While things had been looking up since the day the Old Man Hokage learnt about Mizu, it also started some count down too. It had shocked him at the beginning of the school year to learn that once word had gotten around about his adopted son's bloodline limit, every clan within Hidden Leaf had been aiming to bring Mizu into their clan, through marriage or adoption.

He should have said something before that, about the deal. Naruto thinks to himself. *They had their chance to cancel the adoption six mouths after the paperwork, after that, the ability to cancel the adoption should never come up!* The blond thinks while moving to place a hand onto Mizu's shoulder.

Without a word, Mizu causes them both to become invisible and with that, they phase through the door. Naruto lets go of Mizu's shoulder

and within seconds, an owl is standing where the blond had been. Spreading his wings, Naruto takes to the air, it had taken close to three months to get to the point where flapping while being this short has become second nature to him. *It helps that it's an actually, physical transformation instead of an illusionary one.*

He's never been more grateful for the lack of attention people had in his capabilities or else they would have realized what's off with his Henge jutsu. The big hint should be the fact that genjutsu seems to be something he'd never get since he lacks the control to gently weave illusions upon the mind of others without anyone getting suspicious. Since his henge doesn't cost him energy to keep it up, none are tipped off about him not being who he looks like. *Which is how I managed to sneak into those ANBU classes about seals.*

As Naruto silently flies over the village, the blond notes the number of patrols seem to be increased. Bitterly, he realizes that the council had expected them to make a run of it, particularly since he knew that his only family member was going to be taken from him. Likely in the name of helping Mizu achieve his 'greatness' and it would help the image of various clans if Mizu sports their clan name instead the clan name of a known prankster and local parish.

Mizu had reported a number of genjutsu trying to capture him not long after the Third told them about the council's 'deal'. Mizu did go along with the various suggestions of the genjutsus, mostly to keep them from trying to find another way to control Mizu. *You would think they'd figure he's immune to genjutsu if those mind viewing ones wouldn't work on him. Aw well, just means they put their eggs in a single basket is all.*

] - N

Danny would glance over his shoulder now and again to make sure that his adopted father is still following. The amnesic Fenton is just glad that the charade they've been maintaining is over and done with, not that is stops him from feeling dirty and used. He hated acting like those genjutsus influenced him, Danny shivers at the

training he had gone through with Root during the last two months. It had taken every ounce of his will to keep from blasting that loony, mentally f**ked Danzo into a wall.

While Danny doubts that the Third Hokage had approved Danzo hi-jacking him, he couldn't see how the elderly man could think that somebody like that bastard wouldn't take advantage of the situation as it was. It had given the seven year old a headache trying to sort through the various layers of genjutsu to find the ones he needed to fake. The halfa is particularly glad that none had ever made a large fuss about his pauses, they likely figuring it to the fact that the mass of genjutsu was 'warring' with him.

But now, if I ever see that creep again, I won't haste to blast him. That man is a cancer, it won't matter what kind of situation we encounter him under again, he'll be lucky if his back remains in one piece. Danny thinks darkly.

He learnt one important lesson from his encounters with that man and it's showing mercy to those without compassion is worthless as they'll find ways to make you regret it. Second chances were all well and good but there should be a limit to it as well. *Some people just won't be redeemed, who think they know best. Danzo is just an example of that.*

As noon arrives, they finally decide to find a place to rest. It takes a bit before either of them is ready to move on. Naruto seals the garbage upon a fallen branch before transforming into an eagle. He only takes to the air once he's invisible, knowing that his dad will continue on their westward direction, although at some point they'll begin to go a bit south as they were aiming for the famed sea ports of Wind Country.

They needed to get away from the continent for a while and that's as good a place as any to find a ship or buy a ship to take them away from these lands. *There's got to be another continent out there just waiting to be explored.* The boy going by Mizu thinks to himself while the terran below slowly changes while he's flying above it.

T (=] - N

Well old man, saying 'I told you so' just doesn't seem to cut it. Jiraiya thinks after reading the letter a third time. *They should have been tipped off when Mizu seemed affected by all those genjutsus. Honestly, if the kid's unaffected by Yamanaka family jutsus, what hope would genjutsu have?* The toad hermit mentally shakes his head at that, wondering about the time frame of getting appointed the head of a clan suddenly means the person stops using their brain.

Maybe it happens when they're admitted onto the council, after all, Naruto is an official a clan head, what with having a son, and yet, he's bright enough to plan an escape no matter how increased the security had become since the time of the graduation exam to the eve after it. He reflects. *And I doubt using Mizu's bloodline limit played a large part in the escape too.*

"Only wait to find that out is to find them." Murmurs the author of a certain series of books. "Well, they certainly couldn't have gotten that far, still likely in Fire Country." Jiraiya muses, tipping his head up to look up at the sky.

The toad summoner does note the eagle soaring over the road side stand but since it doesn't move to land, dismisses it out of his mind as the bird likely on its way elsewhere and is circling to get its bearings. With a sigh, Jiraiya looks back down at the letter before folding it up and pocketing it, he's got a bunch of spies to speak with about locating his godson and his great-godson.

Soon enough, Jiraiya is on his way after paying his bill and the eagle long since gone.

To Be Continued . . .

Undoing Time: InuYasha

I don't own InuYasha.

The night of the New Moon has passed and Inuyasha's demonic blood once more takes hold, transforming him back to his regular appearance. Black hair pales and begins to shorten while the rest of his body begins to become covered in silvery fur that stopped growing after a few centimeters. His skull stretches and narrows until his head once more is that of a canine's own, complete with upright, pointed ears upon his head.

The soles of Inuyasha's feet thicken into paw pads while his legs alter so he's walking upon the tips of his toes with blunt claws upon each toe. The palms of the half-demon's hands darken but remain predominately human with sharp, almost claw like nails tipped upon each finger and thumb. Shoulders widen but also narrow a bit, allowing Inuyasha the option of running upon all fours which is made easier with longer arms.

With a sigh, Inuyasha looks away from the stream and his own animalistic reflection. Once the sling containing food, a water skin, and his father's demon rat furred kimono along with a few other articles of clothing that he wears during the nights he's human as cloths tend to rub against his fur, causing him irritation.

That's not to say he goes about naked while in beyond the nights of the New Moon, only that Inuyasha wears a bulky shorts that stop before his knee. While it does cause irritation, Inuyasha had learnt to ignore it as its only in one spot on his body. He just knew that his mother would be disappointed in him concerning his lack of concern with wearing cloths to try and come across as a civilized person but Inuyasha just didn't think it worth while with his features on display for the whole world to see. He had even tried to wear a cape and a

deep hood, only for people to think him a magic user or a infamous bandit.

It had been fifty years since that jewel had been seen and now it is scattered about the land. Inuyasha had once entertained the notion of stealing it from that priestess but thought better of it. It was clear that the priestess named Kikyo, wouldn't haste to kill those that come for the jewel, perhaps if he had been born 'prettier' lookin' he would have given it a go and seduced her but he isn't and as he is rather fond of life, he didn't give it a go. *I doubt she'd have bought my tale of being cursed by a dark priestess because I spurred her affections...*

I'm getting old... falling pray to the desire of getting acceptance from short, lived beings. Inuyasha thinks, ears moving backward and down upon his skull. *Next thing I know, I'm going to look forward to finding the 'one' to settle down with...* The half-demon thinks to himself, snorting softly as he heads for the mountains where a wolf demon is said to possess up to two shards of the Jewel of Four Souls, that they increase the demon's speed.

Inuyasha can only hope he'll get there before somebody shows up to retrieve the shards from the young and hopefully inexperienced, wolf demon.

"What do ya mean he's gone? You're wolf demons and this is your territory! So where else does this guy have to be?" Inuyasha snarls at one of the remaining members of Koga's pack, towering over the very human looking wolf demons.

"Having us repeat it won't make him suddenly appear!" Shouts one of the wolf demons and with a growl, Inuyasha lets go of one of the wolf demons' vest and turns about face, marching off. The half-demon didn't know how to put into words his anger over this development, particularly the knowledge that at least two powerful person/s are struggling over the shards.

Should I continue trying to get one of these shards? Or should I just give it up as a thankless and highly dangerous endeavor? Clearly the sides of this 'war' over the shards is already further along then I thought and both sides seem to possess resources that I lack... Inuyasha thinks to himself.

Growing tired of thinking, the half dog demon moves the sling so that the contains of the sling is resting by his chest and belly before planting the palms of his hands upon the ground. With a flicker of an ear, Inuyasha takes off on all fours, heading southward. The frustration within him ease, the act of doing something helps Inuyasha to relax and to simply enjoy the action of running and leaping about the mountain trails.

The thrill of the wind rushing through his fur, over his body, and when he's in midleap gives the half-demon the impression of flight.

A scent causes Inuyasha to stiffen and to scan about the tavern. With a frown, his elder brother approaches his table. "Inuyasha." Sesshomaru states upon sitting down at the table.

"Sesshomaru." Inuyasha replies with a slight frown. "What brings you here?" He asks, noticing that Sesshomaru is wearing armor, which is rather odd as Sesshomaru is more of a scholar then a fighter. "Since when do you wear armor?"

"Have you been having any strange dreams?" The full blooded dog demon asks Inuyasha after somebody brings a cup and a fresh bottle of sake to the table. The half-demon frowns as he pours his elder brother a cup.

"Nothing but fantasy." Inuyasha replies. "Or wishful thinking." He thinks to add before taking a sip out of his own cup. "You came all this way to discuss dreams? That's rather odd, particularly for you, Sesshomaru."

"Perhaps... perhaps not. Those dreams might be a sign that somebody has altered time, changing things." Sesshomaru says and Inuyasha frowns. "There are ways to do so and each have their instabilities that can allow those most changed by the act to collapse the new time line." His half-brother states before taking a sip of the sake.

An image of a more human appearing half-demon who's demonic features seem to be amber eyes, silver hair, and floppy ears upon their head. "If what you said about my recent dreams is true, then why would it be in our best interest to end this particular time line? What bits I have dreamed of our relationship suggests we are more often at each others' throat over something rather trivial, like a sword or over my mother." Inuyasha informs his half-brother.

Sesshomaru's eyes go to the cup of sake, which means that Sesshomaru seems to be aware of that. "There isn't much to be gained, restoring the time line. I rather not sport a collar and be under the whim of a emotional female." He adds before popping some shrimp into his mouth.

I would be happier if someone else approached me about this. If it had been anyone but Sesshomaru, I would have called them crazy and that would be the end of it. Inuyasha thinks to himself while eating more from his three dishes while Sesshomaru seems to be happy remaining silent.

"You plan to follow this path, do you not? To restore events to their original course?" Inuyasha finally asks as he finishes his cup of sake. "If you mean to do so, then I might as well aid you if only to keep you from getting beaten up. You're true self might be a fighter but as you are now, you'll fall before a holy man or woman as you lack experience to handle yourself in a fight." He says and his elder half-brother seems to relax slightly while a ghost of a smile appears upon his face.

Just what have I gotten myself into I wonder? He wonders when his elder brother begins to outline the plan upon how they'll seek out to

test the items to determine which of them are active and how they'll use them in order to correct the time line. Inuyasha merely smiles as his book worm of a elder brother details not just details of each items but also some of the myths that surround them.

The Ghost and the Fox Ch 4: DP

I don't own Danny Phantom or Naruto.

Interesting society we're getting ourselves into. Naruto muses while glancing around the underground streets. Mizu and him wander about the animal underground city, Mizu in the form of a brown and white rabbit and Naruto himself in the form of a dull yellow/red fox complete with proper color details.

A rabbit? Seriously? I would have thought a cat or maybe some other kind of pet of the meat eating variety. The eldest of the two muses while stopping to glance into the window of a bakery.

The window display of the bakery is that of a manor house surrounded by forests and a river with some ducks. It baffles his mind about why a bakery would sport such a thing. "Huh, can you believe that's edible?" Mizu says and Naruto glances over at the current rabbit in startlement but nods his head as it makes an odd kind of sense considering the shop.

"I'm kind of curious about the seal that encircles the cake." The blond adds as an after thought, already heading into the bakery. The bell over the door tinkles merrily but none come to greet them, which could mean that the owners want to give them a chance to look around.

Mizu moves to browse the counter of glass that displays more sweets while Naruto tires to get a closer look at the seal ring that circles the cake. Though unable to move the display around to see the rest of the seal ring, he could guess how the rest goes. With a flicker of his tail and ear, Naruto moves to study the rest of the displays and finds yet again, more of those seal rings.

"May I help you two fine beasts?" Asks a female tanuki coming to the front. He could only guess what a sight they make or perhaps a more common sight in this society.

"Your seals seem to be rather uniform in nature. The seal master that did this must have a very steady hand." The current fox states and the tanuki hums.

"Yea, usage of stamps in the art of sealing is not a popular way most beasts like to create them, but for a business beast such as myself, it's the only way to be sure there isn't a mistake in making them when we use them as much as we do to preserve our creations for display and for transport." The bakery owner states. Mizu glances at him but Naruto just motions for his adopted son to give the tanuki his order.

When they leave, he began to look for book shops or a library as its clear that this society of talking beasts know how to use chakra and have been making head way into the art of seals. "We're going to be sticking around here for a while, aren't we?" Mizu asks upon their fifth visit to a book shop to browse their inventory.

"I guess the confinement of this place is getting to you?" He asks the rabbit. *Or should I say that you're feeling ready to explode out of that form?* The current fox mentally corrects but doesn't say it simply because there are just too many sharp ears about to overhear such a private conversation.

"You're the one use to this kind of thing. Me? I like having the wide open sky above my head." Mizu states while kicking a tiny pebble with his altered feet.

"Would it trouble you if we do spend some time in this place? Or should we leave, giving you time to grow use to it until we come upon the next city?" Naruto asks as he realizes that if Mizu doesn't want to remain down here in this particular form, then perhaps they should move on when they wake. "I won't force you to tolerate something that makes you uncomfortable just so I can study."

Mizu sighs and just shakes his head. "No, we can stay, it's just that I'll be spending more time on the surface then down here." His adopted son states. "This place... It just touching some deep part of me which makes me uncomfortable."

Naruto disguised as a fox feels his ears move backwards while his tail whips back and forth. *So those old memories of his take in things but doesn't give out information.* He thinks while frustrated on Mizu's behalf and wishing he had the skills needed to aid Mizu in breaking through those blocks.

"Just be careful leave and returning to this underground city, will you? I rather not find out you've been made a meal of by some human." He says to Mizu, hoping that it reminds the younger to remember to change back into his current disguise upon returning to his side.

Mizu nods and he feels his body relaxing, his ears move up from their flatten position upon his skull. "Come on, let's head back to our room in the visiting quarters so we can eat some of treats we bought from the bakery." He says, moving to place a pawed hand upon Mizu's cloth covered shoulder. He tries to smile while sporting the features of a fox.

Mizu nods and take the lead, it would take them a while before they get to the room. Along the way, they found more and more beasts going about their business. *Must be because they're nocturnal types.*

] - N

The halfa didn't know how to spend his time as Danny didn't want to assume a Henge to wander around the city upon the surface. He's currently floating about in his ghost form, mimicking one of Naruto's age group typically does, staring up at the sky to do some cloud watching. *I miss playing video games. Watching movies too, though I really miss the games.*

Floating above the city, the teen turn child halfa hums a tune under his breath while tapping one of his feet. Arms crossed behind his head, Danny just lets his mind wander without thinking about remaining invisible. He's not really thinking about anything in particular and other then finding himself occasionally falling asleep from being bored out of his mind.

Maybe I should grab a scroll or something to read, if only to occupy myself. Danny muses and with a sigh, he rolls onto his stomach. He could use a snack and it wouldn't be hard to find some small time crook to possess in order to get a snack. He would love to rob them or make them appear more foolish then they are but they were trying to keep a low profile so he had to settle for small things like a meal or snack.

And so, the amnesic Danny Phantom slowly moves down to the ground to float above the heads of the population. It's slow going but finally, Danny settles on this guy sporting twin dragon tattoos, one on his back and the second on his left arm. He observes this thug for a bit and manages to spot at least four hidden throwing daggers beyond the katana resting upon the guy's right hip.

He waits until the guy is about to enter into a shop before taking possession of the guy. Smirking, Danny slowly wanders up to the counter, he stops occasionally to grab something seemingly randomly before reaching the counter. "Ring it up." He orders, being sure to throw in a sneer.

Soon enough, he exits out of the guy's body and takes off with the snack, leaving the tattoo guy slightly disoriented. He didn't go far in order to begin eating his snack. Once he's consumed everything, he tosses the garbage into the garbage bin before finding a hidden spot in order to Henge into the form of a rabbit before heading for an entrance to the underground city that chakra using beasts crafted far below the sewers of the human city.

Danny wanders about the underground city, observing the other beasts that are walking about the streets. The sight of mice,

squirrels, rats, weasels, and other such critters walking about, it kind of makes him want to turn to say something to someone but there's nobody there. It's not the first time he's had that urge and Danny doubts it'll be the last time he'll have that urge. *One of these days, a name will come to me.*

It doesn't take long to find Naruto as his adopted dad is in the library a block from the visiting quarters. "It's like you've created a book fortress." Is the first thing that comes out of his mouth at the sight of the two book towers on either side of Naruto the fox.

"Humm? Oh, no, a group were sitting at this table along with me. Most of those books belong to them." His currently disguise twelve year old father informs him. "These three books are what I've been using since I got here." The disguised Naruto explains while returning to writing something down in a note book from one of the two open books about Naruto.

"I think there's some manga here, if you're looking for something to entertain yourself." His adopted dad adds thoughtfully. He smiles before heading off in search for said manga section within the library.

] - N

"There just doesn't seem to be any sign of the brats anywhere around Hidden Leaf." Reports just one of the many squad leaders sent to search the surrounding area of Hidden Leaf. Lord Hokage sighs upon dismissing the ANBU.

Not even the famous nose of the Inuzuka clan have picked up the scent of Naruto and Mizu. The forests within a week's travel of Hidden Leaf haven't provided any trace of the pair. Mizu had only so much stamina and while it seems as though Naruto had broken through the various genjutsus woven upon Mizu, they shouldn't have gotten far with Mizu carrying Naruto.

It's clear that the dual had prepared their departure as little remains within the apartment. *Naruto shouldn't have the skills needed to*

vanish so completely on his own. The Third Hokage muses, which means that perhaps he should take a look at Danzo and his operation.

T (=] - N

Ready to continue on to the city ports of Wind Country, Naruto checks over each of the storage scrolls, making sure that each are secure as well as color coded, he closes the pack before slinging it over his head and putting his arms through the straps. "Is your pack secure?" The blond asks the younger white haired boy sporting green eyes.

"I don't see it getting any more secure." Mizu says dry, crossing his arms across his chest. The blond hums and within seconds, there is now an eagle. Mizu turns invisible before taking to the air while Naruto himself leaps into the air. With a screech, the eagle that is Naruto raises up into the sky while flapping his wings, his legs moving to stay by his tail feathers.

The sun fully raises from the horizon as they put close to a kilometer between themselves and the city they spent three months in. *Well, at least we know which cities sport other such dual residences if we wish to vanish from human view if we ever run across a search party.* Naruto thinks to himself while flapping his wings a few times before stilling them from flapping, keeping them stretched wide and then after a few hundred beats of his heart, he would then flap his wings again for a short period, raising back up into the air before just keeping them out.

Though Naruto can't see his son, the blond trusts that Mizu is flying some where up front of him as unlike himself, Mizu's abilities at flying isn't a physical thing. *I wonder how far the hunting squads were spread? Do I have an entry in the Bingo book? If I do, it likely has something about me being a kidnapper...*

When Mizu appears for a few seconds before him and then vanish, the signal that it's lunch time. Naruto adjusts his course and heads

for the ground. Once his talons are on the ground for about thirty seconds does the blond retake his original form, complete with the knapsack containing storage scrolls.

Mizu is already taking out some of the dry goods stored within that pack. He stretches and wiggle his slightly stiff body, after all, it's been three months since he's worn that shape and flown in the air. Naruto is glade to pig out on what's before him as he finds he is rather hungry, he hadn't been aware of how hungry he had been until Mizu did the signal for a break.

"You know, if you keep to a small form, I could fly us to the coast faster then what we're doing." His adopted son says and he blinks between bites, he considers the pros and cons of that action. *We could have done that from the beginning. But then, we wouldn't know about the chakra beast society or learn so many interesting jutsus they collect from watch human ninja battles.*

"It has been a while since I've flown as a bird. I'm kind of out of shape..." Naruto admits and Mizu smiles a bit at his admission. "Although, I am kind of thankful that we hadn't thought this up or we would have missed out on the resource that the beast society can provide us." The blond adds while opening up a wooden thermos, the seals about it keeps the tea within warm while also allowing the bottle to contain more then its size would allow.

"It's not like ninja will seek us out while we're among those underground cities and out posts." Mizu muses. "But then, their Henge is just an illusion."

"It's good to know that you're as capable of physical transformations as I am, well, while you're sporting white hair at least." He says, smiling fondly over at his adopted son. "So, you have any more ideas you'd like to share?"

"Well, for one, we could always spend time on a forested mountain, cutting down wood, seal the logs away in scrolls, and then use them to build our own ship when we reach the coast. After all, you have

that Shadow Clone Jutsu pretty much mastered, so it wouldn't take long to get the wood we need. We could also sell what we don't use for money." Mizu says and Naruto nods slowly, he hadn't thought about using those physical clones that way but it would save on a lot of things.

"It would give you time to make those plans for that engine you thought up to use instead of relying on sails or steam powered paddle." He says and Mizu nods, the now eight year old had been the only one to make sense of those books that were written in an alien language and set up to read from the left to the right instead of right to left.

"It shouldn't be hard to come up with something that can be powered solely on chakra. Specially since seals seem like a computer program of the universe." His adopted son, Mizu Uzumaki muses and he nods, he could see how that would be to their benefit.

As they finish up and seal the garbage into a fallen log, Naruto turns to Mizu and asks, "So... What kind of animal did you want to carry around?"

"How about you just do a sparrow? It's small and it would allow you to land on the ground." Mizu says before asking, "We'll stop at the nearest town or village to inquire about local mountains?"

Naruto answers, "Sounds good, although I'll leave the asking to you. It would do you some good trying to appear older then you are, especially as Hidden Leaf are looking for a pair of boys, not a pair of adults." With that said, the blond Henges into a sparrow, with a chirp, Naruto rapidly flaps his tiny wings to land on Mizu's shoulder.

Soon they're flying through the air, with both of them being invisible.

To Be Continued . . .

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 7

There's nothing left within the discount bin that Xander could really use for his Soldier costume. No guns of any shape or gun parts could the teen find. *I knew I should have come when Wills and Buff wanted to come. There would have been more of a selection.* The supposedly too human member of the Scooby gang thinks while finding a collection of various plastic discards while he's searching for something to be used as a knife, broken stuff that should be toss into the garbage instead of put on sale.

Shaking his head, Xander notices the clock and with a scowl, he just grabs a few things roughly the same shape and size, he walks up to the counter. The plastic bits cost him a buck total but as Alexander Harris leaves the store, he slowly smiles as a rather interesting thought crosses his mind. *A little bit of superglue, paint, and it should work out.*

Oct 31st

Professor Harris blinks as not only does he find himself out of the lab but also within sight of rampaging creatures. It wasn't long before Alexander pats himself down looking for a cell phone only to find a prototype of the Escafil device resting in a lab coat pocket. "Oh, well, it's so good to know that I manage to have this on me but not a cell phone. I just know this is going to get me blackballed..."

The Escafil device pulses in his hand before glowing for about ten seconds and the light goes out. Shaking his head, Professor Harris of Alien Modification Division of Earth just pockets the cube before checking to see if he's got morph helpers on his cloths. Then, when he tries to morph into his crow, nothing happens.

"Damn it!" Cries Professor Harris and this causes another set of problem as the various rampaging monsters notice him. Much faster then he expects, Alexander manages to stay ahead of the incoming pack of odd beings. He focuses on his running and not what's going on around him until, finally, he just can't run any more.

Upon stopping and glancing around, Professor Harris finds that somewhere along the line, the little beasts' attention had strayed from chasing after him to finding something new to destroy. As Alexander catches his breath, it dawns on him that he's not as tall as he should be nor, as he moves a hand about his face, does he sport any facial hair as he had forgotten to shave over the last few days.

"Xander! Oh no, don't tell me..." Alexander blinks and glances up to find a rather young looking Doctor Rosenberge standing a few feet away. He's shocked at the red haired teen's outfit.

"Dr Rosenberge? What is going on here?" Professor Harris asks, although he doubts that this is the Rosenberge he's familiar with.

"Doctor? Really? Oh wait, ok, everybody's become their costume and we have to find Buffy! Also, could you pick up my body? I kind of left it on a porch..." Willow Rosenberge soon leads him to said body while he's trying to figure out what the red head means by people becoming their costume.

This would be so fascinating if it weren't happening to me right now. Professor Harris think while following the spiritual avatar of the teenager he is carrying. *Although that would explain why I can't morph into either of my morphs...* Alexander thinks, he had tried to morph into his hyena morph but, like his crow, it was a no go. (Guess why his two morphs are a crow and a hyena to get a digital cookie!)

Alexander slowly shakes his head as he studies the various pictures within the Summer's house. The 'princess' seems to be rather pissy about not getting her way. The scientist finds that the spoiled, air-head is trying his patience as the woman clearly doesn't understand

that they're safe out of view of the magical being rampaging about the town then trying to find a 'way' to return her home.

Professor Harris wonders if the teen's brain would be overly damaged if he just knocked her out to keep her from getting on his nerves. "Buffy." He jerks his head and quickly turns to face the man, for some strange reason, he is not happy to see the man. "I'm glad you're safe."

"Somehow, I doubt we're safe now that you're here. Did you remember to close the door when you entered?" He asks the guy in black. With a roll of his eyes, he walks pass the man to find that yes, the door is open.

Once the door is closed and a few seconds after some debate, he jams a door with a chair, he returns to the living room to find, unsurprisingly, the air-head fawning over the guy. *As long as she stops pacing.* He thinks as Ms Chase finally comes down from the second floor.

"Angel! Thank god you're here!" The spandex wearing teen cries and embraces the guy, which seems to annoy Buffy. "Everyone seems to be insane!"

He merely rolls his eyes and a soft thud comes from the kitchen, which causes him to smile slightly, glad that he ended one kind of situation before it arrived. *Hopefully, I'll come out of this with my sanity intact.* Professor Harris thinks as he finally opens a blank note book that he found and began to write in it, mostly mathematical jokes.

Then, Xander Harris takes the place of Professor Harris and he's not the only one as Buffy finally began to sound like herself. "Guess Willow and G-man ended the spell." He says before heading upstairs to check on Willow's body.

Two Weeks Later

Xander blinks as he pulls out the blue cube from the borrowed lab coat. Noting the weight, it puzzles him and then he notices the heat that its generating. Wordlessly, he takes off the uniform clips and using a pin knife, manages to pop a covering to find a bunch of electronic stuff within.

Shaking his head, he sits down upon his bed as it dawns on him just what this could mean for him. Recovering, Xander puts the cover back on before clipping it to his shirt. It takes a few seconds but once each baggy article of clothing has a clip on it, he opens his window and within seconds, a gray tom who's name is Carl enters and meows at him.

It wasn't long before Carl allows him to pet him, the tom has been clipped and while the cat is purring, Xander focuses on Carl's fur and the muscles under it. As Carl recovers, the feline leaves viva the window and once the cat is out of his room, he closes the window and his door.

Taking a few calming breaths to help calm his excitement, Xander closes his eyes and focuses upon willing himself into the form of a gray tabby. Bones pop as Xander begins to shrink, he ignores the urge to look into a mirror, he didn't need to see his reflection to guess what changes his body is going through. The appearance of the cat's 'mind' means that his morphing is complete.

Meowing, Xander moves about the floor of his room before leaping onto his bed. A few tests later does prove that Carl is likely responsible for knocking down stuff about his room since if he in this form can reach those spots, then so could the tabby. Perched on a shelf, he studies the view with his tail lashing about as the feline in him doesn't like the scent of Carl, its similar to the feline's own only it lacks a certain something.

Shaking his head, Xander leaps from his position and once on the ground, focuses on becoming human. Upon returning to normal, he glances at the alien cube, he's summoning Professor Harris'

memories and reviews them as he comes up with pros and cons about this ability.

In the end, he heads out of the house, being sure to add clips to his shoes, he has a general idea of where to go to acquire more animals without visiting the local zoo. His mind recalling the memories of flight that Professor Alexander Harris processed when it came to his crow morph.

I just might acquire a Harris Hawk... After all, I am a Harris. Xander thinks while heading for the local animal shelter in hopes that they're still open.

The Ghost and the Fox Ch 5: DP

I don't own Danny Phantom or Naruto.

" I-wish-that-Tucker-and-I-to-be-sent-to-where-sixteen-year-old-Danny-is-as-well-as-a-way-to-come-back-to-our-world-with-Danny-in-toe! "

"So you have wished it, so shall it be! Wait a minute, what was... Just what wish did I grant?"

"Just what kind of wish was that, Sam?" One techno-geek (proud of it) asks upon materializing within a field not far from a road. Tucker glances around the field and sneezes before adding, "And I don't see Danny anywhere near here either!"

Sam sighs while glancing about, at the sight of a village or town, she begins to head for the road. "Well, he might be in that village over there, so let's get moving, the sooner we find Danny the sooner things can return to normal." She says and a few seconds later, she hears the sounds of foot falls behind her.

It takes them about twenty minutes to get to the village and when they do, they find the villagers wearing out dated cloths, which causes those natives to simply stop and stare at both Tucker and herself. They had slowed to take in not just the people that live here but also the buildings. "Did we go back in time or what?" Tucker wonders and she didn't know what to think of the cloths the villagers are wearing either.

Sam just presses her lips in a line while continuing forward in hopes of locating Danny as their friend should be somewhere close by or else they wouldn't have landed where they did. While they were both conscious of the villagers stares, neither Tucker or herself pay them

much mind as long as they weren't going to confront them or run them out of the village. *Well, we could always shout out his name...*

They come across a rather large building that towers over the rest of the buildings. The sign seems to be in one of those Asian looking writings, not that Sam knows which country it appears to be. "Finally, some place that's got technology!" Tucker declares before heading inside, not that she could blame him as the window does show suck things as clocks and what appears to be parts to things.

A minute or two after Sam enters the shop herself, a twenty year old blond enters and greets them in what appears to be something like Japanese but it's not. "Well, that goes along with the sign, doesn't it? We're clearly someplace like Asia." Sam muses and this causes the, rather handsome man to look puzzled before shouting, "Mizu!"

An answering cry comes from somewhere in the back and the blond shouts something, there's an answering shout. It took a few minutes but somebody stands at the door, somebody that they hoped to see. "Danny!" Both Tucker and Sam cry out, if it weren't for the counter between them, they would have rushed forward to embrace their friend.

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"Danny!" The amnesic teen who goes by Mizu these days just frowns at the name the two teens cried upon seeing him. He glances over at his father to find that Naruto just raises an eyebrow at him, which Danny answers with a shrug.

"Do I know you two?" The halfa asks curiously, after all, he had long since given up on remembering his life before Naruto found him in that forest little over ten years ago. *And now it seems, that past has finally arrived for a visit.*

"How can you not remember your best/girl-friend/s?" The two shout, the girl in black saying best friends while the guy with the strange hat says girlfriend. That just causes him to become bewildered as he

couldn't have had a girlfriend, they would have been, like four when they knew each other.

"I'm missing something, aren't I? I mean, how could I have had a girlfriend? We would have been, like, four years old when we parted." Danny states while his dad glances between him and the two other teens. "They say they know me." He says and Naruto's eyes light up.

"Ah, well, why don't I just go into the back to give you three some privacy?" While the other two seem to be whispering to each other, he could make out what they're saying if he wanted too, his adopted parent and him switch places. "Be sure to flip the sign to close if you three decide to leave the shop." The blond adds, to which he just nods.

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"This isn't going to be easy." Sam states grimly, she does remembers the last time Danny forgot about her, that had been corrected easily with a wish but at this particular moment, Desiree isn't around so they can wish to correct this memory problem. "Remember how you two forgot about me that one time?" She adds and Tucker seems to wince as he recalls that situation.

"Man, this is so messed up. First, we couldn't wish him to come back, or when we did, we kept getting some other guy name Danny..." Tucker grumbles while Sam tries to resist the urge to bang her head against a wall or upon a counter top. "Just what is it you two wished for anyway?" Tucker asks her and she, honestly, couldn't recall it in perfect detail.

"Danny was complaining about the difficulties he keeps running into and I got tired of hearing about it. We made wishes, Danny wishing to be some place where his powers weren't too abnormal and I think I said something about him being a child or wanting to be a child..." She trails off before the black haired teenage girl turns to regard their friend and notices that Danny seems to have gone through some

changes, just some minor ones like longer hair, a darker complexion, and doesn't seem to be as scrawny as he use to be.

Wait a minute, what did Danny mean by us knowing each other when we were four? She thinks as she reviews what little their friend had said to them. She moves to face Danny, Sam notices that the blond has left but focuses on Danny. "What do you mean that we would have been four when we knew each other?"

Danny answers, "Well, I was five when Naruto found me naked in the forest. If what you say about us being friends is true, then we would have been four years old."

"You've been here for eleven years?" "You got turned into a five year old?" They cry out in disbelief but it does explain the minor physical changes Danny sports as he would have gone through puberty while eating another diet and likely experiencing a different life style. *As this world doesn't seem to sport much in the way of technology, which means not a lot in the way of pollution and more walking around.* Sam thinks while wondering just how firm those muscles were now...

"How can somebody change their age? I mean most of those who preform Henge jutsu just cast an illusion around them to hide their actual appearance. Even if you seemingly physically change your form, it doesn't really make you younger, it's just that you trick the world around you to make it seem that you're younger then you actually are." Danny says.

"Jutsu?" Tucker asks and Sam is reminded about Danny's wish, which would mean that there are people capable of using ecto-plasma as well. "What's a jutsu?"

"You didn't go through any Shinobi training, have you?" Danny asks, she watches as he crosses his arms over his chest. "What do you call those that manipulate energy and seem to summon the elements?" Her amnesic boyfriend asks.

"Typically, we would call those that use magic to be wizards and witches, but you use ecto-plasma as you're half ghost." Tucker says, coming through with the technical details. "It's why that energy you toss around is neon green in color."

"Half ghost? Does that mean I'm half dead? Everybody just assumed my abilities were just a Bloodline Limit..." Danny muses with a slight frown.

Then, Danny shakes his head and regards them for a second. "We didn't exchange names... The name my adopted father gave me and who I consider myself to be is Mizu Uzumaki." And Sam sighs but admits, that makes sense that if Danny didn't remember them, what were the chances he would remember his own name?

"You got adopted?" Tucker asks rather surprised by that, although she's just glad he didn't end up as a street rat. Who knows what kind of diseases exist in this world that he could have picked up from living that kind of life?

"Yea, Naruto adopted me and the leader of the village approved it, although they did try and dissolve it, we left before it could be official. I rather not wind up some mentally cripple who's considered a living weapon and being used as a breeding stud to improve various bloodlines or families." Danny states, his eyes flashing green and a scowl, though it's clearly not meant for them.

Ok... Was all she could think of upon hearing that little rant, Sam gets the feeling she'll be outrage at a later date for somebody thinking of using her best friend and boyfriend in such a way. Recalling where that little rant comes from, she introduces herself and Tucker. "Well, I'm Sam Manson and this is Tucker Foley."

"Yo, dude!" Tucker says upon her introducing them. "And just remember, you're actual name is Danny." The techno-geek decides to add and their friend merely frowns, likely not feeling much attachment to the name Danny.

"Why don't we go up stairs and you can tell me about what's behind my memory block? Just let me switch the sign." Danny phases through the counter while still human and switches the sign.

Shaking her head, Sam wonders where to begin as well as wondering who the blond was. "What about the blond? Shouldn't you let him know about closing up shop?" She asks and Danny pauses.

"Oh, you mean Naruto? That wasn't him, that was just a clone. He's been gone since last night to go check the mineral wells. There's a small army of clones down in the basement, working on creating a expanding buildings using seals." Danny says.

"Wait, didn't you say Naruto adopted you?" Tucker asks and Danny nods. "But he's like, twenty years old..." Sam says.

"Yea, Naruto adopted me when he was ten, he's only five years older then I am... Well, at least I thought I was younger then him..." Danny admits and Sam can't help but wonder what kind of village would allow a ten year old to adopt a five year old...

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I wonder what Mizu will do now? I mean, this is the chance to find his actual parents... Naruto thinks, his clone had made a few connections about the two teens that appeared at the shop, particularly the dishearted they were upon Mizu saying something to them.

Also, how did they know they could find us here? Do they know some kind of tracking jutsu that the shop seals can't throw off? The blond wonders while standing before one of the mineral wells, this one is slowly taking local elements within the ground and fusing them into really good iron ore that will become excellent steel for weapons for future commissions.

Breathing through his nose and exhaling out of his mouth, Naruto's mind begins to wander down the twisting paths of years past,

recalling the ship they built after harvesting wood from a forested mountain. His shadow clones helped and when Mizu finally got around to creating more then four clones, work on that engine went faster since Mizu's clones knew what they wanted to do and thus didn't need instructions like his did. *I'm still amazed that none at that port ever wondered where our workers came from or retired to each and everyday.*

It took a good four months for them to construct the ship but they did it. Once they had enough food sealed into storage scrolls, they set sail to the east and south. They would encounter islands that were inhabited by exiles from Wind Country or the children of exiles. They didn't stay for long on those islands, mostly because they didn't like the idea of having their throats sliced open or having their ship stolen.

When they grew tired of unsealing food, they would catch fish from the deck. In time, they would get to see a different set of stars. They didn't encounter much beyond thick coral reefs but by then, they applied seals to life the ship out of the water just enough for them to pass over them. They would soon learn that the reef bed they crossed had been purposeful created to keep raiding parties from where they originate from from reaching this nation.

Their ship was confiscated and they imprisoned, not that they stayed in the cell, within seconds of being left alone, Mizu phased them out of the old yet secure, sealed cell. They flew off after retrieving the scrolls and sealing the ship into one of them. They used Henges to move about that nation for a few years before they heard tales of a war torn land far to the east, beyond the lands they came from.

And so, with thoughts of settling down as they have grown tired of being hunted and wearing false faces, they journeyed in that direction, first viva flight and then using the ship. *It wasn't long to find a village close to the kind of region we were looking to settle. One with a panned out mine.* The blond thinks as he starts up at the next plateau where the next well is located.

With a flash, Naruto has been transported to the next well, this one fuses elements to create crystals, the crystal wells are new and are still experimental as they're mostly combining random elements to try and learn how to create the various gemstones. *And once we know how what that, we can begin trying to experimenting with seals in a whole new way.* He thinks smiling as he approaches the center of the well to take out the sampler in order to see the latest generation of crystals that this well has created.

T (=

"I'm home!" He calls out in a sing song tone as he exits out of the room reserved for teleportation and summoning. It's been bit since he left to check on the wells. Naruto had also taken time out to do some fishing at one of the ponds that can be found about the mountain.

"You stopped to do some fishing, didn't you?" Mizu asks while phasing up out of the floor. Then a look of uncertainty flickers across his adopted son's face. "I think we kind of need to talk."

Naruto become rather sober upon hear Mizu's tone. "You want to go with them to see your parents." He says and Mizu smiles ever so slightly.

"It's a bit more complex then that, honor father." Mizu says and he just blinks at the currently white hair teen, wondering why Mizu decided to be so formal now. Within seconds, the white hair gives way to black and the glowing green eyes to simple blue ones.

Wordlessly, he gestures for them to use the office. Once they're in, he's sure to put up the security seals. Mizu begins to pace about the office while he walks over to sit down on the couch to watch his adopted son pace for a bit.

"You ever wonder where I got all of my knowledge from? I mean, I knew advance forms of math..." The younger of them says, trailing

off. "Well, it seems I know why I have that block on my memory. I think either Sam or I wished for it."

"And Sam is?" He asks while puzzling out why anyone would want to block their own memory. "And what granted this wish anyway? A goblin or a kitsune?" Naruto thinks to add, trying to get Mizu out of this funk.

"Sam is the girl dressed in black, she's also my girlfriend before I woke here as a five year old and with that memory block. The one with the cap is Tucker, he's my other best friend and he wasn't the one to contribute to the wish that brought me here." Mizu explains and he blinks, mentally musing, *So Sam was in on the wish that brought you here?*

"Well, I'm from a different dimension and my powers weren't something that come down from my family. I am the first in my family to possess them, although an old buddy of my parents' was the first first." Mizu goes on to say in a bit of a rush. "And I have a way to head back to my home dimension, which will more then likely cure my memory block too."

"Oh and my actually name is Danny Fenton or Danny Phantom depending on my appearance." His adopted son says and he blinks. "But I don't mind if you continue to call me Mizu, I mean, it's not as though we'll see each other once I return home."

"Ok... Well, first off, I'd like to point out that you should know enough about seals to create the teleportation seal scheme. It shouldn't be that hard for us to keep in contact even if we won't be able to met face to fact. Second, if you can get sent here viva a wish, what's to stop you from coming back here viva a wish?" He asks Mizu.

"Well, from what I've learnt of Desiree, the seal option would be the safer then relying upon Desiree to cooperate so I can visit. Although, I'm not sure if chakra will work in my home dimension but I guess as long as it mirrors one here, we shouldn't have a problem." His adopted son admits.

Silence hangs between them for a few minutes. "You're always welcome to use the Uzumaki name. You'll always be family." He says to Mizu and the seemingly younger of them nods.

"That means a lot. It really does." The black haired teen says and he gets up to give Mizu a hug along with a pat on the back. "I doubt I'll ever forget about what you've done for me." The teen adds softly and he smiles.

"I can't imagine my life turning out to be as perfect as it is now without finding you that night. Who knows, I might have ended up a genin of Hidden Leaf and MIA shortly after." Naruto muses and Mizu snorts softly.

"Somehow, I keep imagining a cat landing on its feet whenever I picture you running into trouble." Mizu states in a dry tone and a few seconds later, they both leave the office.

"By the way, where are those two?" He asks curiously and Mizu replies, "They decided to see the sights and I think purchase some souvenirs. We'll probably leave tonight."

Naruto nods his head and they finally part ways, Mizu likely went off to check to see if he packed everything that he wanted. The blond can only hope that seals do function for Mizu no matter which dimension he's in as he really doesn't want to say goodbye forever to his only family he has at this point.

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"Ok, that was worst then getting transported to that world..." Tucker says while looking rather green, Sam clearly felt the same way as she just nods. Not that it really affected him, not after the memories he has of using his clones to experiment with those various version of the teleporation seal scheme.

"So, your back." A voice rings out, one that belongs to a woman and Danny glances up to find the infamous wish granting ghost known as

Desiree. "As you can see, I've been fairly busy since you and your friends have been away." The ghost says with a smirk, gesturing to the various things that circle about their position.

"You know, I really got to thank you for granting that wish, Desiree. Not only did I get a vacation but I also got some training out of it, which I'm rather eager to test out here at home." He says, it kind of sounded like the kind of thing his previous self would say and from the flicker of uncertainty, Desiree didn't seem that confident about whether or not he remembers.

And so, while Sam and Tucker recover, he moves goes about testing to see if he's capable of jutsus here in this world and if he is, then he'll get to see Naruto again. *After all, if worst comes to worst, I could just wish all these ghostly things away, particularly when I wish to have my memory restored.* He thinks to himself as he divides into ten, three of which will remain behind to watch over the pair of teens while the rest move forward to attack.

The End

To Readers:

I decided to end on a high note and before I ruin what I've already written. A lot of people seem to find this story, a cross-over between **Danny Phantom** and **Naruto** to be one of the best, I think that's what those of you who review are trying to tell me at least, and I would like to thank you for those reviews and hope you are not disappointed that I'm ending it here, like this. Hope to hear more from you, the readers, in the future!

The Fog: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter.

That's not good. Harry thinks while staring out side, taking note of a few stray animals that seem to be totally out of it. A few of the sparrows seem to have become rather large and beginning to sprout... horns?

He does a double take but the young wizard just stares unblinkingly as a squirrel's fur turns blue and the single bushy tail suddenly splits into two, though neither as fluffy as the original one. "I'm beginning to be thankful for the bars upon my window and the face you're unable to fit through them, Hedwig. I wouldn't know what to do if you began to mutant like those poor critters." Harry says while the snowy owl perches upon this wooden perch he placed before the window.

Hedwig clicks her beck and fluffs her feathers, Harry takes that as an agreement. "First it was that crazy house elf and now it's a mutating fog. What's next? Flying plants?" The preteen wizard wonders.

The snowy owls barks a bit but Harry's a little too busy watching as the few sparrows that he can see take on new colors while the feet alter while a second set of limbs come out of their chest. The birds' continue to grow larger, the becks altering so much that sharp looking teeth can be seen while the becks give way to a leather like hide.

Harry finally glances over to the squirrel to see what's going on with it. "Does that squirrel just spat out something green?" The young wizard wonders and Hedwig seems to make a kind of choking sound. "It's now the size of an ape... I sure hope I'm not going to be blamed for this..." The preteen sighs before glancing over at the repaired clock.

They should be waking up in, like, three hours. He muses as he finally moves to rest upon the bed, no longer in the mood to continue watching the mutative effects of the fog outside. Harry studies the shelf sporting the books his cousin have been gifted in the past, he couldn't fall back to sleep even if he wanted to and so, Harry spends the next few hours with his nose buried in a sci-fi book that's a collection of short stories.

"BOY WHAT DID YOU DO?" Vernon bellows after the front door bangs closed. *I wonder what a few breathful of the fog will do to him?* Harry thinks while looking up from the book in his hands, his eyes going straight for the locked door as his overweight uncle comes thundering up the stairs while Dudley begins to whine about it being too loud for him to get any rest.

The various locks seem to only cause Vernon to become even more angry, which is rather ironic as his relatives who feel that there can never be enough secure locks to keep them from having to deal with him. *They can't blame me, they locked up my school trunk which has all my potion stuff in it as well as my school books. And I've only had the one year of schooling too, so I don't have any knowledge of how to produce this fog.* Harry grumbles to himself.

"Vernon! You're... you're..." He hears his aunt stutter but he tunes it out until she finally fainted with his uncle bellowing out his mother's sister's name. Harry spent the next bit imagining what kind of changes his uncle had receive, he comes out of it when he hears the tv blaring about news reports about a strange fog not just hanging around the house but throughout the town.

Hedwig barks something in alarm and the preteen moves to stand behind his owl to see what's wrong, only for his eyes to widen at the sight of the mutated creatures finally waking and bellowing. "Holy sht! You can't even tell what they were before..." Harry murmurs as this four foot, twin tailed, blue furred, three eyed thing seems to be fending off the advances of a pack of mutated sparrows.

The sparrows weren't as large as the ex-squirrel is, they stand about two feet tall and am little over three feet in length. They kind of reminded him of pictures of dinosaurs actually, only they still sport wings on their backs and are covered in feathers. Spiral horns grace their head, just after the eye ridge with what leather hide can be seen is a vibrant yellow.

The ex-squirrel then spats at the circling pack of ex-sparrows and he watches as the spot where the spit landed hisses and smokes. The pack chirps and hisses at the larger monster but it's the arrival of what likely had been a cat or maybe a hedgehog that ends the fight, for the new comer is not only covered in spines but managed to kill one of the ex-sparrows before the newly altered creatures knew what was happening.

He watches as the five foot tall, white and green marked thing makes short work of the ex-sparrow. Harry is rooted to the spot as he watches as the monster heads off, leaving discarded feathers and a few other things behind. There are screams as the neighborhood finally wakes up. It's not long before those human screams are followed by other sounds, like glass shattering or car alarms going off.

It's a bit before Harry realizes that he really needs a change of cloths as he finally becomes aware of something. *I guess I'm not use to this or numb.* The preteen wizard think and is more then glad to find that the locks upon his door were all unlocked so he can go to the bathroom to clean up.

A quick look down stairs confirms that none of his relatives were aware of what's going on around them. Harry also catches a glimpse of Vernon's now balded head. *I wonder if this is magically created or something else all together?* He wonders as he walks into the bathroom with a change of cloths.

The Day Before . . .

Dudley found some package upon the ground that sported his freak of a cousin's name upon it. Quickly glancing around to be sure that nobody saw him, especially his parents, he picked it up and hurried to the side of the house to open it. What he found seems to be a Frisbee like metal plate, the center was thicker then the edges.

After a few minutes of trying to get one of the gems off of the metal and opening it, the 'big-boned' preteen just tosses it away, not carrying where it landed as he heads for one of the doors leading into the house. As he just hopes something is good on tv to stop him from being bored.

Upon landing, that metal disk's flat metal center soon begins a count down to midnight. The unseen note at the bottom of the box sports a picture of a very drunken group of thirty something year olds that include Susan, the 'Golden' Trio, and others who survived the Second Coming of Tom Riddle and a note that says, 'Toss into Death Eater Army and run like hell.'

As the magic upon the disk didn't detect any Dark Marks, it goes to its fall back activation to release a potion in the form of a mist.

Alternate Reality's Future . . .

"Merlin... what did we do last night?" Ron grumbles, not noticing that he had been resting his head upon Luna's belly or that he's got a few heads resting upon his own body. Various bottles of both muggle and wizarding drinks are scattered about while this strange floating stone slab hovers a good ten feet above their heads.

Flying brooms could be found leaning upon the various walls or upon the normal, wooden tables. A bunch of potion ingredients rest next to a cauldron that still has a few centimeters left within it. Various books are scattered about the room along with crumpled up notes and diagrams of various anchor spells which include wards of detection and sensory types for certain magics.

"Kreacher!" Croaks Harry upon his head hitting the floor and soon enough, the ancient appearing house elf appears with a rather large tray that sports hang over potions in each of the cups, enough for them all.

"Thank you, Kreacher." Hermione mutters when the house elf hands her a cup. The house elf served his master and his wife before the others.

"Merlin, what's that stench?" Neville wonders after downing the potion. "Did... did we brew a potion?" The master of the Longbottom family wonders upon noticing the cauldron resting upon the table that's to his left.

"Not sure... There's rune schematics over here." Susan says. Everyone within the room is up on their feet and after a few cleaning spells upon their cloths, they begin to take interest in their surroundings.

"Holy crap, it's pass noon!" Katie shouts and though everyone had drank that potion, they all shush the elder witch. Not that she cares as she just straightens her cloths before Appariting out of the room. Katie is soon followed by others, soon leaving Hermione, Harry, and George in the room.

"Huh, that's strange... Why would we create a mirror at the bottom of that stone slab?" George muses upon looking up.

Harry looks up and for a moment snorts at the sight of some monster moving towards this house. It's not until he sees the house does he curse but pauses. "That can't be right..." Harry murmurs as he really studies the house, the often setting of his nightmares. "Shouldn't there be... I mean, Uncle Vernon traded that car in..."

"That's Privet Drive?" Hermione asks Harry and the grown wizard just cocks his head to the side, rather confused about what he's seeing in the mirror.

"I would almost say that it is... Only... It's not how I remember seeing it last." Harry states and after a few minutes, the view moves to a hallway and he watches as a younger version of himself walks out of the locked room, he can see Hedwig perched upon a wooden perch but it's the sight of a very young version of himself that causes his jaws to open wide.

"That's you when you were twelve..." George notes while the 'camera' follows preteen Harry about the house. He gets a rather good view of a changed Vernon as not only is the uncle in the mirror now balded but also possessing fleshy tentacles instead of a bread or mustache. The other two members of the Dursley house hold look fine while a news report shows the town covered in a dense fog, the same they seen when the mirror had been showing them the outside of the house.

"That's the past..." Harry mutters but Hermione sighs.

"No, that's not the past, or to be truthful, not our past. I think we might have caused a split. Whatever we did last night, we made a large change that likely created an alternate reality that diverts from the time that fog showed up to what we're seeing now." Hermione says in awe and the two wizards turn to look at the adult witch, noticing That Look upon her face and just knew that they were in for a long lecture about something they don't really care about.

Although, I'm rather curious as to how this will effect that world's Dumbledore's plans... Harry wonders thoughtfully while Hermione begins to inform them about theories concerning parallel dimensions and alternate realities.

Enjoy

To Readers:

I want to thank all of you who reviewed my previous story and I noticed a number weren't happy about the way it ended. One person noted that I developed the three young Hyuuga clan members but

didn't follow through with more. I'll work on doing an epilogue of sorts for that one, featuring the Hidden Leaf side of things, hopefully I'll get it done sometime next week.

Life Gift: How To Train Your Dragon

I don't own How To Train Your Dragon.

"Legend tell of Berk once being held a stronghold of a dragon cult. For close to a century, this cult lived upon Berk preforming strange rituals and cultivating favors with the Gods in hopes of achieving what... nobody can say as no records remains nor were their any survivors to tell the summer traders what became of the cult."

"The settlement that the members of the cult had built decayed over the season and none attempted to settle the island until seventy years had passed after the destruction of the cult. The brave Viking who was leader of the expedition was Hiccup Horrendous Haddock I. Through the efforts of the scouts, they manage to drive the dragons that populated Berk away, the dragon colony had originally been started by the Dragon Cult that had settled upon Berk so many years before and the Chieftain of the time wanted them gone from the island before construction could begin upon the village."

"It is unclear if there had been a dragon nest upon Berk or if the dragons settled upon Berk during the seasons when they're not rising their young in the mist cover island home that no Viking has managed to visit. All that is known is that the dragons proved to be stubborn and continue to return again and again to Berk, raiding the new settlement which has caused the Vikings to take to capturing live dragons to use as in teaching the next generation how to defend themselves from the fire-breathing, winged reptiles."

The six year old sighs softly but there's nothing more written about this Dragon Cult that first inhabited his tribe's island home. Hiccup's right index finger traces the runes on the cover of the book, feeling despair at the fact that he came to a dead end so quickly. His mom is suffering greatly this winter and the young boy just couldn't do anything to change it. With unfocused eyes, the child wonders if

magic even exists since if such a mighty cult could vanish so easily, especially if they have been gathering the favor of the Gods for such a long time...

As the candle dies, the child gets up from the bench of the library, being sure to grab his cloak and to put the burnt out candle upon the fire place. The book he leaves upon the table and tightening the hood of the cloak, Hiccup opens the door, walking out into the freezing cold of the afternoon. The wind tries to push back his hood or open up the cloak, not that it works but the wind sure gave it its best try as the six year old fights to close the door behind him before heading out of the village to think about what it would be like to live without his mom around.

Slowly, the six year old son of the Chieftain, Stoick the Vast becomes more lost in his thoughts that he isn't aware of what's going on around him. Hiccup can't help but notice how hot he's becoming and with a few blinks, the child finds himself in a large cave with a pit of lava lightening up the chamber. "How did I get here? I don't remember falling down a hole..."

"There is much about magic people have forgotten about, child. It's as though with each passing generation, they continue to turn their backs upon it and walk away from it." A neutral voice says and the boy glances around the chamber but only finds a pair of glowing eyes standing down at him from a great height.

"Oh..." He murmurs not knowing what else to say. A huge dragon head comes down and the child notices how different this dragon's head is compared to the few that he's seen as not only is the head large enough to gulp him down whole, but likely a whole dozen villagers too in a single swallow.

The lava's light causes the scales to glow as the scales were prove to be pure white with light, pale yellow stripes along the jaw line. No teeth can be seen upon the muzzle, only snout spines in a neat row upon the top center of the muzzle. This dragon sports a number of pale brown horns that are long and spiral like that grow along the

temple, each set getting longer more away from the eye ridge and more to the side of the head.

"What kind of dragon are you?" Hiccup asks with a touch of awe. While a little voice that sounds a little like his dad telling to back away and leave as quickly as he could.

"My species doesn't matter, child. What does is why you brought yourself here." The unnamed dragon says and Hiccup still can't tell if this dragon is male or female. "What is it that you desire, child?"

The six year old bites down upon his bottom lip, not sure if he should voice his concern about his mom dying before winter is over. He's scared of what his life would be like without his mom being around. Hiccup kind of knows that there's something is wrong about thinking such a thought, that he should just be concerned about what she's going through, but being just a child, Hiccup just...

"My mom... she's sick and it's so early in the season but..." Hiccup swallows slightly before adding, "A lot of people seem to think she won't make it through the winter." He feels his eyes well up with tears and he sniffles a bit while looking down at the ground, feeling ashamed for crying before a stranger.

"Yes, I can see how that would upset you. Losing a parent is never easy for one as young as yourself." The dragon says after a few minutes of silence in which Hiccup as used the cloak to wipe away the few tears that escaped and his slightly running nose.

"I don't want her to die but they're so certain..." He says and then finally adds in a small voice, "I know it's wrong but... I don't want her to die 'cause I'd miss her. I feel horrible about it..."

"Ah yes, you feel guilty to think about how your mother's death will affect only you and not anyone else. It's to be expected as you are only a six year old boy." The dragon says gently and he looks up into the blue eyes of the dragon, sniffling a bit as the mostly white scaled beast continues, "But to save a life, one life must end in turn."

"You mean that somebody has to die in my mom's stead?" Hiccup asks after thinking about it for a while and suddenly felt very ill at the very idea. "But... but I can't do that! I can't play God cause I'm not a God!" The boy just pales, suddenly not liking where this is going and if it's worth it.

"Oh, child, there are many different kinds of death, but you do have a point about you're not a God. This kind of thing is typically random, if your mother is to be spared from death then somebody has to lose something just as valuable as her life." The dragon informs him.

Hiccup's mouth moves but nothing comes out, his mind kind of gone blank. The dragon patiently waits for the six year old to recover. Hiccup bites his lower lip once more and something began to come to his mind. Deciding he has to know, he asks, "What if...what if somebody volunteers to have something valuable taken from them?"

"As it is given willingly, the price is not as... steep as it usually is but you must understand, few people are that generous of heart. Many prefer for others to pay in their stead." The dragon informs the boy. "It is in ones nature to want something without putting much effort into getting it."

He swallows as he looks above the dragon's eyes, kind of understanding what the dragon is telling him and knows that he is just like that. *Do I really want my mom to live? Should it really be somebody else to pay for her to live?* Those kind of thoughts whirl about his head and the six year old begins to cry at the weight that seems to suddenly be upon his shoulders.

"I want my mom to live but I don't want anyone else to pay for it. Do you think that, maybe, I can be the one to die? It's not as though they can't have more kids if they're both alive..." Hiccup asks after he's done crying. "I always wanted a younger sibling..." He adds with a sniffle, his eyes are red and puffy from crying so much.

"If you are certain then walk over to that lava pool." The dragon says finally after staring seemingly into the very soul of the six year old

and once Hiccup is standing close to the pool. The lava begins to move out of the pool and encircles him, much to his dismay but Hiccup stands his ground.

Slowly the lava begins to flow up from the base circle and once he's engulf in a sphere, his body seems to burn up. Within minutes, the burning overwhelms him and he blacks out to the smell of his cloths on fire.

The End? Or the Beginning?

Life Gift 2: How To Train Your Dragon

I don't own How To Train Your Dragon.

A Few Thousand Kilometers South of the Barbaric Archipelago

Ten Years Later

Hiccup

Yawning, a grown gray scaled dragon's tongue curls up to touch the roof of the mouth, the dream that disturbed him fading away. The glow of dawn not yet bright enough to help in displaying the row of sharp teeth before the jaws close and the lips are pressed upon each other. As the dragon moves to get up to stretch out his tail along with his wings, the other three dragons begin to wake.

"Morning, Stone." The brightly colored dragoness purrs out while her head spines rattle as she shakes her head and neck. The she-dragon is just a few feet larger in the tail then Stone himself and comes from lands far to the southwest, a place of huge trees and rain. Along Flower's neck and back, special glads could be found, they often give off scents but when Flower is riled up, the glands can ooze a coat of poison. It's why Flower often eats foul plants. (Originates from South America and think poison tree frog for colors.)

"Flower." Stone states before turning to greet the other to the mated pair of White Dragons, who were on their way northwest the previous day. Both Flower and himself dwarf the pair, which likely is why neither made any hunger filled looks their way. The gray dragon couldn't see any difference between the two other then one is male and the other is female. He had only just met the two upon landing upon this stone island with Flower in tow and none of the four felt the need to find other sleeping arrangements, each of them are rather tired from their respective journeys.

Soon enough, the mated pair left while Flower and himself began to discus their travels since they left ran into each other, it has been two years since they have seen each other after all. Flower flirts a bit with him during their conversation, much to his chagrin but that soon passes as their conversation winds down, at which point Flower becomes rather sober.

"Well, see you around, just as long as you stick away from the Barbaric Archipelago. Those humans are getting worse and from what I've heard, there's some kind of 'queen' commanding the local breeds into raiding humans for their raised animals." The dragoness says to the gray.

That causes Stone to blink and to lower his back a bit while his tail raises up before thumping upon the ground. **"Really?"** The gray dragon asks, there's something very familiar about that region but he just doesn't recall where he's heard about it before. **"Why don't they just leave the region? Why stick around taking orders from a bossy draco?"**

"Beats me but I would be careful if you keep going off in that direction. There's something wrong with those dracos." Flower states. **"Well handsome, I'm heading home to see if anything has changed in the last decade. Take care, I wouldn't what such a strapping male such as yourself dying at the hands of a human."** The brightly color dragoness purrs, touching her nose with his before taking flight.

Stone watches as Flower heads directly west, likely going to turn straight south at a later date, likely when she reaches the eastern coast of that land. He's visit a lot of places and the lands lacking cities is among his favorite places to visit. Although, Stone didn't try to visit the rain-forests of Flower's home for he rather not find out if other females of Flower's species would consider him 'handsome', he has enough trouble coming from just one member of that breed.

I wonder if Berk has changed much since I lived there... Then the dragon typically called Stone blinks as he wonders where that

thought came from. After all, he originates from some place the humans call Spain, he's never visited this Barbaric Archipelago in the seven years he's been nomadic.

Shaking his head, Stone shoves that aside to begin looking for breakfast as he is beginning to feel the pangs of hunger. Stretching out his wings, the now lone dragon takes to the air in search of a school of fish. Although, something within him has already decided to head for this Archipelago regardless of what the dragoness he calls Flower has told him.

Berk

Month Later

Stoick

Watching young Ripple, his six year old daughter run up to Rotpelt and begins chatting up a storm with her friend, just hearing the two giggling causes Stoick to smile at the action. With a slight shake of his head, the chieftain continues on his way after kissing his wife upon the cheek. The sun still rising, lighting up the Viking settlement that had recently been attacked just hours before by dragons.

Shouldering his pack, Stoick heads for the docks to set sail once more for the dragon's nest. Other men and women were also setting out for the docks, each carrying their own packs upon saying goodbye to their loved ones. In his brother's company is his nephew, Snotlout, age sixteen. It is Snotlout's first voyage in search of the dragon's next although Snotlout had gotten through dragon training close to two years ago at age fourteen.

The sight reminds him of his first born, Hiccup who disappeared during his sixth winter. That winter had been hard on Stoick's family as they had thought they'd lose Valhallarama to winter sickness early in the season but instead of losing his wife, he lost a son. There wasn't even a body for them to confirm what happened to Hiccup, only tracks vanishing abruptly at some point out of the village. It's the

not knowing what happened that hurts them the most as it still gives them hope that Hiccup could still be out there somewhere.

"Alright men! Let's keep this moving. The sooner we shove off, the sooner we return!" He says at the group holding things up by the ramps that lead down to the fleet of ships waiting for the final people to board. The warriors finally turn away from shore and walk down the ramp, not without the group shoving each other, clearly in good spirits, which is a good sign in his opinion.

Hiccup

Clinging to the cliffs under the dock, the gray dragon listen to the cries of the village as the ships depart. Cocking his head to the side, the unseen dragon moves slowly from his upside down position to the top of the cliff. He couldn't help but feel bewildered at the actions of the Vikings, he didn't question how he understood their language so quickly though.

Why would their warriors leave? There was just a raid last night, shouldn't they remain to guard their village? What's more important then the safety of their home? Or their territory? Stone thinks to himself as he settles down on the ledge, resting his head down upon the ground while stretching out his forelimbs and unfolding his wings slightly.

Just letting go of his emotions, Stone's mind goes over his travels around the world. With a final closing of his eyes, it wasn't long before Stone's hide begins to display colors beyond just his typical dull gray. Allowing his heart to slow, the dragon falls asleep as he has nothing better to do until night falls which will allow him to fly away.

Week Later

Ripple

Giggling, she scampers upon the back of the rocks while her current minders, Astrid and Ruffnut, the two young women seem to be cloud watching with their weapons resting over by the fallen, burnt log. Ripple jabs the stone with a stick while facing the group of her peers. "I, Princess Ripple, here by claim this mountain in my father's name!"

She goes on to add, "And I name this after my elder brother, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III! From hence forth, this mountain shall be called Mountain Cup!"

"Oh, come on, everyone knows your brother is dead!" Bilewedge snaps and many of the group agree, only Loomworm and Rotpelt remain silent.

"He's not dead! He's just on a world tour and he's suppose to be returning home soon." Ripple snaps. "He's also going to marry Astrid cause I know her and like her." The six year old daughter of the village leader adds.

"There she goes, engaging you to her brother. Sounds like you're in luck, a rich husband and the next leader of the village." Ruffnut muses out loud while Bilewedge and her get into a shouting match.

"She's young, she's allowed to pretend." The blond girl replies.

Hiccup

It's the shouting of human hatchlings that just causes him to sigh. Stone had been so close of sneaking off with one of the human books when he heard this group coming out of the village. The gray dragon panicked and leaned upon the few rocks that laying about, curling around them just in time for his hide to begin to take a rocky look to it. The poke from the end of the stick didn't help either.

Whatever possessed me to make that deal with that Night Fury? Sure, it sounded so easy to steal one of their books in broad daylight. Sure, their fighters are gone, but that doesn't make them

any less dangerous. The gray dragon wonders, it's not often that he meets somebody who irritates him and is male to boot.

Oh great, another grown one. The current dragon pretending to be a rock thinks as he hears heavy foot falls. "Heya Fish! Come to join us in watching the rugrats?" One of the grown Vikings hollers, which causes the hatchlings to pause in their pointless argument.

"Sorry but no. I don't suppose any of you guys have seen my journal?" The newly arrived Viking asks and Stone feels his heart begin to race as he gets this notion that he knows where this 'journal' is.

"Nope, haven't seen it about, right guys?" And the hatchlings murmur their agreement. He pulls the book close to his chest while trying not to allow his tail to lash out.

A few seconds pass and the hatchlings begin to climb up onto him. They shoved each other, each trying to claim him. While the hatchlings do that, Fish finally speaks up, "Ah guys? Don't you think that rock pile is a bit strange?"

Oh deer scat! I was hoping they won't notice. He thinks, opening up the eye facing that direction slightly. "What you talking about? It's just a pile rocks that somebody dumped over here."

He is relieved that their weapons weren't within reach as gives him a chance to get away before they get them in their hands. The hatchlings would run before his slightly opened eye, obscuring his view of the grown ups. Stone could hear the change in pitch as Fish says, "Oh no... oh no, oh no no no! Get down form there now!"

The two laying on their backs sit up and glance to where Fish it looking. It seems that his tail swept one of his tracks a little too heavily. Seeing that the jig is up, he shakes his whole body, sending most of the hatchling off of him. He bellows, **"Oh scat! Get out of my way!"**

All but one get off and he's already bouncing off into the forest with the single hatchling clinging to his back, their hands gripping his wings. "Weee! This is fun!" The hatchling cries, he trys to throw her off by spreading his wings.

"Ripple!" The Vikings cry out and hearing them each up, Stone finally leaps high into the air. "Get back here, you devil so I can chop your head off!"

"Oh yea, I'll get right on doing that, right after I get my mind fried by the so called Queen." The gray grumbles to himself while that hatchling clings to his back viva his wing joint. **"Humans..."** He grunts while still holding onto the book, heading for the other side of Berk to see that Night Fury to get some answers concerning this area.

Then, his unwanted passanger's grip loosens and the hatchling begins to scream. With a groan, Stone quickly flips about to catch the human with his free forelimb. With that done, continues to raise high into the air while circling above the island, soon, he heads for the spot farthest away from the settlement, where the Night Fury should be waiting for him.

"Wow... so that's what Berk looks like from way up here..." The hatchling says, reminding the gray, hornless dragon of its presence once more. He merely sighs at the reminder, although he would rather have had the hatchling bucked off before he took flight as he didn't want to deal with humans, no matter their size.

Stone lands, being sure to cushion his landing viva his back legs then his front ones. As he puts the hatchling down as gently as the dragon could, the hatchling sways and lands upon the ground as the legs gave way. "Oh... My head is spiny." The hatchling murmurs.

"You kidnapped a hatchling?" The lounging black dragon says in disbelief and Stone growls softly at the much smaller hornless dragon while stepping over the fallen hatchling. Stone tosses the book upon the ground before the Night Fury.

"It was clinging to my wing! What was I suppose to do? Wait for it to get off to take off? I don't know about you but I like my head where it is!" Stone snaps at the Night Fury.

"Well, what good is having the hatchling? And what do you plan to do with it?" The Night Fury asks and the larger gray hunches over with his wings raising slightly off his back while remaining folded.

"Hiccup!" The hatchling cries upon wrapping its arms about his tail. Before Stone or the Night Fury could react, the larger gray is engulf in light and when it fades, a lean, muscular sixteen year old with wild red highlighted brunet hair reaching to his lower back, who's also very naked.

" **What just happened?** " Hiccup and the Night Fury wonder out loud at the same time. Hiccup speaking the Viking language as he can no longer possess a dragon's vocal cords and thus can't speak in his typical manner as Stone.

To Be Continued . . .

The Ghost and the Fox Ch 6: DP

I don't own Danny Phantom or Naruto.

Epilogue

Hard to believe that just yesterday, Naruto and Mizu where here and then, poof, they're gone. Hinata muses as she tours the apartment where they had once lived. There's nothing remaining in the place, not even the tub.

Relations between the three young Hyuuga members and the two Uzumaki had become strained. Mizu especially had acted differently from the beginning of the school year. Not that either of the three had a chance to look into why they were acting different, not when they were occupied by what's going on in their own lives. The eldest daughter of the Hyuuga family head stops by the entrance to the apartment, various teams have examined the apartment throughout the day and now, evening is falling upon the village.

As she walks down the steps, a small explosion happens on the step before her and when the smoke vanishes, it reveals a box with her name on it. Glancing around, she picks it up and hurries on to a seclude spot to open it. Ducking into an alleyway a few blocks from the Uzumaki apartment building, she using a bit of chakra to slice open one of the ends.

Inside of the package is a bunch of thick file folders, one of them is entitled Root Division. It wasn't long before Hinata's eye widen within reading the first few pages and looking at some of the pictures that go along with them. She puts them back into the folder and moves onto the next, this one with Naruto's name on it.

And on it goes, each folder containing secrets that would likely see her executed if she ever breathed a word of just a hint of any of it.

Hinata turns to gaze up at the fourth head, her mind a whirl concerning her crush's family tree, or perhaps to be more clear, the Uzumaki family tree. *Why reveal the existence of the Kyuubi in its third host?*

Grim faced, Hinata does what this little note tells her to do concern how to hide the files. It isn't easy drawing on her arm as it's got curves to it but the ink that she unsealed worked well as it's rather thick and lumpy so it clings to her skin. A bit of chakra later and it seemingly transforms into a tattoo. Holding the file folders over the site, shy heiress activates the seal and the files vanish.

Once that is done, she puts her arm back into her jacket and heads home, her mind occupied by what little she's read. *At least they have valid reasons for leaving. I don't think I'll ever look at the village the same way, let alone Lord... The Hokage.* The girl with pearly eyes thinks, she can think of only two people she can trust and she hopes they'll have an open mind but then, Mizu's abilities pretty much ensures that what files she has are real and they'll believe so as well.

T (=] - N

Three months, three whole months, over sixty days and still nothing! Bumpkiss! Jiraiya thinks while sitting at a bar, nursing his fourth bottle of chilled sake. Normally, he would have preferred to leave the drinking away woes to Tsunade but the man just couldn't think of a more fitting setting to ponder how to find the pair of wayward Uzumaki boys.

It's clear to him that the two had managed to gain access to various forbidden parts of the village, how could they not when one of them can not only turn invisible but phase through solid objects? That there should have been enough for his ex-teacher to consider how strongly a bad idea it would be to make the pair feel threaten in any slight way by the village. Who knows what kind of documents they left with!

I'd almost wish they would have tried to blackmail the village into leaving them be, at least there would be word that they're around. I could even backtrack where the letter came from. The pervert novel writer thinks while staring down the neck of the sake bottle. *It would almost mean that they're looking for a place to settle, preferably in a city, be it in another country doing mercenary work like typical missing nin...*

Most normal rogue ninja on the run from their old villages try their hardest to make a living using the only skills they got, ninja ones. Depending upon their ranking, some are not as actively pursued as other as those of low standing typically don't know a lot of their chosen profession or have the connections an older ninja could make to get access to or outright steal higher class of intel. Not only were the two boys barely ninja but they likely learnt a lot of the skeletons within the village's closet.

That causes him to frown as he pauses to consider that thought. *Perhaps... just perhaps, that's why they've decided not to send any kind of message at all. They know what kind of lengths the village goes to keep those secrets. They likely had free access to any part of the village, why not the mission library?* That thought chilled Jiraiya as it would mean that if it were true, they would have had time to plan for the typical tactics Hunters use as well as the unusual ones as well.

They distanced themselves from those three Hyuuga within days of that meeting with the old man... Likely to protect the three as well as freeing up time to pursue the gathering of intelligence and perhaps, begin learning jutsus sealed or squirreled away. The more he began to look at it not as a spur of the moment fleeing but the end result of months of planning slowly causes him to despair at the fact they may never catch the pair while also giving him peace, as it would mean that they're beyond the reach of the village.

He raises his bottle of sake in silent toast of the pair's good health and long life before gulping down the remainder of the bottle.

T (=] - N

The destruction of the village didn't come as much of a surprise to either of the trio of Hyuuga. For the pass six months, they had been waging a silent war with various fractions within the village. They had gathered allies and created enemies as well but then, they had a good two years to plot their course from not just the files left behind by the two Uzumaki and verifying the information within viva locating and spying upon those hidden divisions of their home, but through interrogation of various spies and double agents.

What happened during that Chuunin Exam just shoved the fact that their village is on the decline and not by outside forces but viva internal threats, namely Root. They had fed the Intel of the invasion to Root agents but that group had done nothing to protect the village. The seals they had managed to put up in their bunkers alerted them to when they were in use and how long. They had been in use minutes before the invasion began and stopped being in use when night fell.

Of course, father didn't seem to care about how Danzo functioned, only that the man had enough people backing him politically. Hinata thinks, her hand going to the thin scar that could be found just under her jaw. A gift from her father before they put him down and put those various seals upon him, turning the man into their puppet. *Of course the elders couldn't live forever. And such a tragedy they died before the village rebuilt itself.*

"We did pretty good work on those dummies. Pein didn't even noticed the illusions upon them." Hanabi remarks and she turns to look at her younger sibling.

"The Yamanaka's jutsus work surprisingly well when paired with the 'art' of puppetry." Neji agrees. "It's surprising that Sand ninja haven't advanced their art much in that particular direction."

"At least the final rot of the village is out of the way. The problem will be rebuilding, particularly consider the kind of attack that caused that

kind of damage." Hanabi remarks as she waves her hand over to the rather large gaping hole at the center of the walled village.

Hinata listens to the conversation between Neji and Hanabi with half an ear. While Neji and Hanabi had focused upon genjutsu and ninjutsu, she had focused upon the fuinjutsu. It had been rather difficult to get her hands upon the various scrolls and books that detail this particular branch of chakra art but it had paid off as she had not only figured out a way to take an enclosed space and enlarge it. She's gotten rather good at this and has plans to see if she can't alter how time flows within such a space as well, but for now, she is just listing various seals that they should use upon all future buildings of Hidden Leaf.

For truly, the time has come for them to make use of new innovations, particularly as neither Uzumaki showed up to defend the village. *Not all that surprising, really. They're not even living upon the continent any more or else my network of sentry seals would have picked them up.* Hinata thinks, although mentally admitting that there are some places none the them had visited and thus there weren't any sentry seals totally all over this land of warring countries.

I wonder if we should wake Jiraiya? Sure, his body is destroyed but we that seal we slipped on him did store his soul. It wouldn't be that hard to insert it into one of our more durable puppets. He is a seal master and it would be nice to have somebody to act as a sounding board for my future projects... One of the leaders of the Hyuuga clan muse while the wind plays with her bangs.

For the first time, the fear that has weighted her down since finding those files seems to have vanished as had the wondering about whether or not Naruto and Mizu had acted correctly by fleeing the village, the continent.

Perhaps one day I'll take some time to search for them and learn what kind of life they have lead since they left? Not right now, but six or twelve years? Sure. She thinks with a slight smile as she turns to

gaze at the head of the Fourth Hokage, the father of Naruto Uzumaki and Grandfather of Mizu Uzuamki.

There's still trials ahead of them but at least they'll be able to focus on them instead of waiting in the shadows, afraid to act under the light of the sun.

So Ends the Epilogue

To Readers:

As promise and I hope this clear up Hidden Leaf's ends as well as provide more character development of the trio of Hyuuga.

Portal Maddness 4: Naruto

I don't own Fullmetal Alchemist, How To Train Your Dragon, Inuyasha, or Naruto!

Rubbing the bridge of her nose, a twenty-something year old woman allows the book in her hand to drop to the table while the overhead lights of the library continue to hum dimly to Sakura's enhance ears. She's managed to pass off her floppy ears off as earmuffs, which isn't that unusual considering the season. She's just glad that there weren't many people within the library as then her headache would be so much worst as not only would she be listening to them but also smelling them.

If only I hadn't ended up in that program, I might have returned home within days. Sakura thinks sourly while finally moving her hand from her nose bridge, a bit of make up covers the gloves' fingers. Slitted eyes regarded the make up upon the index and thumb before wiping it upon her jacket, she re-frames from taking out a pocket mirror to see if her make up got smeared in anyway.

Upon escaping from the lab, Sakura had been horrified to find the scaly humanoid staring back at her within the mirror to be herself, she nearly took a knife to her throat or wrist. The scales were pale brown with darker patches of brown markings about her cheeks and forehead. Her pink hair had remained upon her head but had grown down along her spine, ending midway down her back in a point, which cause her irritation when she wears cloths.

It had come as a dull surprise that what had once passed as her breasts were pretty much gone, it's why so many people pin her as a man instead of a woman. Not that her temperament helps clear the matter up or her altered vocal cords, giving her a more neutral pitch to her voice as well. Nor did it help that her pelvis is narrow like a man's either...

Sakura knows that a reptile had been used on her but how she managed to keep her hair or sport those floppy ears mean that some mammal was used as well, although that doesn't really explain the overall maleness that she sports through no fault of her own.

With a groan, she pushes the book away, she's been researching in this library for over a month and still, there's no information concerning building a machine that acts like a conduit between the Alchemical forces of this world and a normal human. She's been searching for some hint about this machine once she managed to get things to hide her alterations.

Pressing her lips together, Sakura gets up and leaves the building to head to a secure location in which she can meditate through that information download that the Gate gave her. *If I can't find it in books, then perhaps I can find what I need in that internal collection.* She thinks, as she's not human enough to preform Alchemy that doesn't mean she can't find somebody to preform it on her behalf, the trick would be keeping that somebody from learning her status as a chimera and, sigh, a woman.

With a yawn, Naruto leans back on the branch upon which he is resting. Below him and pinned to the tree is the most unusual looking person sporting long silvery white hair, tiny floppy ears upon the top of the head, and sporting pronounced fangs and nails that seem like claws. The guy's cloths didn't seem to be in bad shape, all things consider as a good five years had passed since the displaced demon container had witnessed the strange event between the local priestess and his adopted son, Inuyasha.

"The question is, should I destroy the arrow or should I leave things to take their course?" He wonders out loud, not caring who or what hears him. Naruto looks up at the sky, remembering the woman who granted him a home upon him finally managing to return to his human frame of mind and recalling the trouble she went through because of her young boy who's father died the night of Inuyasha's birth.

Back then, he still sported certain animalistic features even in human form. Within days, the village already considered that they had become lovers but they never were, although within two years of knowing the pair, he proposed marriage to Izayoi and talked her into it for Inuyasha's sake if not her own as he had come to consider the brat something like a nephew/son by then. It took two seasons but Izayoi did agree to the marriage and thus he became moved from unofficial guardian position to that of Inuyasha's official guardian.

"The question becomes should I do so? Clearly this is a learning experience but on the other hand, any demon or human could slice his throat..." Naruto mutters softly. *It's a toss up, he's an adult and thus doesn't need me always hauling his ass out of these kind of things but he's in danger as long as he remains sealed...*

He could keep guard of his son while waiting for the spell to wear off, another option is to end the spell now and give his son a lecture about pursuing power, or he could cut the bark about Inuyasha and take the two away to a safer area where the spell can wear off without his son being totally defenseless. It never crosses Naruto's mind to just take off and leave things to fate.

"I wonder how deep the arrow head is in the tree?" The demonic chimera of an owl, weasel, and tiger muses before using his spiritual energy to 'feel' the arrowhead out without moving from his seat upon the branch.

The scaly beast that the locals call **drage** , not that Sasuke knows the translation of it would be in his own language. Mostly, he just associates the word with a creature that is large, covered in scales, flies, and, oddly enough, breaths fire. Sure, different varieties of these **drage** exist and have their own breed name but he never bothered to learn them as **drage** is good enough for him as he doesn't care much for the details, only that for every one he kills, the more the locals respect him and don't treat him as some-kind of servant.

What he lacks in brute strength, he makes up for in agility and successful battle strategies. Sure, these locals are tall, broad of frame, and rather fearless but some of their tactics always leaves the impressions that they want to die in battle instead of killing their foes, which seems rather Narutoish to his mind and often causes his mind to drift onto the subject of his blond team-mate, much to his annoyance. *Kill now, think later.*

Shoving those thoughts out of his head, he goes for one of those that send tail spines flying as they struggle to get into the barn viva one of the side walls. The eighteen year old dimly is aware of the leader's scrawny, eleven year old son heading for the only blacksmith in town. Sasuke is kind of fond of the boy that they call **ælfsogoþa** or Hiccup, the reason might have to do with the fact that the boy is the one who typically forges his kunai but mostly, it's because the boy reminds him of himself.

And there goes one of those self-burners. Sasuke thinks while he 'dances' with the closest spine throwers. He's just glad that they lack eyes at the front of their heads as it makes it easy for him to keep out of the beast's line of sight, even if it puts him before the part the spews fire.

All in all, Sasuke couldn't find a better way to keep his fighting skills nicely homed as he believes that it's only a matter of time before somebody summons him back to Hidden Leaf. After all, that's what Seal Masters do most of the time, summon something from another world to the village.

Wishbringer Omake: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2.

Omake: Episode 82

Finally, Ranma managed to get Kuno to order the sword known as Wishbringer to grant her wish. Holding the sword before her, the current female Ranma is just trying to think of a way to word her wish before it dawns on her that not only could she cure herself but make it so Ryoga never sleeps in Akane's bed again or for Shampoo to transform into a c-c-feline either! Laughing, she heads for a private place in which to make the wish.

"I wish that all those suffering from Jusenkyo curses to be cured of them tonight, returning them to their original birth forms and further more, for all future people or animals who get touched by the waters of Jusenkyo various springs to only suffer their curses for a month." Ranma declares, feeling rather proud of his farsightedness along with doing a good to all those suffering from embarrassing water curses.

"So be it!" Wishbringer declares and the blade flashes a bright white before returning to normal. Then, suddenly, somebody hits him on the head.

"You used it already? What a disappointment my son is, not even giving any thought to your beloved father!" Genma declares, it seems that her father only arrived to see the sword flash brilliantly.

"Oh can it Pops! If you heard what my wish was then you would be singing a different tune!" Ranma snaps while pointing the sword at her father. "Not only did I wish our troubles away but I made it so we won't have ta worry about getting hit by Jusenkyo later either! So enjoy the last afternoon of being able to turn into a panda cause

tonight, they go bye-bye!" She states smugly, holding the sword so it's none sharp edge is resting upon her shoulder while sporting a very smug look upon her face.

Slowly walking to the edge of the roof, Ranma notes that there's still a few hours left before she'll never turn into her current form ever again. Not that Ranma gets to leave the roof as Akane chose that time to throw a rock at her head while shouting, "You idiot!"

As Akane walks up, she's pretty much yelling about having dis-basing himself just to get that wish. It seems that the youngest Tendo wasn't pulling her punches and upon Ranma getting up, she began to list Akane's ugly traits as the young Saotome's mind forgets that she not only succeeded in getting Kuno to give her the final wish but also in making it. It seems that her grip upon the sword had slipped and it didn't land next to Ranma.

In the end, the fight ends as Akane summons a mallet and causes Ranma to fly through the air. Upon landing, Ranma decides to stir clear of the Tendo home for the rest of the night. It didn't take long for Ranma to find some hot water and then he headed off in search for something to take his mind off of the fight with Akane.

Midnight approached and Ranma finally headed to the Tendo's to sleep in their guest room, the one he shares with his father. As Ranma lies down to rest, Akane storms in and tosses a bucket of water at him. "What was that for?" He demands while glaring at the youngest Tendo.

"You didn't transform..." Akane finally says and Ranma blinks in one part confusion and one part anger. The memory of his wish then causes him smirk.

"Well, of course I didn't, Kuno did give me his third wish after all. Heck, even Pops here won't transform into a panda ever again." He thinks to answer. "Now, if you excuse me, I need to go change my cloths and my sheets." Ranma states while gathering up said sheets and pushing pass Akane.

No more P-Chan either! He mentally includes.

Noon

Since he had woke, Ranma had been hit with cold water four times since waking and just before the starting bell rung. During school, he had been hit three times while in the locker room, none of the boys had believed that he had been cured the first time he had been hit with cold water and so they had to test it at least twice more. A minor threat kept there being another attempt.

"So, word around school says you're cured of that curse of yours." Ukyo says as she sits down to join him for lunch, Akane has been shying away from Ranma's company since the left for school.

"I not only cured Pops and myself but everyone who's touched Jusenkyo's waters." He informs his childhood friend, few had actually asked what his wish was, word for word. "Not that anyone seems to be thrilled with my getting cured..." He adds with a frown while glance over to the funeral that a bunch of boys seem to be holding over the loss of his female curse.

"Really? So you did go on a date with Kuno just to get cured?" Ukyo asks with a hint of steel and Ranma stills for a second before he tells Ukyo the wording of his wish.

That seems to cause Ukyo to pause before smiling. "So not only did you do something to cure everyone currently affected, you also used your wish to help those future victims as well. That's so thoughtful of you, Ran-chan."

Ranma can't help but feel as though he dodged a bullet there as he watches as Ukyo seemingly summons a grill and begins cooking okonomiyaki. He finishes his lunch bento and is soon eating one of the okonomiyaki that Ukyo has grilled up on her stove. A few show up and pay for okonomiyaki that Ukyo has made and he hadn't consumed.

Soon enough, lunch ends and the students head for class, although not before Shampoo and Mousse decide to show up to check to see if he can still turn into a girl viva cold water. Which causes him to explain what happened yesterday and the now changed nature of Jusenkyo.

Shampoo wants to go on a date to celebrate the curing of their curse while Mousse decides to attack him in gratitude.

A Court for Every Season: Changeling TL

I don't own Danny Phantom, Naruto, Bleach, Oh My Goddess, Harry Potter, Neon Genesis Evangelion, Ranma 1/2, and World of Darkness: Changeling The Lost.

Harry

"Ok... Does anyone know why I sport feathered wings but legs and tail of a lion?" The slightly altered time looping Naruto Uzumaki wonders while holding onto his tail. Out of the seven of them, Naruto's appearance is rather tame as he returns his gaze upon Ranma although he does glance at the new guy who's yet to introduce themselves.

Ranma stands seven feet tall and sports a very large frame that sports a mass of muscles. Saotome's skin is bright red while pale scars could be found about the arms, face, chest, and legs. The leather shorts seem stained with dry blood. Ranma's face is like that of a classic Japanese Oni sporting a thick eye ridge that has those fleshy horns growing out right after the eye ridges. The mass of white hair is like a lion's mane.

Somehow, I doubt he's going to move as lightly as he usual does. Harry thinks, kind of aware that it seems as though he's the shortest one present, which only makes Ranma seem even taller. His gaze turns when he hears a twig snap to find that the still nameless member of the seven trying to sneak away.

"Where do you think you're going?" Ranma asks, his voice sounding like rocks falling down the side of a mountain. The closest member of the group, Keiichi, reaches out and touches the new guy's shoulder, which kind of surprises him as he thought the hand would go through the guy.

"Err... Just who are you people?" The new guy asks and he takes note of the fact that the guy possessing bat looking wings for arms, the wing spread between two of the fingers, leaving the thumb, index finger, and middle finger ready. There seems to exist this kind of haze about this one's form that suggests that he's just a shadow and yet, he's not as Keiichi's hand proves that under that haze there is a solid body there.

"I guess introductions are in order." Keiichi agrees but unsurprisingly, Naruto is the one who takes it from there considering out of the group, the blond is typically the most outgoing of the 'core' group.

"Name's Naruto Uzumaki! The big Oni is Ranma Saotome and normally, he's not that big or that musclar." Ranma simply snorts and crosses his arms while Harry just gives Saotome a bemused look. "The little elven guy over there is Harry Potter." *Elven? Merlin, I hope I don't look like a house elf...*

"The one that looks like he hasn't slept for, like, a few years is Ichigo Kurosaki." Harry glances over at the deadly pale, almost waxy appearance except for black marks under his eyes while certain facial features seemingly more pronounced. "The gear jointed one is Shinji Ikari." Shinji merely gives Naruto a dirty look while the blond goes on to introduce Keiichi, who had taken a few steps back and then bows after the demon container finishes that introduction.

"My name is Danny Fenton." Danny kind of stares at Ranma. "Are you really Ranma Saotome? As in Ranma Saotome from Ranma One Half?" The new guy asks, which causes Ranma to sigh.

"Yes I am." Ranma rumbles while the rest of them sigh. "Although, I am a looper like yourself, so I like to think I've grown from how I was when this started." Then Ranma adds, "We all like to believe we've grown since the time loops began at least." To which they all nod.

"So, everyone of you guy are 'loopers'? Then how do you know each other?" Danny asks, his rather large blue eyes glancing at each of them.

"You ever get 'wake' in a world that isn't yours? Or maybe you've noticed new people living around you? Strangers who seem to possess different skills?" Naruto asks, once more stepping in while they try to think how to best frame the question.

Danny nods a bit. "It doesn't happen a lot but yea, there have been new faces around Amity Park, not that I noticed anything special about them though." The winged arm teen admits.

"We call such crossovers Fusion loops or FUBAR loops. It's how we all know each other, most of us end up commonly end up in FUBAR loops together on a semi-regular basis now a days. The usual setting is typically in Harry's universe, which is usually a seven year loop at a magic school." The blond informs Danny.

"Although, to be honest, Keiichi rarely ends up in a fusion considering that he's living with a version of the Norns." Ranma admits, it's clear that Shinji and Ichigo's attention had shifted when Naruto began to explain about FUBAR loops, likely trying to access their space pocekt, not that he's been able to access his own...

"The Norns? As in the trio of women who control the fate of men? The Norse Norns?" Danny asks a bit alarmed.

"I wouldn't go around calling Urd a crone. She's rather proud of her looks." Keiichi explains with a hint of dryness.

"You might want to look more into the genre of Anime and Manga, if your world has Ranma One Half then you might be able to a hold of Oh My Goddess and Neon Genesis Evangelion. Not sure if you'll be able to get a hold of Bleach or Naruto though." Harry muses and Naruto nods in agreement.

"What about you? You're from an Anime?" Danny asks and he snorts softly.

"Nay, I am typically a book series or a series of movies... I think somebody mentioned once that in one universe I was a CGI cartoon

series once, not sure who told me that one though..." He muses. *I wonder if there's a comic book version of my life out there somewhere?* Harry muses for a bit as he rubs his chin while picturing how he would like to be portrayed as a comic book.

By now, Shinji and Ichigo seem to be frowning while Ranma stretches his body. "Does anyone know where we are?" He decides to ask while Naruto seemingly floats in the air for a few second before whatever effect causes the blond's feet to return to the ground.

"Don't really know, although that thorn bushes seem to be shifting slightly every few minutes." Keiichi notes and Harry glances at the hedge to find that Keiichi is right. "I also thought I saw a pair of eyes looking out of it too..." The handsome eighteen year old muses.

"Hedge... hedge... that kind of rings a bell..." Shinji mutters and then snaps his metallic finger and wooden thumb. "Changeling the Lost! We're in another universe created by White Wolf Publishing! You remember when we were werewolves that time and combated those spirits? That's where we are only now we're playing as abducted mortals who've been changed into one of Seemings." Shinji explains.

"You guys were werewolves?" Danny wonders while he groans, just hearing the world Changeling kind of brought out the memories that were something a kin to his many childhood memories of doing house work, only the torture being very more painful and his Keeper being much more beautiful and bizarre. *If I do look like a house elf, at least I know who to blame.*

"I think we might want to leave now." Keiichi says to which Naruto asks, "Why?"

"Yea, I think that's a good idea." Ichigo adds in support of Keiichi's statement, which is why he along with most of the others turn to look at the Hedge once more. "I don't think we're ready to fight anyone just yet." Shinji agrees and they head away from the Hedge, soon enough they arrive in a backyard.

Danny

As they walk through the town, Danny is rather amazed at how nobody seems to be freaking out at the sight of them, well, Ranma did attract looks but then, the guy is tall and sporting a very broad shoulders. So different then the short, scrawny looking character he's seen while watching the show. He feels very uncomfortable concerning walking around in his current appearance.

The wing membrane of his arms are folded as best as he could make them, which feels rather weird as it means his hand only consists of two fingers and a thumb. The clothing covering his upper body is a poncho as he can't put his arms through sleeves of any shirts. As certain member of the group had lacked cloths, they had broken into the house and rummaged through the basement looking for cloths, which is where his poncho came from along with Naruto's tattered, modified jeans and baggy, modified long sleeve shirt, Ranma's heavily modified leather jacket, and Shinji's sweat pants and sweat shirt.

Harry, Ichigo, and Keiichi had been already wearing cloths when they all 'woke up'. Sure, Ranma and Danny had sported some kind of pants but that's about it while Naruto and Shinji had been butt naked. *Not that there's any girls around to see them like that.* He muses while glancing between Naruto and Harry, the two are the youngest members of the seven of them as they are both only thirteen, although Harry will be turning fourteen come two months.

During their rummaging through the basement, Shinji explained about the world they're now in and what they can expect in way of skills, problems, and power ups. Danny can't help but feel very much out of this depth, particularly as none of the others seem to be fazed by this set of circumstances. *Not that I should be complaining, I've been getting stir crazy for a while now...* Danny mentally admits and begins to wonder just how one causes FUBAR loops as if this is an example of one.

Maybe it's because he's been the only one experiencing them but he's been feeling cut off from everyone, including Sam and Tucker. Not even Clockwork seem to be aware, although it does mean that he doesn't have to worry about encountering his darker, futuristic self anymore as he'll never turn into that guy. *Not that I haven't been tempted to give my hand at taking over the world...* Danny bemuses before snapping out of his thoughts when Naruto says, "Is anyone else hungry?"

Blinking, Danny is just one voice in a chorus voicing yes. "So... anyone find a coin or something?" The other be-winged member of the group asks and Ranma holds up a bill.

"What do you plan to do with that? It's not nearly enough to buy us all a meal." He points out as Naruto takes the bill from the Ogre.

"Don't worry, with Naruto's luck in gambling we'll soon have more then enough for a meal." Shinji says and he just stares. "Just watch and see." The artificial looking member of the group finally adds with a sigh.

They enter into a restaurant with slot machines and sure enough, Naruto take the bill and gets four quarters. The blond picks a random machine and on the first try, Naruto hits the Jack Pot. Danny just stares in amazement at the younger boy, not sure what to make of that particular ability as they collect the winnings. With that, they head for a table so they may eat.

He sits next to Keiichi and Ichigo with Harry sitting across from him. "So... what's your dimension like?" Naruto asks as they wait for somebody to arrive to take their order.

"It's because I'm new, isn't it?" He asks with a sigh while leaning back on the bench. "Well, I'm typically a Halfa, half ghost half human, capable of switching between the two. I fight and capture ghost using my parents' ghost weapons." Danny explains.

"Sounds like you've got a lot in common with Ichigo then." Harry muses and he glances over at the orange haired teen to his right. "Ichigo's dad is a Shinigami and typically Ichigo himself sees the dead."

"Does that make him a demi-god?" Danny asks. *First one of them is living with the Fates and now I learn that another is the son of a Asian Death God...*

"Not really, Shinigami is just a group of empowered human spirits that herd whole spirits out of the land of the living while purifying hollow spirits who feed off of whole spirits and spiritual aware humans." Ranma explains and most of the others nod in agreement. "They've even created a city there, heck they even have an academy to train those with talent to become Shinigami."

"So... where does that leave Ichigo?" He asks curiously, rather interested to hear more. "And if his father is dead, how can his father be his father?"

"Well, when they want to interact with the living, Shinigami use fake bodies. They're very convincing ones at that." Ranma says and they all pause as a waiter arrives to take their drink order while leaving some menus for them to read through.

"How did we end up talking about Ichigo's life again?" Naruto asks curiously. "I mean, we haven't heard any of Danny's adventures or even about his group." The blond muses thoughtfully and he is rather uncomfortable as they all turn to regard him.

"Ah... How do you know that I have friends? For all you know, I could be a Gothic loner." He remarks and everybody but Keiichi snort at that. "Well, Tucker is into technology and is a strong believer in meat." Danny finally relents. "Sam is, well, strict Ultra-Recyclo Vegetarian and a Goth. We usually end up dating unless I run off to play Super-Hero in a big city."

And so began a kind of Q & A session as they would ask a question or for more detail about something he mentioned, which he would answer. As they wait for their meal to arrive and they've done digging for information about him, they told him more about themselves, their friends, and the various pranks they pull on each other.

He learnt that if either or both Sam and Tucker wake up, they'll likely be a bit unstable, typically diverging into porn and sleeping around. Something which he's kind of in the early stages of but which now that he's aware of how much of a slut it sounded to become a "ladies' man" he decides to not follow down that path. Another thing is, now that he's experienced a fusion loop, its more then likely he's 'waking' to the loop will now be varied. It also signaled that one of these loops, his friends will wake up and that he'll likely begin to see an increase in FUBAR loops.

Soon enough, Danny inquires about what universes they've lived in and is rather stunned to learn that there is a Star Wars universe out there as well as Star Trek. He even found it surprising to learn that Naruto, who's rather bold and care free, is a ninja, as in, stealthy, cloak and dagger ninja. "How can you be a ninja? You're, well..." He just waves, unable to find the words to tell of his disbelief about that.

"Loud? Excitable?" Shinji supplies before drinking from his soda. He merely nods in agreement while Naruto just rolls his eyes. "Well, ninja of his world have become rather... flashy." Shinji explains.

"Not unlike samurai, although if you're missing a pet, you can hire a genin team to seek it out or if you want a business rival done away with, you can hire a chuunin or a jonin, it depends on how hard they think it'll be to assassinate the guy. They're very versatile in what kind of missions they'll accept." Ranma says.

"Which is rather useful if you're a ninja and want to vacation, you can hire yourself to go guard, say, a famous pub in a town or city in the mists of a festival." Naruto remarks while using a spoon to fend off unwanted fingers or hands trying to take his fries. "Of course, not every country has a ninja village, which is why the Chuunin Exams

are public. Trying to show which ninja village is the most powerful based off the performances of the genin."

Not knowing what else to say, he stays quiet as he munches on his fries, only to find that he's got like a dozen left. "So... what kind of Motley pledge are we going to abide by?" Shinji asks as he tries to think of a way to sneak fries off of another member's plate as it seems that it's acceptable to do so.

"How about... no stealing from another member of the group?" Danny suggests as he Keiichi donates his uneaten fries to him upon noticing the looks he's been giving Harry's fries.

Ranma hums while Naruto tosses out, "How about agreeing to avoid making pledges beyond those between us? From the sounds of things, this whole society seems to sport a lot of political pledges, even the courts seem to demand a pledge of loyalty just to make us of their resources."

"Or we agree to hold the pledges between us to be more powerful then those made to a court and leadership?" Ichigo states as he hums thoughtfully at that thought. *That would offer more security considering we're not native to this world.*

"So, we want to include in this pledge is to share our good fortune, give aid when bad fortune strikes, to not steal from each other, and to consider the Motley above all pledges make to one's court, if they decide to join a court, and a leader of a Freehold." Harry muses.

"That sharing fortune seems to conflict with the stealing clause." Ranma remarks. "Let's not forget that one persons' good fortune could be somebody's bad. We each seem to need different things, so I would settle on not stealing from one another."

"Are we going to agree to create a Hollow in the Hedge or not?" Ichigo wonders. "I mean, I rather not get too close to it, particularly if those True Fae can move through it like a fish through water."

This soon leads to a long debate concerning what could be found under which clause or if they should include it anyway. He's rather surprised to find Harry doing a very good job as a wordsmith until Keiichi informs him about that Harry's world sports magic and they can create magical contracts, which is why Harry's unusually skilled with words.

Breaks happened when the waiter shows up to take away their plates, bring drink refills, or whatever new food they order up. Finally, they decide to leave, although not before Naruto wins a few more times at the slot machines, giving them money to rent a hotel. They leave once the bill has been paid for.

They hang around a phone booth to review the various hotels within the city. The sun is going down and that kind of comforts him for some strange reason. They then leave to visit a list of hotels.

Keiichi

As his dancing companion moves off to visit with another, Keiichi sighs softly and heads for the snack table, having noticed Shinji trying to catch his eye. The dance is a Spring Court funded event, although few of the other courts have done more then send a token number of Changelings. "So, what's the mood with the Winter Courtiers?"

"Just a thought that the funds for this event could have been spent on aiding those member of the Freehold down on their luck." Shinji states with a roll of his eyes. "Of course, according to Naruto, the Autumn Courtiers wanted to use the money to purchase Tokens that humans find and auction off online."

"I'm still trying to wrap my head around the fact that Naruto wanted to become a member of the Autumn Court then the Summer. Gryphons are known for their military skills." Keiichi states, although the blond had been the last of them to pick a Court, for a good two months, Naruto had been the only one to remain Courtless while

they were spending time integrating themselves in their chosen court.

"Personally? I think he just want's access to Fae magic more then caring about their agenda." Shinji replies. "Although, he's a good face for that court though, very friendly and out going enough that it frees up a number of individuals from feeling as though they have to be social."

"I guess as long as he displays some of that Season's Mantle, they won't care if he doesn't share the same persona type as is common and typical of that court." He muses and Shinji nods. "Still feel lonely as being the only member of the Winter Court out of the Motley?" Keiichi asks while Shinji rolls his eyes.

"I've gotten use to it. Although, you have to admit, the Summer Court is over representative in our group." Shinji says as he just nods at the Manikin's statement.

"Considering that both Danny and Ichigo are Darklings, you'd think they'd shy away from anything to do with fire." The pilot of Evangelion Number One remarks. "That reminds me, Ranma wants us all to hook up at Naruto's condo one of these days."

"Which day is good for him and the other two?" He asks, not that surprise as they've been in this world for a year now. They had spent a week crafting their Motley Pledge and they swore by it before they decided to seek out the local Freehold to engage in the typical life of a Changeling.

"Next week any time, Naruto says Harry willing to meet either next Wednesday or Thursday, which kind of leaves us to hear from you as I'm good for Wednesday." Shinji says.

"I think I can make it Wednesday night." He informs Shinji. They both kind of allow silence to hang between them. "So... how's been your classes at the university?" They both inquire about the same time before they blink and then chuckle slightly.

"I'm almost done with my engineering degree. You?" Keiichi asks, they were both are the only ones from their Motley to be part of their respective courts. He's still adjusting to the fact that as a member of the Spring Court, he's to indulge in his desires instead burying them. *Naruto could have fit into this court like a fish in water, but then, he could have joined any of the three, only reason he never considered Winter Court is he's not one for hiding or running away.* He thinks while picking out the Beast member of their Motley.

"My film classes are coming along nicely." Shinji says before adding, "I'm still waiting for Harry to get back to me about creating a token out of glass lenses that will see a Seeming without me being around to activate it."

"You didn't ask Naruto, did you?" He asks, half curiously half frightful. Keiichi still remember the kind of things Naruto managed to convince Harry and Ichigo to do when they were Uratha. Sure, a lot of what they created helped make protecting and monitoring their pack's territory but when the experiments blew up, they really BLEW UP. They had to help fund the rebuilding of the town's buildings, although they're all glad that they decided to stop experimenting at the manor house after that Pandora Box punishment.

"No, I asked him to try to find me a studio who'll rent out a set building for me to record that movie I've written up." Shinji remarks before adding, "Are you sure I can't talk you into taking the lead? You've got the looks needed for the role, after all."

Keiichi feels the familiar swelling within him at the compliment. "Sorry, but I rather not become a house hold name... I mean, in this world at least." He explains and Shinji nods.

"Yo, you two! So, is it going to be Wednesday or Thursday that we're hooking up?" Naruto asks upon seemingly sneaking up on them. He turns his head to regard the blond teen sporting feathered wings. The faint scent of wet, rotten leaves seems to hang about Naruto, much like how some frost seems to hang about Shinji's metal parts while the temperature seems to be a bit chilly.

"We're meeting Wednesday evening." Shinji says to the out going blond. "Your place too, so you might want to stock up on food." The current Manikin adds as a way of a reminder.

"Sure! I'll remember that. Now, if you excuse me, I've got a few ladies waiting for a drink." The blond says, grabbing a platter that's pretty much empty of food, a few adjustments later, and Naruto is walking away from the table with a few glasses of red and white wine.

"You'd think he'd just settle for courting a single lady considering that in mythology that gryphons mate for life." Shinji remarks as Naruto rejoins his group of pretty Changelings, most of them likely of the Spring Court from what he can see of their Season's Mantle, although one of them seems to be of the Summer Court.

"Well, he's still human enough to sleep around." Another Changeling a few feet away remarks upon overhearing Shinji's remark. He blushes slightly as he turns away from watching Naruto to look into his almost empty glass of wine.

Typically, he wouldn't think of cheating on Belldandy, he couldn't help but notice how attractive and desirable many of his fellow Fairest are. Which kind of causes him to be rather divided about what to do about all of this. "I'm having trouble concerning the trend of following my desires and not cheating on Belldandy." He confides to Shinji after trading his now empty cup with filled cup while they put some distance between them and the table.

"You can always pledge to have no other woman but Belldandy and vow it to the Wyrd." Shinji observes and he blinks, rather surprise by going so far as to remain faithful to Belldandy. "Of course, there's the little matter that there might be a True Fae representing her in this world."

He blinks and sighs. "So how to I follow my Court's creed while staying true to her? I doubt she'll forget about such a slight." Keiichi says.

"Well... You could always go out with guys instead of girls... You know, she might be more then a little turned on by that and you can at least say you didn't cheat on her with another woman..." Shinji admits. "I'm sure Naruto or even Ranma might know how it works... I'm they were drunk when they did something like it but then again... You can never tell with Nabiki and Sakura added into the factors."

Keiichi just stares at Shinji while admitting that those two girls likely had coerced the two at one point or another. Although with Nabiki, it likely had to do with her using that temporary Drown Man Spring to be the boy in that circumstance. It's a given that Sakura has set Naruto and Sasuke up on more then one occasion. There are some stories concerning Sakura that he often wonders if some of it were just exaggeration...

He's rather glad he never had to go through watching his friend 'wake' to the reality of the time loops, particularly watching them become obsess with sex and porn. *There's always my sister though...* But he ignores that thought as his sister doesn't visit enough to need to be woken up.

"Well, good luck trying to manage that problem then. Although, you might want to bring it up with Belldandy about what to do if you end up in this kind of situation in the future. After all, if she can't visit you in this world, there might be other worlds where she can't visit you either." Shinji observes before they part ways.

With a glance about, he decides that he should be able to leave as it's clear that the dance is winding down. He is sure to stop by the table to leave his empty wine glass before leaving the community center that his court rented for this dance. It shouldn't take him long to get to his apartment block from here, after all, that's where most of his fellow Court member rent apartments within the same block if not the same building.

Danny: Darkling - Lurk Glider, Court - Summer

Harry: Wizen - Drudge, Court - Autumn

Ichigo: Darkling - Gravewight, Court - Summer

Keiich: Fairest - Muse, Court - Spring

Naruto: Beast - Windwing, Court - Autumn

Ranma: Ogre - Bloodbrute, Court - Summer

Shinji: Elemental - Manikin, Court - Winter

Life Gift 3: How To Train Your Dragon

I don't own How To Train Your Dragon.

Berk

Hiccup

"Hiccup!" One flash later and Hiccup stands naked where there had been a gray scaled dragon. The shapeshifter sighs while the black scaled dragon merely huffs out in laughter.

"Would you quit doing that? I need to hunt or fish and I can't do that when I'm like this!" Hiccup snaps at Ripple as the afternoon is rather chilly. It's been a learning experience for him regarding why humans wear cloths along, he's a rather quick learner as it's only been a day since the little girl first caused him to become a human.

"Ah... take it easy on the hatchling... She doesn't know any better." The Night Fury remarks a tad too eagerly and Hiccup gives the dragon a dirty look, only to look over at Ripple when the child sniffles softly.

"But... it's so... sparkly!" Ripple exclaims cheerfully before she asks, "When can we go home? I miss mommy and I want oatmeal too! With some cut fruit too!" The young girl crosses her arms over her chest and looks at him expectantly.

"I would love to take you back to your village, the problem is that I now lack the wings to do so. As for the hunger, you should have eaten some of that fish, blackie here fried up for you last night." He reminds the strange little human who seems convinced that he's her elder brother. *Not really sure why she's capable of causing me to become a human either...*

"But I didn't want to eat fish for dinner last night. I wanted duck!" Ripple explains as if it's the most obvious thing in the world.

Hiccup exchanges looks with the Night Fury, as if hoping that the other male understood that reasoning. **"I'm a dragon, I'm not suppose to understand humans."** The black dragon states. **"You know, it's kind of fun watching that light show where you turn into a human. Then watching the two of you is rather entertaining to boot!"** The Night Fury remarks with a dragon style grin.

"I'm hungry!" Ripple whines and Hiccup just sighs while looking back at the little human hatchling. "I miss my friends and Pot-Belly-Sir-Gruff-Oink!" *Do I really want to know what a Pot-Belly-Sir-Gruff-Oink is?* He wonders while just staring blankly down at Ripple.

Finally, he turns to the Night Fury and asks, "That reminds me, why are you sticking around? Shouldn't you gone to join your raiding buddies and enjoy human raise beasts they grabbed from the local village?" He kind of hears Ripple huff at being ignored.

"Who says they're my friends? Or that I partake in what they grab?" Snarls the Night Fury, causing Ripple to yelp and hide behind him after a high pitched yelp. **"Sure, I might destroy a few of those posts but that's only to try and cut down how many dragons these Vikings kill! And from what I've seen of those dracos, I'm likely better off staying away from their homes!"** The black scaled dragon snaps and then the other snaps his head to the right while walking off into the forest with his nose stuck up in the air.

In the end, Hiccup turns to regard the human hatchling and sighs. "Look, we wait for me to turn back to normal and then I'll take you back to your parents, ok? Which means that no more doing that thing that you do that causes me to become like this, alright?" He tries to reason with Ripple, not really sure if she'll listen to him, it's been little over seven years since Hiccup had anything to do with young dragons.

"Ah... but it's so sparkly to see it happen! Besides, why can't we walk to the village?" The human child asks Hiccup.

"For one, my feet are very sore and for another, I don't know how to navigate while on the ground. I also get this odd feeling that you will expect me to carry you once you're own feet get sore or you just get tired." He gives as an answer while rubbing a spot behind his neck where he think a bug has bitten him.

"Oh... I can make myself a flower crown!" Ripple chimes in, her eyes were looking towards the small grassy clearing a bit pass him. Within seconds, the young human seems content gathering flowers as he just stares at the little human.

That's it, I'm so getting that Night Fury to take her. Her magic likely doesn't work on him, at least, not that we know of... Hiccup thinks just seconds before he heads off to where the black scale dragon took off to in order to convince the other to take the human hatchling back to the village.

Astrid

They all stare at the headstone that had been hastily set up to mark Ripple's passing. She feels especially guilty about what happened yesterday and blames herself for being so complacent concerning watching over the group of children. *If we should have been more aware of our surroundings, it was Fishlegs who noticed something wrong and if it weren't for his journal being stolen, then we all could have been killed by that beast when it judged we were too complacent to be on our guard...*

Then as she leaves the site, a slightly familiar cry rings out. "Hiccup!" Then something bright flashes and a young man's voice curses. Astrid just stares for a few seconds, not sure if she should be allowing her hopes to get up but soon enough, she recovers to race into the woods to find a naked young man glaring down at the daughter of Valhallarama and the chief of their tribe.

"Ripple!" She cries out, doing her best to ignore the naked member of the opposite sex. Astrid has her dagger out while Ripple runs up to her and begin tugging on her hand.

"Astrid!" The young girl with a crown of flower cries while pulling her after the naked man. "You remember my brother, Hiccup! Hiccup! Where are you going?"

Oh yes, let's go after the one not wearing any cloths. I'm so sure that we won't be able to catch him later, it's not as though he can be hard to spot. Astrid think dryly while Ripple lets go to run after this so called 'Hiccup'. "Ripple! Your mother has been worried! We should get you home, I'm sure we can organize a search party to capture this guy." She manages to say while chasing after the pair, not at all wanting to tackle a naked man.

"But if we don't bring him along, then he'll leave again!" Ripple whines while she highly doubts the probability of this guy managing to leave the island stealthily. It wouldn't take long to organize a search party, particularly since Ripple's mother will likely head it.

They did catch up to the guy as he seems to be wheezing heavily from running away. "I am really beginning to hate you." The guy states while glaring at Ripple before trying to run once more. "And now is a good time to help out, you lazy scaly lizard of a dragon!" The naked young man snaps which causes her to freeze to glance around.

Suddenly a large shadow moves overhead and just as 'Hiccup' gets grabbed by said shadow, Ripple manages to hug the guy's legs. "Oh come on! You're home now, so, go home!" The guy says while she tries to wrap her head around the idea of a human working with a dragon, particularly one who's scales seem to shine blue under the light of the sun.

Well, that could explain how he got here and plans to leave. A part of her reasons while she feels rather flat footed in regards to what's

going on before her. Finally shaking her head, she throws what she can at the fleeing dragon, which happens to be her dagger.

With a pained bellow, the dragon lets go of the naked young man while quickly raises up into the air, her dagger still in the back leg of the beast. Astrid quickly manages to grab the naked guy's arm and keeps him face down in the ground, ignoring the rather long brunet hair sporting red highlights. "Now, who are you and where is that dragon going?"

"Deer scat! What's your problem? I returned her! Why couldn't you grab her and take her to her parents?" Her captive asks and she gives the arm a bit of a twist, which causes 'Hiccup' to gasp in pain. "Name? They call me Stone! And for all I know, that dragon has left this island! It's not like he and I are allies or anything. We only met!"

Astrid closes her eyes, she can't tell if he's telling the truth or not. "Then why did that dragon help you?" She asks, keeping her boot firmly placed upon the upper portion of this guy's back. "And what's your real name?"

"Oh come on! I answered your questions, why don't you just let me leave? It's not like you'd believe me if I told you anything about me! I don't believe what happened to me and it happened to me!" Counters Stone but this time, giving his arm a twist doesn't cause him to answer either of those questions.

With a sigh, Astrid takes some rope from her pouch, usually she uses it for traps but it's all she has on her. Manages to grab the other arm, she ties the two behind his back as securely as she can. As she causes the naked guy to get up off the ground, it's then that Astrid notices that Ripple isn't around.

"I really protest this kind of treatment! I haven't done anything wrong!" Stone protests but she just ignores that, after all, he could easily be scouting around the island a raiding party.

Astrid and her captive find Ripple humming to herself while drawing in the dirt. "Ripple! Why did you leave?" She asks and the young girl glances up.

"Well, I wanted to give you two a chance to know each other." Ripple explains as though it was obvious. "So... when is the wedding?" The little girl asks curiously, which only causes the blond to sigh.

"He says his name is Stone, so he's not your missing brother." She decides to try and shake Ripple of this, likely, harmful delusion. "Your brother has been gone for ten years, Ripple. He's not coming back."

Ripple stares at Astrid with wide, almost teary eyes. "But... but... he is..." Ripple murmurs and she can't help but feel like the bad guy.

"Come on, let's get you home." The blond young woman says, pulling Stone with her as he was trying to inch away from her. Ripple sniffles and nods, much to the grumbling of the captive Stone.

It takes a bit but Astrid finally manages to get Ripple and Stone into the village proper. More then a few stopped what they're doing rather abruptly to stare at her naked captive. Although a few would then look at Ripple and then look between the two. The attention only causes her cheeks to redden more then a bit, already imagining the teasing that she'll get from various member of the village.

"Ripple! We thought you were eaten by that dragon! How did you survive?" Rotpelt asks upon approaching them as they head for the Mead Hall.

"Well, why would I be eaten?" Ripple asks curiously, which reminds Astrid that the gray beast is the one who carried Ripple off, not that strange black one. *What happened to that one?*

The blond feels uneasy at the thought that the gray dragon is still out there, somewhere without being punished for kidnapping the chieftain's only daughter. She just keeps marching until they are

before the doors of the Mead Hall. Rotpelt had joined Ripple, although it wasn't long before Ripple's mother comes up the steps.

"Mommy!" Ripple cries out, running down to meet Valhallarama.

Hiccup

He hadn't liked being marched through the Viking village or having his hands tied behind his back. Hiccup hadn't cared about the humans gawking at him, no, what worries him is whether he'll be able to escape before that little girl manages to do that thing that keeps him from transforming into a dragon or just touching him period.

Then, Ripple cries out 'Mommy' and it snaps him out of his thoughts. Hiccup stops breathing at the sight of the adult coming up the stairs. *That woman...* He feels something stir within him and his eyes seem to burn, though why, he didn't know.

A strange mixture of relief and sorrow overwhelms him, he really wants to hide from her. "Ripple! Oh, my little girl! You're alright!" It really hurts hearing that come out of this woman's mouth.

And then, the woman looks up and looks at him, a memory of tired eyes seem to flare up within his mind. He wanted to move but his body seems to rooted to the spot. He finally begins breathing again when the woman turns to address the one who tied up his arms.

"Astrid, you didn't happen to take this one's cloths, did ya?" The woman asks in a playful tone, although there's this underline tone to that. Hiccup feels his captor stiffen and then stutter a bunch of non-sense.

The woman approaches them while Ripple holds onto the woman's hand. Hiccup notices the look of happiness upon the young hatchling's face, although how long it'll last is the question as Ripple hadn't eaten any of that rabbit that the Night Fury supplied them,

including the fire the other had started to cook it as they know that humans don't eat meat raw.

"And just who might you be?" The woman asks and it takes him a few seconds to realize that she's talking to him. He found words escape him.

"He claims to be called Stone." Astrid states. "He some how managed to convince a dragon to try and help him in escaping from me too." The human adds. "He says he's not friends with the beast, but it took a dagger in its back legs to get it to drop him."

"Mommy, isn't it great? Hiccup's back home!" Ripple says while the woman studies him with a great deal of confusion.

"He's not your brother!" His captor reminds the hatchling while the other hatchling who's name he doesn't know move to stand next to Ripple. The woman's free hand take hold of his jaw and twists his head this way and that, not that he gets why she does so.

The woman lets go and he watches as her gaze goes to something on his chest. "What the..." He hears Astrid mutter and within seconds, he stands before the village as a dragon. The village gasps while the woman before him eyes leak.

"Hiccup... my little boy..." The woman says softly and he moves his body down so his forelimbs read upon the ground. He bows his head while Ripple moves to stand to his right.

"Told you he's Hiccup!" And then, Ripple touches his neck, light flashes and yet again, Hiccup is human. The woman reaches out to touch him but then pulls the hand away.

He looks down at his chest to find something now being featured upon his chest, the rune of Sacrifice in bold black. "My son has returned to us! Praise Odin! So somebody, give him something to cover himself with." The woman... his mother declares and this spurs the others into action.

It wasn't long before he's got a blanket wrapped about his waist. It wasn't long before, yet again, Hiccup is walking through the village, following his mother and younger sister as he can't bring himself to deny relations with this woman.

Astrid

The blond just watches as the member of the Haddock family walk down the Mead Hall, leaving her rather freaked out by not only witnessing a human transform into the very dragon who took Ripple by the simple touch by Valhallarama and then turned back into a human because of Ripple touching him, only the difference is that the rune of Sacrifice upon his chest, where it had glowed when Valhallarama touched Hiccup's jaw.

"That does explain how he got Ripple 'away' from that dragon, doesn't it?" Ruffnut says, it seems that her friend did ascend up the steps when the chieftain's wife had called for somebody to give Hiccup something to cover up with. "Kind of explains why that other dragon was willing to work with him too."

"Yea, I guess so..." She admits, not really sure what to make this this development. "But he said they called him Stone..." Astrid adds, not sure if the guy had lied or something more is going with him.

"Considering that gray hide of his, I guess we all know why they called him Stone." Ruffnut says before punching her gently in the shoulder. "But damn did you see how hung he is? I wonder how it translates to his dragon form or if it's because he's able to be a dragon?"

Her mouth opens but nothing comes out while she shakes her head. Then Astrid tosses her hands up and begins to walk away from Ruffnut. Her thoughts rather muddled about all of this, it didn't help that she did agree with Ruffnut about his... manhood.

To Be Continued . . .

Leopard Claws: Naruto

I don't own Naruto or the concept for wereleopards from Disney's Gargoyles.

Naruto

Naruto stares once more at the four scratch marks that continue to remain upon his left upper arm. The blond fourteen year old had kept this black leopard from mauling the client that Jiraiya had accepted as a mission for him while the pervert enjoys the sights of the island various bath houses. With a sigh, Naruto just looks away from his arm to look up at the statue of some beast done in an ancient style.

"Is something wrong?" Jun, his client, asks while continuing to brush away at the dirt upon this skeleton, it seems to be a horse judging by the hoof that's uncovered. Jun's the lead archaeologist of a team that's trying to find grains of truth within the island's mythology.

Not wanting to admit that he's a bit concern about the fact that even after a whole day, the scratch remains, the blond teenage genin and student of Jiraiya replies, "I'm just hoping that the leopard wasn't sick. If it is, then we might want to use the buddy system to make sure that the cat doesn't try to pick off one of the team."

"You have a good point there. Healthy predators don't attack people unless trained too." Jun agrees while taking a moment to sit up straight before drinking from a water bottle. "Perhaps you should go patrol the area." His client adds and Naruto gives Jun a blank look, they both know that her father is the one who wanted Jun to hire a ninja for this trip.

A member of the team, a slightly creepy guy name Ryuugo, a specialist in mythical occult, seems to be giving Jun doe eyes. The blond had noted how the creep would hang around Jun's tent during

the evening, when everyone is turning in. Often times, Ryuugo would get chased off by him simply giving the man a flat look while spinning a kunai about his index finger. Naruto's fairly sure that Jun's father knew about this guy's 'affection' towards his princess but couldn't stop Jun from taking Ryuugo out into the jungle as the man is renown in his chosen field.

Although, where Ryuugo was when we were setting up camp, even I don't know. Naruto admits to himself while crossing his arms over his chest that's covered in an orange tank top. Unsurprisingly, Jun is the first to look away but it's just too hot out for him to do more then smile upon this victory.

The Land of Rainforest is large land mass that's half the size of the main continent that sports Hidden Villages. Because of its location, it houses dense tropical forests that are among the oldest in the known world. The Land of Rainforest is more known for their rich culture then their local resources as they have little in the way of ore and the various forests growing upon across the land mass are protected, not that it had always been the case as they did have their own empire at one point that worshiped some kind of feline deity.

The empire fell into decline when the deity had been offended by something its worshipers had done or not done. Naruto's heard it repeated again and again with each storyteller making minor or major edits as to what the ancients' crime had been that caused them to fall into disfavor of this deity. Privately, the blond figures that the feline just got bored and went off to find something better to do then listen to people wishing for stuff or complaining about how their life sucks.

Stifling a yawn, Naruto turns to stare at Ryuugo, unsurprised to find the occultist staring away from the wall covered in writing to stare longingly at Jun. Upon noticing him looking at him, Ryuugo pales slightly and quickly turns away, although Ryuugo does clinch a hand into a fist. Suddenly, Ryuugo bolts away, turning a corner of the wall.

"Must have been something he ate." The soon to be fifteen year old hears one of the grad students murmur dryly, this is followed by some chuckling. Naruto sighs, if he had learnt anything from his time at the academy, people don't like being stalked, although for some odd reason, Jun seems to be rather blind in the fact that Ryuugo is stalking her.

Ryuugo

It's not fair! That... that... brat just had to go and ruin it, didn't he? My one chance to bond with my beloved and that idiot teen just had to interfere! Now what am I suppose to do? Kami, I could only mark one other person, just one and it hadn't been Jun... Anger keeps Ryuugo in the form of a black leopard while he prowls some unused portion of the ancient city with growls, snarls, and hisses ringing out from the human turned leopard's throat.

Ryuugo's anger did get spent and the black leopard moves to rest out of the sun, not calm enough to transform back to his human form nor really caring what form he's in at the moment, he begins to consider going to *Her* and explain how it happened. The occultist is fairly certain that *She* would know how to correct this so that he can mark his beloved. Ryuugo shutters a bit as he realizes that if he does do so, he'll need something to offer in exchange for information upon how to solve this so that he can finally be with his beloved.

Finally, Ryuugo's nerves relax and within minutes, he is once more a man. Getting up off the ground, the occultist then pauses as he realizes that he doesn't know where he is in relation to where the dig site is or, for that matter, where the camp is. It takes him about a half hour to realize that all he has to do is follow his leopard track to return to the dig site.

Naruto

"It's still there..." Naruto mutters softly, it's been two weeks since that black leopard had tried to maul Jun and he had been scratched by the beast. Typically, the scratch would be gone in less then a day

and yet, it's still there. Which is rather worrying as the blond is fairly sure that the fox is still within its cell within his body and thus, he still heals at an abnormal rate.

With a sigh, the fourteen year old grabs a spare note pad and writes a short note informing his current teacher about the leopard scratch upon his arm. Once that's done, he bites his thumb before summoning a toad to take the note to Jiraiya. With a sigh, he watches as the toad vanishes into the surrounding forest before looking up at the hint of the approaching dawn.

Then, without much warning then a cloth moving does he find himself under attack by a black leopard. He manages to grab the front of the muzzle and force the head to go up, using only a little chakra to aid in doing so. Wrestling with the feline, the blond ninja does his best to throw the wiggling feline over his head.

Once free of having such a heavy and angry feline pinning him to the ground, the blond ninja quickly creates a group of clones, which causes the recovered leopard to pause. When one of his clones moves to enter the tent to get his kunai pouch, the cat leaps for the clone. It takes a bit but he does manage to get onto the large cat's back while putting the black furred leopard in a head lock. The beast sounds furious at this but Naruto refuses to let the feline go as it's clear that the beast could very well find somebody new to attack.

One of the clones finally finds something heavy and hits the leopard over the head, knocking the beast out. After a few seconds, much to the grad students and his own surprise, the leopard transforms into Ryuugo. While not totally recovered by seeing a leopard become a man, he does use wire to tie the bastard up as its clear that the guy will try to escape.

Why would Ryuugo want to attack me? It's not like I've done anything physical to him to scare him off... Naruto muses while Jun orders some of the grad students to ransack Ryuugo's tent to see if there's any evidence of how the occultist managed to find a way to transform into a leopard.

With his clones to watch over what's happening, he heads into the tent to get dressed or at least put on a shirt as he had slept in a pair of bangy pants just in case something happened at night. As it's rather warm in the Land of Rainforests, he just couldn't manage to wear any more clothing besides the pants. He didn't exit until his belt is secure only to find this... he just didn't know how to describe the feline other then huge, powerful, and female.

"Well, you aren't you interesting..." The feline entity muses while Ryuugo begs the deity to free him so that he may 'kill' the 'barbarian' unworthy of her 'blessing'. It's clear to Naruto that the entity doesn't care one wit about Ryuugo's groveling or attempt at flattery.

"Ah... you don't happen to know why this," Naruto points to the marks Ryuugo's claws made on his body, "do you? Typically, it should have faded in under a day about two weeks ago."

Ryuugo becomes silent while the feline entity seems to purr. "It's not that I'm complaining, it's just, well, usually *it* doesn't let such things remain on my body for long." The blond ninja thinks to add, becoming aware that this just might be that ancient cat deity that was once worshiped across this land.

"Yes, I can sense one of *those* in you. I must admit, the Shinigami's aid in sealing *it* within you is rather surprising." The deity muses. **"I believe I like you, Naruto-kun. You are rather... divine and yet, it doesn't take away from you having your feet firmly planted upon the ground. After all, forgiveness is divine !"**

Naruto blushes, not really sure how to take this deity's compliments. "I think a lot of people would argue with you about me being anything but a demon, ma'am." He finds himself stating in a slightly dry tone but colored with embarrassment.

"Yes, most humans are idiotic and often refuse to see what's right in front of them, sometimes no matter how many times they walk into it." The divine feline says with a soft sigh and Naruto

sighs, knowing that he can fall into that category as well. **"Take this one for example, he continues to try for her,"** the deity turns to stare at Jun, **"not taking the hint that she's firmly disinterested in him. He continues to believe that just because she's nice to him that she returns his feelings."**

Ryuugo reddens, pales, reddens, and then pales. "Yea, well, most of the girls in my class were aiming for Sasuke Uchiha as their boyfriend and that prick never gave them anything to cling too. Not that I'm one to talk as I pursued Sakura in much the same fashion. Not that I know much about relationships as I never really interacted with people... Not that I'll ever be able to, considering that my current teacher is a self declared super pervert." Naruto admits with a sigh and running a hand through his blond hair, he stops looking at Ryuugo mid way through that confession.

"At least you're aware of the fact. Although, you must have had a lot of fun giving all that questionable advice a try, huh?" The feline entity asks and he blushes.

"Well, yea. Sure, it didn't grant me a good reputation but I have so much leeway in the manner department because of it. The looks on their faces when I followed it were just so enjoyable..." Naruto admits with a grin. "Not that it helped so much with getting Kakashi to pass us though..." He admits, his smile gone.

"He was the worst teacher to assign to a team that sported a avid self styled loner and a social out-cast." Naruto admits before frowning and giving the deity a suspicious look. "Ok, what are you doing to me? I mean, it took years to get comfortable playing the fool and you just stripe it away like that." He snaps his fingers, slightly angered at the fact that he suddenly feels very exposed.

"Nothing more then giving you a much needed release of your internal pressure to stay in character. Not that I don't understand why you took the role of the fool, so few would see you as a serious threat but it means that they won't take you seriously in any real situation either." The deity responds and

Naruto just looks a bit grim as he has been getting tired of nobody ever *listening* to him, be it what he leaves unspoken or what how he says things.

"I guess..." He admits and then sighs. "You're not going to answer my original question are you? Or is it because I should already know the answer to it?" He muses out loud and glances down at Ryuugo, studying the creepy stalker for a few minutes as he goes through what he knows about the guy. "He could only mark one person and he wanted to mark Jun, but I got between them and got your mark instead." Naruto says looking over at the female deity to know that he's right.

Ryuugo clearly wants to say something but is likely unaccustomed of ranting and raving before an audience. "You didn't even bother to ask her if she wanted to be marked, did you? Of course you didn't..." Mutters Naruto, shaking his head, knowing that it's useless to talk with Ryuugo, not if the man is willing to make a bargain with a higher power and force that power upon an unsuspecting person.

"Am I going to be wearing your mark for the rest of my life? I think a lot of people how know what I carry will become suspicious of me as it still upon my skin." The teenage ninja asks the deity.

"Would it be so bad wearing my mark?" The deity asks and after a few minutes of staring at each other, the feline sighs softly. **"How about this, it'll only appear whenever you are in your leopard form? As you sent that note, why don't we tell your current master that Ryuugo here, found an old folk remedy for you that caused the mark to fad? That's rather believable, don't you think?"**

Naruto breaths out of his nose, tension in his shoulders fading. He nods while filing the fact that he can now transform into a leopard. "I guess, although, does the Kyuubi affect this leopard form or not?" He decides to ask and for the next few minutes, he learns more about the ins and outs of this 'blessing' of the feline deity's.

"So... what will become of him?" Naruto finally asks after a period of silence. "I doubt you want your existence to be revealed like this or because of him." The blond states.

"Yes, what will I do with you? You already paid, or is that bribed, me with cat nip to get this modified blessing. There's always that unnamed favor you owe me... Looks like I'll be taking you up on it rather earlier then expected." The feline deity muses and then, without warning, the two fade while the rest of the group leave until he's alone outside of his tent. The signs of the fight erased.

Time begins and Naruto turns to regard that spot upon his arm to find it blank of the claw marks. He stretches a bit before heading for Ryuugo's tent to throw some random things together to make a convincing fake medicine to explain why the leopard claw marks are gone from his arm.

WizardBadger: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter.

"I guess you've never heard of Therians, have ya Harry?" The gruff man asks, startling the young wizard. With a sigh, the built thirty something year old presses his lips. "I know that wizards and witches have something call Animagus, but that's a talent they train. With Therians though, we don't need training, at some point, something within us just snaps and we transform into our inner beast."

"One could say that the magi learnt to that particular path of transfiguration from studying natural occurring shape-shifters, often called therianthropy, Therians for short." Kevin tells him. "None really know why therianthropes occur but they do. Of course, not all Therians are capable of using magic, which is why we don't have much of a presence in magical communities around the world. Although, considering that in the past, typically one person born for every two hundred humans are born to be a Therian, although that percentage has been undergoing a series of changes since the beginning of nineteen hundreds."

Harry just stares at the man, feeling rather taken back by that. "How long lived are Therians?" The twenty year old asks, finally deciding that if he's going to be even more... 'special' he might as well get the facts. It's hard to dispute what Kevin is telling him, not when he had spent at least four days of living in the forest as a badger. *I would have thought a feline or maybe take after my dad and be a stag...*

"It depends on how you balance your time as a beast against your time as a human. If you split your time evenly between the two, a very long time as doing so some how causes time's 'touch' on you to be almost non-existent. Besides, it's more likely that you'll die through violent methods then by old age. I've yet to hear of a Therian

doing so and I've tried to stay in contact with those from different countries." Kevin admits. "The average life expectancy is four decades once a Therian transforms for the first time."

"They're killed by humans in either form, huh?" Harry asks and Kevin sighs. "That's not really reassuring to know." He murmurs while looking down at his hands. *I'd almost think that this is a result of some ancient family magics...* He muses to himself while trying to keep from vomiting as he suddenly recalls just what kind of meals he had during those four days.

Harry finally takes the water and pills to settle his stomach. It takes a few minutes before the pills take effect. His tension in his upper body loosens. "How is it that the... common folk not know about Therians?" He asks as to how this group of people manage to slip through the media.

"Who says we hide? There's a subculture all about people calling themselves Furries or Therians. Why hide when there's million of people claiming to be what we are?" Kevin muses and it's then that Harry finally places the smell that's coming from his host.

"How many claim to be werewolves then?" Harry asks while trying to find some feature that goes with the animal he smells coming from Kevin. "Why would anyone want to admit to being unable to control themselves during a full moon?"

"Oh, but they edit it so that they don't suffer from such things." Kevin goes on to explain to him. "They typically turn werewolves into wolf Therians. You'd be amazed what they've done to vampires... Or maybe not."

Harry presses his lips together as he turns away from Kevin to stare at the wall opposite of him. "So... what happens now? What kind of expectations do you and the rest expect from me?" If it's one thing he's learnt, it's everyone expect something from you.

"Nothing beyond keeping yourself from the media's eye, but then, you being a wizard, you already do that. I also think you won't have to be convinced to keep what you are from your fellows either, after all, they do, at time, learn how to transform into animals." Kevin remarks and Harry nods his head in agreement.

Not that any of them would expect me to become a badger animagus... Harry muses to himself while sighing. It's not as though he's stayed close to Hermione or Ron since they began working at different jobs. Ron managed to get onto his favorite team as a reserve keeper and Hermione pursuing a career in law.

Harry himself has dived right into rebuilding his family's holdings and trying to figure out what to do with his godfather's holdings too. He's been buying up land in and around small villages in Scotland. What he plans to do with the land grants are pretty vague, it use to be a toss up between creating farms and all magical towns or creating a magical amusement park.

As soon as Harry feels steady on his feet and has had a good, warm meal, he leaves the boar Therian's rented cabin. Once a few feet away, he uses Apparition to appear at the 12 Grimmauld Place in London, hoping that the family's library might hold some information about Therianthropy. If only to confirm that such a condition is as old as Kevin alluded to.

After all, it's not as though Harry's lacking on forested lands to roam as a badger.

Time Loop: Space Age: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter.

Harry sighs while looking down into his mug of cider, wondering what to do now. It's been over a few hundred loops since he began hosting holidays within sight of Hogwarts on those floating platforms. He's even gotten tired of creating the first magical amusement parks too or zoos.

About his wrist is a special magical item that helps prolong the Polyjuice Potion within his body. The other magical items upon his being is a thick collar that animates a fake, eleven year old version of himself while the twin rings upon his index fingers grants the puppet the ability to use magic. The various earrings upon his eyebrows and ears allow him to influence the faux boy.

There's even an enchantment in place that gives the faux boy his very own name, leaving him without one. Not that it matter much, it just means that those capable of using magic just don't pay him any mind, which is a pulse but also a negative as it means that he doesn't get refills of his drink or for his food to arrive more as an after thought.

Each magical item the anchor wears is something he himself created and enchanted within hours of Hagrid leaving him at the Leaky Cauldron. He's come to enjoy the time between his birthday to the day before Hogwarts begins as it's the time where none really take the time to spy upon him. And then, a thought crosses his mind.

I wonder how high in the air I can have those platforms hover at? He wonders, after using those platforms regularly since he began throwing those festivals. Although the problem will likely be about circulating air within the shield and keeping the air from escaping.

Might be a good idea to have a large garden in hopes of filtering the air.

After a few minutes of musing about it, he gulps down the remainder of the cider in his mug. With a slight grin, he's found something to do, after all, if he manages to pull this off, he could give space travel a try. *Or underwater travel.* He thinks to himself, dropping some coins upon the table before leaving.

Picking up his hat, he heads for the door. With a wicked grin plastered upon his face and the snow drifting into the tavern, he causally casts a warming charm upon his cloths. He just walks, not really in much of a hurry as he did set up his tent between two buildings. The entrance of the alley sports an illusion to keep others from noticing the tent while an enchanted set of planks keep the snow from piling up on them.

Upon entering into his tent and with a flick of his fingers, the dangling crystal strings light up. Taking off his hat and cloak, his boots seem to vanish just as he steps off the 'porch' but they appear again when Harry is a few feet away. He walks over to the table and sits down upon the couch. Picking up the remote and pushing the power button, the enchanted television comes on.

He channel surfs to find a movie and then puts the remote back onto the table. The anchor then picks up a sketch book along with a pencil, resting the pencil behind his ear, he flips through the sketch book until he finds a futuristic looking sketch. Taking the pencil from his ear, the seemingly grown wizard begins to add to the rough draft of the metallic appearing building.

He knows that the final product will be something totally different but at this stage, it's about putting everything you think you'll need on the building and then slowly taking or modifying it. He already has the necessary shields, they just need to be modified to be more air tight and to be strong enough to keep outside influences from getting through.

T (+

It had taken him four years to create the final product, each of the previous platforms had allowed him to test and modify each of the shields, particularly allowing him to find out how being that air tight will affect the structure along with the living things within. *Not that I used actual animals... Those golems worked out rather well.*

Not that it should surprise him, Harry's got a lot of experiences with creating golems be they based upon himself or using them as a work force. They didn't need to eat, sleep, or want to be paid, which almost means that they don't gossip or need to socialize at all. He use to give hiring unemployed witches and wizards a try, only for them to take their time with any tasks he's given them, take long breaks, and often take unscheduled time off among some of the things that ticked him off. And then Harry thought to give mundanes and Squibs a try but he ran into other troubles with that too.

Since using man power failed him, he began to puzzle out how to create his very own golems. The Black Library helped in that pursue and so did the Ministry's own collection of books. Then spending time going to mundane schools gave him ideas of how to make use of his materials so they don't need as much magic to be animated it. It took him a long time to figure out the trick of enchanting ropes string about the golem in mimicking muscle groups. Putting on a fake skin and the ropes ripple under the skin, giving the illusion that the golem is a living body.

He needs people to think they're alive as he does send them into the mundane society to purchase things. While he can put shades to cover unblinking eyes, it's harder to have people to ignore how the golem isn't breathing or if the person is touching the golem's arm, how their muscles don't flex. Sure, he could have just slapped a much of magic over them so nobody think of such details but he was trying to create a golem that can pass as a living being without using a lot of magic.

Well, considering nobody has yet to figure out that the Harry Potter at Hogwarts is anything but a real boy, I'd say that it works. Smart move to give it something that mimics a circulatory system and filled it with clone blood of myself. He thinks, although there are still a few details he'll have to work on or else go ahead and perform that cloning ritual. It shouldn't be that hard to animate a blank body...

Giving his head a minor shake, he focuses on the grid that he can see from his position upon the platform. A very light blue shimmers, the glow rippling throughout the shield surrounding the floating structure. Sometimes the ripples meet and a darker blue flares up for a few seconds. Glancing down, all Harry could see is clouds.

He smiles at the scenery of his new home, although he knows he's got a long way to go before he can set up a home on the Moon or even on Mars or even orbiting the Earth. Harry didn't know why but magic done by humans seem to fail after two years unless it under the Ozone layer of Earth. The anchor plans to learn just what kind of magic can survive off world but for now, he just wants to enjoy the moment.

It's nice not to be attending Hogwarts... It's not like the school has anything to offer me anyone either. Harry muses while moving away from the window to flop onto the couch while the large screen tv playing a Star War movie.

Harry studies a map of the UK upon the table sporting a bunch of pins. Each pin represents an area that he's searched. Not all of the pins came from this single loop, no, he's searched during previous loops too, but still, he's yet to find the ritual site that Dumbledore set up. He's even dug down to below sea level and still, nothing.

The anchor rubs his chin as he moves to stare at the model of Hogwarts which includes separate models of the school's different floors. Each model even sport tiny dolls that move about while sporting neon names over their heads. He downs his whiskey and moves to sit down in his chair.

"I'm missing something... I know it..." Harry mutters while using his right hand to run over his collection of earrings on his right ear. His left hand is touching his right elbow as his gaze moves between the various models of Hogwarts and the map on the table.

He watches as a ghost doll moves through a wall between two classrooms. "Dumbledore could influence the ghosts but without the ring, he couldn't have complete command of them." Harry says with a slow smile, nodding slowly. "Just because I removed Albus' memories doesn't mean I removed his set commands." The anchor admits with a sigh, which also means that commanding ghosts to search for this ritual site would be his best bet.

He glances over to one of the three golems and uses magic to order the faux person to go fetch the ring from the Gaunt's Shack, after all, the magic on the ring won't harm the golem at all. He then climbs to his feet and has the two remaining golem follow him as he'll need the Elder Wand to undo the enchantments on the ring. It's been a few thousand loops since he united the three Hallows.

Exiting out of the tent that he, once more, set up in Hogsmeade, in one of its alleyways. Harry turns and within seconds, the two golems are soon wrapped up in the illusion of two prominent members of the school board. It takes him a bit to do himself before they march off toward Hogwarts. With the Chamber of Secrets being open, it shouldn't be that surprising to be seeing member of the board popping up without appointments.

Once he's sent Filch to bring Dumbledore to the main gate, Harry takes a moment to check on his faux twelve year old to see if he's roaming about. Then he sends his body double to check on the Weasley twins, not wanting them to be using the map. By the time Albus arrives at the main gate, the anchor is secure that nobody is awake to witness him disarming Dumbledore and taking the wand Hallow for his own.

He'll use the Hallow to transfigure his current wand to appear as the Elder Wand. Harry wouldn't be surprise to learn that this would likely

be the first time anyone had thought of such a deception but then, Wizards and Witches do flaunt their wealth and power. If they have a powerful artifact that can only be used by them, they'd wear it or be sure to casually use it in public.

"Ah, Minister Fudge, what a pleasant surprise." The headmaster says and he merely smiles before casually summoning the Deathstick from Albus' pocket. The fact that the wand comes doesn't really shock him that much, after all, he's welded this particular wand plenty of times and just before time restarts does he remain the master of this wand.

A simple stunning spell from the Elder Wand causes Albus to freeze and it doesn't take more then a second to modify the man's mind. With that done, he takes out the yew and dragon heartstring wand from his pocket, holding it in his left hand, he uses the wand in his right to transfigure the yew wood to alter until the wand is the Deathstick's double. Putting the faux Hallow into the headmaster's pocket, they part, the headmaster heading back into the school while he and his golems head for Hogsmeade.

When the golem sent to retrieve the Hallow Stone, he has the golem hold it and then with an over powered cancel spell, the magic protecting the ring and the soul bit vanish but so does the magic animating the golem holding the ring. Harry winces a bit at the but levitates the ring off the floor and takes it from where it's hovering. With pressed lips, he reanimates the fallen golem without using the wand as he doesn't want to accidentally transfigure the golem into a woman as that's the kind of cloths and look he had done when making that golem.

Harry takes the wooden 'car' that he crafted and enchanted to fly. He takes it out of the closest and flies it high over the Forbidden Forest. Once there, he calls forth all of the ghosts native to the UK. It takes only ten minutes for all of the ghosts to appear. Many look rather hasty but also curious too.

"By the Resurrection Stone, I have summoned you." Harry addresses the crowd of ghosts. "And thus, I have need of your serves. I seek a site of a temporal ritual, preferably one that Albus Dumbledore has visited and used. If any of you know what I speak of, please approach and tell what you know." He then waits to see if any of them will volunteer before he makes it an order.

T (+

Harry studies the jewelry box that took him four years to find. He had already visited the old site that Dumbledore had used previous but it hasn't been in use for decades. Then, Peeves had informed him of a jewelry box Albus had forbidden the poltergeist to ever touch after he had been placed with his aunt.

It helped that Albus is dead and thus most of the enchantments that surround the jewelry box have wasted away without being able to feed off of the man's magic. Even with the Elder Wand, the anchor had trouble finding the box previously years. Harry had even used Moody's magical eye in hopes of locating the box but even equipping the eye on a golem didn't yield much.

He could have order a ghost to be his eyes but he rather not involve such an unreliable element on top of the various paintings too. Harry didn't know how Fawkes fit into the security but then, Harry still doesn't get why the magical bird even found Albus to be worthy of his company. *At least I know where to go to get phoenix tears, ashes, and feathers.*

Harry then moves to his pensieve and reviews memories of memories that belong to Albus Dumbledore for a spell that would allow one to teleport into such a tiny space. Less then a few seconds have passed since he dived into his memories. Once he's ready, Harry teleports into the expanded space within the jewelry box, making a note to think of a way to make use of such an interesting bit of magic. He's pretty sure that there's a number of ways to use it in the future.

"Well, it's nice of you to finally arrive, Mr Potter." A woman's voice chimes in and he turns to find two beautiful women and a young preteen lounging about a ruined ritual space. "We have so much to discuss after all." The one sporting a darker skin tone then the others.

Harry just gulps and backs up a bit, not really sure what to make of the three lounging about. "Really? I would have thought you'd be expecting Albus Dumbledore..." The anchor trails off, not liking the fact he doesn't know a thing about the three or that he'll be able to overpower them if they decide to get violent.

He's not sure what it is about them but they just have this aura about them that made him feel as though he's outclassed and outgunned.

To Reader:

Like you can't guess who they are or why they want to speak with him.

A Tiny Accident: Harry Potter

As Harry sits upon the bed within the Hospital, the eleven year old tries to sort out the various details that lead him to his current situation and appearance. With the tip of his tail moving against his knee while his two hands rest upon his fur covered legs, the famous boy looks out of the nearest window. Unlike at Hogwarts, he's very much alone in the room as the nurse has been gone for close to five minutes now, grabbing him something warm to drink.

It started that day Malfoy tried to fling something into Neville's cauldron. Of course, being a simple minded prat, he didn't think twice about the consequences or of somebody getting between the item being thrown and Neville's cauldron. He admits, recalling how the explosion of Malfoy's potion had flung that potion about the room, some of it into other cauldrons and then they would explode.

Harry rubs his forehead before running a hand over the fur covering his head, it had only been their third potion lessen too. He makes a face, recalling the smells that assaulted him along with the overwhelming sense of being off kilter. *It's amazing the House Elves managed to rid my robes of that stench in a single night. But then again, perhaps I shouldn't as they did manage to repair all of Dudder's old things too. Making them seem almost as good as new.*

With a sign, he leans back, allowing his back to touch the wall not far behind him as he recalls the march to the Hospital Wing. *Trust the Slytherins to stop walking just because they don't have the common sense to take off their footwear.* Harry thinks dryly.

He recalls how the rest of the Gryffindors grouped upon the beds, waiting from an adult to arrive. Harry had been the only one to take out his wand to try and alter his glasses before moving onto his footwear. The glasses began to trouble him within minutes of them walking away from the Potion Classroom, likely due to the alteration done to head in general. He recalls how nobody even bothered to

crack open a textbook to relieve the boredom, but then, some likely didn't grab their book bags when they left.

Oh yea, can't forget the bristling match that started when Snape left to retrieve Madam Pomfrey. Honestly, you'd think they'd know better then to start picking a fight. I swear, most of the guys just used the accident as an excuse to act out. He muses with a scowl. "Not that Malfoy was ever punished for his part in the accident. Heck, the only reason nobody was punished likely been because a member of the Slytherin House would have been given detention."

The defense of him not knowing any better fell short because Malfoy grew up in a magical home and likely taught by the 'best' tutors money could buy. They should demand their money back, the prat clearly didn't learn anything during those years. Harry thinks with a sigh. *So glad I don't have to worry about that anymore.*

Harry glances over to the door and to the nurse has returned. "Thanks." He says while taking the mug from the woman. The nurse smiles warmly before leaving the room, likely to attend to the needs of another patient.

It takes a bit before Harry recollects his thought concerning past event. Rubbing the front of his throat, he then rotate his neck about, causing minor sounds of popping and a small sound of something cracking. He then takes turn rotates his shoulders a bit, the mug switches hands and he kind of get an idea of what he had been musing about when the nurse arrived with his hot drink.

Oh yea, Professor McGonagall arrives at the end of the school day. She just marches right into the back, not even trying to reassure us. Heck, Snape showed more interest in us then she did. After an hour, she just marched right out, not even trying to comfort anyone. And she's the Deputy Headmistress! Harry thinks while drinking from his mug.

The least she could have done was speak with the rest of the house if not the school about treating us normally. He thinks to himself,

recalling the jokes featuring bananas, monkeys, and picking bugs off each other. *Although, to be fair, none of the other teachers seemed to have been motivated to interfere on our behalf, well, nobody did make such comments when Snape was around, but then, that's likely is because they don't want a months detention and loses points.* Harry mentally adds.

He recalls the beginning of the next day and how they were given a potion to protect them from parasites from the outer variety like fleas and inner ones like tapeworms. The potion is one that is typically given to pets to protect them from said parasites, which didn't really help their situation when the rest of the school learnt that little fact. Even Snape had to take said potion.

If they have such a potion then everyone should be given it. It's not like humans don't have their own brand of parasites, what do they call lice? Harry thinks darkly. "Tapeworms live in anything's intestines too." He murmurs out loud.

As he finishes his drink, he reflects that this could be the best Christmas he's ever had, which is rather said considering he currently looks like a monkey and had just left his birth country, not really sure if his accounts will be transferred like he requested either. *On the bright side, I finally began to take control of my life.*

The doctor finally comes in. "Mr Potter, I have your results here to go over with you." Doctor Feasey says upon taking a seat upon one of the chairs. "The results of your famous scar tell us that it is actually a Horcrux, the soul piece is surprisingly small, which is rather worrying."

"Why is that worrying?" He asks. Harry's right index finger moves up and down.

"It means that whoever created it has made a bunch of them before they made you into one. Don't worry, we can deal with it without killing you or doing you any undo harm." Doctor Feasey explains and he sighs.

"We also want to begin you on potions that will, in time, correct your previous injuries you have suffered during your childhood." This causes him to tense as he hadn't expected his health report to be able to hint about it. "We won't press you to talk about it but we do have people for you to talk to when you're ready to do so." The man explains. "Also you might want to contact a lawyer to begin to legal proceedings."

"I see. Do any of them operate in both... societies?" Harry asks, not sure if it's an acceptable to call non-magicals Muggles.

"We typically use the terms Mundanes and Magi." Doctor Feasey explains. "Now then, as to your changed appearance, we believe we know why none of your school nurse's cures work. It seems that the potion altered the expression of your genes. The cures were trying to remove a continuous magical presence on you when there wasn't one to remove."

Harry finds that answer to be rather believable. "We believe that going through Animagus training will allow you to regain your previous appearances." His doctor informs him. "We would like you to give us a copy of the potion accident and any of updates you were given about your condition."

"Ah... I don't mind giving the copy of the incident but nobody ever gave us updates about our condition." Harry admits before asking, "And how do I give you a copy of the incident?"

Doctor Feasey frowns, it's clear that the man's opinion of the staff of Hogwarts is going down. "There are ways to extract copies of a person's memory and put them into an artifact called a pensieve." The man explains and Harry wonders if such things are used as evident in court.

"Ah. Do you need the memory now?" Harry asks curiously.

"No, but we would want to deal with your Horcux. We have everything prepared, so if you would follow me?" Doctor Feasey

says while getting up off the chair.

He unfolds his legs and then moves off the exam table. He's sure to grab his jacket which holds his shrunken trunk, he didn't bring Hedwig's cage as he didn't feel like imprisoning the snowy owl. He's sure that Hedwig will be able to find him when he needs her.

To Be Continued . . .

The AA of PantherBoy 2: Harry Potter

I Don't Own Harry Potter

Well, well, well... Looks like they did keep the pieces of the staff, just destroyed the head. Realms muses before Harry could unroll the scroll that came with the fourteen cm bit of wood. The wereleopard just rolls his emerald eyes while unrolling the scroll.

"Any more interesting tidbits you want to pass along?" The eleven year old asks the sentience sword that feeds off of the blood of its welder. As the scroll unrolls, he can hear the snowy owl fluffs up her feathers with a soft click of her beak now that she's finished drinking from the bowl of water that Harry had provided upon her return.

Nope, not really. Realms remarks as he begins to scan the contents of the letter. Tomorrow is the day where he's to head for London to get aboard of some train that will take him along with the other 'muggle' raised students to Hogwarts, at which point they'll be given instructions upon how to harness their magic.

With pressed lips, Harry shakes his head at how flowery the explanation is about why they never destroyed the staff. Sure, they destroyed the top of the staff as none like that part of it as it bought up memories of punishment they suffered at the hands of the ex-Queen of Opar. Not that he really care much about what they did with the staff, unlike majority of his fellow 'brothers' in the Brotherhood of Leopard-Men, he only suffered at her hands for less then three months while some suffered for decades. *At least it explains why I couldn't 'bond' with another wooden foci, if they had destroyed it all, then I could have... Maybe.*

"Mind doing a little scalping, Realm?" Harry asks the sword leaning next to the bed while holding the staff sliver with his left hand. The

wood seems to melt and within a few seconds, the eleven year old is holding something akin to the few wands he's seen during those following times that they had taken to visiting that magical shopping district in London.

He whistles at the finely 'carved' cat head at the handle of the wand. The grip of the handle sports leopard spots. Such personal touches illuminating to Harry's true nature. *Looks like it'll pass inspection, although I could have done without the leopard head...* Harry muses while putting the wand away.

With the wand in the trunk, the wereleopard transforms into his hybrid form before picking up Realm. The room expands as Harry rises the magical sword up in the air. Stepping away from the trunk and bed, he slowly began to go through his typical work out to keep himself in tip-top shape. Given his history of adventures whenever Harry was sent away, the wereleopard could only imagine what kind of danger they'll be getting into at a magical school.

Kids learning to use magic? That's only asking for trouble. He thinks to himself while Realm arcs in the space before him. Harry rather doubts the safety of the student populous and worries about what kind of things they teach their students.

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September 1, 1991

Hogwarts Express

Harry grunts softly as the noise from the platform intrude upon his nap. The young wereleopard had arrived near dawn to find the train waiting and once it became apparent that nobody was going to greet him, the black furred leopard-boy climbs onto one of the carts before selecting one, giving his wand a try by preforming a few wards that he recalls Realm explaining to him once upon a time.

It had taken a lot of effort on his part but Harry believed the wards were set up. With them up and deciding not to invite Realm to begin criticizing his attempt, the eleven year old laid out on the floor of the compartment as the benches were too narrow and didn't possess much in the way of a cushion upon them. *I never would have guessed magic could take so much effort... But then, none of my 'Brothers' have tried to preform magic either...*

'Are my wards still up?' Harry asks, focusing his 'spoken' thoughts to Realm. Most of the time, he never bothered with this form of communication as he didn't care what people thought of him but he didn't want to alert anyone to the location of this compartment. It's why he had drawn the curtains across the window before setting up the wards.

They are shaky, but they're up. Not bad for a first timer but then, not the greatest either. The sword remarks and he just snorts softly while stretching his body a bit. *Not even sure how any have missed them either, guess they haven't bothered to reason that some of the students might be advance enough to ward their compartment cars.*

Harry opens up the bag he kept out of the trunk so he didn't have to lug it up and down from the overhang. Slowly, voices of students seep through the walls of the compartment, signaling that the train is filling up so that it can then leave the station. It takes a few minutes for him to find his walk-man and a travel version of Chinese Checkers.

Black. Realm says as he fits the headphones of the walk-man about the sword's hilt. The play button clicks as Harry sits on the opposite seat of Void of the Realm, being sure to put the black marbles on the board before choosing his color, this time he picks red.

Once the board sports the two colors, it raises up and takes to hovering between Realm and himself. Harry faintly hears the music that is playing from the walk-man. If the eleven year old wanted to, he could have shifted to the hybrid form to pick up the music more

clearly. As the students say their fair-wells to their parents/guardians, Realm makes a move on the opposite side of the board.

He mostly just leans forward and after a few minutes of thought, moves on of his own marbles. The train begins to jerk and the fair-wells grow louder, not that either really bothers the Chinese Checkers board hovering between Realm and Harry. The train's whistle sounds out while the murmur from beyond the compartment quiets down.

A some point, during the second side of the walk-man's tape beginning to play does the door leading out into the hallway rattle. After a few curses, somebody orders somebody to open the door, only causing it to rattle. Next comes a command to give the door the shoulder and this causes Harry to turn his head just so, allowing him to see the door a bit better without taking his focus off of the game of Chinese Checkers, knowing that if he allows his focus to shift, Realm will alter his side of the board just enough that he wouldn't notice it until a few rounds later.

The door just holds fast, just. Harry lets out a soft hiss as somebody tries to ram the door inward. He shakes his head while squaring his shoulders while pulling away from leaning towards the board. The emerald eye leopard-boy doesn't bother to ask Realm to reinforce the door, if the sword didn't want their game interrupted then Realm will ensure that the door won't give and if the sword didn't care... Well, he rather not 'pay' for the service by forfeiting at least four of his turns just to see that the door stays close.

It's not as though we can't restart at a later date... Harry thinks to himself while wincing at the loud crack as the door and a rather husky built pre-teen enters into the room. Not even bothering to keep his eyes on the board, he turns to give flat, frank looks at the trio who wanted into the compartment.

"I wonder how much that'll cost your parents..." Harry wonders as he reaches out to grab the board. He feels it resting on his one hand then sees it as his full attention is upon the blond and his muscle.

"Your... your..." The blond stutters and Harry's lips twist up a bit. "I am rather famous, aren't I? Or it that infamous? Not that I'm prone to give people my real name during my summer vacations." The eleven year old sporting emerald eyes bemuses with a sly grin as he leans fully back.

"Your... Harry bloody Potter." The muscle who wasn't laying on the floor states and Harry chuckles at the god smacked look upon the blond's face, particularly as it's directed to said muscle. *Likely didn't expect him to speak, at all.*

"Well, other then 'bloody' actually being James, then right on the money." He answers. "And I don't do autographs, you never know what you could be signing when you do." Harry adds, although dealing with these three were already growing tiresome.

The blond finally gathers himself and introduces himself while stepping over the as of yet door bashing muscle, taking a seat next to Realm, although the blond clearly sports a flash of confusion concerning the sword. "I am Draco Malfoy, hire to house Malfoy."

Harry raises a slight eyebrow before realizing that Draco is what is commonly called a 'Pure-Blood'. "Oh? Huh. Why are you on the train if you don't need to be? I mean, why send you to the train station when they could have used other means to send you straight to the school's property?" The emerald eye leopard-boy asks, mostly wanting Draco to confirm his suspicion of why Draco's parents would want him riding on a 'muggle' enchanted train.

This causes each of the three to look rather baffled while the one who broke the door finally gets up off the floor and the door. "What are you on about? All Hogwarts students arrive viva the train." Draco answers.

Harry frowns just enough while replying, "But you're a Pure-Blood, aren't you? Why would your parents want you to ride on something clearly 'muggle' in origin? Why not send you to school in a carriage or through the Floo Network? I was lead to believe only those

muggle-raised needed to take the train as they don't have the magical means to travel to the school."

This seems to cause Draco and the two un-named boys to look like they were going to... Well, it just seems that they weren't use to thinking deeply on. anything in the case of the two muscle. Draco's mouth would begin to move but it seems that he stumped the other boy in a rather spectacular fashion. *Guess magic doesn't cure inbreeding.*

"Yes, well, I... ah, I know people!" Draco exclaims in a fluster before paling and looking embarrassed about the out burst. "I mean, I can introduce you to the people." The blond hastily says in correction.

"That's nice..." Harry says in a droll way. "If that's all, could you please leave? We're rather busy with our game of Chinese Checkers." He says is a very dismissive way, following this up with a look that heavily suggests that they leave.

The trio retreat rather quickly, not even bothering to say a parting comment. *You sure have a way with your peers.* Realm says while the door is repaired and then the compartment glows briefly which means that Realm set up wards about the room.

Harry merely snorts softly while rearranging the board so that they may start all over again. It wasn't long before Realm requests that he changes the tape after they finished a game. It wasn't long before he becomes restless and he begins to look for something else to do that causes the eleven year old to remain seated.

Vampire the Masquera? When did I pack this? The wereleopard wonders but it seems that those D&D books he had packed hadn't made it to his pack but into his trunk. With a shrug, he opens the book and begins to read it.

Some time later, the train jerks and that causes the dozing eleven year old leopard-boy wakes. Harry stretches a bit and yawns, while noticing that there wasn't much in the way of sunlight on the curtains.

Putting something into the book as a bookmark, the emerald eye leopard-boy then proceeds to gather up a few loose ends and putting them back into the pack.

The echoing cry of Hagrid serves as a rallying point and once Realm is fastened onto his back along with the pack, they exit out of the compartment. Harry notes the robes that the other students are wearing and can only frown at them as school hasn't even started yet, so he saw no reason to wear the uniform unit class begins. As he walks through the crowd of students, he did notice a number of them stopping to stare at him.

"Don't ya know that you were suppose to change into your robes?" Somebody sneers and he snorts softly while moving closer to the spot where Hagrid is. A number of other murmur the same set of questions when he is with the rest of the new students.

"What's with the sword?" A girl who's face reminds him of a certain breed of dog inquires. "I doubt you'll be keeping it once we're at the castle." The girl adds.

"If the goblins couldn't take this sword from me when I visited their bank, what makes you think the staff will fair any better?" He asks, deciding to continue to ignore the questions about his cloths. "As Hagrid about it, he witnessed that particular event." He adds as an afterthought.

This causes a number of students to stare at Realm but with the older students gone, Hagrid then leads them through the woods a short way. "No more then four to a boat." Hagrid shouts and he merely stares at the boats they are to ride in, not really sure why the boats need to look so ratty.

"Bet magic is the only reason they're still sea worthy..." Harry murmurs softly under his breath while watching as the other First years climbing into the boats. Realm seems to mentally snort in his mind before he heads for one of the boats that lack four members.

They gaze in bewilderment at him but shift their looks else where, like towards the castle that the boats are now moving towards.

It takes him a moment to realize that none of them could see the castle, not until gasps of wonderment causes him to give them strange looks. "What are you gasping about? It's been there all along." Harry murmurs which causes a few of his boat-mates to send a dirty look or two at him. *Must be some seasonal illusion that hides it from those on the lake.* He concludes to himself as the boats enter into a minor dock within the castle.

They climb out of the boats and onto the docks. A few of the students seem to sway on their feet as Hagrid begins to lead them towards the stone stair case. It wasn't hard for him to take point compared to the rest of the students, it seems that few of them were in as good of shape as he is. Not even Hagrid seems to be quick up the stairs, which means that he's at the top of the stairs before everyone else.

'So... what kind of wards does this castle have?' He inquires to Realm while watching the group of students and their guide climb up the stone stairs. The lack of light doesn't hinder him at all, after all, he is part feline.

Most of the wards seem to be warped or disabled. The latest bunch of wards seem more to connect the paintings, statues, and ghosts to a kind of information network. Realm reports. *The warping seems to be due to lack of maintenance which caused weaken warps to combine to access power. It's likely the warping that allows the castle to seem to feature 'quirks' that suggest that the castle is 'alive' or even sentient when it really isn't.*

Harry thinks this over as the rest of the group finally arrives. Hagrid nods at him before knocking upon the doors about three times. They open to reveal a very stern looking woman, clearly old as her hair is gray. Unsurprisingly, the woman takes a look at him and her look morphs into a disapproving look.

Then she takes out her wand and tries a spell aimed in his direction. The spell hits but nothing happens other then his cloths glowing every so briefly. He raises his eyebrows slightly at the woman's rather stunned, god-smacked look before the woman tries again. *What a waste of magic.* Is his only thoughts as he casually looks about the hall with a bored look upon his face.

"Are you wearing enchanted cloths?" The woman demands and he turns his head. "Never bothered to have them enchanted. It's my natural immunity that is keeping you from trying to ruin my cloths." Is his reply, his gaze very disapproving.

"You were suppose to put on your school robes on the train." The woman states and he snorts. "School classes hasn't started yet, so I didn't see the point in changing into them." He states in a cold tone.

"You shouldn't have brought the sword." The woman says in a stern tone while sporting another, sever look of disapproval. It's suddenly very clear to him that this woman is use to being obeyed and doesn't like how she is being addressed by him.

"The sword stays and don't bother trying to take it, Hagrid can attest to what can happen." Harry states and the woman glances over to the half-giant while he glances at the moving paintings. He didn't care what kind of authority the woman has, he already is regretting coming to this school so being thrown out would be a blessing in his opinion.

Maybe he had read one too many fantasy novels or gotten use to dealing with magic in certain settings, but the eleven year old expected things to be less uniform. Diversity was something he had been expecting but this... it was just too dull. *The castle isn't even hovering hundreds of miles in the air either...* Harry thinks to himself, his expectations seemingly falling apart the longer he's standing within the castle.

The woman finishes her speech and then marches them through various halls. Hush whispers erupt at some points along the march,

mostly fellow muggle-raised commenting on the suits of armor or the various moving pictures. The halls ceilings are high up and it seems that none of the paints or tapestries that high up. *I can use that, although how, I'm not sure yet...* He muses and wonders how wide the ledges were, if they were wide enough then he can walk about on them to escape the notice of the various moving pictures.

They arrive at yet another set of doors, which he merely rolls his eyes as the woman slips into said room. "You could have been more polite to the professor." A bushy haired girl says, figuratively rounding on him.

"She wasn't polite to me and I found her attempts to alter my cloths to be rather disrespectful, particularly her expectation of us needing to wear school robes when classes haven't even begun. They are a school uniform after all and I doubt classes begin tonight as well." Harry explains to the noisy girl, which also had the effect of answer the group's own unanswered questions regarding why he isn't wearing the robes.

A few minutes tick by and finally the stern, authoritative professor returns, this time opening the doors fully. The sight that greats them is four rows of student tables and a fifth table for the staff. He follows the rest of the group without much thought as he casts his gaze all over the hall. It doesn't really surprise him about their reactions to the ceiling, which is rather impressive but nothing that remarkable compared to what he's read in various novels, comics, watched in movies, TV shows, and, finally, real life experiences.

It's the singing that grabs his attention and pulls it to the stool sporting a hat that sings. *Finally something that's got a lively personality to it in this castle.* Harry thinks to himself, not really bothered that it's in the form of a singing hat.

Polite applauds come from the students when the song is done. The stern professor unrolls a scroll and reads a name from it. As the names are read, it's clear that it switches back and forth from using the first name to using the last name. He notices when the blond,

Draco, is called and how the hat simply refused to touch this one's head. *The hat didn't really sort him, it didn't even want to touch him... Which means that the hat is forced to honestly sort those that touch it.*

As if testing this new observation, he paid attention to who the hat curls away from, shouting out a house name and those it doesn't, which takes at least a minute or two before supplying the house name. *The hat connects those it touches to the wards, any who it doesn't touch aren't connected and thus, do not benefit from the protection of the wards.* Realm supplies.

'I see but that doesn't explain why it refuses to touch them.' Harry thinks at his magical sword. With a shake of his head, he hears his name being called and walks up to the sentient hat and the stool is had been sitting on.

He feels the hat make contact with his head. *'Why are you not linking in every student into the wards?'* The eleven year old asks the hat.

You noticed that, did you? I'm not the only presence in your mind am I? The hat muses and he gets this odd sensation that Realm is engaging into a private conversation with the sorting hat.

"Gryffindor!" Bellow the hat and is taken off while he continues to frown but does get up. Harry wanted an answer to that question but it seems that he won't get one unless the hat has told Realm the reason.

The loudness begins to cause a throbbing in his head, particularly as he draws closer to those sporting gold and crimson. He doesn't particularly care where he sat so when a free space opened up, he took it once he had taken his pack off while adjusting Realm just so. He leans slightly heavily on the wooden table and is rather glad when silence claimed the hall.

The last few names were called and then, as the woman takes the stool and hat away, the headmaster stands up to address them. *The*

one next to the guy favoring black is possessed. Seems to be the same guy who left that soul bit in your forehead. Realm says and he turns his emerald gaze upon the pair.

He then blinks and turns away from the staff table and leans back. The color blind old man says some nonsense words, a signal to those preparing the food to send it up to the tables. He merely blinks for a moment, snorts at the meat heavy meal before him for a few seconds more and then begins to collect most of the meat within his range.

With the appearance of food, it seems to signal the start of table conversations. He listens with half an ear as various peers of his year brag about their linage and gives minor bits concerning their family history. He merely hums or grunts at the right times as he consumes every bit of free meat about him. He had gone without a hearty meal of lunch and so is very famished.

The bones quickly pile up on his plate, far faster then his neighbors but then, they were only eating halfheartedly, more concerned with visiting with their fellows. "Hey! I wanted some of those drum sticks!" Exclaims a crimson haired, scrawny like preteen.

Pausing ever so slightly to swallow before taking another bite, he replies, "Then you shouldn't be talking to your neighbors. You should either eat or talk, not do both at the same time."

Finally, his hunger is sated and once his plate is cleared up, he begins to pick up what passes as veggies and fruit at the table, he ignores the pumpkin juice for water. By then, his neighbors seem to have nothing more to say to each other but considering their sneaking glances at his direction, it's clear they want to know why he has a sword with him and likely what's up with the back pack. As he polishes off what's on his plate and doesn't add anything more for the next five minutes, a change happens and the remainder of the meal is switched out with desserts.

He is rather picky about what he takes from the offered selection as most of it was pastry in nature. When he doesn't take any more, he stretches his shoulders and glances at the wrist watch upon his wrist. Raising a slight eyebrow at the time, he exhales slowly and glances about the hall.

"Well? Aren't you going to explain about where you got the sword?" The crimson haired preteen asks in a rather demanding fashion.

He blinks and looks over at the kid. "It's private information and no, you can not touch it. If you do, I'm not liable for any thing that happens to you or to the surrounding area." Harry states flatly.

"It looks rather foreign, don' it?" Mutters one of his house-mates. It seems that they don't approve of foreign items.

"Hey! Your watch! It works!" One of the half-bloods exclaims in udder amazement and he just mentally sighs. His magical protection is like a second skin that covers his whole being. Sadly, the negative side to having this protection seems to be at the cost at his ability to use magic.

It had been something of a dream to him once he had gotten home from Africa to be able to place magical curses on his relatives but none of his attempts had worked, which left him believing that he's just a battery and not the live-wire. Then comes the next summer and he acquired Void of the Realms, suddenly he had access to magic, sure he wasn't the one weaving it but he could make requests and see them fulfilled. That had been more then enough for him, he could live with that but then Hagrid appeared and informed him that he should be able to weave magic, not unlike Realm, only to conclude now that because of his status as a leopard-boy, he'll always have trouble weaving spells.

The dessert plates and their personal plates vanish but before they're able to leave the hall, Albus Dumbledore once more addresses them. It's a request for them to sing the school song, which Harry meets with a look of disbelief. His headache starts up as

the others begin singing it, each doing their own modifications and timing. He grinds his teeth while following after his house-mates once his pack is back on his back.

It takes a few minutes for them to arrive at this stair well possessing a bonanza of moving pictures. Then come before a certain one and upon giving the woman featured within the painting the password, the painting moves to reveal a room sporting the feeling of a living room. The primary colors used were the house colors.

With a soft grunt, he heads up the stairs, not really paying any mind to the older students. Once he locates the room possessing his trunk, he sets his pack down on the floor before going through the trunk. Upon finding that everything seems to be in order, he puts his pack into the trunk once he grabs his alarm. He discards most of his cloths, leaving on his underwear.

Realm sets wards about the bed and the trunk while he stretches a bit. "Add a silencing ward too, if you don't mind. I don't want to hear my room-mates or have them hear me." Harry says as he draws the curtains about the bed.

I'll even include one that keeps them from throwing the curtains open. Is Realm reply. He nods as the curtains glow for a few seconds. With that done and his room-mates finally filing into the room, he takes Realm and moves through the curtains.

Putting Realm next to the pillow and taking the undergarments off, Harry then shifts into his black leopard form. Circling about the center of the bed, Harry lies down, his tail curling about his head. It wasn't long before his mind quiets down enough for sleep to take him.

o - T - o

September 2, 1991

Hogwarts School

The black furred leopard sporting emerald green eyes yawns upon uncurling his body. Getting to his feet, the predatory feline glances about his surroundings, taking a few minutes to remember where it is he is. With a shake of his head, Harry shifts into his human form and upon collecting his underwear, puts them on before reaching for Realm.

Moving the curtains to the left, he climbs out of the bed. He glances out of the window while stoutly ignoring the snorts of his room-mates, more then a little glad that Realm had put up those silencing wards about the bed. It takes him a bit to pull out his watch, checking the time, he then collects a shirt before heading down to use the rest room, being sure to take Realm with him.

Harry's shower takes up to twenty minutes to be completed, particularly as he had to go back up to get his shampoo and conditioner as there weren't any down in the showers. "Going to have to make arrangements to purchase more when what's in the bottles run out." The eleven year old murmurs under his breath upon returning to the room.

As he finishes getting dress, various alarms go off and his room-mates struggle to wake up. With a shake of his head, the eleven year old leopard-boy then moves to empty out his pack and exchanging various items for school books plus things to take notes with. Harry leaves the tabletop role playing books in the back. As his room-mates sit up and rub the sleep from their eyes, he has Realm and the back on his back as he leaves the room.

A few members of his house are drifting towards the showers or the restrooms. Leaving the common room, it takes Harry a few minutes to return to the dinning hall. Harry notices that members of the Ravenclaw house sitting at one of the four tables and not wanting to sit alone, waiting for members of his house to come down, he walks over to the table.

"Mind if I join you?" He asks one of the older students. They seem rather startled.

"Your a Gryffindor, aren't you?" One of them asks in a dull tone. At which point he hums a positive as he sits on the right of the student he addressed. "You know that this is the Ravenclaw table, don't you?"

"Your telling me that you always sit at this table? Even when one of the other tables are free? That you never move to sit at one of the others?" Harry asks with a hint of disbelief while looking away from the sudden appearance a cup of juice.

Each of the Ravenclaws seem to nod and Harry leans back a bit as he regards them. "Why? What's so special about this table? I mean, there isn't a table cloth sporting your house colors or are their carved heads of your house's mascot on the corners of the table and the bench. I don't see any silverware here proclaiming it belonging to your house either. That banner is gone too, so, why do you keep sitting here?"

From the dumbfound looks as the members of Ravenclaw glance about their table, seemingly looking at it for the first time. Although, one recovers to sneer at him while replying, "This table is where all previous members of our house sat and it'll be where all future members of the house sit."

"Here's an odd thought, do you think that this is the same table you sat at last night? As in, how are you sure that the tables haven't been rotated about the room? For all you know, this very table was used as the Staff table or even Hufflepuff table." Harry asks after a few seconds of thinking about it. "Besides, you all must be rather bored of viewing the room from this particular spot." He adds, picking up the cup of water and drinking it before touching the juice cup.

Don't you know how to make friends... Realm muses to him and he snorts ever so softly while drinking more water. It seems that his thoughtful observation sparked a rather furious debate with those Ravenclaw students.

In the end, one of them uses a wand to carve an image of a rose onto the bench and the debate ends. *'Mind making that same mark on one of the other benches while repairing this one when breakfast ends?'* Harry asks Realm and the sword merely chuckles, thus proving that Realm would cooperate on this little case of mischief.

The topic changes, particularly, they ask him about last night and why he is lugging about Realm. He finishes the juice before giving any answers, "I carry Void of the Realm about because I'm the only who's capable of safely using it."

It's more of an answer then he gave his house-mates but then, he just didn't feel like socializing and this morning he did. "It's not a magic sword... is it?" One of the Ravenclaws ask.

He smirks slightly as he replies, "What do you think? Besides, it's as much a souvenir as a weapon. I got it during a summer trip to the Far East."

"Must have been an exciting trip." One of the students says in a neutral way. His only reply as he picks up the refilled cup of water is, "It was."

"So... what do you think of Hogwarts so far, Harry?" Another asks, the topic being changed. Each member at the table seem eager to hear his thought concerning Hogwarts.

Harry sighs and it takes him a few minutes to arrange an answer, trying to cushion his reply. "Well... to be honest, I've never visited a magical school before or seen moving pictures before." The eleven year old says in a slow, deliberate manner. "I came here with little in the way of expectations and so far, I get the feeling that I should wait a week before forming any lasting impression of Hogwarts." He states, although he can't help but feel that the week will more then likely finalize how bad of an experience it'll be to remain here for the full year.

Most of those Ravenclaws at the table seem to think he's impressed while a minority seems to be frowning, likely thinking deeply about his answer. But before one of those minority could press to get a clearer reply from him, members of the other houses finally begin to show up. A few seem to just stop moving just as they move to pass the table as if they just catch his house-badge upon his robes.

One of those newly arrived Ravenclaws demands, loudly, "What is **HE** doing here? Why is *he* sitting at our table?"

Silence falls all about the various groups as they all turn to watch the fall out of this. Harry just raises an eyebrow at the speaker while more then those earlier comers frown at the speaker. "He's a Gryffindor!" That same person explodes, pointing right at the eleven year old.

"Why yes, I did get sorted into that house. I wonder what gave it away? Was it the fact you can see this badge? Or was it because you witnessed my sorting last night?" He asks said rude Ravenclaw, which causes a few to snicker.

The teen's look of outrage merely causes him to chuckle. "So... when do we get our class schedules?" He asks, turning to regard to one sitting to his left. "I didn't receive one since I picked up my supplies." He adds.

"They get handed out today. Your house dictates which classes you take at what time." Said Ravenclaw answers while the rest of the new students go back to heading to their chosen table. He remains seated and even reaches for his water.

"Why aren't you leaving? Members of your house are over there!" Said explosive Ravenclaw bellows.

"You are rather high strung, aren't you? If you don't want to join us at the table, you could go sit with your friends in another house." Harry replies in a dismissive way before returning to the topic concerning his schedule. "Why by house? Shouldn't they review our previous

school records to decide our schedule? Some of us are more studious then others and would absorb the school work at a quicker rate. Why drag those capable to advancing at a quicker pace to the pace of the slowest in the class?"

"Well, for one, few of the Pure-Blood students ever attend school before Hogwarts." Answers the older student sitting across from him. "It's rather frustrating, to be sure, but it's just how the school is. You'll find the teachers all teach the one subject to every year."

"Your the one sitting at the **WRONG** *table* !" Bellows that teen once more. Once more, silence descends but unlike previously, a teacher approaches.

"What's going on here? What are you yelling about?" The slightly plump teacher asks.

"He's a Gryffindor! He should be sitting over there! With his own kind!" Said complainer whines, being sure to point and gesture at him and then at the rest of his house.

The woman blinks and glances first at him before looking at the rest of the table. "I would say that you are the only one who shares that particular opinion. So either sit down and stop with the disturbances or find another place to sit at one of the other tables." The teacher states before walking away, Harry gives the woman a thoughtful look before trying to recover his train of thought.

"He should even be here!" The teen whines. "Oh shut it! Do you even know who he is? He's Harry Bloody Potter! If he wants to sit with us instead of with his house, let him! He was here long before any of you and he didn't want to be the only one at his table." One of the original early 'birds' snaps at said teen, a teen who decided to finally sit down at the table.

A few seem to relax upon hearing that, as it does explain why he was here at their table to begin with. a very reasonable answer at that. "Ok... If the only one teacher has always taught their class, then

that would mean to save on writing up new tests or thinking up new projects that they recycle them. If that's so, then you pretty much know everything that there is to know when it comes to the classes."

"That... that might be true..." One of the Ravenclaws admits as the food finally arrives. "It shouldn't be that hard to disprove or prove. Could contact previous graduates to see if they still have their notes and homework assignments." Another says.

It wasn't long before the Ravenclaw students add their two cents in while Harry slowly fills his plate up. It wasn't long before all of those between second year through to seventh year begin to drudge up almost forgotten homework topics for this class or this test for such and such class had this question while owls enter and wheel overhead carrying mail.

It's close to the end of the breakfast that schedules are handed out by the heads of the various houses. Harry merely feels the beginning of a headache upon learning that the heads of houses being teachers at the school. He just knows that somebody at some point of time had abused their power as both a teacher and a head of house.

It didn't help matters for him to learn that said stiff teacher from last night is his current head of house either. *Oh lovely...* The eleven year old thinks while he browses his schedule a look and then frowns at the fact that one of the classes takes place at night.

This place is positively medieval... I'm fairly sure that they possessed star charts back then too... Harry thinks with a scowl as he gets to his feet. *'Mind giving me directions to my first class, buddy?'* The black furred leopard-boy asks Realm.

Just follow the arrows. Is Realm's reply and suddenly, directing arrows appear upon the floor. As none of the others gasped at the sudden appearance, he concludes, is only meant for him.

He wonders just how many of the older students gave out correct instructions. Not that it's his problem as it seems that none of the staff plans to give the new residence of the school a tour so that they could find their classes. No maps were handed out along with the schedule either.

Realm's arrows take him into a dungeon level of the school. Entering into the classroom, he glances around the room and begins to curse. Harry can feel Realm chuckling and closes his eyes for a few seconds, taking deep calming breath before picking a table. He did wonder why he had to purchase a cauldron when one is already provided for him... *Unless they stole it out of my trunk...* He thinks darkly as the first year students from the Slytherin house arrive with much 'fanfare'.

The small number of Slytherins seem to eye him while fingering their wands within their pockets. Harry smirks in a very predatory manner, being sure to make it a toothy one as well. That outraged a few of them but the arrival of other Gryffindors break up the mood of tension, for now at least, much to his private disappointment. If those students had chosen to throw caution to the wind, then it wouldn't be on his head if he defenses himself. If would have been one verses nine, clearly in favor of the nine, particularly if they received some training before coming to the castle.

"Mind if I sit here?" A rather round boy, one of his room-mates if he recalls, asks. Harry shrugs while looking towards the cabinet. "I'm Neville, Neville Longbottom." The other eleven year old pipes in and the leopard-boy glances over at Neville.

"Good to know." Is his reply before asking, "Any idea who teaches this class?"

"You don't know? It's Professor Snape." Neville says and it takes a moment before Harry also recalls something he learnt about during a previous chat.

"The Death Eater, eh?" Harry muses in a bemused tone. "I take it he's a git but no amount of complains have managed to dislodge him from this job either..." The eleven year old emerald eyed leopard-boy muses with a sly smile as he already has a slightly formulated plan concerning how to get this man removed from his position.

There isn't any doubt in his mind that this... 'Professor' Snape needs to be removed, the very fact that he has killed innocent people mean that the man was a criminal. *The question become though, how long would it for me to enact this dismissal?* Harry wonders to himself but his thoughts are interrupted by the entrance of said man.

"There will be no foolish wand waving or silly incantations in this class." The man turns around while still addressing them, "As such, I don't think many of you will appreciate the subtle science, exact art that is potion making."

The man's eyes sweeps over them while continuing this vein, eyes focusing on those members of the Slytherin house upon the positive parts and upon the Gryffindor house upon the negative ones. "However, for those select few who possess the predisposition," The man comes to the very edge while saying, "I can teach you how to bewitched the mind, ensnare the senses. I can tell you how to bottle fame, brew glory, and even put a stopper in death."

Snape suddenly turns on him and verbally rounds on Harry, "Maybe some of you have come to Hogwarts already possessing abilities so formidable that they feel the need to flaunt their possessions." For a few seconds, it feels as though something is trying to crawl into his body viva his eyes but a blink forces that sensation to be forced out. This seems to startle the man ever so briefly.

"Why did you bring a sword to my class?" The Death Eater demands but doesn't even allow him to get a word in before adding, "It seems that you believe that being famous would entitle you to do as you will. Be rid of that thing, put it on the desk."

Harry snorts and gives the man a look of contentment. "If you want Void of the Realm then come and take it from me, otherwise, it goes where I go." Then with a smirk, "Now, will you come and take it from me, Death Eater or will you continue on with this class?"

A sharp gasp erupts from the students while the man still with outrage, hate, and a dash of fear radiates from the man's eyes. "That will be fifty points from Gryffindor for your disrespect." Is the man's reply. "A weeks worth of detention as well."

Harry chuckles before saying before the udder amazement of the students goes on to say, "Is that all? You think I would **respect** a murder and rapist? You think just because you were given the rank of Professor, I should respect you? Ha! It's the opposite effect! Having you on staff only makes all those sharing in your rank to be just as dirty as you! If they had possessed a smidgen of self-respect, they wouldn't remain at their post until you've been fired!"

"Heck, I think that Albus Dumbledore should be mentally examined for keeping you on staff! You can take all the points you want and give me all the detention you can toss in my direction, I don't f**king care! I won't serve the detentions and I don't have any emotional attachments to this system of points either." Harry is rather glad at how liveried the man became, the Death Eater is shaking in fury and outrage.

Within a blink of an eye, a green color spell comes flying at him. It hits but doesn't affect him at all. Harry just laughs while the man pales for a few seconds while disbelief very much evident in the man's black eyes. Before any even blink, Harry had gone from laughing in his seat to standing behind the Death Eater, the wand upon the ground while forcing the man's face upon the stones, keeping a firm grip upon the guy's arms.

"You really can't control yourself very well, can you? I wonder if Albus will be able to clear you of attacking a student? I may not be well verse in this communities' laws but I'm fairly sure that you're looking

at prison time." He muses while keeping his foot resting on the back of the man's head.

"Neville, could you please use the fireplace to contact the local law enforcement? I believe they'll know what to do with him." The emerald eye eleven year old states and Neville nods slowly.

"We got to inform the headmaster of this! He'd know what to do." The girl possessing bushy brown hair says.

"Oh please, as if the man isn't already on his way. As headmaster, he's tied to the wards of this school." He replies, then notes the strange looks he's getting from the Slytherin portion of the students.

Most of the girls seem to be... well, looking fondly on him. Most of the guys mostly look very pale and look ready to faint. The remainder of the guys, like two of them really, seem to be looking rather thoughtful.

Neville returns with four older wizards and a single elderly witch, one of whom seems to smile ever so slightly at him holding down the Death Eater. He steps off of the man while Realm lifts the wand up off the ground, it is hovering before the woman for a second before the woman takes it from its hovering point. A single spell is casted upon the wand and the first result is a silvery, misty version of the green spell, this causes the five to stiffen.

"Using an Unforgivable on a student? Upon Harry Potter no less? I doubt even Dumbledore will be able to wiggle you out of this one, Snape." The woman says. "Copper, take the man back to headquarters. The rest of you, begin taking witness accounts from the students, I'll be accompanying young Potter here to the hospital for examination."

As they are about to head into the back, Harry had to head back to his seat to get his pack off the floor, Albus Dumbledore finally appears, looking slightly worst for wear. "There's... no... need... for

that, Madam... Bones. I'm... sure... that... Madam... Madam Pomfrey... can examine... Harry."

"We better hurry up and head for the hospital then." Harry asks after looking at Albus Dumbledore for a few seconds and is looking at Madam Bones. Out of the corner of his eye, Albus seems to pull himself up while the leader of the magical police looks rather bemused, barely holding back a chuckle.

"Well then, we'll be speaking with you at a later, Headmaster. Come along Mr Potter, we don't know what ill effects you possess from surviving your *second* brush with the Killing Curse." Madam Bones says, the effect of that announcement causes Albus to pale a great deal more.

As they use the Floo Network to arrive at the hospital, the woman remarks, "One would wonder what the Headmaster has done to cause such a response of mistrust. It's rather rare to find someone your age that is so disenchanted with him."

"Let's say that upon hearing that it was him who thought my relatives were... proper guardians for me causes me to wonder if the man is of proper mind as its clear the man isn't in the prime of his life." Is his reply as they make it to the desk. He stays silent as Madam Bones requests, rather strongly, for a certain healer to attend them.

With that, Madam Bones directs them down a hall, likely to a room for an examination. During this walk, Harry is conversing with Realm about having Realm 'fudge' the examination spells to make it seems as though he's a healthy young eleven year old.

To Be Continued . . .

Alien Girls & Werewolf Principal:Digimon

Angel of the Hazard

I don't own Digimon.

Note: I know updates for Angel of the Hazard are slow, sluggish even. Here's a little something from me, just me. Just a lonely one-shot.

Age Ten

Takato sighs, once more he feels so... clumsy. The class laugh as he remains sitting in the water, his face crimson from embarrassment and red hazel eyes staring directly downwards. As he finally feels strength return, he stands up in the pool and with some help from a teacher, gets out of the mud of the pool and bank. *'Would I still be this clumsy if I had remained a girl?'*

As a towel is draped about his shoulders, Takato is lead somewhere to sit down. Inquires about if he's hurt are directed at him but the ten year old boy murmurs that he's fine. It takes a bit but he's mostly towel dried, although his socks are put into a bag before being put into his bag.

"Did ya have a good trip?" Kazu asks and he smiles rather nervously. "No big, you just got to work on looking where you're stepping, ya know?"

Kenta joins in upon going step by step through what they saw happen and the likely reason for why he didn't pay that much mind to his surroundings. Not that Takato felt it right blaming Jeri's sock puppet for him tripping and falling into the pond, but it did kind of play a small part of it. The color and the setting reminded him of his brother, when Tai had entertained her using sock puppets during a camping trip once, the memory just sort of caught him off guard.

'At least nobody seems to think I'm a... girl liker. Funny, really, at one point in my life it was a disgrace to be a boy liker. ' Now though, he'd be hard press to know what's going on with his birth gender. Adapting to being a boy had been kind of trying as she hadn't been one of those tom boy types before the hold gender shift happened. He had such a hard time to remember which washrooms to use let alone learning to go while there were others in the washroom with him.

'Still... I wonder what I would be like if I hadn't become a boy...' Takato muses and then snaps out of his thoughts with the mention of why girls are so weird. "You can't think every girl is an alien, Kazu... Remember when you became obsessed with proving that the principal was a werewolf? It'll only get you in trouble if you pursue it, you know."

"Oh come on! Why else would Jeri still be playing with a sock puppet? It's likely some kind of advance alien gizmo! I bet the mother ship is taking scans of us right now!" Kazu says in a slightly harsh tone. "After all, how else would you explain what happened when we were eight? Aliens are among us! And I think they've replaced girls cause they, the aliens, find it easier to pass themselves as girls!"

Takato bits his lower lip and looks away, the mention of when the Digital World appeared in the sky continues to generate interest, though not as much as new events have happened to draw public attention to other matters. He, of course, avoids that subject as it only reminds him of what he lost. It's likely that Kazu mentioned it to cause him to be silent and soon enough, between Kenta and himself, Kazu plans out a hasty operation to snatch Jeri's sock puppet. He didn't like the idea of them stealing it but knew that by this point, him saying anything would some how get twisted around in such a way that they'll make it seem as though he agreed to help them in their plan. *'I wonder if Tai was ever like Kazu when it came to something like this?'*

Try as he might, Takato couldn't imagine it, likely due to being Tai's younger sister. He knew that Tai typically acted differently when she had been around. Slowing his pace, space quickly stood between the pair and himself. He angles himself so he is walking next to this boy sporting a rather dark tan. This trip is a combination of his age group, pretty much every single one of them from either class groups.

"Hey! Give Jeri back her puppet!" Takato sighs and the boy to his right seems rather startled out of his own thoughts. "It's an alien device!" Kazu counters.

"Times like these I wonder why I consider them my friends..." The ten year old wonders out loud while watching as Kazu sulkily hands over the sock puppet to a teacher.

"At least they keep things from getting dull." The other remarks with a slight, bemuse smile.

"Tell me about it. Last time was the Principal being a werewolf..." Takato replies with a bit of a bemused look.

As Kazu and Kenta drift back to be with him, the other speeds up a bit, not that Takato could blame him, it's clear that Kazu plans to complain about the unfairness of not being able to take the puppet apart in order to find something of alien make within the puppet.

'Some field trip...'

It ends here

Portal Maddness 5: Naruto

I don't own Naruto or Thundercats 2011.

"Hey! I'm not the one who punched a vase because it was, and I quote, 'being perverted!' Right teme?" Naruto snaps after listening to Sakura complain endlessly for a good twenty or so minutes about their current situation.

Not to mention you guys have a slight scent of urine about you. The blond humanoid sporting canine features, known more commonly as Naruto Uzumaki silently adds sourly. Even in under the shadows of a forest, the pair are sweating, although they deny it whenever he brought up the idea of taking a break to drink from their water containers.

Sasuke grunts in what sounds like agreement with what Naruto had stated, which seems to cause Sakura to huff. "I don't see why I was the only carrying it." And the blond seriously begins to wonder why he sported a crush on the girl upon hearing that.

"You were carrying it because you said I was clumsy! Then there's the fact that you declared that Sasuke-teme needed to have both of his hands free!" Naruto snaps as he glares over his shoulder at the so-call brains of the three of them.

Once more, Sasuke grunts his usual 'hn' which again sounds like agreement with what has been said. He rolls his eyes and pushes a bunch of branches away to reveal a road. There's a sign post on the opposite side of the side.

"Greetings. Your... servants are rather noisy, don't you think?" Naruto glances to the left to find a man sporting the features of a feline sitting upon a log.

"Greetings and it's the one with pink hair that's talkative, the other just grunts. You'd think she's be able to keep her mouth shut given where we are. You never know what will show up just to see who's being so noisy." The blond ninja says as he sets his pack down, it's rather bulky but then, it holds his orange jumper within it.

Having fur not only made wearing it itchy but hot. He left the black under shirt and shorts on. About his waist is his ninja headband as it kept sliding to cover his eyes. He had been forced to put away his belt pouches, although he did re-bandaged those weapon pouches onto his hip and lower portion of his leg.

He sits down on the log and cracks his neck. "So, been on the road long?" Naruto asks after a few minutes of silence hangs in the air.

"Still got a few days before reaching Thundera. I'm Bengus." Bengus says as way of introduction.

"I'm Naruto, currently a nomad along with them as my back up." He says with a wide grin.

Then Bengus gets up, being sure to grab his pack and walking stick. "It was nice meeting you. Good luck in your travels then." He nods and replies, "Dido to you as well, sir."

With the cat themed man gone, he moves over to make room for his team mates. Glancing their way, Naruto wonders why they seem so... ridged. With a shake of his head, he pulls his pack over to him, taking out something to eat. Silence hangs between them for close to thirty minutes, at which point, Naruto puts on his pack, getting ready to head out when somebody breaks the silence.

"Naruto... who is this guy?" Sasuke demand suddenly and the blond glances over to find his team mates rather tense and lost. "And what is with the odd sounds coming from you both?"

"Huh, what's wrong with you? Bengus here says we're not far from his home, Thundera. As for 'weird' sounds, we're talking, duh."

Naruto replies, giving the pair a flat look. "You guys need to get your ears cleaned out or something?"

"Naruto... You guys are making gibberish sounds." Sakura states slowly.

"It seems more then just your appearance has been altered." Sasuke says in a flat tone. His fur bristles at the display of distrust in their eyes, it brings to mind the villagers and how they look at him.

"Yea? Well, maybe it's not me who's the problem here! We're suppose to be a team and yet, here you are, ready to do what? Put a kunai through my heart? Or is the plan to knock me out? Take my stuff and tie me up, leaving me worst then defenseless here?" Naruto snaps at the two, getting up off the log.

"I sure as hell don't get what I've done to you guys to warrant distrust! Not since we became a team at least." He says to the pair. "We're suppose to be a team and yet, here we are, as though we just became a team yesterday! Well guess what? Screw you guys! I don't need this from you and I sure has hell am tired of it from the villagers!" Naruto says.

" **I AM NOT THE FUCKING FOX AND THEREFORE AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING ANYONE, ESPECIALLY THE FOURTH!** " All the hurt feelings finally being unleashed. " **I REFUSE TO TAKE THIS ANYMORE! SO SCREW YOU, SCREW HIDDEN LEAF!** " Naruto rips the ninja head band from his waist, tossing it at the pair.

"Screw you!" And with that, Naruto sprints off, chakra fueling his muscles. He puts a lot of distance between them and himself.

At a river, he stops and wipes the tears that are trailing down his cheeks. His sniffles a bit as he uses the back of his hand and arms to clear the other side of his face. Wandering over to the stream, he looks down at his new appearance before looking angrily away.

He tries his hardest to shake himself out of his current state but he just keeps remembering everything that's happened to him. One tiny voice pipes as he lays on his back in the water, his belongings on the shore. *If we're really on a different world, then nobody there would know about me losing my cool. We might never return to Hidden Leaf and I'll never have to face any of the villagers or be hunted down like a dog cause they can't reach me here.*

"I'm safe. I'm safe from their loathing, their hate, their pity needs... Free to be whoever I want to be." Naruto whispers out loud, suddenly feeling excitement and dread at the same time.

To Readers:

To read the previous shorts of this idea, check out chapters 74, 88, 94, and 140.

Trainer Ares: Harry Potter and Pokemon

I don't own Harry Potter or Pokemon.

January 1982

A collection of papers can be found on top of the desk, one stack in particular sports articles concerning the owner of the desk, building, and finally global empire.

Who is Ares Black?

That seems to be the question one everyone's mind as the death total among prominent families continues to climb this man's name is on the lips of every Witch or Wizard as it has been confirmed that this man has been...

Another news paper on top of that one reads:

Family Connection Confirmed!

As Sirius Black is released so to is information concerning Ares Black. It seems that the already infamous Wizard is descended from a Black who was shipped out to Africa during the...

Ares drops the book he's been reading on top of the minor stack of Wizarding newspapers. The time-traveler sits down at the desk. After a moment of thoughtful pause, he places both hands on the handles of the two top drawers of his desk. A few seconds of this and a drawer drops down from the top.

Taking his hands from the handles, Ares pulls this hidden drawer open to reveal a collection of bank keys of vaults of various accounts, some ancient and other recently acquired. Tiny paper tags hang about the keys themselves, names of the previous owners and/or vault numbers. The seemingly young man moves the keys

towards the back, a new tray appears, this one containing a bunch of papers and photos.

On many of the papers there are names in red ink. Ares takes a few minutes to go through the list and chuckles upon spotting the name Dolores Umbridge being in red. *Finally! I thought nobody would get around to doing her. Thought I'd have to do her myself.* The time-traveler thinks.

He looks at the last page and notices that number totals, red meaning dead and black meaning alive. "Only eight left? Oh, there we go, that's the end of that then." Ares murmurs as the number eight becomes a zero and the number eight is added to the number dead. *And the one I would never forget will meet his end soon enough.*

With a hum, he pushes the tray back like he had the one with the keys. The new tray reveals graphs and business charts. It also contains his shares in mundane businesses as, at this point, having any solid connections between a Magical business and a mundane one would only be the final push certain parties would need to 'hang' him.

His Hermione had helped him create a business outline once upon a time as they had been drinking heavily. Ares kind of forgets who it was who began the 'What If' game, and doesn't really care enough to do so either. Luna had just finished asking Dean a question about, What would he do if everyone in this room had been turned to stone.

Dean then turns to ask Hermione how would she create a business empire in the nineteen-seventies through the eighties. It hadn't taken long before his surviving best friend to summon, transfigure, or just plain draw on napkins concerning how she would go about not only using future knowledge but what she would change concerning the business world's global 'foot print'.

When they got kicked out of the bar, he would later show up to grab his coat the next day and ended up with the various papers that

Hermione had either transfigure or summoned. With those papers, he would go through them and then, mostly out of boredom, used it to create his own plan, which got modified on a yearly bases until he was approached about going back in time to destroy the seventh Horcrux which wasn't him or the snake but some cloak pin that belonged to Gryffindor in the Chamber of Secrets.

Good thing I found a way around all those Unbreakable Vows or things would never change for the Wizarding world. Ares thinks to himself. *They never even asked if I felt that the Mundanes were... 'out of bounds' when they began interfering with the magical world after the third time Tom aroused once more or I would have been forced to tell them my thoughts on the matter.*

He had collected a certain selection of hairs before popping them into permanent Polyjuice and drank it. Ares had been sure to have enough of his old hairs to retake that form using a longer then normal Polyjuice potion when he was in the department. Ares had shed the name Harry James Potter to take up his current name and looks, using his position as Head of the Black Family and of the Potter Famly to get pass the vows while making a simple request of his own.

With a shake of his head, Ares dismisses his past to focus on his present, particularly concerning his business empire among the Mundanes. Pulls out one of the date books from the tray and turns to the page where the date tab is to see if there's anything important happening today or tomorrow as he is expected to meet with various political figures from beyond Britain.

Taking out a cell phone, he phones his Mundane office to sell his shares in this company before it crashes. Ares is sure to ask for updates, which takes up to an hour and half of his morning. As the phone call ends, he puts everything back into the tray before pushing everything back into the drawer. Tapping the bottom of the drawer, it vanishes and he gets up to move before the enchanted wall that displays the shopping district of magical London.

Ares hums thoughtfully as he watches Witches and Wizards move through the street. Though he looks in his late teens, early twenties, he is actually in his sixties, closer to his seventies. His skin is so much darker then his previous existence as Harry Potter had been, so much healthier, and sporting a totally different color for his eyes, he achieved the purple color through a potion although without it, Ares' eyes are dark brown.

The deal with the Blacks and him claiming various extincted families titles by opening their vaults grant him pretty much all of the seats upon a certain council. Without certain families holding another collection of seats, they get channeled to the Black family, to him. *Sure, Albus is the head of it but he doesn't have anyone backing him as I won't back him. Finally, this community will be pulled forward while the Ministry is dismantled, it will only be charged to enforce the laws, not monitor them or reinterpret them.*

With a soft snort, he glances at a recently opened store. The store sells magical items that are to function parallel to the technologies that will soon be developed. When the time comes, he'll be there to combine the two, to allow magical computers to interact with mundane devices. He even has an idea which software and game companies he will 'merge' with to achieve that as well.

Turning away from the enchanted wall, Ares heads out of his magical office. Once out of the office, he teleports to the Ministry building for the Wizengamot. With a bounce in his step, Ares walks through the doors, he had seeded the front of the room and hallway with special items that will allow him to teleport to this spot and out of it.

His entrance causes more then a few to glare in his direction but it didn't matter, not to him. *I own this council, they just don't know it yet.* Ares thinks with a predatory smirk.

August 2011

"You want me to take Pokemon to the next 'level'?" Ares asks with a hint of disbelief. "The so-called Gold Butcher of Britain, the Destroyer

of Worlds, Bane of Society to take Pokemon and take it to place it has never been?"

Those titles were given to him long before anyone learnt of his self appointed mission to merge magic and technology together. *Of course the idea of a global magical company had been alien at the time, it had all been about contacts between different families in different countries until I arrived on the scene.* He muses.

"All of our sources say you are the best when it comes to merging these two elements." The chairman of Nintendo states in a matter of fact tone. "What you have done concerning magical edition of World of Warcraft shows that and that is what we need."

Ares can't deny that although what happened with World of Warcraft was more of an unexpected bonus as they had been trying to get the user more into the game. *Now not only are they in the game, they pretty much occupy their avatar. It wasn't that hard to link the real body so that it benefits from all that physical exercise the avatar experiences. Sure improved their bodies though.*

"I'll see what I can do. My specialists will sent you something by this time next week." Ares says to the three on the other side of the desk. As he leaves, he makes a note to stop off at a retail store to buy a DS plus a Pokemon game so he can be familiar with the game.

May 2013

Field Test: Day One

Ares holds the Pokeball in his left hand, four months ago, they activated the magically enhanced lot of land a few miles away from the Nintendo offices in Redmond Washington. With the activation, plant growth, berry plants among the list, was sped up and a variety of 'classic' Pokemon released, primarily the types that live in woodland, plains, rivers, and lakes. He sighs softly as he looks out at the map that's on the wall, it shows the minor portion of active land, most notably the Pokemon Center/hotel/shop.

Well, might was well release the Bulbasaur. Ares thinks, taking out the PokeDex to be sure to check the gender of his starter and to enter in a name he'll give to his first Pokemon. Pressing the trigger, the ball opens slightly and a beam of crimson light shots out.

Within a second, the crimson glow gives way to a female Balbasaur, he is sure to check the screen of his PokeDex after all. "Hello there." He says, crouching down as the Pokemon homes in on looking at him.

Ares feels the currently shrunk balls hanging from his belt kind of dig into his thighs. The Balbasaur cocks her head to the side, regarding him rather curiously. "I'm Ares."

The Pokemon grumbles out something that does sound like the species name and parts of it. Then, after a few minutes, the Balbasaur moves a few paces forward. Not knowing what else to do, he extends his hand out and a vine comes from the Balbasaur, gently wrapping itself about his hand. They shake once before the vines withdraw back to where the Pokemon typically holds them.

"I think I'm going to call you Ojal, after all, naming you after a plant is rather dull and uninspiring." Ares tells the newly dubbed Ojal. He gets up as Ojal glances away from him, there isn't anyone in the main hall of the center as most of the others had already left to begin testing out the enchantments, they each have a starter, a PokeDex, ten potions, and five empty PokeBalls.

He heads for the way into the park, trusting Ojal to follow after. Most of the other testers are all board members of Nintendo and members of their family, most notably are their kids or grand kids. Although, if this week passes well, the next group that consists of animal behaviorists and those who filed paper work to enter into the beta phase as well. Although most of this first group sport one of the classic starters, a single member of the group was allowed to start with a Pikachu.

He glances down at Ojal, coming to a stop before the doors leading into the Pokemon populated park, a meadow. "Ready?" Ares asks and Ojal grunts out something that is followed by a nod.

Pushing the doors, Ojal slips out before he does but she doesn't run far, she merely seems to have closed her eyes and feeling the wind blow across her face. With the metal doors clicking, he walks to stand next to the Balbasaur. From where he stood, he could faintly pick up sight of a bird type in the meadow.

"Come on, we have a long day ahead of us, Ojal." He says to the Balbasaur. He has his lunch in his pack as well as some Pokemon Chow for plant types. As Ares and Ojal walk through the meadow, flying Pokemon take to the air while some ground bound types head for shelter, it's clear that the local population has already adapted to having humans and Pokemon picking fights with them.

After about eight battles with various Rattata and a single battle with Raticate, using three potions. With Ojal feeling rather low, he finds a place to sit as he takes out some water, pouring it upon Ojal's plant bulb. This seems to perk Ojal up and a vine snakes up and wraps itself about the bottle. Letting go, he watches as Ojal gulps down some of the water and once done, the Pokemon puts the bottle down next to his feet before laying down, eyes closed, bathing in the sunlight.

Smiling, Ares take a look at his watch before rummaging through his pack for his data screen. He moves his shades up to his forehead, Ares checks his E-Mails. While he can receive messages, he can't send them but that's part of the security measures of the park just in case they have a spy among their number.

He then brings up the digital book he's been reading. It was the chipping that causes Ares to look up, he finds a Pidgey cocking its head this way and that while looking at Ojal. A snort causes the Pidgey to hop back and semi spread its wing while looking up at him.

With a shake of his head, the time-traveler returns to reading his data screen. A bit later, he feels something on his shoulder and turning his head slightly, Ares finds a Pidgey resting on his left shoulder. The Pidgey seems to be peering down at his data screen.

"You're rather bold." Ares says, startling the Pidgey slightly as it turns to look at him, its beak almost pointing itself at his eye. The bird type chirps a bit before taking to the air, he tries to follow the Pidgey as it circles overhead for a few times and then comes to settle back down on the ground, not far from Ojal and Ares.

Ojal murmurs something and that seems to causes the Pidgey to tense up as the Bulbasaur yawns. It seems that Ojal is feeling better and the Pidgey seems to bombard Ojal with questions, he assumes that as like in fiction of the Pokemon world, all Pokemon here at the park can speak to each other. With a soft sigh, he pulls out his PokeDex, pointing it at the Pidgey and learns that the Pidgey is male.

As he puts the device away as Ojal begins to reply to the Pidgey. Ares puts the data screen away after closing the digital book, making sure to put it into his pack. As he gets up, one of Ojal's vines snake to grab one of his shrunken balls and watches as Ojal gets it ready before putting it down on the ground by the Pidgey. Then, to his bewilderment and yet bemusement, the Pidgey then activates the ball.

The ball only shivered once before the capture was complete. He picks up the ball and lets the bird type out. "Well, you never see that in the games..." Ares admits softly. "Well, I think I'll call you... Calum."

The newly dubbed Calum puffs out his chest while Ojal stands up, shaking her body once her belly is off the ground. Within seconds, Calum has taken to perching on his left shoulder. Taking a moment, he says, "When you get bigger, you won't be allowed to do this."

Calum chirps but seems to settle in. With a hum, he slings only one of his pack's straps onto his right shoulder before having Calum

move onto his right arm so he can put his left arm through the left strap. Instead of returning to his shoulder, Calum moves to rest on his pack.

With Ojal taking point, he walks behind her. This time, before they come to rest for lunch; it's been five hours since the first day has begun, Ojal and Calum have fought off seven Rattata, three Oddish, and two Spearow. Before taking out his lunch, he fills a bowl with Pokemon Chow and place it before the pair of likely tired and hungry Pokemon. He fills the second bowl with water before he begins to eat his own lunch.

The pair take turns at picking at the food and drinking the water. It didn't really surprise him when a Rattata appears, clearly following its nose but bolts upon seeing Ares. Then a Butterfree comes flying out of the sky and lands on Ojal's back. This causes the Bulbasaur to begin bucking the Butterfree off and Calum watches along with Ares.

Ojal then glares at Calum while growling something. The Pidgey takes to the air and dives at the Butterfree, this drives the insect away and he shakes his head in disbelief at what just happened. "Well, at least you two are getting along." Ares muses and the two murmur their agreement.

Sadly, as the wild ones get use to humans, they'll grow wary of approaching humans and their Pokemon. Ares thinks to himself, although the testing phase will last for a few years as they test out each environment and then the new species. The Legendary Pokemon will be release once we get each generation tested.

Might want to think of installing one of those time wards to help speed up testing... Those Japanese schools have those that allow you to be in a time sphere without speeding up your age. He then spent a few minutes thinking of how to make such a suggestion. *Although I might want to use them to grow food on my farms, if only to keep up with the demand that'll place if we do so. Shouldn't be hard to increase inventory, just take what food that hasn't been purchased after two years of being on the shelf. Those preservative*

spells and ward upon the packages should keep them fresh for up to ten years.

As lunch comes to a close, they did have a few more Pokemon visitors attracted by the Pokemon food, he begins to clean up. Stuffing the grabage into his pack, he heads off to a bush to do his business, careful to put the tissue into a ziplock bag, he stuffs that into the outside compartment of his pack. As he finishes zipping up his pack, the two Pokemon come back from their own bathroom break.

"Ok, we'll head back to the center, although this time, we'll go through the forest. Be on the look out for Berries to harvest." He says hitching his pack up slightly. "Any objections?" Ares asks and the two shake their heads no.

With a nod, they head to the forest to the east, Calum flying for a bit before perching on Ares' pack. They then began to encounter more insect type Pokemon along with Bellsprouts. They also found berries and picked them, putting them in a special pouch on his belt, kind of a phany pouch.

Ares didn't see anything he wanted to add to his collection. Most of those he wanted have yet to be released, after all, they were still working on Eevee's evolutions paths, particularly those to Leafeon and Glaceon. Of course trying to create a place for the fossil types to thrive in a seperate environment, they're thinking of placing them underground, in a cave system that will be linked to each park no matter what region the park is in. Although it'll likely have to be done as a yearly event that lasts up to a week, maybe two.

Might need to help promote the idea of creating check points. Ares thinks to himself as he takes out some Oran berries to feed to Ojal and Calum as he is down to his last potion. The pair were likely tiring and he looks about for a spot for them to rest.

The spot isn't far from a river and the pair take mighty gulps from the river before they find places to rest comfortably in a patch of sunlight.

Before taking out his data screen to continue to read his book, Ares stares into the river, watching some Goldeen, Magikarp, and Poliwag within the water swim about.

He found himself in the perfect spot to watch a Fearow snatch a Magikarp out of the river. The caught fish Pokemon just wiggles in the Fearow's grasp as the bird Pokemon flies off over the tree tops. As the hour passes, he gets to see another fully evolved bird type Pokemon grab another Magikarp, Ares gets a glimpse of the feathery crest from the top of the Pidgeot's head flowing towards the tail.

Ares glances over to Calum for a moment before continuing to read his data screen. As he grows bored, he closes the book and looks through what he had recorded off of the tv. Finding his recordings of Friends, he picks one of his favorite episodes after glancing up to be sure that the pair of Pokemon seem content to continue to nap.

As the two hour marker comes, Calum wakes and after stretching moves to have a bird bath in the river. The sound of splashing water so near causes Ojal to wake and with a shrug, he stops the episode before putting his data screen away. Given how energitic the pair are, Ares assumes they are well rested and ready to continue back to the center.

Along the way, they manage to catch sight of a pair of Farfetch'd. The pair flee with the leeks in their beak, taking flight, although their flight path are already on the descent. Shaking his head, they continue on their way. As they make it out of the forest, heading west back towards the meadow, the sun is already slowly setting which means that Zubat, Golbat, and a few Crobat localed about are waking while most of the bird types are settling in to sleep.

As Ares enters into the center, his stomach growls at the smell of supper. He is sure to hold the door open for Ojal to walk through as Calum has once more stays perched on his pack. He heads for his room and has a quick shower while Ojal and Calum seem to be content poking about the room. They manage to turn on the room's tv and as he gets dress, the two seem to be happy watching a

movie, the original Star Wars, it's the scene where they are in the bar with Han Solo, hiring the man to take them off the planet.

"I'll be back in an hour or two. There's a box in the washroom for the two of you to do your business." He says and the two just grunt something, it's clear that they're absorbed by the movie.

With a bemused smile and a slight shake of his head, he heads out of the room. He locks the door before heading to the dining room to eat his supper as the House Elves will be sure to send food up for Calum and Ojal when they realize they're out of their balls.

As he enters into the hall, he finds he's the last one to arrive. With a hum, he walks over to one of the tables that sport few people sitting there. They nod and greet him as Ares pulls out a chair before sitting in it, moving it up to the table as best as he can. "So... How many ran out on you?" One of his table mates asks him as he clicks the menu to show what he wants to eat for supper.

"Pardon?" Ares asks rather startled. His glass of mineral water appears a moment after he spoke.

"How many Pokemon that you caught ran off when you released them?" The man, Steven Mantle, asks him in a tone that show how annoyed he must have been when it happened to him.

"None, but then, the Pidgey allowed itself to be caught. I didn't even throw a ball, it was just sitting there and the bird just poked it." Ares says and the other four give him a look of disbelief.

"You're kidding?" Cara Valerian, girlfriend to Marcus Baker, demands.

"Well, to be truthful, Calum had shown up while we were resting in the meadow. Ojal, my Bulbasaur, was having a sun bath and I had taken out my data screen. He seem interested in Ojal, but then, there aren't any wild starters so she's rather unique. Then, as I

ignored him, the Pidgey then perches on my left shoulder." He shakes his head as he remembers that.

"Well, I spoke, he flew to rest by Ojal, who's waking up, and the pair then talked. Then a vine from Ojal snakes out, taking of my shrunken balls, activating it before resting it by Calum." Ares says as he picks up his fork as his supper appears before him.

"And this Pidgey just tapped the ball?" Steve asks and he nods as Ares spears some noodles with his fork. "It just allowed itself to be captured?"

"Seems so." Ares says. "I then released him from his ball and he took to perching on my pack as we walked about." He adds before he puts a filled fork onto his mouth.

"Wait, you allowed both of these Pokemon to walk with you as you walked around?" Cara asks and he nods. "That's... a strange."

"Yellow version is the first to have a Pokemon wander behind you." One of the others muses. This soon erupted in a conversation concerning the pros and cons of allowing their starter to walk next to them.

Ares doesn't see any reason to mention that both of the two Pokemon of his are in his room, not in their balls. As dinner begins to end and dessert is about to be served, people often get up and wander around. Soon those at his table inform their contacts and friends who were sitting at the other tables.

As Ares leans back, he swirls the sparkling apple soda as he listens to the murmurs going about the hall. It wouldn't be long before others come looking for conformation concerning that story.

And so ends the first day of the field testing the park.

Field Test: Day Four

Ares studies the Pokemon egg that he discovered by Ojal this morning as they head to report the glitch that allowed Calum and Ojal to breed. *Which begs the question, how many of the wild Pokemon have been breeding outside of their egg groups?* He wonders as he arrives before the only vid phone in the building that allows contact from within the park to the outside.

"Mr Black, what is it you wish to discuss?" Mr Smulders, head of the park monitoring department for the field test.

"My Bulbasaur and Pidgey had an egg together." Ares informs the man and Mr Smulders blinks, clearly startled by the news. He even holds up said egg as proof.

"I see. If you will, could you place the egg on the scanning pad?" The man on the other end asks and he does so.

"We'll send you an E-Mail when we discover the glitch and have patched it up." With that, the vid phone blacks out and with a sigh, they head out of the room.

As they reach the dining hall, Ares glances between Calum and Ojal. He hadn't bothered to capture any other Pokemon the park had and now, it seems, his two had bred him a third. *I wonder what moves this one will have?* He wonders, not for the first time before continuing into the hall.

Everyone part of the testing group have taken to allowing their starter out of their balls. Today, there are a few other types wandering about the room as well, likely those that their trainer had developed some kind of friendship with, enough to trust them from running off when allowed out of their balls outside of battle.

A few of those Pokemon Calum and Ojal had met the morning of day two pause in their business to wave and call out greetings to his two. His pair return those waves and greetings before catching up with him. He picks up Ojal so she can sit on the chair next to him while

Calum perches on the back of the chair. He hands the egg over to Ojal and the new mother gently wraps a vine about the egg.

It wasn't long before his meal order arrives. Calum and Ojal's meals had arrived once he had pulled his chair up. Calum had glided from the back of the chair to a cleared spot by a bowl of Pokemon Chow for bird types. Ojal uses her other vine to grab small amounts of chow from the bowl and brings it to her mouth.

As people finish breakfast and lingering, waiting for their families or girl/boyfriend finally leave, likely to pick up their packs from their room and then to the store to pick some more potions and Pokeballs. People do keep having newly captured Pokemon run off at a drop of the hat but they've gotten wise and come up with ways to prevent that from happening, although most now wait until they're in the center and in a enclosed room before allowing the newly captured Pokemon out of their Pokeballs.

With this happening, most were getting rather bore now with the selection of Pokemon currently being offered by the test and have taken to having matches between themselves in the meadow next to the center. Ares didn't join in such battles, prefering to walk around the park to exercise the two, doing so seems to help their stamina as Ojal doesn't feel the need to stop and bath in the sunlight as much as she had during the first day. One long hour is all she needed to remain active throughout the day.

Doesn't hurt that they seem to gather experience during those walks too. Shouldn't be long before Ojal will be ready to evolve. He thinks to himself while eating his breakfast and drinking his coffee.

As he finishes, Ares takes a few moments to reflect upon his life and the changes to the world that he caused to happen. Sure, in most he played a minor role but then, the waves he created in the UK can still be felt, particularly by those of the older generation that he hadn't posted rewards for.

And then his cell phone vibes before chiming. Taking the phone out, he finds an E-Mail from Mr Smulders. He reads it and sighs softly, it seems that it was only a minor glitch that had allowed Calum and Ojal to bred and is an easy fix. The only reason why the few others among the testing haven't had it occur is likely due to the fact that Calum and Ojal have spent so much time together and like each other. The glitch happens among those who are magic-users and there weren't that many among the testing group. The message always says that the resulting Bulbasaur will be fine and won't possess a glitch that will allow it to breed with bird types, although he shouldn't be surprise if the egg hatched faster then normal.

Nodding to himself, he closes his cell phone and finishes his mug of coffee. Glancing at the two Pokemon under his name, he notices that they are done eating. "Let's head back to the room." He says as he pushes his chair back before getting up off the chair. He's sure to pick up the egg that's resting next to Ojal, the mother allows him to do so.

The two grunt/chirp in agreement and follow him after getting off the table/chair. It takes him a half hour to have a shower, he didn't get one in once he noticed the egg next to Ojal, so he has one now. He is sure to put on something warm as they are expecting rain today. He's sure to pack some extra socks and cloths as he plans to teleport to the previous point of their walk so they can continue to go through the park, far from the center and most of the other trainers.

Once he has both Calum and Ojal in their respective balls, he slips from that location to the other one. With their arrive upon a large rock, the land mark which Ares had used for his teleportation. Leaping off the rock, he releases Calum and Ojal.

The two Pokemon shake themselves before moving about the area, investigating the spot. As noon arrives, he gets an E-Mail from the park that informs him that they opened up two new areas, one is a mountain and the other is an underground cavern, a prototype for future underground designes.

"Guess both are filled with rock types." Ares muses as he takes a few minutes to find the two open spots on the map feature on his data screen. An opening to the cavern system not that far from where they're having lunch. He is sure to check his supplies, he has a good twenty empty Pokeballs, a hundred PP potions, and between his health restoring potions and berries, about forty-seven total with most of the numbers being potions.

As they reach the cave opening, the sky clouds over and it wouldn't surprise him if it began to rain. Next to the opening, he finds a lamp on a staff, likely making it easier for him to walk about within the tunnels. He presses the button that turns the lamp on before glancing at the pair.

"Ready?" Ares asks and the two nods their heads. Ushering them into the cave, he then enters himself. The first group of Pokemon they spy is a mix group of Zubat and Golbat with a single Crobat among them. He assumes that the eggs on the ledges belong to the bat types.

They then began to encounter Paras, Geodude, Sandshew, and the odd Cubone. As they get deeper into the cave, Calum and Ojal began to fight off Zubat. As they stop by an underground river, they get to see some Psyduck and Poliwhirl hanging about the edge of said waterways.

With a frown, Ares studies the Psyduck, mentally debating if he should try and catch one, as in toss a ball after knocking it out. With a sigh, he decides upon another day. After a particularly tough battle with a Zubat, Ojal begins to glow.

Then, that glow shifts into the form of an Ivysaur. As the glow dies down, Ares and Calum get their first look at Ojal's new form. Calum chirps and circles about Ojal before landing next to his first Pokemon. Rubbing his chin, he realizes that soon enough, Calum will be doing the same.

"Congratulations, Ojal." Ares says when Calum and Ojal finish chatting with each other. *Or maybe by the time we leave these caverns...* He corrects himself as he takes a few minutes to read what little information his PokeDex has on Ivysaur.

They continue to encounter more wild Pokemon and he does spy some eggs, likely belonging to the Pokemon that is more then a little common in a certain area or perhaps a better word, more likely the right one, territory. Ares takes a few minutes to check his watch, having the staff lean on his chest and shoulder as he rolls his sleeve up to check his wrist watch.

With a hum, Ares allows his sleeve to go back down and grip the staff once more. "So... which direction do you guys think will guide us out of here?" He asks curiously as he finally admits that he's rather turned around in this place.

The two shake their heads and Ares hums with a frown. He glances behind him to note their tracks. *And then there's always teleporting out of here.* He muses to himself.

Noticing a ramp that leads up, Ares directs the two to the ramp. Slowly, they walk up the ramp and then enter into a seemingly cram into a tunnel. They pause upon seeing something sparkling in the lamp light. Calum glides from his perch on his pack and lands next to the item.

Moving over, he finds some kind of white crystal in the wall, a few inches by the floor. Nodding to Calum, the Pidgey flaps his wings a bit to reveal more of the crystal. It takes him a few minutes to realize which generation of Pokemon this resembles.

"Interesting... Well, let's keep going." Ares says to the pair of Pokemon. Calum leaps up and flies to his pack once more.

Stretching his shoulders as they continue to walk up the ramp. As they continue through the tunnel, they didn't come across any Pokemon. They come across a large area, as they move about

looking for another path, they come across more of those crystals and they range from white to yellows and reds.

They also encounter a great deal of Sandshrew and Paras. The lack of bat types mean that they are far from an opening leading outside, well, Ares hopes that's what it means at least. He bends down to get a look at this blue crystal when he notices a strange print, he takes out his PokeDex and searches for what Pokemon left such a print as it looks different then those left by the other Pokemon they've encounter.

The entry for Clefairy appears, causing him to blink at the picture. Ares closes the device while humming thoughtfully. "Let's go hunting for Clefairy, after we have a snack." This is greeted with some cheers from Calum and Ojal.

Finding a good spot to sit, he sits down and once Calum gets off his pack, he moves it onto the ground so he can dig through it. Luckily, the elves had packed extra, they've been packing extra just in case he captures one or two more Pokemon.

He had saved his dessert and as Calum and Ojal ate their snack, Ares eats his cup cake and drinks his water. He is sure to fill up one of the spare bowls with water. Once they are done, he packs up their stuff and a quick answer of nature call sees them trying to follow the Clefairy tracks.

He trusts Ojal to keep them on course as she should have an easier time seeing the tracks. They find a steep climb and they climb it, although he does have trouble with the staff that holds the light but making sure it's settled on a board ledge before finding foot and hand holds to pull himself up. Ojal uses her vines to pull herself up along the rock face.

It isn't that surprising that Calum has it easier out of them but the Pidgey isn't large enough to fly about with the staff. Every so often Calum chirps something and this has Ojal alter her climb slightly.

Finally, they arrive at the top of the climb and those that actually climbed took a break from such sweaty activity.

Pulling out the two water bottles, he opens one and places it next to Ojal before opening his own to gulp down some water. Ares rotates his head about, causes his neck to crack. When Ojal is done with that bottle of water, she sets it down next to him. With a few stretches of his left arm, he gulps down one last mouthful before putting the lid back on and then putting the lid back on Ojal's bottle.

Putting his pack on, he grabs the staff and uses it to get up off the ground. Calum returns to perching upon his back pack. "See any prints here?" Ares asks Ojal, being sure to have the lamp low to the ground so Ojal have a bit more light to check for foot prints.

Ares did think about checking to see if there's an update concerning the egg he's carrying but decides to do so when he's back at his room at the center. So they continue on following what little foot prints they can concerning their search for Clefairy. They continue upwards, he assumes they are heading up as they keep walking on an incline.

They do encounter some more Paras and after the ninth after they walk into this tunnel, it's Calum's turn to evolve. Calum glows brightly and soon that light shifts into a larger bird form, that of a Pidgeotto, which is a good foot larger then his previous form and sporting a chest upon his head that goes towards the back.

Calum circles about them, clearly happy about reacting a higher form in his evolutionary line. Ares sighs while shaking his head and Ojal snaps at Calum, likely berating the bird for erasing the tracks in the dirt. Properly scolded, Calum moves to perch on his pack and chirps his apology.

They move up some more and rediscovers the tracks. As they come to an opening, they catch his first glance of Cleffa and Clefairy, although the first scatter for hiding places while the Clefairy move

into cover their vanishing act, none came charging up to either Ojal or himself.

They were more startled by finding such a large number of them then to try and pick one out to try and battle it so he can catch it. *At this point, I would love a canine type to sniff them out.* Ares admits to himself. *Or just something that's got a good hunter that knows how to track one down.*

Then he notices something something sparkling faintly in the lamp light. Ares approaches it and the sparkling changes to various colors getting reflected back at him. Once he's within a certain distance, he finds more then a few eggs in a next made out of those crystal shards.

Then one of the eggs begin to shake. Moving the lamp on the end of his staff forward, Ares watches as this one egg shakes more violently. Then, snap can be heard and then parts of the egg shell fall off. It takes a few seconds before the baby Pokemon to shake off the remainder, but what startles him is the color of this Cleffa.

"Aren't you the special one, huh?" Ares murmurs softly as the bright pink Cleffa sporting green ear marks looks up at him with wide curious eyes. Calum moves to rest next the newly hatched Cleffa and chirps softly to the Shiny Cleffa.

Feeling Ojal tugging on his pants, he reaches down and picks up the Ivysaur. *Heavy...* He thinks to himself but manages to put her next to the nest of shards.

Ares then rummages for his data screen to take a picture of this particular scene. While the Cleffa is nervous at the appearance of said device, Calum places a wing gently behind the Shiny. Moving away, he snaps a picture and after a few more, the Cleffa getting more relax due to the fact that nothing seems to happen when he takes a picture.

Then, before leaving, he hand feeds the Shiny. While he wouldn't mind taking the Shiny back with him, Ares didn't think it very sporting as they came to capture a mature Clefairy not a newly hatched Cleffa. Nor is he particularly interested in snatching one of the eggs that are still in the next.

"Thanks for posing, little one. We'll be leaving now, so you be good for your parents, ok?" Ares says to the Shiny Cleffa as he helps Ojal down from the ledge after the pair say their good byes.

Grabbing the staff that's leaning on the ledge, he looks smiles at the Cleffa and then begins to walk away. Soft patter of feet and calls of parts of Clefairy come from the nest after they got about seven or nine feet away from the nest. Then, feeling the breeze coming from one of the tunnels, they walk down that one to come out upon the peak of a mountain.

Closing his eyes, he enjoys the feel of the wind whipping over the mountain. Looking up at the sky, the stars twinkle and not a cloud in the sky to hide their splendor. He kind of glanced at the time when he had his data screen out but it never sunk in so he rolls up his sleeve and takes a look at the time.

"Eleven pm. Looks like we'll be teleporting out of here." Ares murmurs and the pair grumble slightly at that as it means that they'll be put into their Pokeballs. With the pair in their respective balls, he teleports back to the center.

The light of the lamp dies upon entering into the center and noticing the rack filled with staffs with lights hanging from the top, he adds his staff to the rack. Yawning, he heads straight to his room. He releases the two before heading to have a shower, tossing his cloths into the dirty hamper.

Ares notes the egg laying next to Ojal and smiles a bit as both Pokemon seem to be asleep already. Turning off the lights, he crawls into the other bed, as the room sports two beds, and it takes a few minutes before he's fast asleep.

Field Test: Day Seven

Ares watches as one of the small groups heading out of the center pick up one of the staffs. It seems that a number of people were hunting within the caverns looking for that Shiny Cleffa as it seems that those monitoring this decided to release a Shiny on purpose as a treat for the group, they didn't expect that the Shiny would end up as a Cleffa.

The morning after the opening of that area, everyone was a buzz with the news of a Shiny. When he showed pictures of the Shiny Cleffa, pretty much telling what to look for, a lot of those who hadn't cared about the caverns fought to get a staff to hunt for that Cleffa within that mountain. Kids begged their parents to take them into the mountain so they can try for the Shiny.

With so many heading into the caverns, Ares had taken his pair of Pokemon about the outside of the mountain. They encounter Rhyhorn, Machop, Diglett, Geodude, Sandshrew, Paras, Pidgey, Pidgeotto, Spearow, and Fearow among the grassy ledges that are about the mountain. It takes them a while to find springs, streams, and waterfals to check to see what kind of water types hanging within them.

But today is the last day of the test, it's ending early due to having to install patches that have cropped out regarding magic users. Considering that beyond him, most of the other magic users were kids under the age of eleven. Although, considering they weren't European, they have been going to a school that is teaching them a few magical subjects, mostly history, magical creatures, and a few very basic spells, mostly cleaning spells that come in handy at home. Although, like him, they had to put their wands in secure lock-boxes and will get them back when the testing is over.

The next testing group will extend invites to adult magic users to see what glitches come up when dealing with a greater number of magic users, trained ones though. Given his connections to various magical communities, it wouldn't be hard to find some fresh graduates who

wouldn't mind getting money for begin a beta and swear on their magic not to reveal any unofficial details before they open the gates to these parks.

Land has been purchased about all capital cities throughout the world (be they the capital city of a country or a state/province) and now that those sites are prepared to receive the magical 'program' that is Pokemon, they're moving on to purchase sites about smaller cities. They didn't need a lot of land, the expansion wards and charms allowed them to stretch even a foot by foot parcel of land into a fifty by fifty mile park. With the kind of land they have purchased within the limits of various capital cities, they could create rather good size countries.

With a mental shrug, Ares looks down at his egg. He's had more then a few offers for the unhatched Bulbasuar. Although, a few of the various trainers have recently decided to try their hand at Pokemon breeding, although that's still too recent to see any progress in getting their Pokemon pregnant.

I guess we might as well head into the mountain again. Might be able to catch a Slowpoke or a Psyduck before the day is done. Ares muses, he hasn't seen many of those outside of the caverns as he strokes the egg while Ojal and Pidgeotto rest next to him.

Finally the exit is cleared of trainers, he puts the egg into his pack before walking over to the rack. He tests each to see which he likes the feel of. Out of the four that remained, Ares picks the second as he liked the weight of it, not as light as number one and four but not as heavy as number three or as thick.

The two look eager to be gone from the center. They made use of the 'gate' that will teleport them instantly to one of the cavern's openings. As there doesn't seem to be any signs of other trainers within sight, Ares and his two companion Pokemon walk into the cave.

No voices echo as the lamp becomes the only source of light either. Ares' gaze often drifts up to the ceiling to spy clusters of resting bat Pokemon. They Pokemon they tend to fend off most of the time time are Geodude with some Graveler every so often, it seems that the trainers' Pokemon aren't the only ones evolving from all of the battles either.

As they walk up this ramp that leads to a higher placed ledge, they find a group of Sandshrew and Sandslash busy watching a fight between two of their number. They are so focus on the pair of fighters in their mist that none of them notice as they walk by as silently as they could and they reach the tunnel that will likely take them to another chamber of this massive underground complex.

They jerk as an Onyx slams through one wall of the tunnel just ten feet from where they are standing and through the next one. The ceiling shakes and parts of it falls down. It doesn't help that another stone snake seems to be chasing after the previous one.

"I... didn't know they released Onyx here." Ares finds himself saying, slightly numb at the size of the pair. It didn't help that the last giant anything that he's met had tried to kill him.

The staff created a shield that protected them from the rumble that got dislodged and sent flying when the two Onyx made their brief appearance. The dust settles but the shield remains in play so Ares looks up, he can't help but curse at the amount that's on top of the shield.

Slowly moving, the stuff at the top of the shield shifts as the staff moves. With a scowl, he grips the staff with both hands, he focuses magic into the staff which empowers the shield. The rumble on top of the shield shudders as the magic within the shield begins to expand outwards. It takes time but finally, a good twenty minutes later, the stuff on the shield has been shifted elsewhere.

Ares seemingly collapses and both of his Pokemon clutter close, clearly concerned about him. Sitting down, he takes off his pack and

then takes his water bottle out, he gulps down water. He then pours some on his left hand and then rubs it on his face. He feels rather chilly and decides it's from the sweat he had coming out of his skin during him adding more power to the shield.

"I'll... be... fine. Just... let... me... catch... my breath." Ares manages to wheeze while looking first at Ojal and then at Calum, giving them each a small smile. He coughs a bit, after all, he hadn't had time to familiarize himself with the staff to safely feed it his magic and it likely didn't help that the magic inherent in the staff is likely House Elf magic.

After a few minutes, he feels somebody poking him in the arm. Ares looks up and finds Ojal offering him a berry. Chuckling softly, Ares gets up after taking the berry. "Thanks but I don't think it'll work on me." Is his answer as he puts the berry back into the pack.

He is then reminded about the water ball as Ojal holds it up to him using one of her vines. Ares nods his thanks and once the cap is back on the bottle, he puts it back in his pack. He shakes his head and as he shoulders the pack, Ares finally takes a look around the much altered tunnel.

"Maybe we should chase after those Onyx... If only to have one clear the path." Ares murmurs while holding the lamp part of the staff before him, moving it from left and right.

Calum chirps and the Pidgeotto leaps towards something. Following Calum, he finds a elemental stone laying under some dirt. Based on the color, he assumes that it's a fire stone. As he gets it off the ground and rubs it, he finds a image of a flame within the crystal stone.

"Guess there's some benefit to having those two race around..." Ares sighs and they range about the rumble, finding more items like gold nuggets, star pieces, fossil items that are typically used to resurrect prehistoric Pokemon, those colored crystals, special rocks that range from Ever Stones or Hard Rocks, and more evolution stones. They

wandered into the right side of the tunnel and then into the left. The Pokemon they encounter during this improvise scavenger hunt are Diglett and a few Dugtrio.

Ares takes a moment to check on his watch, but finds it busted, likely due to him pouring magic into the staff. The watch had been digital and he never bothered to put any of the usual rune protections on the device, or at least upon the battery, to protect its function from his use of magic. Sighing softly, he takes a few minutes to rotate his head about, causing his neck to crack and pop.

Stretching his upper-body, Ares feels a bit sore and assumes that it's from all the bending over he's been doing in regards to picking up valuable items that the two Onyx brought to bare. Shaking his head gently, he motions for them to continue forward, moving over the rubble that fell from the ceiling. They did find more crystals and evolution stones before they cleared the ruin part of the tunnel.

The underground cavern they find at the end of the tunnel sports a river of sorts. Although Ares doesn't see it, he can hear the water and the splash of the water as something falls into it. They didn't encounter any Pokemon as they walk up to the water's bank. It seems that the local Pokemon have been scared off by something.

"It's rather disconcerting, isn't it? Nothing showing up." Ares murmurs softly and Calum chirps in agreement while resting on his pack. He doesn't hear Ojal's agreement and guesses that she might have nodded her agreement or didn't respond.

They move to the right, keeping the river to their left. Ares did often look into the water but what water types he spies quickly swim out of his sight, making it hard for him to identify them or to have either of his Pokemon to attack them. He merely sighs after a while and as they come to a wall that the river is coming out of, he decides that Ojal and himself will swim across.

"Ok, Calum, I'm going to take off my pack and after I put some of my stuff in it, I want you to fly to the other side of the river, ok?" Ares

says to Calum and the Pidgeotto chirps in acknowledgment.

Smiling for a moment, Ares turns to look at Ojal. "With Calum doing that, we'll be swimming across, unless you're not fine with that?" He asks his first Pokemon.

Ojal shakes her head and so, once he sticks what he didn't want wet into the pack. Calum flies the pack over the water, the pack sports a feather light enchantment on it as well as a space expansion one. He enchanted it as he was creating the pack, Ares typically creates specific items that he needed to have enchantments on them as they held better then just buying something made by somebody else and enchanting it.

The very act of crafting an item isn't unlike a magical ritual, one of the oldest. *Given what you can do with magic, it's kind of surprising that they, the Wizarding society, has such a community mind. Magic pretty much makes you independent of needing others to create most of your stuff, particularly if you have the materials to do so.* Ares reflects as he slowly moves into the water, Ojal waits a bit before leaping into the water as well.

He manages to swim the distance until his feet once more makes contact with the ground. Ares stops and turns to watch Ojal come swimming. Once Ojal is on shore, he leaves the river behind. What cloths he is wearing drip and stick to his body.

Finding where Calum is currently perched with the pack, Ares begins to take off his shirt and rings it out while walking towards the pack. Letting the staff rest next to the wall, Ares focuses on grabbing his pack and getting dry cloths out of the pack, he has a few bags to put the wet cloths into so they don't soak the rest of the items within.

Any Pokemon that show up as he is doing this face Calum and Ojal. As he finishes getting his shoes on, the last item he needed to put on, Ares begins to zips the pack up but stops as some commotion happens. As he crouches, he watches as a Paras is sent flying by an air attack from Calum.

"Here's a snack for you guys. It's been trying given what we've encountered." Ares says and it didn't take long before the pair are chewing down on some Pokemon Chow. Clearly the pair had developed an appetite since breakfast.

With their bowls polish of food, he takes them and puts them back into the pack. As the two drink from the river, Ares shoulders the pack and gets up off the ground. His legs ache from all the crouching but a few stretches help relieve the pain. He grips the staff and walks a few feet away from the river.

Once Calum and Ojal have joined him, they began to survey this side of the river. It wasn't that hard to figure out that while the other side had very little in the way of Pokemon, this side still sported a few. They also found another ramp that leads upwards.

The higher they went, the more Pokemon they encounter, particularly those seemingly made out of rock. The fact they found some Rhyhorn and Rhydon inside of the mountain kind of surprised him but then, the weather likely help to drive them into the cavern area. Fortunately, they didn't encounter any Onyx.

As they make it to the seventh ledge area, Ares suggests they rest and, being hungry, he takes something out to snack on. The pair take the time to take a nap, they lean against each other as they do so. As he finishes eating, he takes out his data screen to check for any event notices before putting it away, pulling out a flashlight.

He leaves the staff with the two, using the flashlight to look around for any unusual items. Ares keeps an eye on where he left his Pokemon. As he is about to head back, he hears a soft cry.

Startled, Ares turns and then a cheerful cry echos as something bright pink sporting green charges up to him. "Err? Oh, it's you! So, how have you been?" He asks the Shiny Cleffa who's hugging his right leg.

The baby fairy lets go of his leg, allowing him to kneel down as the Shiny talks to him without him even understanding a word the little Pokemon is saying. Although due to the emotions that come out viva the tone and the little one's face, Ares can make some intelligent conclusions about what the Shiny has gone through since they last met.

Ares nods at certain intervals and rubs the Cleffa on the back when the tiny fairy pulled in close, needing some comfort. As he wipes some tears from the Shiny's face, he takes off one of the empty balls on his belt and place it down. Like Calum had, the Shiny Cleffa enters into the ball. Once the ball stops moving, he picks it up and then releases the tiny fairy Pokemon.

"Come on, let's go see if Calum and Ojal are up." Ares says and picks up the Cleffa before walking over to where the pair should still be resting. "I think Vala is a good name, don't you?" He asks and she nods while adding a murmur of agreement as they reach the area aglow in the light of the lamp.

He clicks off his flashlight as they get close. Lowering the Cleffa onto the ground, he then swings the pack off to dig up something for Vala to eat. The Shiny quickly digs in, it seems as though she's rather famished but then, Ares could only guess what kind of encounters she's had within the mountain since Vala hatched to their meeting today.

Vala seems to be happy now that she has a full belly and tugs on Ares' pants to get picked up. He does so while watching a movie on his data screen, he is using these simple wooden rings, enchanted to act as head phones or ear plugs, so that the sound of the movie doesn't wake either of his napping Pokemon. Vala joins Calum and Ojal, leaning into the nook of his left elbow.

As time passes, Calum wakes but doesn't seem interested in moving away from Ojal. What few wild Pokemon that approached, they moved along, likely confident that they weren't going any where right away. Ojal wakes and then Vala does a few minutes later.

He pauses the movie as Vala murmurs out and then yawns. He's careful to take the wooden rings from his ears. When Vala climbs down to go greet Calum and Ojal, he puts the items back into pack. He collects the bowl that he had put Vala's meal in. His original pair seem happy to have Vala with them and as part of the team.

With his pack on his back, Ares asks, "Ready to continue on our way?" The three nod while agreeing to do so. He's sure to grab the staff.

Ares picks up Vala and once he's straighten, Calum perches on his pack once more. Gripping the staff a bit more tightly with his right hand as they begin to walk, Vala finally gets comfortable in the nook of his left elbow. Those Pokemon who make their appearance, they were chased off by Ojal or Calum, depending on what kind of Pokemon they encountered.

They find a tunnel and enter it, Ares is rather wary about having another Onyx or pair of Onyx slam through the tunnel but doesn't let it keep him from pressing forward. *Well, if it happens, I'll have Ojal use Leach Seed and Stun Spore on them.*

To Be Continued?

Ranma and the Spring of Drown Garu

I don't own Monster Rancher or Ranma 1/2

Jusenkyo

Ranma manages to leap with ease between the bamboo poles along with his Pops. As the teen begins to head for the center, the poles begin to look... dodgy, not that this keeps the daring Saotome from pushing forward. With the first four poles managing to hold his weight, the remainder of whatever hint of doubt within Saotome the younger is purged from his mind.

Don't see what the big deal is, this is easy! Ranma thinks and as he's about to toss out a taunt out to his Pops, he hears the bamboo pole whine. He leaps upon a few poles before coming to another stop.

"Always be aware of your surroundings, boy!" The elder Saotome declares and Ranma, caught off guard, rolls with the kick as it, which causes him to fall into one of the springs below with a splash. Kicking his legs while he struggles to get out of something he's become tangled in, a much changed teenager pops his head out of the water's surface.

"Lucky hit!" The creature, commonly known as a Garu in a Monster Rancher world, shouts before swimming to the bank. Ranma shakes his whole body, tail flipping back and forth in the opposite direction then what the main body goes.

With a confident smirk, Ranma leaps upon the nearest pole, although he doesn't quite make it as he seems to have misjudge the distance. Although he does manage to get a go grip upon the pole so that as he falls, the bamboo falls down along with him. It does snap but he manages to move it so that it lands in the spring and he

manages to land on top of the pole before leaping towards the earth between the springs.

As Ranma the Garu glances about, it become rather apparent that the world seems to have gotten bigger on him. *Or did I get smaller?* Saotome the younger wonders while flicking his tail about.

It takes the teen a few seconds to spy his Pops and the man seems to be gasping at him. With a smirk, Ranma once more leaps up and this time, manages to land on top of an undamaged bamboo pole. "What's a matter Pop? You trying to catch flies or something?"

Then, as his Pop is about to recover, Ranma launches himself in his father's direction. With a punch, that seems to spark a burst of fire, the Garu that is Ranma Saotome sends Genma Saotome into a spring about five feet away while the teen balances on top of another bamboo pole, crossing his arms while feeling very satisfied concern his counter attack. Then, Ranma almost falls off the pole as something clearly not his Pops breaks the surface of the spring.

"What the heck?" Ranma shouts while pointing down at the fairly large tanuki sporting his Pops' glasses hanging from about its head. Then, noticing that his arm sports orange fur while his hand sports a very light brown covering his much altered hand.

He then wiggles his toes and finds only three toes upon each foot from the feel of it. He feels so much like fainting but in the end, decides to head for solid ground. Along the way, Ranma gets a better look at his new reflection from the springs he's leaping over.

As he comes to a stop, he then hears, "Ranma Saotome! You dishonourable coward! Where are you? We aren't done! You owe me a **FIGHT** !"

The teenager turned Garu glances up at this cliff where this other teen is standing. He merely stares dumbly at the guy, suddenly finding everything to be rather unrealistic at this particular time.

Do I know him? Ranma wonders to himself while trying to place the voice as he can't see much in the way of the face or any particular details. Then his thoughts are derailed by something warm running down his back.

"Don't do that! Couldn't you warn a guy before doing that?" The now human Ranma demands and then becomes aware of how chilly he is. "I'm naked." The teen murmurs in a flat, matter of fact tone to which the portly man wearing green nods.

"Yes sir is." The caretaker of this training ground as the shorter, older man puts the kettle down onto the ground before gesturing for him to follow. "Sir can borrow cloths while I get older sir a plank to walk on."

Then, as they reach the hut, a yelp rings out and as Ranma pauses to look towards the cliff, he watches as that guy falls into a spring. "Honored sir fall into Spring of Drowned Piglet. I go pull other sir out. You, young sir, go into hut please."

Nodding as it only reinforces that yes, coming here is a rather stupid idea. It didn't take long for Ranma to find a worn chest fill with different cloths and he isn't picky, grabbing a green shirt, a pair of crimson underwear, and a pair of black pants. As he puts on some slippers, the man in green arrives with a struggling piglet, likely the teen now cursed to be a piglet.

"Warm water returns honor sir back to normal. Cold water returns honor sir to curse state." The older man explains while placing the piglet down and walking over to the sink. The portly ground's keeper fills up a cup after checking the temperature of the water.

Turning off the sink, Ranma watches as the keeper dumps the contains of the cup upon the piglet's head, transforming the little porker into a teenager, also naked one at that really looks familiar to him. The teenage Saotome rubs his chin as he tries to recall where he's meet this guy before while the green wearing ground's keep heads out of the hut. *Did I skip out on any fights? Not that I recall, but there was that time...*

"Ranma! Because of you, I'm cursed!" The other teen shouts, shaking a fist up in the air. *That... actually sounds familiar.*

"Ryoga? Ryoga! Why the heck did ya here?" Ranma can't help but ask curiously as he honestly didn't see why Ryoga would do such a dumb thing.

"You ran out on our man to man fight!" The bandanna wearing Ryoga snaps, turning to face him even though he's pretty much nude from the head down. The other teen pokes Ranma in the chest and that brought back something else.

"Hey! It wasn't my fault! Pops knocked me out the early morning of the fourth day! Before I knew it, we were on a train with the country side flying by!" Ranma counters, pushing the hand who's finger is poking him.

"And get some cloths on!" He snaps to the other teen. "That chest has cloths in it, you might want to cover yer-self!" The young Saotome adds, gesturing to the chest filled with cloths that he got his current set out of as he doubts that they'll be able to recover his previous cloths.

Ryoga looks down and blushes rather brightly, tapping into unknown speed powers, the bandanna wearing teenager seemingly teleported to the bed and pulled off the sheet to wrap about his waist. Ranma merely raises an eyebrow at all of this while crossing his arms across his chest. Ryoga can't seem to look the young Saotome in the face.

Second tick by becoming minutes until the guide enters into the hut with a very irked raccoon-dog that is carrying a pair of glasses in their mouth. Upon seeing Ranma, the tanuki begins to bark and growl at him, causing the glasses to fall onto the floor while the guide fills a cup with some water.

Well, at least we're cure, right? Ranma muses to himself as he turns around when the guide finishes filling that cup with hot water.

Ending it here

Readers: Reason where this idea came from has to do with my sudden obsession with playing Monster Rancher Advance 2 for Gameboy Advance. I had this idea of Naruto ending up in the Monster Rancher world and raising a Hellhound, a sub-breed of the Tiger species until I realized I don't see a lot of Ranma 1/2 stories featuring Monster Rancher. If you do know some, make a comment or a review, ok?

American Werewolf in Mexico: HP

I don't own Harry Potter.

Moving his bangs, the almost twenty-one year old Harry Potter also known as Boy-Who-Lived and unknown to majority of the world, member of a werewolf breed that some American company had stupidly created. At least in the wizard's bitter opinion as he stares down at the headless rabbit and with the moonlight shining down, the black furred werewolf begins on the rest of the body.

Finish eating the rabbit, Harry is no longer hungry. And then, his half hour is up and he painlessly transforms back into his typical form, the shape he was born with, minus the tattoos mimicking tiger's stripes. The stripes aren't just on his face but all over his whole body. With a shake of his head, wandless, Harry causes a glamour to spring about him, hiding his tattoos.

His gaze finally moves away from his bloody hands to glance up at the full moon, the last of the set. Taking a deep breath, Harry lets it out slowly, closing his eyes as he begins to inhales. Under the July full moon, Harry recalls just how he became a werewolf and received his tiger stripe tattoos.

September 14, 2000

Small Town In Mexico

The sun is out and yet, this werewolf stands as bold as can be with sunlight lighting up everything. The fur seems to be a light brown mixed with black spots behind the ears and a kind of V on the back. The typical nocturnal being seems to be a huge example, not that Harry is much of an expert on those affected with the curse but not even Remus tranformed really got to be very tall compared to his

human form, the illusion of gained height came from the legs becoming more like the back legs of a wolf or cat and the ears.

Which causes Harry to muses out loud, "You've got to have a bit of giant's blood in you." He licks his lips, the town had been a magical community and yet, it seems that this werewolf managed to decimate it down to every last babe and pregnant woman. *It's like this guy is immune to spells.*

The werewolf doesn't seem to make any move to advance or retreat. He is at a lost how to kill this guy outright with spells. Tensing up, Harry flicks his wand and causes the ground about the werewolf to explode into towering spikes. The werewolf leaps back but not without getting an injury and then as the werewolf charges at him on fours, reacting on instincts, Harry fires at the werewolf but the spell, upon hitting the magical afflicted man in the form of a beast, just shimmers out of existence.

Instead of biting his arm right off the bat, the magical wolf-like being chomps down on his **wand** . Then, as Harry shoves his hand near the fanged mouth, the jaws open slightly and then comes down dig just hard enough to break his skin of a few of his fingers. Hissing in pain, the werewolf backs up and once off of him, does a kind of push up that allows the wolf-man to stand on his back legs.

With the nose twitching, the werewolf stares at him for a few minutes as he curses and tries to wrap his bleeding fingers. The ears perk and then, the werewolf moves to the side and then drops down on all fours, walking away. There's nothing Harry could do as his wand has been destroyed and his fingers bleeding. He can't help thinking that at least the moon wasn't out or else he'd become a werewolf as well.

September 18, 2000

Harry collapses down on the ground, he hadn't been feeling well since the evening of the fourteenth. The wounds under his bandages had been throbbing rather furiously but this morning, they haven't, which he had thought meant they were finally healing. As his glasses

fall down upon the ground, the twenty year old suddenly finds his body on fire and every part of him itchy.

Then, as his senses swim and his balance vanishes, he can't help but find that a thumping sound surrounding his very being. As it ends and his senses return to him, the adult man finds himself ravenous and very parched. Then the bleeping of sheep reaches him and the thought of mutton causes him to lick his lips.

Pushing himself up off the ground, he runs, clumsily at first, towards the sound. Harry pauses at the fence and first using his hearing, then his eyes, finds this herd unattended. With a growl, Harry leaps over the fence and lands on one of the sheep, with a quick bite to the back of the neck, he begins to really tear into the dead sheep.

Still hungry, it didn't take long to get near another sheep, biting the face while forepaws moving about the upper-body of the beast. There wasn't much Harry cared about at that point beyond ending his hunger and when he finished, he feels pain again but didn't care beyond getting a good nap.

September 21, 2000

"Wakie, wakie." A voice says in a sing song way and Harry closes his mouth, he tries to swallow but it's rather dry within it. He opens his eyes and then blinks until his vision clears.

Harry bolts to sit up and stares about his surroundings, that of a parking lot. He's rather confused at the sight of the man wearing a black leather vest and loose, baggy even, jeans. "Looks like sleeping beauty is finally awake." The man says with a toothy grin.

"And you the bloody hell are you?" He demands, getting to his feet. He automaticly reaches for his wand, only he doesn't find it. The gesture of him padding at his pants seems cause the other man to chuckle.

"Well, ya ain't going to finding a magic stick about your being, don't rightly know where to get ya one being as I don't give a crap about that techno shit either." The man states with an American accent. "Name's Albert Howard and I'm here to give ya the skinny about what's what, ok Giles?"

Giles? Harry wonders while Albert continues on to say, "Ya see, about three years, I was across the boarder, running with a drug smuggling crew when this fucking wolf thing suddenly drops into the room from the fuckin' top of this stair case! Just, woosh and suddenly, lead is getting unloaded at this hell beast." Albert begins to pace, "Blood coming off of it but ain't doin' lastin' damage as it keeps getting up with bullets coming out of its damned body!"

"It gets near and it's tossing people about but then it begins to start taking bites outa people. Me included! It vanishes like, ten minutes after it showed its mug. We hunted around for it and after fifteen god-dang minutes, we thought it gone until it showed up again, only this time picking us off one by one." Harry is beginning to get an idea of what this is leading to.

"We finally track the mother-fucker down and then, witnessed it transform into this scrawny ass nerd with no scratch on him!" Albert seems to pause, his frown transforming into a wicked smirk. "Didn't take long to string the fucker up, course throughout this, the nerd was babbling to thin air. Then, as we were just getting our knives ready, the asshole just grins and begins to fucking transforms! Wising up, I quickly slit the fucker's throat and then made sure to decapitate his head."

Then the smirk vanishes from Albert's face. "Not long after that did that swarm team swarm the place. I managed to hide out among the dead, almost died when they decided to burn the place down. A few days later, I blacked out and when I woke, I was in a meat packing plant with a few dead employees about. Didn't know what to think until I got this itch during the next full moon and transformed into a fucking monster wolf, only bigger then the one that scrawny nerd had turned into and not crimson in color either."

"Didn't take me long to realize that I would end up in a kennel if I'd stayed so I headed south of the boarder and never looked back." Albert states and glances over towards Harry. "I've learnt a few things about this blessed curse, like if ya transform outside of the three days and nights of the full moon, it hurts as hell but during that time, it's painless."

"Next is, first year, your transformation lasts fifteen minutes before ya become a man again and if ya wait fifteen minutes, ya can transform again, it's limitless during that time, ya know? Second year, that time increases to thirty, and it seems that in year three, ya transformations lasts forty-five minutes." Albert watches his expression as it dawns on him just what this means.

He can transform at will and he keeps his mind. Harry thinks as he pales. He begins to look for an escape route, this only causes Albert to laugh. "Oh no, I ain't going to kill you. If I wanted to, I'd have gone for ye throat after destroying ya stick. Kind of surprised to find ya hadn't kicked the bucket, most of your kind can't survive more then a day or two. Must be being a Brit, ya different then the local stock, eh Giles?"

"Then what is it you want from me?" Harry asks, he wasn't going to volunteer his name, while he doesn't get the reference, he's pretty sure that he can live with this murder calling him Giles. He doesn't feel that he's going to like where this is heading.

"Every so often, I only lightly bite a bunch of people, track them to see which of them weren't affected and those that it takes root in, if it don't kill them within the first day that is. I then paint them up and give them this speech, I then set off on a killing spree in places where they have connections but seeing as you're a tourist, I'm just goin' to take a gamble and say that ya don't like people dying for no reason or else ya wouldn't have followed my tracks that day."

Hit the nail on the head. He thinks rather sourly and mentally groans at the sight of his bare arms. The skin about these black inked stripes is still a little red but looks fine, beyond the fact he both of his

arms are tattooed. *Not even the tiny bit sore...* Harry thinks to himself as he rubs his right arm, noticing that it doesn't hurt despite it being rather fresh.

"So, I'll be leavin' ya to get your bearings and while your doin' that, I'll be heading out of town. I ain't going to be giving ya directions, I'm rather sure that you'll do that voodoo that you people can do to track me down." Albert states with a rather chilly causing grin on his face. "See ya around, Giles." The werewolf states with a two fingered salute and walks away, leaving Harry to watch the murder walk as he lacks the tools to prevent the bastard from doing so.

He can't help but feel so naked without a wand and he is just so damn thirsty.

December 11, 2000

Harry continues to stare at the rat he had bought from the pet shop just two hours ago. He is siting and looking down at the open box. Finally, he gives into the itch that has developed as he had been staring at the pie coated rodent. As he is naked, none of this cloths are ruined and the rat suddenly grows frantic, likely due to the face of familiar predator.

He reaches in and with a quick twitch of his rather thick fingers, snaps the rat's neck. Pulling the rest of the body out, he tries to breathe through his mouth as the rat had peed itself. With a single gulp, the rat is down his throat and likely in his belly. The hunger vanishes from him like it had when he ate that rabbit that one night in October, he had tested it again during the course of the full moon in November.

Kill an animal and devour it, the hunger vanishes only to return the next day at which point, you go kill another and devoured it. At first, he thought he could get by on already dead meat but he could eat it all night and day, it just wouldn't satisfy him, not like the action of killing and then devouring the critter he killed. *Of course, there is that theory that if I just kill a single human the first night, I wouldn't have*

to suffer the hunger until the next month's full moon cycle. That's how Albert can keep on moving without leaving a trail of missing pets or massacred animals.

He's not willing to test that out, at least, not yet. Still, Harry could think of a certain... breed of people that nobody would miss and he wasn't talking about breeds like being a muggleborn or a pureblood either, he's talking about rapists and murders. That breed of predators that the world could do without. *I wonder if being a werewolf is changing me in other ways?*

Harry closes his eyes and shakes his head fifteen minutes are up and he transforms painlessly back into a human. There wasn't any blood on his hands but he does go to the sink and run water over them for a good ten minutes before getting dress. As he finishes getting his pants on, the door of this motel room suddenly opens and some suited people take a look about before moving on without so much a word of apology.

A string of Mexican Spanish beaks the silence and he walks over to his open door and finds suited agents crawling all over the place. Large vans, almost similar to RVS, parked upon the street out front of the motel. *Is Albert's past catching up to him? If it is, I better get to him first.*

Grabbing his jacket, his only other article of clothing and possession, Harry heads away from the motel. There's this famous mine that is a tourist trap, he's pretty sure that Albert is there or will be. He turns into an alley and with closed eyes, does his best to cast a disillusion spell on himself to hide from the eyes of the agents crawling all over the town. He didn't want to get in their sights, he rather his involvement be unknown to the world at large along with his condition.

It doesn't take long for him to arrive and to slip pass the barricades set up by the agents. He does pause when he catches sight of magic being done with what appears to be a wand, only, it's got crystals around the handle, or maybe the crystals were the grip, like leather

on the hilt of a sword or dagger. Harry just stops and looks about him to see if anyone has noticed him, it didn't help that they were wearing sunglasses after all. Which could be enchanted to see those using magic to be stealthy.

After a few minutes, he finally continues into the mine. Nobody stops him or seem to halt him. Once in, he finds a trail of blood and can only guess at the number of dead already at the end of the trail. Then he catches the musk of Albert transformed and with a set expression, he slows down and does his best to cast a spell of silence on himself so he doesn't tip the other werewolf off.

He waits until he catches sight of the brown furred wolf before taking time to study the area. A number of agents lay dead and slightly mauled about the room, it wasn't that surprising as instead of having wicked claws to gore through flesh like in the movies, their only deadly weapon is their bone crunching jaws. Nor do their hand paws do well welding a weapon as they just can't get that tight of a grip. Shoulders aren't positioned well for a large range of movement either and it's just plain easier to move about on all fours then on two.

Moving into a deep enough hallway, he transforms and pads towards the entrance. A second later, he charges at Albert, his jaws managing to get a hold of the base of Albert's tail. He does his best to move along with the direction Albert moves, managing to avoid those snapping jaws from the other end.

Suddenly, something burns into his left shoulder and he lets go. Albert is charging the ranks of the incoming agents. He didn't know why the bullet his shoulder hurts so much but it does. He back as away and does his best to sink into the shadows.

Upon transforming out of his wolf form, Harry finds his shoulder still hurts but is more concerned with leaving the mine without being in the custody these agents. It takes hours of waiting and repeated casting of spells to hide him from sight and to keep them from

noticing the noise he makes walking around among them as he moves to get out of the mine.

Upon noticing that Albert is still alive but injured, he picks up a gun and as silent as can be, puts a few of the bullets into Albert's head. He didn't want these people to learn anything from Albert through applications of truth serum, well, that is if potions can affect them at all. Taking out a few examples of the bullet, he then destroys the gun by melting it into a lump of metal.

Just handling the bullets causes him unease but he plans to study it to learnt why it can hurt them but not silver, like with the original type of werewolf. Once out in the area, he does his best to transfigure local material into cloths while applying a glamour to himself to cover his tattoos. He'll have to find a doctor to get the bullet out of his shoulder but at least the other bullets are in this bag he transfigured.

He feels... oddly disappointed with how everything turned out but he knows he has to leave as soon a possible. As those agents sport witches and wizards among them, they could likely hold him without much effort. Which Harry doesn't want as he has a life to get back to and likely an eager godson wanting a stack of gifts for Christmas.

July 4,2001

Finally Harry returns to his senses and heads for the farmhouse where a bachelor party is going on for Neville. It's doubtful anyone noticed his disappearance as they began partying at noon. Nobody will raise much of an eyebrow, if they are still awake, if Harry walks into the house nude but he still prefers to keep his tattoos hidden under a glamour.

Merry Christmas

Author's Note

Oh, there is more to the story, like Draco and a movement of Pureblood deciding to push through a bunch of harsh laws targeting

anyone not a Pureblood, what else is new. Harry setting up a meeting with them at some isolated building he set up to be like one big walk in contract that just by drawing a wand and firing a spell at Harry pretty much gives him leave to kill said witch/wizard. Of course he only kills like three or four while the rest just plain turn on each other and make it look like Harry killed them.

By the end of it, Harry gets to raise Draco and what's her name's only two year old son, that he raises more in the mundane world as being a werewolf has been slowly altering his thought pattern to the point where he sees that if the magical society doesn't alter it'll be exposed.

Let's just say that there's a lot to the story then just Harry the werewolf killing Purebloods for being assholes. I kind of would love to portray him as a father to Draco's kid and why he pulls the kid out of Hogwarts during the Winter Holidays of the kid's first year.

Yea, I have one active imagination, the problem is, I just don't get around to typing it out.

Common Sense Exercises: Animorphs

I don't own Animorphs.

Short #1

Esplin 6483 blinks the eyes of the Hork-Bajir, a female named Jea Kepak. Esplin listens dimly to Jea while getting up off the floor, moving away from the edge of the pool. A fellow Hork-Bajir Control waits at the bottom with an impatient look upon their face while giving out orders to those new Controllers coming from the infestation pier.

"You are to answer to Sub-Visser 84." Said Controller states and Esplin heads towards this unit of fellow new Controllers, secretly amazed at how easy this walking is becoming while Jea continues to demand that the Yeerk gets out of her head, which is rather distracting in Esplin's opinion and discomfort.

Well, maybe our scientists will make use of Arn technology to create a race of non-sentient hosts. They made these Hork-Bajir and other species, why not use those expertise in a practical manner of engineering hosts? Esplin reasons to himself as he asks using Jea's voice, "Is this Sub-Visser 84's unit?"

"By the transport." The other Controller states, waving Esplin towards the ship, which surprises the Yeerk but Esplin is already heading in that direction a second after getting direction. Esplin glances about as Controllers go about their tasks, moving to avoid them as best as Jea's body could.

"Esplin 6483 reporting as ordered." The Yeerk states to the one carrying a data pad. The other Hork-Bajir Controller studies them for a moment, Jea seems to finally quiet down before the other just waves them into the ship.

"We depart in two minutes, be sure to strap yourself in." States the other Controller and Esplin once more causes Jea's body to move up the ramp. The ship looks like one of those Andalite ships, likely one of the few that was captured along with the other ships that would enable their race to travel in space.

The inside shows signs of alterations, likely due to engineers installing new equipment to replaced damaged equipment. Esplin finds the hold and finds a place to strap in, sitting next to a fellow female Controller. "You got any special skills?"

Blinking Jea's eyes, Esplin glances to the right, to the male Controller. "I use to read up on Andalite biological archives when I had access to the computer." Esplin replies to the question, not sure what that had to do with anything.

"You studying to be a scientist?" The Controller to their left asks. Esplin shakes Jea's body, while replying, "I just wanted to know what species there are out there and what kind of strengths and weaknesses they had. Most of the techno jargon went over my head, even with access to a language program."

That seems to cause the other members of the unit to relax. "First host?" A second male Controller asks and Esplin nods Jea's head.

"Ah, well, I doubt you'll get to enjoy the sensation of tree travel at our destination." The female Controller to their left states and it didn't take Esplin long to access Jea's memories. Only, they made the Yeerk rather uncomfortable as it seems to renew Jea's yelling and struggles to get out from out of Esplin's control.

Suddenly, the ship jerks and then, there's this sensation of raising up into the air. None of the others spoke, not that Esplin could blame them, it's rather tense as they could fall under attack by free Hork-Bajir and starved out of their hosts. The tension then begins to leave and conversations develop among the veterans as Esplin is the rookie among them.

Esplin's mind wanders, although staying out of Jea's memories. Esplin didn't know what the future holds and has mixed feelings concerning it, excitement and dread in equal measures.

Seven Months Later

Esplin 6483 swims about the pool, enjoying the fact that Jea's presence is gone. In some points, during his time as a guard at this Arn encampment, Esplin has taken to reading up on Arn's biological sciences and believes that it shouldn't be hard to use said technology to create a race of blank hosts. And yet, to Esplin's dismay, all those that tried to bring up seem to suffer from set back that causes them disgrace or death.

It seems that from the first time scientists have gone through Arn data banks, they had dreamed up the same thing Esplin had but nobody seem to have something to show the Council anything concerning why they should purse this course of action. Esplin had read and reread various proposals, none of which plotted out anything resembling a schedule or even a single form of a host species they could create using Arn technology.

In the end, most scientists and those in the know avoid speaking about such a possibility, thinking such a project is cursed, even if it never been brought before anyone on the Council. Esplin didn't think the project curse but admits that something doesn't want Yeerks creating their own breed of hosts using Arn technology. The Yeerk would have blamed the Arn but that species probably be happy to give them anything they wanted just so they wouldn't destroy their whole race.

Breaking Esplin out of his thoughts is his name being called to the infestation pier. Within seconds, Esplin waits for the familiar smell of Jea to come into the water before darting for the ear. With practical ease, Esplin reaches the brain of Jea and as the Yeerk settles in, mentally winces at the feelings coming from Jea's body.

You just had to find get pregnant, didn't you? Esplin says to Jea, not particularly likely the feeling while Jea just seems satisfied with the new life growing within her. The pregnancy is still in its first term so there isn't any reason for Jea not to be infested.

Getting up from the pier, Esplin takes a glance at the time piece and then heads to the nearest lab to study this DNA strand that Esplin had been slowly constructing for the heck of it. With at least three hours before Esplin's shift to begin, the Yeerk wants to take advantage of the time. While most of the DNA mimics that of a Hork-Bajir, Esplin had been inserting genes of regeneration and trying to create this brain like nerve cluster in the chest area so that beheading the being wouldn't kill it or the Yeerk.

As the screen lights up and Esplin puts in the pass-codes, a six foot creature appears. It's head rests on a bit shorter and seemingly thicker neck while a series of short, thick blades about two inches long covers the top of the head. The rest of the body is very similar to that of a Hork-Bajir except for the fact it lacks the blades upon the arms and legs. The tail sports a large bone ball at the tip while three claw like blades jet out of the club.

About the end of the tail is suppose to be an acid spitting apparatus. The acid's effect are slightly modified from the stomach acid, making it mild within the body but coming on contact with the air, it lights up on fire for a brief amount of time. Esplin had added that bio-chemical weapon just to see if it could be done and so far, even though the genome is incomplete, it seems to be rather stable.

Besides, Esplin can't take all of the credit for how easy it is to create this genome, the Arn programmers had done their best to make it rather easy to manipulate DNA to such an extent. Previously, Esplin had engaged the program to locate matching genes needed to fill in the rest, among which is to find the right kind of structure so that the bones can be light and yet tough.

Finally, two hours had passed and the creature on the screen has been altered by the introduction of the new genes. The being now

stands five feet at the shoulder but is seven feet in length. The natural stance is the being resting on the four larger limbs. It is capable of standing up to operate controls using these arms that come from this chest cavity but it can't move very comfortably about being bipedal.

The primary nerve cluster is located under that chest cavity, this cluster literally needs to have a Yeerk within it just to move. The idea of this kind of nervous system comes from the Hawjabran. This will keep the Yeerk safe from the usually method of beheading.

The tail adds an extra four feet and still possesses that flame throwing acid that is created at the tip and comes out from this hollow spike. The tail is capable of curling up over the butt and could spray forward, although the head will need to duck down as not to get hit.

The color would be primarily black with spots of light blue and stripes of green. It possesses two sets of eyes, one set looking straight ahead while the other set slightly higher up and to the side, allowing for a wider range of sight. The tongue possesses air taste buds on the bottom of it while the nose possesses wide open nostrils. The mouth possesses rows of sharp teeth, although the being is omnivorous, capable of eating bark and greenery to flesh and bones of the dead.

"Impressive. A rather bulky design but given the digestive track, likely needed." Jea's body stiffens and Esplin slowly, jerkily, turns to find somebody very important standing there, looking at what Esplin's free time had wrought.

"This is just my second design. The first is bipedal, although shorter then a Hork-Bajir, it possessed wings for gliding." Esplin says and taking a look from the other Controller as permission, he saves this design and brings up his first.

Then, directs Jea's body to step back as the Emperor advances. Esplin didn't know what to do, this whole thing seems... surreal.

"Only five months to reach adulthood? Rather short life span, but then, they grow up rather quickly. Hm, yes, I want five thousand of this design ready in five months and a thousand of your second."

"Yes sir!" Esplin bows and remains so as the Emperor and bodyguards leave the room. Jea's heart pounding in their shared chest. Once alone, Esplin moves to another computer terminal and brings up the Arn's network to check upon the spawning tanks.

With a frown, Esplin finds a com-device and get a hold of the head engineer to inform them to begin creating and repairing the spawning tanks. Of course the Sub-Visser wasn't happy about it and demanded why they should do so. To which Esplin states, "Because the Emperor needs eight thousand spawning tank hooked up yesterday."

Esplin is rather overwhelmed when the Sub-Visser contacts him later informing him that they had a hundred ready to go and were working on importing more from the other settlements along with making them. Next, the head scientist contacts him concerning ways to improve the tanks, it seems that Esplin hadn't been the only one to find some project to do in their spare time beyond hanging out with their comrades in the time off lounge.

While Esplin 6483 hasn't been officially promoted, many have begun to treat him as though he possessed the rank of Sub-Visser and then that of Visser when the other Sub-Vissers of the camp began to answer to him as those spawning tanks get filled up with those engineered eggs of his first design.

Short #2

Garoff 2759 finally realize what is wrong with the ships that the new Yeerk Empire has been busy building. They were wasting resources building ships for Controllers to pilot instead of making use of Andalite technology to allow Yeerks without a host to pilot ships or even man weapon stations.

We can make them smaller, saving resources, and maybe install mini Kandrona Ray generator in them so they don't have to exit out ship. Garoff thinks. *Have to be sure to have relief with them, given how large we are in our natural form it won't be much trouble.*

"Now who do I have to speak with to set things in motion?" Garoff wonders out loud, using the Gedd's vocal cords in the Trade Tongue and with that, Garoff sets about looking through the crew list and is rather shocked to learn that a 'sibling' is in such an important position.

But before Garoff 2759 decides to approach said 'sibling', the Yeerk planned to do so with some plans for such ships on hand. Garoff didn't see how it'll take so long to create, not with access to the Andalite archives and use of mind thought technology to interact with the memory banks.

After five hours, Garoff is done and sends a message to said 'sibling'. Just as Garoff's replacement arrives, the Yeerk gets a reply and with a smile upon the Gedd's face, Garoff 2759 heads to meet with said spawn sibling. *Even if I'm only allowed to build a single prototype, it should worth satisfying my curiosity concerning if a Yeerk without a host could contribute to the war effort.* The Yeerk thinks while walking down the hallway.

Making it to the designated room, Garoff 2759 enters and tries to straighten the Gedd's pose as best as the Yeerk could do so. "This should be short and to the point." States the other Gedd controller.

"We are wasting resource on a frightful manner. The use of Andalite mental controlling technology means that instead of needing hosts to pilot ships, a single Yeerk interfering facing with the flight controls could so the same. Perhaps better as the ship's technology won't have to filter the host's mind to obey the Yeerk's mental instructions."

"Little in the way of minerals would be needed as the ships would be smaller and if we install a small Kandrona Ray generator, the ship's Yeerk crew wouldn't need to return to a pool and allow for long term

survey/scouting." Garoff 2759 then waits for the other to say something or ask a series of questions.

"You want us to rely on technology that belongs to the enemy." States the other controller in a flat tone. "But you do have a point, Garoff 2759 that we are not using every means at our disposable. Create a prototype and if you can find volunteers to pilot it, we will officially review it."

Taking that as a dismissal, Garoff 2759 turns and walks out of the room. *Now to find an engineer willing to help with this project.* The Yeerk muses while heading to get food and liquids as Garoff's host is in need of that and rest.

Four Months Later

The wiring of the small ship is finally done, they had run into problems like how do the crew make repairs without hands and then came manufacturing equipment so it's smaller in size while still able to function. Every piece is custom made out of scrap parts. The final product possesses enough space to a crew of ten Yeerks, although it's more likely that at least five Yeerks will be used as they also have robots to do repairs as Yeerks naturally lack such appendages that they prize in hosts.

Garoff and those who aided in creating the ship have each ridden in it, circling the room, each taking turns piloting it. The weapons that the ship have also been tested and while not as powerful as normal size, they can switch intensity rather easily. It's likely that the ship and others like it could do well in stealthily entering into other ships.

One interesting idea is of a hatch would allow a Yeerk to exit out of the ship and enter into a stunned target with the ship hovering. From the updates send on to Garoff's spawn sibling, that feature seems to be rather desirable as it would allow them to take Andalites as hosts. Which would give them informants among their enemies.

Today, the ship only needs to prove itself to be tight enough that it can survive outside of the confinement of the ship as the updates of construction have kept the upper ranks of the Empire in the know concerning its performance. Garoff watches as the ship seemingly glides towards the air lock on the screen. The Yeerk's tension extends to the Gedd host body in the way of tense muscles and certain chemicals getting released within the host as well.

Garoff stays silent, the current crew has experience and there shouldn't be any problems during this flight test. They have used the air locks a few times in the past and none gave out. *Only difference should be temperature.* The Yeerk known as Garoff 2759 thinks to itself.

Garoff's tension gives away to relief when the request for them to return to the air lock. Things were looking up... until an Andalite star ship exits out of Z-Space. The tension returns as the alarms go off and orders for the pilots to head to their fighters. Garoff swears out loud and balls one of the Gedd's hands while glancing away from the screen showing the Andalite ship.

When the tiny ship requests orders, the Yeerk replies, "Sabotage the main ship anyway possible." Flickering the host's eyes to the screen, Garoff tries to follow the proto-type's progress.

As the fighters engage each other, the main ships attempt to get into position where they won't receive fire from the other main ship while having a clear shoot at firing at the other ship. The shields continue to keep the damage done by incoming fire at a minimum. Not being a fighter, Garoff is at a lost at how quickly order and counter orders get sent out to the smaller ships.

At some point, the main Andalite ship seems to suffer from a problem, likely engine related given the way the shield falls. Suddenly the smaller Andalite ships are retreating and they are getting hailed, when the com is brought up, they are addressed by an Andalite, one identifying themselves as Akdor 183, one of the crew of the test ship.

"Could you repeat that, Akdor 183." Janath 429 asks and Akdor 183 does so. *-Carger 567, Alahar 14688, and myself are in possession of Andalite Hosts. We are currently stunning each Andalite we come across for future infestation.-*

Silence seems to hang about them all as the fact they now have a number of Andalites that can be infested once they begin boarding the Dome Ship. "Good work, all fighters, secure that Dome Ship! Start loading some Yeerks into containers to be transported to the Dome Ship for infestiation!" Orders the Akdor 1154, the very same Yeerk who led the uprising against the Andalites.

Within seconds, controllers are stumbling over themselves to follow through with those orders. *Everything just seems so unreal...* Garoff 2759 thinks while staring up at the screen viva the eyes of the Gedd the Yeerk controls.

Unknown to Garoff 2759, the Yeerk would be given an Andalite host as a reward for being the Yeerk who envisioned the ship that allowed for the capturing of not only another Andalite Dome Ship but Andalites as hosts.

The End of the Tales?

To Readers:

Yea, been working on this since December so I hope you enjoy them.

The Looping Soul P2: Buffy

I don't own Buffy the Vampire Slayer or any other copyrights mentioned.

Casper rolls onto his stomach while putting his arms under the pillow. His thoughts circle around his defeat of that young version of Tai'Jynn. Although a school day, he doesn't feel like sitting through classes he's already sat through, listening to information he now knows off the top of his head.

Perhaps I should wait until he's reached the level I remember him reaching the first time? It would be a more... honest fight at least. The looping soul muses while his gaze is inwardly focused.

And then rather suddenly, Casper laughs at the fact that he still seems to have a moral code. "I guess it evolved like I have." The current blond muses once he's regained his composure. He couldn't keep the wide grin off his face as he finally rolls onto his side and sit up.

Swinging his legs over the edge of the bed, Casper stands up and heads to the bathroom adjacent to this bedroom. As he waits for the water to warm up so he can have a shower, he relieves himself before fully undressing himself. Tossing the cloths through this hoop that instantly teleports them to the laundry room.

His thoughts drift to the first creation of that demon body to explore the Hell dimensions.

Five Hundred and Twenty-Seventh Loop

It took a good twenty-one loops of genetic research and then another five to mix paper scroll magic into the mix to speed up the creation. It also aided in giving him options of how to express genes. Although,

figuring out how to insert himself into the body had been, unsurprisingly, easy.

Not that it's really that surprising. Casper, although his current birth name is Henri Ellison, thinks while pushing his currently green bangs from his forehead. *Given how the rich are always willing to pay any price in order to remain alive. The thing is, how to modify the spell so that I can go back and forth between the two.*

The body within the tank is currently that of a child. The rest of the tanks that surround him are currently in the embryonic stage. Each of the embryos are meant to grow to appear vastly different then the others around it. The count is currently twenty-nine embryos and one child.

"What do you think?" Casper asks, glancing over to Jonathan. "Think you can handle this body when it's older?"

The sixteen year old nerd/warlock looks startled and opens his mouth to say, "Wha?" Casper smiles as he turns to the computer terminal, accessing the child demon's information.

"This body will be yours as a reward for helping me with this... project." He simply states to Jonathan. "I promised that you'd never have to worry about bullies ever again, didn't I? You inhabiting a demon body should give you the physical prowess you've sought."

And then there's the fact that I'll get to see if inhabiting a demonic body does indeed corrupt one or it is the spell that does so. Casper thinks to himself while Jonathan stammers out thanks. He plans to try his variation of the spells of transference with Jonathan.

Of course it goes without saying that if Jonathan dies during the course of the experiment, there are a list of others who'll be more then happy to jump at the chance to have supernatural capabilities and physical prowess. Given that nothing seems to be going wrong in growing this bodies, it means that those in the higher plane see it as a resource to exploit.

I really need to find ways to block their attempts at killing me or sending me to a Hell dimension if I interfere with their designs on the current time stream. Casper muses to himself, although he's rather restricted concerning research options about how to do so. He has been doing his best to avoid making deals with Demons as he doesn't know if such bargains will extend pass his current life in the skin of somebody who isn't Xander Harris.

Current Loop

Casper glances through his library of books, some of which were actually role playing table top game manuals instead of anything dealing with the shadow underbelly of the world which possesses magic. He's long since learnt of a number of ways to create majority of the items from each game line. His gaze lingers on what would be known as Classic World of Darkness game line, which actually led him to make overturns to the spirit world, not to be confused with lingering ghosts of people.

With a shake of his head, he pulls out one of the Dungeons & Dragons. The manual he pulls out is the one talking about vessels that allow mortals to travel to various planes of existence. He's slowly gaining an understanding of the magical 'physics' that allow others to travel between various realities, although it helps that he's been living on a Hellmouth for ages.

Casper does have a slight understanding of how to create minor pocket dimensions, he does know how to create bags of Holding after all. He is kind of interested in creating a version of it on a safe and from a safe to a closet and then from a closet to a room or even the whole of a house. He's not sure if he can work it without having physical walls but first things first, he needs to create a stable version of it for something made out of metal and that's rather problematic as at least the stuff he's used to create previous bags of Holding had been made from organic material like from plant fibers like cotton and silk from silk worms.

It's also likely that begin able to import material from other dimensions would open the way for new ways of doing things. Of course, he needs to get to those dimensions which is why learning to create a vehicle that should allow him to find dimensions that are more hospitable. It also doesn't hurt that it would finally allow him to gain access to the so-call divine realms where he can finally show how 'happy' he is at some beings' micro-management as well.

Although he does know of one way to get access to the spells to create said vehicle but, for now, he'll keep trying to puzzle it out on his own, using personal experience.

Nine Hundred and Thirteen Loops

Halloween coming up and he's slowly paging through his notebook that's warded up the yin yang to avoid the notice of 'Balance' demons. He's grown bored with using tiny bits of paper in hopes of putting a suggestion on various costumes. Casper did have a way of appeasing said God that gets invoked and hopes that it'll leave a very distinctive impression once the spell has passed.

After all, there's a whole race of tricksters in classic World of Darkness called Nuwisha. He plans to have seven 'characters' of this race along with examples from each tribe/race/court. There's going to be at least two members of the so-called extincted tribes, White Howlers and the Bunyip while the only ones being left out are the Black Spiral Dancers and the Nagah. Which brings the total of characters that will possess various people to be hundred.

Given the diversity of looks common among each of the various Fera/tribes/courts. Casper already had plans for the Scooby trio, Buffy's going to end up a Silverfang Pilodox who's breed is that of a Homid, as she needs to be reminded of her duty and she's got to have something mentally wrong upstairs as she does enjoy screwing vampires. Willow is going to end up as a Gurahl, Forest Walker Kieh to be pierce, only instead of her breed being Ursine. And finally, Xander is going to end up a male Ajaba of the Dawn Aspects with his breed being Homid.

He's set up the entrance that each person that shows up in his note book walks through the door of the costume shop, it connects them to said character sheet as just by walking through the door. After all, he knows who buys what and he's even gotten familiar with what Willow ends up buying when he buys up all the ghost costumes too. He lingers on the Gurahl character sheet that will soon connect up to Willow when the Scoobies finally go costume shopping.

Before closing the book, he takes a moment to go to the last page to where his character sheet is. That of a Camazotz, making him half of the population that will arise when everything begins. He's rather curious about what it'll be like to be one, to fly at night while relying upon echolocation.

Halloween

Casper counts himself lucky that he wasn't that high in the air when the spell broke. As he gets to his feet, he glances around at the wreckage and if this were an anime, he would be sporting a sweat drop at the sear amount of damage that's been had. Most of the dead are actual demons and vampires, he made sure that everyone who became a Fera or a Garou would not sense the Wyrm in anyone save for vampires and demons that inhabit the town.

"But then, it shouldn't be that surprising that we have so many living and passing themselves off as normal humans..." Casper murmurs thoughtfully until it dawns on him that the dawn has arrived so nobody actually ended the spell early. "Got to remember that for next time I decide to use Werewolf the Apocalypse. Or any other smart ideas."

Then, as the shock begins to wear off, kids of various ages begin to whimper while a few move about as if in a daze. Casper moves forward and gathered up the kiddies, being sure to check to see if they have any injuries but from the looks of it, they seem perfectly fine. As the memories of his character rest on the back burner, he slowly herds the kids through the town, dropping some off at their homes while picking up more.

He did find a few things that brought smiles to not just his face but the kids' and knows that it's the work of one of the seven Nuwisha. A few did seem to have left their names on some of their art work. He does make sure to keep from the routes that clearly been decorated viva limbs, organs, and bone.

It's about noon before he finally realizes how hungry he is and, making sure he has his wallet still, although the few ID in his wallet have been permanently enchanted it seems as the moment he touched it, the picture shifts to mimic his current body's face look instead of that of a bat. The name and other information shifts, although he stiffens at the age that is not in the brackets, which is his body's current age.

"Ok, get new ID, check." He murmurs under his breath as he pockets the ID before checking the rest of the contents but it seems that they remain non-magical. Closing the wallet, he walks into the breakfast restaurant and finds a number of people crowding about the tables. With a shake, he does notice the seven sitting at one table.

He knew who they were last night and not that surprised to see them acting friendly, after all, they had formed a pack last night. *Which makes me wonder if any of the other packs connects survived the end of the enchantment.* Casper muses as he places an order for a dozen muffins to go as he didn't want to stick around here any more then he had too.

As he sits in a park, he is reminded of the enchanted ID and pulls it out to take a long look at it. Although as he polishes off eight of the muffins, he found himself wondering if anything else had become permanently enchanted as it is doubtful that only one of item would have survived having that much magic going on, particularly as at least a hundred 'costumes' had tapped into the imagination of likely hundred of thousand gamers from around the world.

Hm, I wondered why Etan never put out any of the popular comic book characters out? Although, I have been transforming into future popular characters before, but then, I had been the only one who

knew said characters. He tries to review what little he knows about previous tests. He's fairly sure he's never seen this level of destruction but then, he's never let loose over a hundred of beings geared for battle and dedicated to wiping their version of evil off the face of the Earth.

Closing the box, Casper decides to explore the memories he inherited from Torn-Scream-Echos. He's not sure when he finally came to, but the fact that the sun is setting and his box filled with what remains of his muffins being long gone means it's been a few hours at least.

Hungry once more, he gets up off the picnic table and pauses as it dawns on him that if Angle is dead then he could be seeing the sky of some Hell dimension in a few months. Murmuring a curse, he heads straight home to prepare gear for when that happens.

Current Loop

As night arrives, the opening of the door causes Casper to look up to find... "I forgot to cancel the copy, didn't I?" With a single hand sign, the clone falls to the floor as if his strings had been cut, which they had been.

Mentally murmuring curse, he carries the copy down into one of the basement level for storage as he'll use it again when he has sent his mind out of his current body and into that demonic one in another dimension.

To Be Continued

Spirital Fox Cloth: Naruto and Bleach

I don't own Bleach and Naruto!

Naruto giggles as he evades the irritated Uchiha police man, he turns right at the corner and suddenly, he trips. "Ahahahahahah..." The six year old blond screams as he brings his arms up, crossing them before his face. Then, the shadows and light seem to get colorful until suddenly he hits grass and falls forward, rolling while he finally begins to choke and cough.

As Naruto's vision slowly comes into focus and he is breathing regularly, the child groans and rolls onto his back. The sunlight greets him as he stares up into the sky while some clouds dot about. *That was weird... How did I get out of the village?*

Then, being a child, he grins widely and begins to laugh while talking to himself. "Hehehehe, I so show them! I'm Uzumaki Naruto, the awesomous future Hokage ever in the whole universe! Believe it!"

As he gets up off the ground, he charges off, not really paying any attention to his surrounds. The child's baggy, off white t-shirt presses itself upon the blond as Naruto races about the forest, heading northeast. Humming a wordless tune, Naruto found ways to occupy himself while waiting for those masked people to arrive and take be before the Old Man.

Then, as the blond finishes climbing up a tree, he yawns a bit and bites his lower lip as he looks up at the sky. As the sky darkens, the blond begins to get worried. "They've never waited this long to collect me..."

As the sun sets, young Naruto begins to feel rather hungry but he doesn't move to get down from the tree. Rather, he moves higher up into the tree until he finds a comfortable branch and getting

comfortable, he begins to drift off. Being a warm night, Naruto drifts off to sleep.

- = Two Months Later = -

Naruto scowls as he trudges down this dirt road. The six year old kicks the ground while carrying this pack that somebody threw at him a few days ago while running away scream 'please spare me, little Kami!' While it's a step up from being called a demon brat, he hasn't been able to walk up to an adult to ask where he is and where Konohagakure is from here.

"Why are yea following me?" Naruto demands as he lets the pack fall to the ground, turning on his heels to confront the other problem that frankly, scares him more then a little. The elderly man sporting this plate on his chest and this chain that's, like, nine chains long seems to blink.

"Following you? Why would I follow you? I'm going to visit my granddaughter you whelp." The rather creepy feeling elderly man answers rather waspishly.

Naruto didn't believe it, after all, he's been bugged by these people wearing metal plates in their chest since he seemingly left his birth village. They just appear at random times, spend the day with him before vanishing. It doesn't help that they don't seem to have feet and sometimes, he hears these dull screams off in the distance that set his teeth on edge.

While he does want company, he has come to want the company of people he could actually touch. The six year old sits down with his back against the pack. His feet are sore from all this walking and he's rather thirsty, he has check the pack but found some bottle of headache juice in it, which he just left alone.

As the blond six year old is about to drift off into a nap, a hollowing roar sounds. He straightens up and his head snaps to the other side

of the road. Birds fly into the sky as the roar becomes something of a background noise.

Naruto just sits there frozen as the sound draws closer and then the something begins to claw at his mind, a hunger that's worst then what he knows of right now. He's learnt through trail and error which plants he could eat without getting sick, there have been dry food to eat in the pack so he didn't have to forage around if he didn't want to. Something hazy appears coming out of the forest.

He can't see it real well as it seems to be bouncing around. And then, with a roar, Naruto sees it clearly, too clearly. Then the hunger in his mind surges forward as the monkey-spider thing leaps at him. Everything but the white monster fades to black and he knows that he's about to die.

If you don't want to die this day, use this! A voice bellows, jerking out from the feeling of hunger and the terror of the white monkey-spider inspires. He wraps himself up in the 'cloths' he mentally feels flying pass him.

The hunger vanishes and he just manages to leap out of the path of the monkey-spider monster's way. His body feels so light and feels so strong. He digs his fingers into the dirt of the path before standing up from his crouching position.

He feels something over his face and covering his head but it doesn't seem to obscure his vision in the least. **"What kind of Hollow are you? Psst, it doesn't matter, that power will be mine once I consume you!"** A feminine voice erupts from the monster before Naruto.

The blond child grins as he dodges away from the tail that snakes towards him. While the looks of his opponent are strange to him, the situation on the other hand is very familiar. This woman monster wants to catch Naruto? Well, loads of people wanted to catch him before and he's out race them!

"Na-uh! You can't consume me! I'm Uzumaki Naruto! Future Hokage of Leaf!" Naruto exclaims proudly, a wide foxy grin plastered upon his face under the mask he is currently wearing.

"Come and try, you Spider-hag! Catch me if ya can!" The six year old says and darting forward, he easily picks up the pack while evading the five limbs coming at him pretty much at once. With the pack on his back, he somersaults backwards before landing and darting down the path, heading back the way he came, laughing all the while.

Confronted with something familiar, Naruto doesn't care that its not some upset Uchiha, merchant, or Genin trying to grab him to bring him to 'justice'. Never mind that without the Old Man around he could wind up dead or 'consumed' as the Spider-hag put it. He doesn't even wonder why he has some red bangs whipping before his eyes or that the pack that once been so heavy is suddenly so light. Nor was there a question about how no longer feels as heat of midday.

For now, it's just a game that he is confident he can win. It never crossed his mind that there is a chance he could lose.

- = Year Later = -

Naruto blinks as Spider-hag screams, not the hollow roar that she's done before but a much more human sound. The young boy blinks and without breaking stride, shifts into those red cloths he received, with the sense of power and freedom, he easily leaps over the building and runs upon the very air towards the site where he can see the Spider-hag combat something wearing black.

Stopping short, he gets a clear look of what's fighting his 'play-mate' and 'buddy'. The person that is injuring Spider-hag sports a katanna sword, wearing black cloths, and seems to be a young teenager. Sensing something to his left, Naruto darts out of sight as somebody seemingly teleports next to where he had been standing.

Turning, he finds a woman coming at him welding another sword, only this one is much shorter and sporting very short black-blue hair with a single braid tucked behind each ear. *She's fast. Faster then Spider-hag.* Naruto admits as he finds it hard to keep his distance, particularly as she is attempting to use that same sword she owns upon him.

Naruto continues to try and evade the woman but she just matches his speed! He bites his lower lip to keep from crying out in pain as the sword does manage to strike him on the back of his left hand, he just manage to get out of a strike aimed for his shoulder. He is dimly aware of the defeat of Spider-hag and that the teenager is now watching this woman and him 'dance' about the sky.

"Enough of this, Sai!" Naruto finds himself unable to move much but the woman seems confident that she has him bound up. As she takes her time, the blond reaches into his own energy reserves and snaps the bindings as he rolls out of the down swing of the sword.

"Sai!" Naruto cries, the word seems to come naturally to him and suddenly, both of them seem to go rigid. Not sure how long it'll take them to break out like he had, he dart back into the village, once he's on the ground and out of sight, he transforms back.

A second after, the pair teleport about the building but he acts like he doesn't see them. The one before him glances around in bewilderment before teleporting away, along with the one behind him. Running a hand through his dyed hair, Naruto tries to come to grips at the new players that he now had to watch out for as they were clearly more skilled then Spider-hag and those other white monsters he sometimes glimpse in the months since he spied Spider-hag.

Naruto glances around the small village and then heads south, away from the village. *Was that even a jutsu?* He wonders, he never encountered anything like it before. Sure, those white monsters seemed to have special attacks but they always seemed to involve a body part and felt hungry to him.

"Sai?" Naruto murmurs under his breath as he remembers what it felt like to be under that jutsu and can't help but wonder how he managed to cast it upon the pair wearing those black kimonos welding those swords. Feeling a slight tug at his energy, he picks up a rock, tosses it, and declares, "Sai!"

The rock hastes a bit midair but it still moves until it lands. He also feels rather drained just by that effort of calling upon it in his current form. He then grins, he'll work on it until he can cast it without saying it out loud, believe it!

He picks up another large rock and gets ready to toss it once he feels he has a grip on his energy.

- = Two Years = -

"Oh man, I still haven't grown at all!" Naruto grumbles after he checks his height against the tree he's been using for the last month. The black dyed blond child pouts once more at this development, his bangs slipping from behind his ear to cover his face, much to his irritation.

He blows at it for a few seconds before using his left hand to brush it to the side and back behind his ear. Although Naruto is much more tan then he had when he found himself in these lands, he also filled out muscle wise. He does stand a bit taller but that is likely due to a growth spurt to make up for his poor dietary habits when he lived in Konohagakure so he is now a tall six year old but still six years old; in body development at least.

With a soft sigh, he takes the knife he has in his right hand and with a frown, decides to do some hair trimming using the knife. Without a mirror, Naruto doesn't see how uneven he is hacking it off or that his blond roots are showing even more. Putting the knife into his belt, Naruto walks over to the water bucket to take a look at his new hair do.

Sighing at the sight of his blond roots, the child pulls over rather beat up pack and digs around for some boxes containing herbs. For the next few minutes, Naruto adds various stuff to the pail of water, stirring it until it is black itself. He then adds some more and then stirs it. It takes time but a test shows it'll work as dye, he then takes a keep breath and dunks his head into the bucket.

He does this a few times and even does his best to rub it in some more before dunking his head in the pail again. He continues to do this until even his hands sport black splats. Dumping the pail, he then takes it and washes it in the stream. He returns to get soap to wash away the stains on his hands. He is careful of touching his hair, happy to allow it to dry on its own.

Feeling that he's not alone, Naruto glances to find a small trio of spirit gossiping not far from his efforts to clear the bucket and his hands. The child looks away from the three, they'll be gone by evening and no harm done to himself or to others. He had long since given up trying to puzzle out why he attracts the dead or what's the deal with those metal plates in their chests.

They also tend to vanish, hiding more likely, whenever those white monsters decide to appear. And usually when those white monsters appear so do those so call Shinigami. Although he has seen many different Shinigami since the first pair and has learnt a few more of their Kido.

A smile graces his face as he recalls the expressions those Shinigami get when he turns those same Kido on them . Once he is sure he can break a Sai without much effort on his part, he's taken to playing with the Shinigami but has done his level best to keep them from seeing him transform. He didn't like the idea of getting experimented on by them just so they can figure out how he works.

He keeps practicing them too, typically as he is now as it is so much harder to use those Kido and thus he feels a hundred times his size when he manages to pull them off! While Naruto feels a swelling of pride within his chest, he puffs out his chest while straightening his

shoulders. He hums a tune while he finishes with the pail, while it did still have some dark hues, it doesn't look as black as it usually is.

He dyes his head to keep people from thinking his is some kind of Kami. While Naruto likes that better then becoming considered a demon, he just doesn't feel like it fits him. After all, he doesn't want to offend any actual Kami.

And those people can't be Shinigami either. 'Cause nobody escapes death and I've been escaping from them so there. He thinks, pleased with himself as he collects everything he brought and heads back to his camping site.

Putting things away, Naruto is sure to check to see if anything is worn before closing the pack. He leans back upon it and stares up at the sky, he finds it rather calming for a while until he gets hungry. Getting up off the pack, he heads for the village that's a few minutes run from his little campsite, all the while ignoring the fact that those three spirit were following him.

With a few coins jingling in his kimono's pants pocket, Naruto made a beeline to the small restaurant, an inn, of the small village. As he walks pass, the child notices somebody wearing monk's cloths and with a staff as he walks pass to get into the small building. Seeing the daughter of the own free, he walks over to her.

"Hey, hey, hime-chan, can I get something to eat for this?" Naruto asks, pulling out the coins he has in his pockets, offering them up to the fourteen year old. She turns to smile down at him before humming at the sight of the coins.

"Hm, let me just get your order from the kitchen, ok chibi-kun?" The daughter turns after ruffling his newly dyed locks and heads for the kitchen. He sighs a bit but is content to wait, he knows from experience how much he'll have left after he leaves with his meal.

The gossiping trio of women spirits were outside, which is just fine with him as it means they are content to only address each other

then to butt into his business. As Naruto begins to fidget while standing in place, he is relieved when the daughter comes back with a bento box. As he leaves a few coins lighter, the seemingly six year old comes out to find that the monk seems to be intent on studying the three gossiping spirits.

With a shake of his head, Naruto dismisses this observation and walks away, heading to a tree to sit under to eat his bento. When he's done, the almost ten year old takes the box up to one of the benches and leaves it there. Humming to himself, he heads back to his campsite to continue to punch that post he set up.

As the day progresses, he pauses to take a breather to find that the monk had followed him back to his campsite. He frowns in puzzlement while he tries to think of a reason why he would attract the attention of this particular adult. *I don't recall seeing him around here before today.*

"Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?" The monk asks upon walking over to him upon seeing that he's stopped attacking the post. "You didn't do anything wrong, I just wish to know a few things concerning the area."

Naruto kind of relaxes but can't help at feeling that he isn't the right person to ask concerning the village. "I guess... What do you want to know?" He asks as the monk crouches, the staff leans on the man's left shoulder.

"Has a woman you were close to recently died?" The monk asks and he can't help but blink at the question. He shakes his head and this causes the monk to frown.

"Are you sure? It need not be your mother, an aunt or even somebody you consider to be your sister." The monk presses and he glances over to the trio of spirits, at the sight his eyes light up as he gets why the monk is asking.

"You see those three too? Never meet any of them until I visited the river today." Naruto waves a hand towards the three women. "I've gotten use to that, actually. Spirit show up, spend the day with me before they vanish." Not caring at the look that flashes across the older man's face.

Shrugging, he add, "Don't know where they go or why they show up like they do, only that they can be really annoying." The monk glances towards the spirits with a raised eyebrow.

"Three? There are three spirits here?" The monk asks and Naruto nods.

"Yea, can't you see them?" He asks with a confused look upon his face. "I mean, you were asking about a woman dying on me, right?"

"I can sense an overly female presence in that direction but I can't see her... them." The monk informs him rather truthfully after looking in that direction. "How well can you see them?"

Naruto takes a moment to look at the three, studying them more intently. It's really his first time really staring at them as he had gotten in the habit of ignoring spirits that linger in his presence. He then describes them one at a time.

The monk's expression becomes clouded, Naruto couldn't read the emotions that seem to be going on within the monk. Not having anything else to do and knowing the importance of such man as this monk, he does his best to stay still but that doesn't help him from moving back and forth or moving his hands from before him to his back. "How would you like to become my student?"

The dyed blond blinks at this question, it's rather odd that an adult wanted to teach him something. "What's the catch?" He asks warily.

"Well, you give me your name and you travel with me, studying what I have to teach." The monk states. "I am Denji."

"I'm Naruto!" He exclaims proudly and this causes the monk Denji to smile. A soft chuckle escapes from him while Naruto once more suffers from somebody ruffling his hair, causing him to pout at being treated like a little kid.

- = Nine Years Later = -

Naruto claps his hands twice as Denji-sensei had taught him to do before praying. Head bowed, he thinks, *I'm sorry sensei for not being quick enough to purify that monster. Please know that though I mourn your passing, I will do my best to follow the lessons you taught me.*

He stands up and though his eyes are puffy from crying, he doesn't have any more tears to shed. The incense tickle his nose, but then, this particular scent always did that. Denji-sensei's staff rests in the bundle of cloth he wrapped it in. He'll be taking it to the nearest temple and inform them about his master's death.

Alone again. He can't help but think as he stares down at the incense pot and grave offerings. Although Naruto still appears to be six years old and his blond hair is dyed black, his eyes show this true age. He wasn't an innocent child that his body shows him to be.

Looking away from the small shrine, he does his best to pick up the bundle that the staff is wrapped in and then the child size pack that has his food rations, scrolls, and two alternate changes of cloths. He moves his hair braid so it rests over his right shoulder, reaching towards his chest as he hitches the pack onto his shoulders a bit more.

While he would have liked to say good-bye to the spirit of sensei, he knew it was for the best that both of them step forward on their own paths now, each heading off into different directions. Though the weight of the staff bundle is great, Naruto walks away with it resting in his arms, the top leaning on his left shoulder as he goes.

As Naruto walks away, he reflects upon the years he spent with his master and they warm him, causing a soft smile to remain upon his face. The lessons in reading and writing might have been trying at times but he finally got to understand what the big deal was and found himself enjoying writing down his thoughts down or whatever tunes that cross his mind. Drawing came next, particularly as he got into the habit of drawing those white monsters that appear from time to time, attacking him.

I never would have gotten the confidences to attack those monsters if not for Denji-sensei. I knew that those Kido could affect those monsters, I just never bothered to fight using them. They saved my life and not always in encountering those white monsters either. He reflects, but that only brought up the matter of how his master died so he turned his mind to other matters, like that tune that's become rather popular among kids that **he** wrote !

Shaking his head, he thinking upon that song, a wide smile upon his face as he continues down the path. He hums a bit, the burden upon his back is rather familiar and one he'll likely continue to feel as he has yet to grow at all.

Ending it here

Readers: Ok, it has been a little over a whole month since I began this and I can't think of anything more to add, so I'm posting it. I hope you enjoy this.

Defying Pride: Dragon Flyz

I don't own Dragon Flyz.

To Readers: Events are based upon Dragon Flyz episode Son of Dread. It's central plot is about Z'neth with a case of memory loss that Dreadwing tried to used to his advantage. You can find the episode on YouTube.

The first thing to assault his senses is gargling sounds that are wet. He feels something sticking to his limbs and as he finds the strength to open his eyes, Z'neth finds his vision blurred. With his head pounding, he pushes up with his arms, a slurp sound occurs as he pulls himself out of the muck. He has coughing fits that cause his body to shake and make him feel as though he's trying to hock up a lung.

Just pulling himself up causes his senses to whirl, he doesn't even get the chance to wonder about his surrounds. His body, particularly his head and back, ache and protest any movement but instinctively he knows he needs to find a place to shelter in. That being out in the open like this could very well be the death of him.

Standing up, he then hunches over while a fist covers his mouth. His stomach calms down slightly and he becomes aware of the chill as the mud begins to come off as he rubs his arms. Z'neth dimly acknowledges his surroundings as he crosses his arms across his chest as he begins to walk.

His brain throbs and his vision keeps blurring. *Must have been some fall.* Z'neth thinks as he walks through this landscape featuring bones. *Dragon bones.*

Finally his legs give out. Privately he is amazed they took him as far as they had. Falling to his knees in pond of muck, he spaces out of it

for a few seconds, becoming alarmed when he hears something behind him. With a sharp breath, he stands up once more, already looking over his shoulder to see what is coming up behind him.

He moves back as this muck monster gets close and its bulk becomes apparent. Without a thought, he brings up his arm and with his other hand, tabs his gauntlet only for it to click. He turns and flees, but he is quickly finding it hard to breath as he is pushing himself beyond his current limits.

Z'neth stumbles and falls into the muck. The muck monster bellows and he hears its paw slam into the ground not far from his leg. He turns, gasping at the sight of the wide mouth and glowing yellow eyes.

He begins to crawl away, as he grunts out, "No!" Although it comes out as go. Then, suddenly, a blast of something hits the monster and it falls back due to the force of the blast. Heart pounding, he turns to stare at the thing that almost had him.

Then all the excitement overwhelmed him and he blacks out. He barely gets a glimpse of who saved him. The toll of everything is just so exhausting.

Ten Hours Later

As Z'neth comes to once more, he finds himself in a building. Yet again, he is having trouble with his sight. Looking down, he finds that he is wearing blue armor with white straps and boots. Leaning his head back down, he closes his eyes as he hears somebody close stirring something.

He feels much more rested then before, although he still aches in places. As somebody approaches, he calls out for his father. As he glimpses a face, Z'neth asks, "Is that you father?"

His vision begins to blur as he calls out but seeing that a spoon is coming towards him, he opens his mouth. After all, he wasn't behind

bar and whoever this person was, they seem interested in his welfare. Although, something about the others looks unsettled him, particularly the eyes. The glow yellow of them.

He shrugs the worry away as he continues to be spoon fed. As he finishes his fill, he drifts off into slumber. Feeling secure where he lay.

Six Hours Later

Z'neth wakes and finds himself alone. His vision is still swimming but he feels the need to get up. He has someplace to be and though he aches, he notices that they weren't as bad as before.

He feels a bit disoriented as he swings his body about and moves to get up. Pushing himself up, he notices the door. Once before it, he places both hands upon it. Feeling how solid it is with his, slightly pale hued arms still covered in that blue armor.

Then, feeling dizzy, he pushes off against the door and returns to his bed when noticed that the door didn't give. Feeling hot, he climbs up onto the bed and attempts to reach the hole in the ceiling. He needs to see his father.

Then, after exhausting himself and only causing himself become spent, he lays back down upon the bed. Groaning at how hot his body feels. *Fever... I have a fever.* Were Z'neth's last thoughts as he falls into a restless sleep.

Four Hours Later

He wakes to find the previous person once more coming towards him with a bowl. As the spoon comes towards him, he slaps it away. Then, he begins to black out as the person approaches more closely.

Where is my father? He wants to demand but he can't seem to get the word to come out. *Father...* He mentally cries out.

Seven Hours Later

Once more, he wakes and as he looks towards the door, he finds it open. Z'neth finds that his vision has cleared up and although his aches do bother him, he gets up anyway. He groans as he moves for the door.

As he walks through the halls, he finds them both familiar and wrong. He continues to ignore this, pushing down the thought that this place isn't safe. His father must be here, he hopes that his father is here. He wants to see him, to speak with him, say he's sorry for causing him to worry.

Nobody moves about the halls but him, the clicking of his boots upon the floor echo in the empty space. Slight panic sets in, is he going the right way? Has everyone gone off on a mission?

He comes to a pool of lava and the wrongest of it causes him goosebumps. *This isn't home... Our father isn't here...* A voice whispers in his mind and as he marches on, he slowly begins to agree with that voice.

He goes over the image of the person feeding him, the strange hue of the skin, the glowing eyes, and how thin they were. It wasn't his shape and so far, he hasn't seen a face that, for some reason, he knows is his face. His joints ache from all this walking and with each step, he feels his fear increase.

At times, he stops, resting by leaning against the walls. He grows hungry and thirsty. The heat in the halls becomes unbearable as he continues.

Then, he comes into an open cavern with stone bend like fangs leading into the mouth. Z'neth continues on after a few seconds to take this in. As he draws close, he begins to make out a central pillar, no, it was a throne.

A crimson person stands next to the care-giver, a soft chuckle comes from this guy. Z'neth notices how this one carries himself and judges that this person is likely the one Care-Giver answers to. *So then, he's the boss. What does that mean for me?*

And then, as he stumbles to the ground, a voice, a very deep toned voice, welcomes him as his son. Z'neth is alarmed by this, particularly as he gets a better look at the Crimson's face and knows that this isn't his father. Plus, as near as he could tell, they may be closer in age then that of father and son.

Now then, he could do one of two things, play along with it until he gets a better picture of things or he could call this guy on it. Given how weak feels and sore, the smart thing would be to play along. If he does, he could likely have a better chance at escaping.

But then there's that part within him that's made up of his pride that pretty much wants to call this guy out. That he is lying as the Crimson guy continues to say how pleased he was that he recovered. "Your son?" Z'neth inquires and then he feels a tickle of a cough.

In a split second, he chose his course of action and by suppressing the cough, he says, "While I am grateful for the help you have given me, I don't believe we are what you say we are."

Then, suddenly, his head tries to explode. As he clutches his head, fighting against the pain, he dimly hears Crimson berate Care-Giver about mutagen being permanent along with him already beginning to remember.

Finally, he collapses as a pause where Crimson expected Care-Giver to speak. What little conscious thought he had was, *Why try and fool me into think your are my father?*

Bit Over a Month Later

During his stay in Care-Giver's company, he never did get a name, he's been moved out of the base due to attacks by enemies of Crimson. He dimly recalls his first meeting with Crimson, he recalls getting greeted by the guy and then the pain in his head. Of course his next meeting with the guy was when he was in the worst way, being tied down to keep himself from harming himself.

Care-Giver admitted that his head injury might be a bit worst then they thought as he once more became feverish and he began to bleed from his nose and ears. He barely recalled what ramblings he had during that fevered time. What helped had to do with this strange light that was rather soothing to look into and helped with his headaches.

The pass month took a lot out of him and Care-Giver's worry seems to have faded away as his fever and the injuries from that fall healed and went away. His armor has been replaced with a shirt and pants while he also wears this hat that sports a veil to cover his face. The veil gets changed every few hours due to the liquid it as been soaked with drying up and the gases in the air beginning to affect him.

Care-Giver wears a mask that covers his lower face but soon enough, they won't need to continue dwelling in this gas filled hole in the ground as they will be leaving shortly, heading back to Crimson's base. As he looks out at the lava pool, he finally turns and asks Care-Giver his name.

"What is your name? I don't think I've hear you introduce yourself." Z'neth says and this seems to startle the other to look at him.

"Ah yes, of course." Care-Giver murmurs rather softly to himself, although with the mask, he can hear it rather easily. He's grown use that that habit in the time they have been together. "I am Gangrene. A doctor of sorts in the service of Dreadwing."

With that, Gangrene returns to packing up equipment and after a moment, he moves forward to lend a hand. Between the two of

them, they finish packing everything that's important up. They head to the higher levels of the cave to eat their meal.

Soon enough, Fryte arrives upon his dragon and hands him some armor for him to change into. He has met this guy before and he didn't particular like the guy as he seems like he wanted to pick a fight as shown by the way Fryte seems so keen on threatening Ca... Gangrene during his weekly visits.

Z'neth gets the feeling that Fryte and Crimson aren't the kindness task master. At this point, he feels more of a connection with Gangrene then either of the semi seen Crimson and the threatening Fryte. *Not that explains much of who I am...*

Once in the air, he takes off the veil a few seconds after Gangrene takes off his mask. Feeling the wind rushing about his face, it just feels so right...

Gangrene

Dreadwing isn't going to be very pleased about his mental state. Although I must say, the mutagen has finally settled down compared to how unstable it had been at the beginning. I would have preferred something like a pair of tusks jabbing out from the lower jaw to obscure his looks a bit more, making it difficult for him to be recognized. He muses on the flight back to base. *But then, Dreadwing likely wanted to shock value of one of Airlandis' top Dragonator leading an attack upon Airlandis himself.*

I've managed to suppress his memories, which, regrettably includes the lay out of Airlandis and it's defenses. The hunch back thinks as Warnado comes into view. A swarm of Gremwings comes out to escort them into the heart of the caverns. Already one of them is darting on ahead to inform their master of their arrival.

Gangrene dreads his meeting with Dreadwing as it is clear that while physically, the alternations made to Z'neth will be permanent the mental ones are so very weak. Nobody can deny that Z'neth has a

strong will and personality, he is the leader of a unit of Dragonators, the ones that give them the most trouble. Also, it's not like the Dragonators are likely to believe the ploy they cooked up to make them think Z'neth is dead, all they saw was the armor getting consumed by the lava.

There's too many factors involve when it comes to keeping Z'neth among our number. Anything could break through the weak walls keeping his memories at bay. I need time to come up with something that should make it harder for him to remember but at the moment, he needs to be kept away from familiar settings to have new experiences. Gangrene reviews and concludes. *The science of the mind is rather unpredictable but the basics are the same.*

As Skunk lands, Gangrene quickly turns to fussing over his equipment. Z'neth aids in the unpacking, he does spare a look towards the former Dragonator but given that he's the only one who is being careful, leaves him be. *At least somebody knows to be careful!*

Z'neth

With all the boxes containing Gangrene's equipment off of Skunk, he is escorted before Dreadwing, he finally has the name of the master of Warnado. He didn't particularly like the name and as he looks upon the man, is reluctant to be in his presence.

"Welcome back, you seem to have made a complete recovery." Dreadwing booms in his deep toned breath. He notices Fryte looking rather displeased concerning his welcome.

"Thank you. I hope you have had luck defending yourself from your enemies." Z'neth says politely.

Dreadwing gets this smirk upon his face that causes him to become even more uneasy. "They did not get what they attempted to raid from me. What I claim is rarely taken from me."

Z'neth nods as he couldn't find any words that come readily to his mind. This seems to satisfy Dreadwing and he says, "As such, I have need of someone to secure my south-eastern border. I have decide that you and a couple of my Dramen will be sent. I'll give you eight months to do this, understand Zangear?"

Z'neth nods, when Dreadwing signals his dismissal, he and three of the gathered Dramen head off to the waiting dragons. Briefly he imagined a blue among the four brown but he puts it down as his imagination. He sighs as he is upon one of the four dragons, flying away from Warnador with three warriors under his command.

What little he has gathered, he had been an exile fighter from his tribe who had the misfortune of arrived while the Lord of Warnado, Dreadwing, had been fending off invaders. His dragon was killed and he suffered a great fall. And thus, how he came to be in the care of Ca... Gangrene.

Perhaps it is for the best that my memory is gone. I won't remember the shame I caused my father that way. Z'neth thinks as Warnador vanishes over the horizon.

A Family Is Split Apart

American Werewolf in Hogsmeade: HP

I don't own Harry Potter.

January 17, 2003

Leaning back, Harry feels like rolling his eyes at the discussion going on a few tables from his own. He has the hood up and the glamor he usually wears is down. The emerald eyed wizard knows that none of them would be able to identify him, after all, Harry Potter doesn't have tattoo stripes on his face or on his body period.

If it weren't for magic, they wouldn't be any better, perhaps worst, then the non-magical populous. Harry muses to himself with a sneer and disdain shining in his emerald eyes. *Even the so-called Mudbloods seem to shred their common sense striving to be accepted by the magical society.*

The only reason he even entered into this tavern is due to checking the Shrieking Shack as he is thinking of buying it for its still intact tunnel as Hermione never thought to collapse the tunnel like she had to the others that lead from Hogwarts to Hogsmeade due to the Whomping Willow. *What Bollocks collapsing those tunnels! They could have just Warded them so they can be of use in the future, when some other Pure-Blooded blinkered decides to capture the castle for its resources.*

As Harry sips from his butter beer, he can't stand the taste of hard liquor since he became a werewolf. He finds that alcohol just doesn't affect him in the same matter either. For some reason, it causes him to become more alert and harder for him to speak. It seems that his vocal cords just relax after consuming about three glasses of wine.

Just remembering how he found that out causes him to bring his left hand up to his throat and rub the front of it, holding his fingers and

thumb around his Adam's Apple for a few seconds before lowering his hand. Harry sends a glare towards the bottles behind the counter, almost wishing that he didn't have such an odd reaction concerning something that everyone in the magical society seems happy to serve to their guests and how refusing it could cause offense among such circles.

Since then, Harry's been privately experimenting upon himself to discover if any other drink or food causes an unusual reaction in him. He has come across a few strange effects in five other foods and has discovered that its likely due to the artificial additives that has become common place in non-magical foods. The more 'pure' the artificial chemical is, the longer the effect lasts without intensifying the effects, which he is just happy about.

His attention returns to the drunkards as they cheerfully declare that they are going out to hunt centaurs. Harry scowls at the group of four. Given that a recent article came out talking about fertility magic and a traditional list of what is usually used in such magic, he at least knew why they would think this such a good idea.

He gets up, upon finishing the remainder of the drink and walks before the four managed to grab their cloaks that are hanging up. A number of customers shout out protests, demanding warnings before the door opens. He sneers at that, already knowing of a ward the owner could set up to deal with any kind of outside weather coming into the building.

Harry's become something of an expert on ward schemes since he was bitten. He had begun looking into enchanting to try and mimic his now immunity to magic sent towards his person. So far, he can create a thin skin that breaks if hit with a single spell, it's a recently created scheme after he had to self-teach himself about the subject and the runes used. He had been impatient so he brewed Wit Sharping Potion to help with his studying.

The enchantment on his boots, he got a spell book from Canada that had such a niffy spell in it, allows him to walk on top of the snow and

ice without breaking through the surface. He didn't need to see the moon to know what phase it is as he heads for the forest's edge. Harry finds a nice spot and waits, minutes tick by but finally, the drunkards arrive as they plow through the snow.

Once more a sneer of disdain appears upon his face. *What's the use of having magic if you don't use it for the small things? Magic is like a muscle, the more you use it, the stronger it becomes.* Harry thinks as he begins to undress himself.

When he's done with the group, nobody will believe they encountered a werewolf, even if the Forbidden Forest is suppose to have werewolves living within it. He didn't think anyone would be able to prove that the group saw either once he does a few spells before leaving. Once all his cloths were off, he does some quick spells with his wand before he puts his wand on top of the cloths.

With ease, fur springs forth over his body as his bones and muscles already begin to budge and move. As he hunches over as his shoulders grow heavy and his fingers thicken as his finger nails darken to become the toe claws. Unlike the artistic drawings and movie creatures that the non-magicals envision, his finger nails don't coming razor sharp talons that can slash through flesh with ease.

As he drops forward and a flick of his tail, he takes a few steps away from his spot. His nose twitching and ears moving about, he glances deeper into the forest for a few minutes before the drunkards begin firing flare spells. With a snort, Harry moves through the snow, he doesn't sink into the snow that much and he could easy move about by leaping forward if he wants to pick up speed.

As he leaps up onto a large tree trunk, he looks at the group and taking a deep breath, he begins his howl. Midway through, his head is thrown back and then lowers it as it comes to an end. Spells are flung in his direction by the panicking group. Given that they were drunk at this time, not body will think that they really encountered a werewolf that they are viewing right now.

One of the last two spells he had done had been a glamor that gave him a ghostly outline while the last spell had been to make it seem like he's got a tail of black fire. He'll alter the tracks to appear like fox tracks and nobody will be the wiser that the group was telling the truth. He lets loose a mighty snarl when a spell hits the snow a foot away from him.

His body tenses as he shifts his weight to his hind quarters. With a sharp bark, he leaps from the stump and charges towards the group, as he growls. The men, screamed and he can smell them pissing themselves before they turn about, running as fast as they can through the snow.

He slows down but dogs their heels, the idiots that they are, they didn't think of heading towards the village of Hogsmeade but heading into the forest as they head north. Finally, after about an hour, they realized they could just Apparition away, likely grown sober by then.

With a sigh, he feels his transformation reverse, a minute more and they would have witnessed him revert to his human form. Shivering, he Apparitions back to his cloths and once he's clothed, he takes out his shrunken broom and gets on. Slowly, he moves about the scene, altering his prints into that of fox tracks up to the trunk before heading off into the forest.

He then erases his other track of him charging and harrying the group. He then returns to the fox tracks and leads them to what appears to be a badger set and then heading to the beginning of his tracks, searching for fox tracks that lead into the town and does some editing so it appears that it came close but didn't venture into the town.

He had to make sure to that nobody notices him and a rather powerful Notice-Me-Not charm covers him. With a sigh, Harry lands on a cleared path, shrinks the broom once he Apparitions back home. Pocketing the broom, he enters into the house and heads for his bed.

January 20, 2003

"I can't believe you bought the Shrieking Shack!" Hermione exclaims viva the Floo Network. He sighs and heads to the kitchen, coming face to face with Professor Weasley, his bookworm of a friend is now teaching History since they managed to get rid of the previous ghost of a teacher close to five years ago.

"Well, hello to you too." Harry says dryly as he crouches down to face Hermione. "And what does my purchasing of said building have to do with you harping at me? Don't you have a class to teach?" He inquires, they haven't seen eye to eye with each other since she took it into her head to collapse all those tunnels that lead out of Hogwarts and the strain has only gone down hill since.

Of course I began to have a problem with her bossing me around once I got back from Mexico... The emerald eyed wizard thinks as she glares at him in a heated say. "You only want the property for that tunnel!"

"Actually, I plan to build an apartment complex on the property. I've already spoken with dwarfs about it and they'll start once we get a tent up, which should be by tomorrow night." Is his reply and is the truth, although the dwarfs were also going to get paid bit more to expand the tunnel to the Chamber of Secrets along with building an indoor pool and hot tub in the basement of the complex.

"You're going to do **what** ?!" Hermione shouts and he winces, already his ears are ringing. "You can't do that!"

"Last time I check, there's no law against building on my own land." Harry states simply. "Just as there wasn't a law against my buying up land to do some farming and ranching. Or operating my own butcher shop that has a restaurant attached to it."

"But... but, it just isn't done! Aren't you earning enough already?!" She demands and he mentally snorts at how out raged she is acting.

"Then why don't you go speak with the Pure-Blood camp? I'm sure you'll find common ground, yet again, about what 'hare brain' scheme that Potter is coming up with." Harry spats at her.

Seriously, it's like I have to fight again and again just so I can spend my money on my interests. So what if the Potters had been more into clay working then into ranching? It's not like the family clay pits are bringing in a lot of money, nobody is the least bit interested in brick making or pots for cooking, there's only a few artists that use clay in their art on any level any more. He thinks, he had begun to amass his fortune by selling clay to the non-magicals as they had plenty of uses for it compared to the magical society.

Nobody ever bothered to step up and take over the farms and ranches that use to be run by dead houses. I didn't even buy up all the available farms steads either... He thinks as Hermione attempts to inspire some kind of cultural pride into him and leave off his building project, never mind that he's already paid the dwarfs half in advance and importing ward stones.

Perhaps I should start up a factory and hire the muggleborn to create them? I know want to set up wards around my farms and ranches just in case somebody thinks they can set fire to the crops and kill the animals. Harry's gaze turns inward as he begins to come up with such an idea. There are some properties he already owns that have crumbling structures that were of no use to him.

"...paying attention! Harry James Potter are you paying attention?!" Hermione demands and he blinks, coming to realize that she's done with her lecture.

"Kreacher." He says in a soft tone and the old House Elf pops in next to him. "Please disconnect the Floo for me? I am done speaking with the 'good' professor." Harry says as he stands up from his crouch.

"As Master wishes." Kreacher says and soon, Hermione's head is gone from the fire. "Thank you Kreacher." He says and Kreacher nods before returning to his work.

"Hupa." Harry says and a much younger House Elf appears, "Yes Master Harry?"

"I believe a certain Dragon will be informed about my private business." He says to Hupa and the House Elf nods in understanding, vanishing from the kitchen.

A number of Hogwarts House Elves had wanted to work for him after what they heard he had done for Dobby. He hadn't wanted to 'lure' away any from Hogwarts but after Mexico, he began to ask questions and finally remembered something about why they would have been eager to leave Hogwarts employment, now why he forgot about this bit of information had other concerns at the time but now, with the need for loyal workers after the disaster of trying to hire farm hands from the magical society, he approached the House Elves and about twenty entered into his service, they were happier to be in his service when he hired Squibs to work on his farms and ranches as they preferred taking care of humans more then animals and plants.

If they knew about his altered nature, they never seem to mention it and he's fairly certain they knew what changes he has undergone since Mexico. Nor do they seem particularly displeased about working for him. Harry smiles as he walks out of the kitchen, heading back to going through his mail.

February 19, 2003

"Fine work, Master Garth, fine work indeed." Harry says as he studies the steel door that sports an etching of a younger version of himself stabbing the monstrous snake in the mouth. *So that's why they wanted the memory...*

"Your welcome, Mr Potter. And after we got a look at said skeleton of the beast, well, it's the least we could do. Particularly as you just gave us the skeleton for nothing!" Master Garth of the Crimson Mead, at least that's what the translation of the dwarf word the master craftsman gave him at any rate.

"It's not like the Headmistress or the staff seemed interested in clearing it out from the chamber." The emerald eyed wizard says in a dismissive tone. "Besides, I like the idea of it finding its way to a Wizarding museum, particularly a none UK one."

"We'll let you know which country won it then." Master Garth says but before they could continue the conversation, a runner comes down the tunnel on one of the enchanted carts for the dwarfs to use to take away the dirt and to help speed travel back and forth along the tunnel. "Some Dogs showed up asking for our client."

I don't think I'll ever get use to hearing Pure-Blood's getting called Dogs. Harry muses to himself. "Well, better late then when we broke ground." He states out loud.

"True." Master Garth says and he moves to the cart that brought the messenger. Once in, the dwarf messenger shifts the levers to return to the tunnel entrance before shifting the one that allows it to go.

Within minutes, the cart arrives and Harry climbs off. "Thank you." He says to the young dwarf who nods in return.

As he moves through the packing of equipment and the moving the crates that contain the shrunken dirt from the tunnel digging. The 'machine' that shrinks the dirt remains untouched along with the other enchanted mining karts. Within two to three days, the dwarfs will be gone and he'll start calling up those applying for apartments for interviews.

The total of the apartment building can house up to a full thousand families. The amount of ward stones he used helps maintaining the sheer size that he enchanted the building to hold. He already decided which three House Elves he'll put on as a starter staff and will likely add more when the number of occupancy grows. Each floor above the main floor sports up to rooms for two hundred on each floor and there is five floors total.

He'll hire some of the unemployed people wanting to rent an apartment to create a landscape and to maintain it. He expects most of those applying are single, not that it stopped him from ensuring that each set of rooms is like a one story house. There isn't any furniture in any of the apartments, and again, he's fairly happy to allow some of those unemployed to do wood working for other occupancies as part of their rent.

Ever since he learnt just how many Muggleborn migrate out of the UK or attempt to be reabsorbed into non-magical community, he was disgusted at the waste of supposedly well educated Muggleborn just wasting their talents due to nobody willing to pay them or allow them to operate their own businesses. Heck, he even paid for the education of interested Muggleborn to attend cooking schools for his restaurant as long as they agree they to work for him for the first three years after they graduate from the school.

So far, none of them have been able to find anyone willing to hire them claiming their dishes are too, Muggle in nature. Which is why he's given his more senior workers the chance to begin experiment with ingredients from a magical animals to be used in dishes. He has recently imported domestic magical breeds to be raised on his ranches just to get said product to be used.

Why is it I feel as though I'm the only one who sees that the economics of the Wizarding society is so stagnant? Harry wonders as he walks up to the lift once he has crossed the basement. He feels a headache creep up on him and it'll likely get worst.

Hupa has been keeping track of Draco's political movement, he's of the opinion that the only reason anyone follows Draco is due to his father and his wife, both of whom were much more charismatic then his childhood rival. Also, Draco still can't get over giving empty threats if things don't go his way, although if Draco's wife throws her weight behind a threat...

As he exits out of the lift and walks through the lobby, Harry calmly reminds himself that he is powerful enough to rip into Draco and his

family they ever become an actual, active threat without any use of magic or being injured viva their spells. He also had an odd idea concerning the use of Magical Contracts, after all, as he never put his name in by hand in that tournament it wasn't official until he participated in that first task, after that, he couldn't get out of it.

The sight of the tent over head blocks most of the natural light, not that Harry notices that he's exited out of the apartment complex. His mind continues to be elsewhere as he walks towards the entrance of the tent, simple walking there instead of using magic to hurry to the encounter with a bunch of wizards and witches out raged over his latest project. His boots go through the wet muddy ground as the tent's temperature enchantment keeps it in the plus range instead of the negative one.

He's fairly sure that if any adult had actually read the rule book, they wouldn't have kept saying he had to participate or confirm that he was an adult, which meant that he was an adult when he was charged with that use of underage magic in defense of himself and his cousin. *Not that anyone would admit it or wanted to think that I was capable of making my own choices. Dumbledore pretty much wanted me to be that sacrificial lamb after all.*

Nobody knew who it was that destroyed the portrait of one Albus Dumbledore and none of the other protraits knew how that came about either nor could they repair it either. All of the other spares had been destroyed in the same mysterious fashion as well. Within three months, no image of said Dumbledore anywhere in the world and he's content with that, for now, who knows, he might have to take to finding ways to erase the man's total impact upon history, leaving him to be just a foot note in a Hogwarts book of being a transfiguration professor.

Pushing those thoughts from his mind as Harry hears a demand for the dwarfs to step away to allow them entrance into his property. The dwarfs in his way part to let him stand before the entrance. He nods his thanks to either side before coming to a stop.

"I would prefer they didn't." He pipes in as he comes before the tent entrance, blinking slightly at the sudden increase of natural light and the slight chill, although he doesn't step out of the tent as he has no particular want to catch a cold as he didn't stop to put on some heavy cloths for the current weather going on outside of the construction site.

"Potter! You took your bloody time, as always." Snaps the ring leader of the current group of magic users standing out in the cold. A murmur of agreement circulates within the crowd.

"Well excuse me of wanting to finish the inspection of my building. Which, just to let you know, these good beings finished just hours ago." The emerald eyed wizard states in a slightly dry tone.

"They couldn't have finished already! The bloody tent hasn't been up for barely a full month!" One of the locals that live in Hogsmeade says in full disbelief.

"You had some nerve of hiring these halflings to built your building instead of proper wizards. Bet they did botched it." A witch mutters softly to her neighbor but he heard her none the less and given how the dwarfs tense, they did as well.

"Oh shut it already. I'm the proper owner of this property and I got all my papers in order, so I don't need checky cobbers coming around telling me what I can and can't build or who I hire to build it! So clear off." Harry snaps at the group.

"Actually, you aren't the proper owner of this property." Draco pipes in as the group seem to be fingering their wands. "And we got the documents to prove it. Hogsmeade's landower is whoever is Headmaster of Hogwarts."

"Actually, it was the Founders who hold the land in trust and give management of said land to the Headmaster of Hogwarts. Any proper heirs of the Founders, as long as they get recognized by the Founders' portraits, can do as they please with any land that the

Founders hold." Harry pulls out two scrolls, one from the magical portrait of Slytherin and from Hufflepuff, unrolling them before the crowd's eyes.

"These papers proclaim that I am the proper heir to the lines of Slytherin and Hufflepuff. The blood potion mapped out my bloodline and both portraits declare am of their blood and can lay claim to their lines." Harry says to the group, the dwarfs had found the magical portrait of founder of the 'Pure-Blood' house in the resting place of the Basilisk. Being able to command the beast to move out of the way had been part of the test to prove that one is a member of Slytherin's bloodline.

It was from that painting that he learnt of the rights of the Founders' Heirs and that just being a member of the blood isn't enough to lay claim. No, they wanted heirs that prove that they could lead as they had, possessing the stern stuff that allowed them to go against the conventional standards of their time. He proved that to both of the two, Hufflepuff by his creation on work for those that come from non-magical parents and to Slytherin by the fact his thinking outside the box when it comes to dealing with the stagnation of the magical society.

He hasn't found either Griffindor or Ravenclaw's magical portraits but as he had been declared the heir of the two he had found, he wasn't going to make it a priority of his either. Perhaps when his god-son is about to enter into the learned halls of the school he will, if only to do a rapid update of the school and to get a more balance in what is taught, maybe increasing what ages are accepted or just the creation of a school that could teach from six year olds to ten year olds.

"So, you are a Dark Lord then!" Exclaims one of the group. "You must have used Dark magic to get the Hufflepuff's acceptance!" Another exclaims.

"Oh please, you are just a bunch of bloody fools if you think I could fool those two portraits. And I'll have you know that Old Tommy boy

was never Slytherin's officially sanctioned heir either! The man was appalled of Riddle for what he done concerning the basilisk. Tom failed, failed horribly and only acknowledged that the boy had his talent for speaking with snakes and nothing else." Harry states in a hard, matter of fact tone.

"How can we believe any of this?!" Cries a witch among the group, the same one who mentioned the dwarfs doing a botched job. "How do we even know that those aren't fake?"

With a snort, Harry uses a bit of magic to roll the scrolls, tossing them at the leader, Draco just manages to grab them before they fell. "It's not my job to converse you nor do I really care. Come next year, you'll see my name upon the letters getting sent out as well as my official position."

With a nod, the final dwarf closes the flap and the entrance seals itself. "Stupid blood buggers." One of the dwarfs say as they head off to help with the packing. The crates of shrunken earth will be used by that landscapers to flatten the ground.

"Master Harry Potter sir." He turns to find Hearth standing to his right, offering him a cup of hot chocolate. Harry's expression softens as he accepts the drink.

"Thank you Hearth." He says and the House Elf nods before popping away with the tray. Harry sighs and begins walking to the apartment complex as he slowly gulps down the hot drink, helping to take the slight chill off from some of the chilly wind entering into the tent.

As long as I stay at least four or five steps ahead of them, I'll be happy. He thinks, he mentally reminds himself to meet with that Canadian lawyer he has previously contacted. He'll need coaching for when they bring him before the Wizengamot, he knows some of the hidden loop holes but he needs to know upon what grounds they'll try and bring up on him.

Given that state of the group, he's likely got three months to get prepared. It'll take that long for Draco's wife to organize things through her husband. *Might help to go through those journals in the Black's library as well, never know what kind of blackmail they house.*

July 2, 2003

Draco

"There's nothing we can do to over turn this! We've had how many people try to find a loop hole but they can't find anything!" Draco exclaims and when done, flings himself into his chair. A dark expression upon his face at the fact that Potter has achieved yet another victory in defying the very heart of the world, the Traditions of the Wizarding World.

"There is one way..." He looks up to gaze at his wife, although her expression is rather grave. "Which is?"

"Challenge him in a Dual of Conquest or gather people to challenge him one after the other to wear him down." Idania Blishwick nee Malfoy informs him and he blinks, not sure what this challenge is.

"I thought such duals were disconnected and outlawed." He mostly guesses but Idania sighs. "No, they just generate fines but I'm sure we can get a written pardon from the Ministry, particularly if they know we only wish to challenge just the one person."

Draco perks up and is about to open his mouth when Idania pins him with a look. "And don't say you can take him right now. Your skills have grown rusty. We'll hire a tutor or two to get you or whoever else you wish to throw at Potter to sharpen those skills, perhaps even learn a few tricks that he wouldn't be expecting."

His face reddens then pales as he does recall the few times he has seen Potter use a wand. Draco doesn't like it but his wife as a point. "Besides, at the moment, you do wish to see your child born, don't

you?" His wife asks and it takes him a few minutes to realize what that means.

"Your pregnant? Do we know if its a he?" Draco asks, getting up to place a hand upon his wife's belly.

"It's a boy but whether he'll be able to do magic..." And he frowns but couldn't argue. "For now, let Potter bask in his achievements and gather more as in a year or two, you'll claim all that is his for your own, husband."

He liked that idea, after all, Harry's has spent all that money to import those magical livestock. *Let him do the hard work and grow lazy in the mean time. Then I'll strike and take everything that is his as is my right as a Malfoy.*

Harry Potter

Harry gets a thoughtful look upon his face upon hearing from Hupa about the fact that the master mind behind the Malfoy family plans to train Draco and a number of others up, likely those that will have given an Oath of Loyalty to Draco personally and challenge him in a year or three and that the fact the wife is with child who's using it as an excuse.

"Harry! Harry! Guess what?!" Harry turns to look towards the fire place to find Nevile's head popping out of the fire.

"Guess? Me?" He asks the man who has replaced Hermione in his circle of friends.

"I'm going to be a dad! Can you believe it?! A father! To a babe!" Nevile exclaims joyously.

"Good on you mate! Want me to come over or you want to come here?" He asks as he gets up from his chair.

"I'll come through!" And soon, he and Neville are chatting away about what good news this is.

Until Later

Portal Maddness 6: Naruto

I don't own Naruto, Pokemon, Werewolf the Apocalypse, and Dragon Drive!

"Another story please! Pretty please?" Young Lore-Gather, Coastal-Wave-Driver asks, doing his best to look cute an innocent as only an otter could, his many time descent is of the sea otter tribe. **"I really want to hear the one where you trick the sun into granting us Auspices!"**

"How about you tell it this time, grandson?" Naruto, Tricks-the-Sun and founder of the Wereotter line of shape-changers. It's been over a few thousand years since he found himself in this strange world and his descents have gone on to form tribes based upon what type of otter they change into and from all over the world. Otter Den is located in the Umbra and has been his home since he stopped wandering the material world, sowing his oats as it were among both human and otter populations.

"Ah, but you are such a great story teller! How about the tale of the time you gambling with Old Man Coyote?" Coastal-Wave-Driver continues to try to wheeled another story out of him. He smiles as he slowly shakes his head.

"Now, now... if you won't tell me a story then I believe it's time for you to turn in. We'll be going hunting for a special Spirit tomorrow, so we will be needing to get up rather early." He says as he gets up from his mat in his, as the Garou could call it, Crinos form.

"Yes sir." Coastal-Wave-Driver says, getting up while in his near-otter form, leaving the communal room, heading for his assigned room before Naruto heads for his own, assuming his birth form, although instead of the bright blond hair, his hair is as white as purist

snow and is done up in a braid that has grown to the ground. Looking to still be in his mid-twenties, he heads for his room. There's still a lot to be done in order to prepare Coastal-Wave-Driver for his position as his emissary to the court of Luna.

Sasuke leans upon the rail, his eyes focused on the display in the water showing a battle between two teams, each riding upon monstrous creatures that the locals call Dragons. His left hand rubs the spot where his right hand's pinky and ring finger should be. Since they had been bitten off, he's found it hard to do jutsus and he's had to learn to deal with missing two of his fingers. *And nothing to show for it either, I never did get to partner with any of these beasts either. Training my ass, all I ever did was clean stables, never got the chance to really interact with one, even to bath it.*

In the end, he turned to thieving and robbing which lead to gambling. Even after twenty years, he still haven't met a worth while woman to bed, let alone bear him strong sons. Oh, he's paid for services but never for that. And the few he's sure weren't in that line of profession tended to be just as thieving as him, sometimes, better then him as much as he hates to admit it.

Soon enough, the battle is over and the team he bet on won. He heads off to find his bookie and get his money.

Sakura laughs as yet another victory is attained, Kuno the Vulpix turns and leaps into her arms, happy to cuddle. Finding a Oran Berry, she feeds it to Kuno while the pair of opponents are attending to their Pokemon injuries using Potions. Even with two against one and with at least one of the enemy Pokemon being a Water-Type, it didn't hinder Kuno at all. Once she has the money, she leaves the clearing, heading for the cafe that she owns.

"Grandma, we need you at the counter. Ben needs his break and I have to make more sandwiches." Ranko says while continuing,

"Grandpa and mom have gone into town to get more supplies while dad's up in his room, trying to recover from last night."

"I understand, Ranko dear." The fifty-one year old Sakura Zecele nee Haruno moves to stand by the cash register while Kuno remains upon her left shoulder. Kuno is just the latest Pokemon that she's been training, her first Pokemon Chikorita she named Ino, after her old friend.

Tucking a loose strand of hair behind her ear, she reflects upon her time on Team 7 and while she would love to know what became of the pair of numb-skulls, she is content with her lot in life. She found her self-confidence, made new friends, found a nice man to settle down with, started a family, taken up Pokemon breeding along side of running a cafe, and seen her children go their own journeys, living their own lives.

Digimon Loops: TK 1

I don't own Digimon!

Loop 1a

TK scratches his head as he tries to come to terms with the sight before him. *Although, this does give me an idea.* He muses as his look turns into a smirk, which looks rather wrong on his eight year old face before he walks over and picks one of the mushrooms.

"Patamon, you just gave me an idea." The Digidestine of Hope says to his partner as the rookie comes over to rest on his back pack, leaving DemiDevimon to his panicking over not knowing who he is after eating his fill of the Mushrooms of Forgetfulness.

"So does this mean that next loop I can delete DemiDevimon?" Patamon asks in a hopeful tone. It's always been a sore point between them given DemiDevimon's actions during their first time through these events.

"We'll see, it depends if we need him to do this if it fails this time." The green clad eight year old Looper. "For now, just help gather these mushrooms up into my pack." He goes so far as to take the pack off his back, he checks to be sure he has room or he'd have to make room.

"So, what's the plan, after all, these mushrooms do mess with your mind." Angemon asks upon Digivolving. It's not that surprising, Patamon rarely spent much time in either his Champion form or Ultimate like the others. TK hadn't been much into fighting at this age the first time he had been through this so Angemon and MagnaAngemon were a rare sight before.

"That's the whole point. After all, do you think Myotismon will be able to cure his memory loss?" He asks, gesturing over to where DemiDevimon is busy getting into a fight with some Gazimon who just shown up to avenge Etemon's defeat.

"No... oh! Yea, that would be an interesting sight. You think we can reform them?" Angemon asks and he shrugs.

Loop 2

"Ok, let's see if that hack paid off." TK growls as he holds out his Digivice and imagines himself at age fifteen and a stream of light comes out of the screen, a egg of light engulfs the nine year old and when it leaves, revealing him at the age that the loop end/restarts. "Well, it's a start." He murmurs as he takes in his appearance.

Nail polish? He thinks, his eyes narrowing at the black nail polish and upon the black, long sleeve shirt and jeans. A glance towards a mirror and he finds bright blue hair, bright spring green eyes along with some purple tattoos on his forehead and under his eyes.

His right eye twitches before turning to glare at his Digivice. "Ok, let's see if it reverts at least." He states darkly and within seconds of the light vanishing, he walks over to a mirror and sighs in relief at the fact that he is back to his usual nine year old self.

"Sure, it works when I will myself into my fifteen year old self but I do it in the real world? Maybe it's a matter of practice..." TK says out loud as he regards the Digivice once more. *Once I get to fifteen, I'll try for age twenty-something.*

Taking in a deep calming breath, he again wills his appearance to assume his fifteen year old self only to find his cloths being neutral brown and black. His hair going all the way down to the ground while being bright yellow in color and his ears seem a bit more pointed then usual. "Ok, maybe I should try hacking it again... I mean, sure, I

manage to create that storage space but I can't get it to allow me to assume a more mature appearance?"

He dispels his current appearance and walks back to his computer, he did wonder if maybe he shouldn't get Izzy to help in hacking it to allow them to alter their appearance while in the real world.

Loop 1b

They stood upon a sky scraper, watching the Dark Masters and Myotismon lead an army of Digimon in conquering Tokyo. The non-looping Digidestine were still in the Digital World, showing their families around the Digital World. Even now, neither of the Loopers knew how it came to this.

"Maybe it's the nature of the beast?" Angemon muses and TK just sighs, nodding a bit in agreement.

"You think its because we failed to answer those questions they asked concerning what humans are doing to correct the environmental problems they create?" Angemon asks and TK just closes his eyes.

"Maybe, Angemon, maybe." The eight year old muses.

Loop 3

TK looks between the two scrips and with a press of the button, one of them gets deleted and the remaining one gets copied. "Next, changing the director and voice actors." He murmurs as he continues to hack this studio's system.

Thanks to lessons he received from Izzy and reading a number of hacking help guides, he's rather decent hacker and program writer. After all, if he wanted to spend any time with Patamon before the fight against the Digimon Emperor, he had to create a gate program

to allow him access. He had to modify it to allow Patamon to cross into the real world as well.

Then he grew bored of watching the same movies and shows come out time after time. Then, some review commenting on how such and such a director could have been a better choice while another suggested a different lead actor. It took him Loops to figure out the various computer systems and how it all connects to making a movie. The produce of said tampering is kept in his Digivice's storage space.

It's always interesting to compare the same movie done by different directors using different actors, even different movie effects company. While he couldn't be bothered to use the various graphic programs to make a movie himself but he's been able to sell them to various parties to ensure the best CGI is used.

Next up, TV shows. He thinks with a smirk, after all, he's getting tired of seeing the same line up of 'new' shows. He's got a number of ideas of what kind of new shows he would like to be made and future scripts of shows that get produced by the time he reaches the age of fifteen. Once more such things are kept in the storage space, waiting to come out to be used.

He makes sure everything is set up for the change he made to the movie before erasing his presence within that system. Once that's done, he logs off and turns off his computer. Getting up, he looks over to where Patamon is watching one of those movies he stores in his Digivice.

Loop 4a

As Angemon gets encased in an egg of light, so too did TK. When they are visible, TK couldn't help but noticed that everything seems to be, odd. "Well, it worked! So, what do you think... TK?"

TK blinks and looks towards the orange haired twenty-something wearing a white shirt and blue jeans. "What? Dear god what happened to my voice!" The blond colored mini pegasus looking rookie says, rearing up, trying to grab his throat but doesn't. He looks down and finds silver leg braces before the black hooves. He flaps his wings trying to keep from falling forward.

"You're a Digimon, TK." The Digimon turned human says and TK didn't know what to say as he finally falls forward, standing upon his four hooves. "And, I'm human. So this is what it feels like to be a human." Angemon muses as TK turns to regard the rest of his changed form.

"That's great, but just what kind of Digimon did **I** transform into?" TK wonders as he rears back up and gets a better look at his chest. Stand up like that, he stands about as tall as a thirteen year old, which could mean he is a champion or just a really large rookie. "I can't be a rookie, could I? Although, I've never met a rookie that's larger then Gabumon or Agumon."

"Hm, let's see if your Digivice has a listing of you." Angemon muses, picking his Digivice up from its position on his pack. It wasn't long before the lap top is up and his Digivice is connected.

"I can't believe I look like a My Little Pony!" He mutters as his current form's picture comes into view. Angemon snorts softly and he finally looked at the name.

Loop 5

"Ok, that's the last time we force feed Apocalymon Mushrooms of Forgetfulness." TK says to Patamon, who is resting on his head. The surroundings are different then what he's use to.

"It might have something to do with getting the others to focus on helping him break out of the time loop as well." Patamon pips. "After all, we've never had them try and help him before."

"Ah, excuse me, but, did you guys really brainwash Apocalymon?" A new voice inquires and he turns to find himself staring at someone who sports a resemblance to Kari, if only in the eye department but sports goggles like Tai and later Davis. "Ah, TK and Patamon right?"

"Yea and you two are?" TK asks, noticing a rather large crimson dino like Digimon sporting black markings and ears like Patamon.

"Ah, sorry, I'm Takato and this is my partner Guilmon." Takato says while Guilmon chirps in a hello. "We're also stuck in a Time Loop as I believe you two are."

"I'm kind of curious, how did you know our names?" Patamon asks and Guilmon chirps in an answer, "It's cause your adventures are featured in a TV show!"

That's... kind of sad actually. He thinks to himself. "I guess it's a little too late to ask for Royalties." TK says in a dry tone causing Takato to snort in amusement at that.

Suddenly they hear a yelp and they look over to find some teenager running away from blond teenager riding upon a blue canine Digimon. "Get back here Marcus! I won our bet and I want that KISS!" The blond teenager yells while what appears to be an Agumon sporting red leathers about his claws runs after the others.

"Hey! Wait for me Boss!" The Agumon cries while entering into a fast walk.

"..." None of the four didn't know what to say at the sight, especially Guilmon. As the Agumon vanishes from sight and they were about to break the silence when a raging tornado erupts, sending a car to land behind them.

"We aren't the only Loopers here." Takato observes and TK couldn't help but nod in agreement. "I don't think this is going to end well." Patamon adds thoughtfully as they watch as a group of Digimon get

raised into the air, swirling about the center figure of a Digimon that sports butterfly wings.

"I guess that leaves us as the sane ones." TK comments as some of those Digimon in the tornado suddenly Digivolve into larger forms and try to take out the central Digimon, who also assumes a more mature form.

Loop 6

TK finishes the test with time to spare, not surprising as he knew the material well enough to do it in his sleep, which he's done for a loop once. He's even advanced enough to get into university and he's taken the whole range of university classes from every University in Japan. He has been thinking of applying for out of Japan, if only for a different scenery, after all, he's pretty sure he can get into any university, although he really should brush up on his foreign languages, his English is good, after all, he has long since mastered his ability to alter himself in the real world.

Maybe I should give 'accidentally' being left behind a try? Might be interesting to see if I can stop Ken in his tracks before he gets fully established as the Digimon Emperor... TK muses as he stares off at some random point while resting his head on the palm of his hand.

Although, hopefully, the next loop starts when I'm eight instead of when I'm elven like this one did. He thinks with a frown. *I wonder if Takato and Guilmon are having this problem too concerning when the loop resets? Sure, sometimes we'd wake after a few days of being in the Digital World to showing up just before we face the Dark Masters but I was eight years old when we'd wake.*

I wonder what Patamon is doing? Hm, that reminds me, even if I don't do that left behind in the Digital World, maybe we pull a switch? He goes to school while I do whatever Digimon do while in the real world? TK wonders, although it's a strange arrangement that for Patamon to assume human form, either a preteen or an adult(It

depends on his evolutionary stage) he had to be the Digimon partner.

Not that he has ever Digivolved into a champion or de-Digivolve into an in-training Digimon. "Just have to discuss it with him." He murmurs under his breath out loud. He's pretty sure they both want to experience new things and they still haven't really taken advantage of their ability to turn into adults much during these loops either.

Loop 4b

"Folamon?! The flying foal Digimon, said to be related to Pegasusmon. What kind of name is that?" Folamon, AKA TK, cries out while the adult, AKA Angemon, reads out the list of attacks that he can preform.

"Hyper Senses, Cloud Vapor, and Silver Rain." While Folamon snorts, the orange haired adult reads the descriptions of the attacks. "Hyper Senses speeds up time which allows the illusion of super speed and agility. Cloud Vapor is used to cover enemy foes in a vapor that can cause sleep. Silver Rain is a spray of needles coming from the mane or tail."

"Is this because I stored the Digi-Egg of Hope in that storage space isn't it?" He wonders out loud but nobody answers him. "We will hack the Digivice to fix it so we can both be human at the same time." He states and Angemon just shrugs.

"So, you want to get something to eat?" Angemon asks after a few minutes, derailing TK's mental review of what kind of code to use to do so.

Blinking, his stomach growls and he realizes that he is really hungry. "Yea, I am. My wallet is in my pack." He says as he glances around the living room of the apartment.

"Yes! I get to pick what we eat!" Angemon cheers and he snorts softly, it's not as if he never consults with Angemon about what he wants to eat, they just had a system where they take turns picking what they order in. Although, given that Angemon will be the one to actually place the order...

I hope he orders extra due to my size. I feel like I can eat a horse... Folamon thinks to himself.

Loop 7

As Takato comes to sit down at the table, Zoe is leading JP into the fast food joint while wearing a white leather jacket and biker pants while JP is wearing a studded collar and pulled along with a leash. "Stay here, JP. I'll be back with our food."

"Yes Mistress." The Warrior of Lightning says in agreement while sporting a silly smile while taking hold of the leash.

She's going to sit and eat with us? TK thinks in alarm, paling rapidly, true this is only the second time that he's met with Takato and the other Chosen Loopers, but in his experience from the last time they were in this fusion loop is that the other two Loopers were perverts.

He recalls how Thomas proposed a three way between Takato, Thomas, and himself, which proved to be the more disturbing then when Zoe proposed a three or multi way between Kari(or any female Chosen), herself, and him. TK is pretty sure she proposed the same thing with Takato but didn't want to know if Guilmon's partner actually went through with it, after all, most of the others tend to spend be around the age of twenty when their loops reset so they've been through puberty while he was usually just discovering his hormones.

Even when he passes himself off as a twenty-something year old, he didn't feel much incline to talk women into having one night stands with him or looking at porn. He's pretty sure that Patamon doesn't do so either the few times he's assumed human form. *But then, the*

others tend to become of age to do such activities after a few years while I never do unless I cheat using my Digivice to alter my appearance.

Takato raises an eyebrow but continues eating and he follows suit. Soon enough, Zoe appears with a tray of food and he scoots over to make room as does Takato. Both of their partners had decided to find their own place to order their lunch from, he just made sure they had enough money in order to do so. He's pretty sure the other Digidestine were off getting to know the other non-awake Chosen.

"It's so good to see you two again, Takato. TK." Zoe says in a silky tone which causes Takato to blush. "How have things been for the both of you since we last met?"

"Well, the starting point for my Loop seems to be off now a days, so far, I haven't restarted when I'm over the age of twelve." He tells the leather wearing Warrior of Wind.

"I have noticed that myself. It sucks to wake up to find the D-Reaper in the real world." Takato tells them. "There's so little time to make the corrections to ensure that the code doesn't send the Digimon back to the Digital World."

"Agreed. I found myself rather displeased when such happens after I have lost my human Spirit." Zoe says, JP never says anything, just eats his burgers throughout this discussion.

"Thomas much feel the same way. I can't see how it can effect the three of us without effecting him as well." Takato remarks thoughtfully.

"Hmm, Thomas..." Zoe gets this smile on her face that sends shivers down his back. Did he really want to know what went on between the two? Nope, not at all, he didn't even want to think that they may have traded trips and bedroom tricks.

"Where are your partners?" Zoe asks after a few minutes of silence.

"Out at a different restaurant getting lunch." He answers as Takato seems to be chewing on what's in his mouth. *She doesn't know about Patamon's ability to become human, does she?* He wonders as he looks down at his fries, picking one up, dipping it in the gravy before popping it into his mouth.

I don't think I told Takato about it last time and I didn't spend much time around her for her to get it out of me. He wonders as he glances over to Takato and then over to Zoe.

"I still can't believe you guys have partners. Also, have you ever got Patamon to become a Mega yet?" Zoe says and looks over at him.

"As far as I'm aware, there hasn't been any enemies around to cause him to need to." He answers with a shrug, after all, Angemon hasn't need to Digivolve into MagnaAngemon to deal with Piedmon after how many loops? Nor does Angemon revert to an egg upon defeating Devimon. "He's gotten to be fairly powerful, I can't recall the last time he's reverted to his egg stage upon defeating Devimon."

"Huh, Patamon too? I guess that means that Gaomon is the same. I recall Growlmon easily handling the Tiger Deva without needing to become an Ultimate these days. Then there's those few times where... So, you been feeling more powerful then, Zoe?" Takato asks.

"Very much so." Zoe says with a smile, likely recalling her current rate of easy victories.

"Anyway, I came over to ask you, TK, to hack my Digivice to set up that storage space for me. I heard you did it for Takato just as we defeated that... Quartzmon? I think that's his name, and had been hoping you can do the same for mine." Zoe tells him and he nods.

"Sure, I'll just need to borrow Izzy's pineapple lap top as it's more then capable of handling anything connected to the Digital World and Digivices." He tells her and she smiles brightly at him, causing him to blush a bit.

"Thank you, TK! How can I ever repay you?" Zoe asks and he replies, "By allowing my brother to leave your bed under his own power for this loop."

"Done!"

To Be Continued . . .

Digimon Loops: TK 2

I don't own Digimon!

Loop 1a

Glancing around at the group as they sit about the fire, TK sighs. He reaches for his Digivice, touching it as he remembers his earlier loops and how he'd try to convince the others about time looping. Sure, Azulongmon had installed something onto his Digivice to help end the time loop but what's he going to do with it? Nobody explained what the program **did** and all his hacking of his Digivice, he didn't know what to look for to see if it's still installed.

He reflects on the scene going on before him, recalling his promise about not manipulating them into doing something just because he found it funny or for Patamon and his entertainment purposes. He made during a loop where he convinced the group rather early about the time loops and they asking if they, Patamon and him, had done anything... unethical concerning them. Both Patamon and him promised never to do that and though they were suspicious about it, which only resolved his intentions of fulfilling that promise, they never made the accusation again for that loop.

That's not to mean that they hadn't pulled minor pranks on the group, like convincing them that when both Patamon and himself were dunked in cold water they switch roles and only in dunking them both in warm water reverses it. He had to admit, it had been interesting fighting in those battle instead of standing on the sidelines and cheering Patamon on. He feels his lips twinge a bit but keeps them from forming a smile.

For entertainment, Patamon and him often find ways of using certain timing to make the Dark Masters and Myotismon look like fools or

get them the mistaken impression of a 'deadly' human weakness. He sighs softly as he comes out of his thoughts to look up at the sky.

He leans backwards until he's laying on his back, watching the sky. Soon enough, people will be climbing into the...

Blinking, TK looks over to the trolley car and a smile slowly blooms, after all, he's never seen if he could get it to work. Who knows what new encounters could happen if he gets it up and running. "Ah, I'm going to look around, is that ok, Matt? Tai?" He asks once he is sitting up and they didn't seem too concern.

"Keep Patamon with you." Matt says and he nods. Patamon gives him a puzzled look while he just smiles widely and the rookie blink before smiling himself, trusting that he knows what he's up to and that it'll be entertaining.

- - T - -

TK just blinks at the still covered in snow camp grounds. "Well, this is something different." Patamon remarks and the young blond nods slowly as kids and teachers gather around to stare in awe at the sudden appearance of the trolley car.

"And we left the others back in the Digital World... I wonder if this means that Izzy gets to defeat Devimon?" Patamon wonders out loud and he turns as one of the teachers force the door open.

Now then, how to explain why I am the driver... And it looks like the others haven't found a way back home yet, which is troubling... The eight year old looper thinks as he glances about the crowd, hoping to spy the rest of the group.

Loop 2

"Bubble boom!" Patamon cries as the force of air sails through the air, hitting a certain crimson bug champion. As the other Digimon are

currently still in their in-training forms, they didn't lend their aid.

Patamon's attack hits and suddenly, the giant bug's data threatens to break apart, much to his surprise. He glances over to the orange rookie and finds that Patamon looks just as surprised by this as he was. *I wonder if this is why Kuwagamon never gets up to send us over the cliff edge these pass loops?*

Patamon fires off another attack and this deletes the crimson champion, the virus' data reveals Black Gears, which sail away. All of the others of the group seem to be looking in awe at Patamon. Which leads to another thought, *I wonder if this means he can defeat Devimon without getting deleted himself as Angemon? We are so going to test it when that bastard turns up.*

Loop 3

TK turns to his Digivice now that Matt and Gabumon have taken off to that dinner where they will slave away along with Joe and Gomamon. He wills the Digi-Egg of Hope to appear and it does in his free hand. "Ready Patamon?"

Patamon nods with a smirk, "Ready TK!"

"Digi-Armor Energize!" The eight year old Digidestine of Hope declares, pointing the Digi-Egg in Patamon's direction. The usual white cocoon appears around the rookie and when it vanishes, Pegasusmon is standing there.

With a grin, TK is engulfed in that same light cocoon and reveals a thirteen year old wearing a dark gray hoodie along with fingerless gloves along with a pair of blue jeans. His knapsack is now within his Digivice. He walks over to his partner, the hood is up and covering his hair while a cloth mask covers the lower part of his head, covering a bit of of his nose and all of his mouth.

Getting on Pegasusmon back with ease, once he has settled, the orange Armor Digimon takes to the air. "Myotismon's castle?" Pegasusmon asks.

He thinks about it for a few minutes before shaking his head, saying, "Nay, it's too easy as we know where it is and it unlikely to change locations. No, let's see if we can't find out the current lairs of the Dark Masters. Even if we just get leads, we can continue the investigation next loop."

"Sounds good."

Loop 4

"Hey CB!" Davis greets him as he adjusts to his surroundings. He stares at Davis in a blank kind of fashion while blinking at the Veemon's human partner. *The question becomes, have we taken down Ken as the Digimon Emperor or not?*

"Ah, Davis, so, excited to face off against Ken and his team?" He asks the current possessor of Tai's goggles.

"Well, yea, but yea know, that isn't for a month!" Davis answers before adding, "Good to know you think we can make it to do so though." The other preteen beams with pride.

He just nods and wonders what he should do next now that he confirms that this is before Ken unveiled himself to be the Digimon Emperor. *It'll be redundant if place those bets but I could use the cash for, well, where haven't I been on vacation yet?* He wonders as he takes in the room they are in, it seems that he can't leave as they were due to travel to the Digital World today and since neither of them brought their partners, it means that they may have needed their recharge.

With a sigh, he pulls out his cell phone and take a hard long look at the date. With a nod, he moves to a computer while Davis seems to

just waiting for the others to arrive. He does recall this day and the reason why they were late so he had plenty of time to do some hacking, he just hopes that Davis decides to take a nap instead of coming up behind him to watch him do his thing.

"Going to work on some homework, VB?" Davis asks and he sighs. *Is it a wonder I ever feel like decking him? Do I really want to reason out what his problem with me really is?* He wonders as he writes a minor program to free up more bandwidth for the next two hours.

"Something like that... Did you need help with your homework?" He turns by the end, looking at Davis who just look clueless as to why he'd ask to help him with it or that he'd want TK's help to begin with.

"Why? They'll be here soon, so it's not like we'd have the time to do that stuff." Is Davis' answer and it takes a moment before he smiles slightly as he has an idea.

"What are you willing to be they'll show up in the next fifteen minutes?" He asks the goggle wearing preteen, he knew what he wants out of Davis, the question is, how many bets will it take in order to up the wager to that point.

"What, do you know something as to why they'd be late, RT?" Davis asks, annoyed at being out of the 'loop'.

"Haven't heard anything about why they'd be late." He says before adding, "If I lose, I'll call Kari by her last name and if I win, you have to address her by her whole name."

"For how long?"

"How about a day?"

"Your on!"

Loop 5

"TK?"

"Yes?"

"Do you know why...?"

"No, I really don't know why you are human or why we're suppose to be fraternal twins." He says looking over to, according to computer records, his twin brother, named Shoya.

The orange haired ten year old sighs, "Well then, how about these two?" Shoya motions to the pair of strange beasts, one of which 'belongs' to him. The two beasts are not of the same species as one sports a plant bulb on its back and the others sports a open flame upon its, her, tail.

"Think of it this way... Shoya. We won't be dealing with the Dark Masters or Myotismon." TK says to his current 'brother'. He used the name as he'll have to get use to using it while they are in this universe.

Wish I know why this all seems familiar though...

Loop 1b

TK sighs as he stares at Davis, Yolei, and of course, Kari, no Cody as he's way too young to be allowed to join them. Of course they'll be joined by another two, one of which is from America, most likely Willis and he's not sure what's keeping Ken, assuming that Ken will be joining them and not someone else. *This isn't want I had hoped to happen upon getting that trolley car to work. I just thought it would be nice to have a ride as we traveled the Digital World...*

"Sorry I'm late, it took me a while to find this place." He turns to find Ryo, a younger Ryo then he's use to seeing, walking down the path. *Well, won't this be an interesting story to tell Takato when we meet up again.*

"Hi, I'm TK and this is Patamon. He's Davis, the one with purple hair is Yolei and the one with hazel red eyes is Kari." He says as way of introduction, wondering if he should just see if he can't get Patamon to achieve his Mega level and leave them out of it. *Hopefully Millenniummon doesn't decide to make an appearance...*

The others go shy at having someone as old as Ryo around, which seems to surprise him when it shouldn't. With a slight couch, he grabs their attention once more. "Ok, the one other will be meeting us once we cross into the Digital World. And as to what Patamon is, he's a Digimon and each of you will be gaining a partner to protect you when we cross over."

"Are they going to look like Patamon?" Yolei asks before he can continue on with his explanation.

"Ah, no. No all Digimon look like Patamon and each different Digimon has a different name." He says.

"Kind of like Pokemon then?" Ryo asks curiously and he blinks but just nods as he wonders just what a Pokemon is and how something so small should be compared to a Digimon.

"I guess I'll let Gennai explain the rest then. Ok, gather around and I'll get the gate to open." He tells the group and once they are behind him, he holds out his Digivice towards the TV set and within seconds, they land in Gennai's living room, surprisingly, not in a dog pile.

"Wow, that was cool! Can we do that again?" Davis asks, suddenly resembling his future twelve year old self.

"I'm sorry to say that you will not." Old Gennai answers. "You have been summoned to help combat the Dark Masters, who have captured the other Digidestined."

TK feels a bit guilty about the situation but excited as well as this was something **new** to do. He glances around, finally spotting Willis

with his twin partners, both of which were fine as in not influenced by a certain virus. *I wonder if I could create a vaccine for it?*

As Gennai brings them all up to date concerning the situation, he does his best to listen as to remember this loop better. Although, he just might need to write all this down just so he doesn't get it all mixed up. Then, as Gennai finishes, he leads them out into the court yard and he is surprised to find Gatomon in her rookie form among the group as well as a certain rookie he typically sees in his Ultimate form of Cyberdramon.

"Davish!" And so the blue rookie known as Veemon tackles Davis to the ground, arms about the other boy's neck while the Digimon says how happy he is to finally meet him. He turns to watch the meeting between the others and while none of them had the Digimon partner pinning them to the ground, it's clear that they were happy to finally met their human partners or is that counter parts?

- - T - -

"Patamon Warp Digivolve too... Seraphymon!"

TK feels kind of tired but not so much at the same time. He shrugs it off, after all, its not every loop that Patamon achieves his Mega form, let alone fight in said form. *Although it's not every loop that sees Apocalymon managing to by pass the Fire Wall and then DNA Digivolve with the Dark Masters.*

"Ascension Hallow." His partner declares in a rather calm, even neutral tone. Lightning comes shooting down and hitting the vastly different Apocalymon then previous encounters.

Just this one attack has causes black data to bleed from cracked parts. "Divine Breaker." The out stretched palm of Seraphymon soon grows an orb of light, then, with a flick of the wrist, it is sent into the defending Apocalymon, the orb goes right through the limbs and even main body, exiting out the back before exploding, as the light

touches Apocalymon, the Dark Digimon screams and the data breaks apart as Apocalymon reverts to his usual form.

With that, Seraphymon reverts back to Patamon and although Patamon remains flying, he could tell that his best friend and fellow looper is tired. The others seem to have regained energy, likely due to that light from that orb.

Soon enough, the other Digimon ranging from Ultimate to Mega reenter the battle. With a touch to his Digivice, Patamon Digivolves into Angemon. *Mental note, never exit the Digital World until pursuing Myoticmon to real world.*

Most of Apocalymon's energy is gone so the incoming attacks finished him off. Without any energy, no threat of implosion and thus, no need to a cage created viva Digivices.

Not that the others knew that as they cheered and congratulated their partners for a job well done.

Soon enough, they come to congregate around Patamon and himself as he feels rather embarrassed of the praise they were giving them, particularly given he felt rather responsible for everything that happened.

Loop 6

"Hey TK? You know you are late for the trolley ride home, right?" Patamon asks as they lay on some rocks by the river.

"Well, yea, that's the point. See, I've been wondering if I could have stopped Ken in his tracks if I were to be left behind. And after being bored for, oh, the pass elven loops, I've decided to finally do it this loop." TK explains to his partner.

"Oh, well, aren't you going to miss your parents and the others?" Patamon asks curiously and he sighs.

He glances towards Patamon with a raised eye brow.

"Oh, yea, sorry. It's easier to avoid the other Digimon just by leaving for a random island when I want to be alone."

"And it's not like my schooling is needed, I've graduated from various university with so many different degrees that some time away from it is like a dream. Heck, I've been thinking of applying to collages and universities in Africa and South America just for a change of scenery."

"Have you thought of... well, I doubt you would as that would cause everyone to mourn you."

"Yea, faking my death is a big no. And I have done the go to another country under one name and when there use another one while taking on an adult appearance. Sad to say, I think I'm better off with getting money viva gambling. Work is over rated, particularly if you are running your own company. Stupid politics and don't even get me started on the times I've done government jobs. Stupid paper work and idiot people not using their god damn common sense to solve their problems..."

"Well, it's not like I know any of that." Patamon says and he blinks before a plan forms.

"You know, if we can figure out how to get you to take on my exact appearance, you could give living life as a kid a try." He muses.

"But it seems so boring... The school part that is." His partner replies.

"Don't you get bored just hanging around without any purpose? At least with school, you get a direction to get to." He points out. "Plus, it's an education that can be used towards whatever goals you want to try out while you are human."

"Well, I always did want to learn how to cook..." Patamon admits.

"So it's settled, we keep working on that transformation until you can pass as me, even if I have to forgo being Folamon and be transformed into a Patamon."

"So, when did you want to get on that?"

"How about tomorrow?" He suggests as the eclipse occurs. "Besides, we'll likely be busy later concerning my missing the ride home."

"Well, yea, but I bet a lot of them will be happy to have you around despite it all."

"And you would know, wouldn't you?"

Loop 7

"Call them OFF! CALL THEM OFF!" Patamon cries as he flies pass the restaurant with a rather large following of Monsters, a usual all female race called Pixies. Sadly, upon arrival in this universe, Patamon found himself being the rare, mythical male type, hence the swarm out to see if there are any truth to the myth about how powerful the children would be between said mythical male and a member of the typical Pixie race.

"Oh, Patamon has a lot of new friends." Guilmon notes, the crimson rookie also became a member of a race of Monsters, only called Dinos and is also a mythical rare type of said race as well.

"Just as long as you don't see Thomas or Zoe among that group of 'friends' I'm happy." He states.

"What makes you think they are in this universe?" Takato asks.

"Well, Guilmon and yourself are here and when that happens, they are also here as well." TK points out as he finishes cutting into his steak.

"I hate that logic." Guilmon's human partner murmurs, looking back down at his plate. "Also, shouldn't you be doing something for your partner?"

"Like what? Face that horde of hormonal Pixies and experience whatever elemental attacks they posses? No thank you, besides, I'll make it up to him when we return home." He says in reply before popping a piece of steak into his mouth.

"So, you two visited any other universes?" He asks after a few minutes of silence.

"Well, yea, one called the Magi-Nation. Crazy world that one, they use special rings to summon magical monsters." Takato tells him.

"Patamon and I spent time in a Pokemon universe. He got transformed into a ten year old and his name was Shoya, also my fraternal twin brother. His partner was a Charmander."

"Really? So, what was differences between you two?" Takato asks curiously.

"He sported orange hair, a heck of a lot straighter then mine plus longer, and he kept his eye color." He tells Takato and realizes that in the previous two encounters with Takato and the others, he never mentioned the fact that Patamon can transform into a human and himself into a Digimon. *And for good reason.* He thinks as he looks out the window at the rather large battle/cat fight going on over Patamon, who seems to be tied up on the ground, struggling to get out of his bindings. He could easily picture Thomas or Zoe standing over Patamon at this point, ready to show his partner a 'good' time.

"How many did you guys end up catching?" Takato asks curiously and it takes him a few minutes to remember that particular loop.

"Let's see, I caught forty-seven. Shoya went on a rather big collection spree and captured five hundred twenty-three Pokemon

from various countries, not including the ones he bred, which had been around fifteen."

"How many badges did you guys earn?" Takato asks upon swallowing what's in his mouth.

"Well, you need eight badges to compete in the yearly tournament per league and there were five leagues so... forty badges for the both of us. Since we did stick around to participate in each tournament, our average rankings among the five tournaments were, for me, seventeen and for Shoya, twelve."

"It didn't bother you that Shoya beat you in rank?"

"Not really, and it's not that surprising. I'm pretty sure you'd beat me too. After all, how often is it that I end up in a fight with a Digimon compared to the fights Guilmon and you get into as Gallantmon?"

"I see your point." Takato agrees as he focuses on eating more of his steak, particularly as there were now holes in the bar's wall and roof. A few Pixies have crashed into different tables and even into the bar.

They both remain silent, each deciding to eat their fill before the bar, and likely, much of the town was destroyed viva the Pixie Battle Royal. After all, they will likely be lending their help in repairing the buildings if they weren't chased out of town when the towns folk realize that Patamon is his traveling companion and friend.

To Be Continued . . .

Digimon Loops: TK 3

I don't own Digimon!

Loop 1a

TK merely watches in udder amazement as the others save for him get a Digivice. It had been a very interesting few months and a first for him too as he usually Wakes after being sent to the Digital World, never before has it ever been before being sent. *Ok, this is very different and could go very wrong...*

His brother and the others get swept away, leaving him alone. Heads inside and begins to pack what he can before they get back, hopefully within five minutes. Checking the clock every once in a while and sure enough, the snow melts fairly quickly, he hadn't known snow could vanish so fast but it did and he was around to glimpse it.

Time comes and from the small building, he witness the Digimon head off to go collect some plant material. Within moments, the others wake and, to his surprise, they call out for Davis only for Izzy to remind the group that Davis had been at home when he traveled to the Digital World. *So, Davis took my place so does this mean Ken took Kari's? Or did Ryo?*

"Hey you guys! Where did you run off to?" He asks as he comes out of the building, it's a mixed blessing about Looping is that it forces one to perfect their acting skills as well as lying skills. Never mind going over the same events again and again unless you do make a small change, even then it takes a while for that little ripple to cause something larger to happen but time is something he has.

"TK, you're ok?" Matt asks, coming over to examine him.

"Why wouldn't I be, Matt? Look, the snow's all gone!" He remarks and the others do notice.

"I'm going to tell the teacher you guys are back, ok?" He spotted the Digimon returning and takes off at a dead run with a frown on his face at the mystery of why he isn't a Digidestine or worry about what that means concerning Patamon.

Loop 2

Getting off the elevator, TK's wrist is grabbed by Maiko, she pulls the current blond teen out of it and he gets his first look of the underground area, in particular a screen featuring combating beasts that sport wings. "Welcome to Dragon Drive, Kero!"

Oh yea, Mai's nickname for him isn't TK but the last part of his name, minus the u and adding the o to it. His nickname for her was merely the first three letters of her name, Mai.

"Dragon... Drive?" He repeats slowly, while he will admit that they do bare the Western Dragon body type, a number of them don't seem to sport the rest of the characteristics like being red, breathing only fire, or sporting just scales. A number of those shown on the screen possess fur, feathers, and what could be hide.

"Yip!" And then she proceeds to tell him about the game, although at the mention of the word Digital, it finally clicks about why he ended up here, although he doesn't particularly like the fact he seemed to have switched with somebody to live out their life and it could be that they are living his life...

I wonder what Patamon is going to look like as a dragon?

- - T - -

Let's see, on the plus side, I have Chibi and a older brother. On the down side, I'm eight years old, stuck in some world called Digi-

World, and there doesn't seem to be any other humans around here save for this group and myself. Reiji thinks as he looks around while Chibi, he just knows it's Chibi despite the different appearance.

Suddenly a huge crimson insect appears and bellows. Reiji is about to shout for Chibi to attack when his partner, who can now speak, says "That's a Champion Digimon, I'm still at the In-Training stage, Rei!"

"Oh..." But as the other partners leap and begin attacking, so does Chibi.

Then, they as a group cry out as they get battered to the side, light engulfs the bodies of the Digital Monsters or Digimon for short. When the light vanishes, Chibi does look more like himself.

Well, hopefully, this loop won't last very long and we can get back to our home within a year.

Loop 3a

TK sits at the pier with Takato to his left, both of them doing some fishing at a river in Western Plaguelands. Takato is currently a warrior Worgen and himself to be a druid Night Elf. The few times they spotted Thomas and Zoe, Thomas being a mage Human and Zoe being a shaman Draenei.

Feeling a tug, he does his best to pull the line out while hoping it to be a fish instead of some weed or even a tangled line. He grins at the fish and into the bucket the fish goes. He then casts the line back into the river.

"Pretty relaxing afternoon." Takato remarks, he's currently in his human form. "Still, in the three months we've been here, we still haven't found our partners or even Thomas' own."

"At least they weren't a pet when we woke here." He replies, it's not the first time they've discussed this. He's fairly confident that they'd find them. He's pretty sure that where ever Patamon is, he's sporting the symbol of Hope some where on his cloths, same as him. Takato sports the hazard like symbol on his own cloths. He's unsure if either Thomas or Zoe are sporting any particular symbols.

"At least we hope they are not pets in this universe." Takato mutters darkly and he lets it go as Takato pulls up his line, sporting a trout of some kind.

Loop 4

TK stands still, watching as Patamon speak with a party from the town. He admitted that Patamon does look good in those cloths, particularly with the orange hair. A few of the women and children around them gaze in awe at himself. *Still, even after seven years, I'm still not use to those kind of looks.* He thinks to himself as he flickers his ears back.

Happily, they weren't alone in this universe nor was he the only one with reversal of fortunes. *Not that it meant much to Thomas or Zoe, it only seemed to encourage their usual activities once they adjusted. Although, I wonder if it's true what we heard concerning Zoe? She couldn't be pregnant, right?*

"TK! I've talk them into allowing you to follow into the townhall. You coming right?" Patamon, or to use his human name Shoya, mentally asks him.

"I'm coming, Shoya." He replies and gingerly entering a fast trot. He adapted easier to being a Companion, it's not unlike his times spent as Folamon, just no flying or special attacks.

His hooves hit the ground and with each step, his silver hooves make a sound not unlike bells. Again, the eyes of the 'common' people follow him with looks of awe and longing. This is only the third

village they have visited since they began their solo assignment as Heralds of Valdemar. Their previous time traveling through outlaying villages and towns, they were with an experienced Herald, thus he didn't have to deal with all of the stares.

He wonders if Takato or Thomas were getting these stares on their tour of assignment.

Loop 1b

Holding out his Digivice, he wills a wall of light to form, defending Ryo and himself from the incoming Dark Spores. The Dark Spores try to force their way through but he knows they won't do so. He's been in these loops far to long and no matter how powerful Millenniummon is at this moment, the mega won't win this, he's too willful and sure of his own power to have a spore get lodged into his neck or into Ryo's.

The Dark Spores dissolve in a flash when the light shield flares brightly, almost blinding him. "TK..." Ryo states in a tone sporting awe and surprise.

"Yes Ryo?" He asks as he turns to give the older boy a curious look, the light wall had vanished upon that flaring.

Ryo gawks at him for a few minutes before saying, "Ah, good job...?" The tone ends as if it were a question.

"Ok Ryo." He says cheerfully, glad that it's over. TK's not sure what to make of this whole adventure but logically speaking, he is fairly certain that he assumed Ken's role in it just like Ken assumed Kari's role in the first adventures concerning the Digital World. At the moment he's considered the Chosen of Kindness which would make Kari Chosen of Miracles, taking Davis' roll.

That's considering if we do end up having the second series of adventures as I'm do not going to be the Digimon Emperor. He

thinks as they get reunited with Patamon and Salamon, which is a surprise as he's use to her being in her champion form of Gatomon.

"He's finally gone, right?" Patamon asks and he sighs, "I don't know, Patamon, I don't know."

Loop 5

"Again?"

"Seems so, Shoya."

"Ah, damn it. So, which one is yours?"

"I'm going to guess, the one grass snake? Why, you want the grass snake?"

"Nay, I'm good with the otter."

"Alright. Now the question is, can we remember their names, be it their species or the ones we might have given them."

"I think mine starts with an O with a watt somewhere in it."

:This is embarrassing isn't it? They forgot our names."

"I keep thinking Sev for some reason."

:Speak for yourself, I kind of like the name Sev, it's better then the other name he gave me.:

"This is going to be a long one, isn't it?"

"Seems likely."

:I wonder if they mean long life...:

:Hm, that's a nice thought isn't it?:

Loop 3b

"Hey, Patamon?" Guilmon, currently a Troll hunter, asks.

"Yes Guilmon?" Patamon says in reply, he's currently a Paladin Blood Elf.

"Can I buy it?" Guilmon asks while the kitten's paw remains upon the out stretched finger. The black kitten then bats the finger a bit before trying to nibble on it.

"I don't see why not. You do have the silver to pay for it." The orange haired Blood Elf says and Guilmon nods in agreement, clearly happy, although the hunter's pet lion seems rather bored of everything and is trying to sleep in the middle of the path through the store.

"Check out what I won at the Auction House!" Gaomon, an Orc rogue, states, displaying a rather shiny dagger, as the rogue comes trotting into the store. "Is Guilmon buying a kitten?"

"I'm about to buy the kitten." Guilmon corrects rather gently as he picks up the carrier and then heads to the counter to pay for the kitten.

"I thought that's why he tamed the lion was to have a cat?" Gaomon asks Patamon, who just shrugs.

"So, did you get any leads about the others?" Patamon asks Gaomon.

"Oh, yea, there's a pair of Alliance members who have been acting in the manner of Master Thomas and Mistress Zoe."

"Location?" Patamon asks.

"Through the Dark Portal in Outlands." Reports Gaomon. "As for Takato and TK, there's a pair up in Western Plaguelands who answer to those names."

"Right, so which of the two do you think we should find first?" The paladin asks the rogue.

The Orc seems a bit torn about it, Gaomon doesn't answer until they were at the Wyvern Post that is over a certain bar in Boot Bay. "Takato and TK seem to be in one place, they would be easier to fetch before heading to Outland." The rogue finally states and Patamon just nods.

"My friends and I would like to fly to Western Plaguelands." Patamon requests to the flight path master.

"That will be four gold." The Flight Master says and he hands over the four gold. Soon enough, they are flying in the air, heading northward.

Loop 1c

TK stares thoughtfully at the Control Spire as he flies upon his partner's back. "Still haven't hear who set it up?" He asks, he's ten years old and is currently on summer vacation. His mom thinks he's gone to spend a week with his dad, not that she'll get a hold of him nor really remember that little fact either given the timing of it all.

"Should we destroy it?" Pegasusmon asks him after a few minutes of silence as they circle the Control Spire.

He gives it a moment's thought before agree, particularly as some flying Digimon have taken to the air. Each likely sporting a ring on their bodies. With a single firing of Silver Blaze, the spire is destroyed and the flying Digimon seem to hover for a few seconds before scattering.

"Is there another one around here?" He asks curiously.

"There are two more, not far from here." The armor Digimon replies. "You think we'll find out who's the puppet?"

"We might." TK agrees and with a flap of the wings, his partner heads for the next Control Spire.

- - T - -

Yip, this is a rather big shock, isn't it? TK thinks as Izzy stands upon Kabuterimon's back. It's doubtful that Izzy can ID him, he had thought ahead about disguising himself.

Currently, TK appears to be thirteen, raven black hair done up in what is called a lazy hawk, it is a type of Mohawk. Current eye color is a dark hazel while his skin tone is a rather bronze color. *Well, something had to give. Not unlike what happened with the Trolly Car incident really.*

This is so not going to end well. He thinks as Pegasusmon begin dodging maneuvers as Kabuterimon readies to attack. "At least it's not Joe, now that would be wrong. Just plain wrong." He murmurs softly to himself as he keeps a firm grip upon his partner's mane.

Being fired at tends to grab ones' attention and so, he doesn't really think much about how Izzy got corrupted or is under a certain Digimon's control, he just wanted to think of a way to capture the other Digidestine unharmed before even exploring such things.

Loop 3c

There's knocking upon our door... TK thinks in a half awake state as he rolls onto his side and then sits up. Shivering, he pulls the sheet about his while his bare feet touch the cool floor.

Yawning a jaw breaking yawn, he walks over to answer the door. Upon opening it, he barely registers a cry before finding himself upon the floor. "TAKATOMON!"

"Ok, I'm wake and I hate to say it but Takato's in that bed." He says, managing to point a hand towards the sleeping warrior.

"Oops, sorry TK." Guilmon says and he's able to get up off the floor while Guilmon, currently an Troll, pokes the Worgen that is Takato.

"Horde?" He inquires as he looks at the other two, namely a Blood Elf and an Orc.

"And you are Alliance." The Blood Elf, who's features remind him of Patamon's human form.

"Good to see you three, Patamon. Gaomon." He says, nodding first towards the Blood Elf and then to the Orc.

"And to you, TK." Gaomon says with a nod while Patamon just smiles.

"Now then, what time is it? And is it safe to go to sleep?" He asks, rather hoping they hadn't brought Thomas or Zoe with them.

"Ah, they are out of rooms for the night..." Gaomon says and he sighs.

"If you care to, you can share the bed." He says as he takes off the blanket, handing it to Patamon before assuming his panther form.

He circles a spot about five times before curling up and going back to sleep. The sound of the door closing and a soft yelp from Takato are among the last things he hears before he returns to dreamland.

To Be Continued . . .

Digimon Loops: TK 4

I don't own Digimon!

Loop 1

They sit around the library's table, TK glances around the table before focusing on the oldest member within the room, by more then a few centuries. Shoya is currently in the slot for Angel from Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

Takato seems to have replaced Rupert Giles while Zoe did Buffy. The weirdest among them has to be Thomas, who's taken Willow's role and gender. He's just plain freaked out by that, particularly as Thomas is taking his... her new gender fairly well and is looking rather lustful at him with a smile that makes him both blush and feel as if he's been dumped into a barrel of ice water.

It's kind of a worst nightmare come turn, he's human and almost legal in a universe where Thomas and Zoe can get at him. *Damn it, screwed either way... Stupid figure of speak that is so damn literal in this case.* He thinks as he glances towards the shelves.

"Shouldn't we be, I don't know, researching demons or mystical stuff?" TK ventures to ask the group.

"I guess we should. I mean, this is something new for us to do, right?" Shoya says in support.

"Hmm, I always wondered how good a succubus is in bed." Thomas muses.

"Point, I wonder how much stamina a vampire has if full of blood." Zoe remarks, turning to look over at Shoya.

"No screwing Patamon." Takato states. "I don't think we want to find out what he's like without a Soul."

"Shoya, his name is currently Shoya or, Angel, given that he could still have earned that name." He states and the other two glance at him with questioning looks.

"While this is his first time as a vampire, it ain't his first time being human." He states simply and Takato nods, having heard about this.

"Ok, if Patamon is here, where are **our** partners?" Thomas wonder and they all look towards Shoya.

"Well, one of them might, if I recall correctly, be Spike. It's hard to say if who I remember is Guilmon or Gaomon." Shoya says with a shrug.

"What's his hair color?" Takato ask curiously.

"A dark black, with... oh, so I do know which one became Spike." Shoya muses.

"So that leave..."

Suddenly a cry of, "Takatomon!" And within seconds, they find a red haired older looking teen hugging the much older Takato.

"I'm betting he replaced Oz." TK states.

"No bet. The question is, is he a werewolf right now?" Zoe wonders.

"Well, we'll know in a few days, I think." Thomas states. "There should one coming up soon."

He sighs softly, he is hoping that he doesn't wind up with Xander's problem concerning female demons, he'd be lucky to remain out of bed with either Thomas and/or Zoe.

TK did find it a little odd for Patamon to wind up as a vampire though, but not overly as he did recall their time in World of WarCraft universe.

Loop 2a

Coming Awake while confronting a certain crimson insect Champion wasn't all that odd. What threw him is the fact that he's currently a Digimon known as Folamon. Within a second he turns to look towards the group of kids behind the line of Rookies, the other Rookies attack.

He quickly focuses on their foe and leaps into the air. With flick of his head, his cry joins the others, "Silver Rain!" Silver nails fly from his mane, flying into the chest of the Champion.

He hovers in the air while the Champion falls down and the Digimon plus Digidestine cheer, well, except for Shoya and himself. He turns and flies so he lands next to Shoya. Wordlessly, he lowers himself and within seconds, eight year old Shoya is on his back, a firm grip upon his mane.

He launches himself into the air as the usual events play out, again. The cliff falls with the Digidestine plus partners down into the river. Within seconds, Gomamon summons the raft of fish.

Folamon follows after the raft, his hunger was easily rectified as he borrows energy from the Digivice. "So... I guess Matt's my brother for the loop."

"Seems so." He agrees, moving towards a fruit tree and hovering as Shoya harvests as much fruit as he can carry. "It seems that it's only you and me who've switched."

"Well, it's not like they are Awake... Although, it does make you wonder what kind of Digimon they'd wind up as." Shoya remarks as he catches up to the raft.

Soon enough, the others make it to shore and another round of introductions will begin. Once on the ground, Shoya and him begin to eat the fruit, they'll need all their energy for the up coming days. *I guess I'll finally get around to seeing what kind of Champion and Ultimate form I have... Armor too, I guess.*

Loop 3

TK reclines on the chair, his fingers slowly going over the strings of the guitar that he bought. His current appearance is a raven haired nineteen year old sporting emerald eyes. And open guitar case on the pavement before him. It's early in the morning, the sun is just raising up.

Due to a relatively recent loop in which Patamon and himself switched roles, he had come to realize just how much he took Matt for granted, well, when they were in the same universe. Tai as well, as the goggle wearing preteen usually does fill the role of second older brother.

Well, to be fair, Sora's kind of fits the role of older sister/motherly figure. Joe's like the responsible older cousin while Mimi is that spoiled sister. Izzy's a friend, more like a friend of my siblings then mine... TK reflects as he slowly increases the pace his fingers move about the strings.

He's rather afraid to fit Kari into a role, she typically is his best friend and the one he protects. The relationship is... it's hard for him to pin her down, she has been a romantic interest for him but as the loops continued and he began to feel older then his appearance, he felt rather disgruntled about pinning away for Kari. It doesn't help that there's some kind of relationship between them, Hope and Light... Their chests seem to reach for each other.

He is still drawn to Kari, it's something he can't deny, their chests were a part of them, it's just that, what kind of relationship did he want with her. Friendship is the most typical between them and it's

one he does his best to keep it that way, but then he's fifteen and sees her... Particularly at a dance or something...

Doing his best to push that kind of thinking away, he focuses on the song he's trying to play. It's a song by a band that hasn't formed as of yet, so the song didn't legally belong to the band either. One could say if he wrote it up and sold it to a current band, they would legally own the copy rights to the song. Of course, he's just strumming on the guitar, doing his best to recall all the recent lessons he asked Matt for in the last few loops, doing his best to spend some quality time with his older brother.

He's done something similar back when the Loops were new to both Patamon and himself but after a while, it became something of a pain to regain the trust he had with them. The fact that he knew a quick way to establish said bond kind of made it... not as valued as it once was.

And then I decided to spend Kami knows how many Loops convincing them that time is looping. He thinks to himself. Which lead to that promise that he keeps by doing his best to keep an emotional distance between himself and the non-Awake Digidestine.

I wonder if that's what drove Thomas and Zoe over the deep end? He muses, shivering at just thinking of the pair of sex obsessed Loopers.

In the end, TK pushes such thoughts out of his head and focuses on playing his guitar.

Loop 4

"Four moons in the night sky... Ah damn it, looks like I owe Takato a DVD." TK mutters as he touches his leather bag. Within it he feels a few coins, not bad for an eight year old and is the youngest Looper in this universe.

As he heads for the nursery barn, he gets this nagging feeling he should know about this world. It's not until he's in the barn and spies a 'dragon' does he remember, after all, he's fairly certain he arranged for this book series to either become a mini series or a series of movies. *Jane Yolen is the author if I recall.*

"The Pit Dragon trilogy." He murmurs as his hand moves to touch his Digivice in his belt pouch. He feels some connection to the beasts around him as he walks over to deliver what he came to deliver.

Once the delivery was made, he races back to the main building. He nods to the native Looper, Jakkin who nods back. He heads for his bunk, it's going to be one of those loops and he shuttered to think of what became of their Digimon partners for the Loop.

- - T - -

Shoya face palms at Guilmon's antics. Gaomon seems rather bemused over their youngest member's actions. He's yet to learn either of their human names so he keeps using their Digimon one, both mentally and when addressing them.

He wonders where their partners were but, for now, it seems that they are on their own. Their current universe is one from the comics, likely the DC given that there does seem to be an actual Superman in the US. It makes him wonder if they will gain special powers when they hit puberty, which should be in seven to eight years.

He looks up when his aunt when she calls his name. He says, "Bye you guys." Once up he walks over to her, wondering when this Loop will end so they can be with their partners once more.

Loop 5

TK finished going up the stairs, he glances around the Hinata Inn, or should he say the Hinata Dorms? His name for the Loop? Takeru Urashima, his adopted sibling for the Loop? Shoya Urashima, who's

still male. His goal for the Loop? Get into Tokyo U, which should prove a breeze as he's done so plenty of times back in his home universe.

The only problems he foresees in this Loop is the various girls and women who call the Dorms home. "Maybe I should have headed into the Tea Cafe to wait for them..." He murmurs as he turns to look towards said cafe.

With a sigh, he turns back to the building and take a few steps toward it. He stops, his frown deepens and with a shake, he turns around and does the smart thing, heading for the cafe ran by his aunt/cousin. He didn't want to get attacked and if he did enter into the inn turned dorm, it's more then likely he would be under-attack by at least two of members of the dorm, particularly violent man-haters.

- - T - -

"This is a GIRL's Dorm! We don't need any MALES!" TK sighs at the explosion coming from a certain violent woman pretty much screams and growls at the same time.

His current aunt/cousin stiffens next to him, clearly not liking the out burst. The heiress to a certain kendo style looks a bit nervous as the temperature dropped a drop but goes on to agree with Naru, "We can look after the dorm ourselves."

"Then I hate to point out that Granny already made her choice and as of today, I am the owner and manager of this place. While you may not have a problem disrespecting me, you are disrespecting my grandmother by your attitude. It would seem that you didn't possess any **real** trust in my grandmother's judgement, its a good thing that you are all free to seek out new places to live as I plan to respect my grandmother's decision and remain owner slash manager of Hinata Dorms." He states in a calm, matter of fact way that caused two of the group to glare venomously at him and the others to sport slightly guilty look.

"Why should we leave your the..."

"I'm the owner as of today and thus, have an investment in this place. I am not an intruder as I was invited here. If you can't get it through your head that I am now responsible for the operation and maintenance of my family's legacy then I expect you have alternate places and you are free of your tenant agreement for Hinata Dorms." He states, cutting of some illogical rant and that seems to inflame the two troublesome tenants, he could hear Naru's teeth grinding together and Motoko's grip upon her katana tightens as her already frosty demeanor gets cooler.

"Just like a male, throwing your weight around." Naru growls, trying to physically intimidate him by standing up just so and leaning on the table, her palms flat on the table. "I can't believe you have nothing to say about this, Haruka!"

"Nothing he is stating if false, Naru-chan. And frankly, I find Motoko and your own attitude about this rather distressing. TK hasn't done anything to gather such outrage, he's been polite throughout dinner even with cutting remarks coming from the pair of you." Haruka states. "Given that this has been sprung on your the last minute, perhaps a good nights sleep is needed before we continue with this discussion."

He nods in agreement, saying, "You are right, Haruka. Perhaps we should continue this discussion with a night sleep behind us."

With a scowl on their faces, Naru and Motoko get up, soon enough, the others follow their example save one. He sighs softly but lends a hand to Shinobu in cleaning up the table. Haruka also helps.

Soon enough, Haruka shows him to his new room, a glance up shows that yes, there is a hole in the ceiling. He'll have to repair it first if only to get some privacy from Naru. They had a short private talk before Haruka leaves him alone, he puts his suit case down by the door.

Glancing around, he pulls out his Digivice and within seconds, he has some of his possessions out and ready to be placed. Once he picks out what he wants out, he puts the rest back into his storage space within his Digivice and walks over to his suit case, beginning to put the cloths away into the dresser in the room.

He is on his lab top, waiting until eleven pm to go have a dip in the hot spring. After a good hour, he climbs out and uses his Digivice to shroud him in shadows. Stepping into one, he exits out in the hall, he finds both Motoko and Naru waiting outside of the Hot Springs, it seems they planned some kind of confrontation where they believe he would be at his weakest.

Got to remember to post a new schedule for the Hot Springs. Also... might need to wait a bit before asking Shoya to join me here... He thinks as he walks back to his room, once more entering into his room viva the shadows. Once within, the shroud fades away and he finishes up drying off before putting on some PJs and turning in for the night, his Digivice clipped on his pants encase they decide to barge into his room for that confrontation they seem to want to happen.

- - T - -

"This is my adopted brother, Shoya and he's agreed to take the post of assistant manager of Hinata." TK states, it's been two weeks and things seem to have become rather troublesome, the magic of the land keeps trying to throw him in the path the women/girls and it's only by using his Digivice has he avoided said situations from happening.

Figuring that haven't Shoya around might help fend off the pressure from the magic, he finally asked him to assume said post. He also plans to hire some expert carpenters to help repair what he can't, it shouldn't be too hard as he has more then enough money. With Hinata back in good condition, he plans to look for new tenants, ones without any problems with men, heck, he might make the Dorm co-ed just to satisfy the match making magic of Hinata.

Might be a good idea to get an estimate for replacing the Annex while they are here. TK muses as he doesn't really listen to the protests of the two man-haters or the 'subtle' flirtations of a certain fox like woman. As long as they don't try anything physically, he is content to let them vent.

Soon enough, pair will become more enraged when he announces the coming of the carpenters and most likely when he decides for the dorm to become co-ed. He'll mostly ignore Motoko's continuous challenge attempts, after all, it's rather one sided and by keep demanding said challenge isn't showing how dishonorable he is, as he keeps pointing out she can't offer anything equal to the ownership and management of Hinata Dorm, which has been in his family for... well, he doesn't know how long really.

Until Motoko could come up with something of equal value with both value in both historic and economic, he won't fight in a duel with her.

They should be happy I haven't terminated their tenant contracts. He thinks, glances towards the two man-haters. *Although, I should contact their families if only to let them know how poorly their children are acting. They really need to reconnect with reality.*

Loop 2b

"Folamon Digivolve to..." He cries as he is within the hand of the giant Devimon. He feels a surge of energy throughout his whole being. His body undergoes a change as the power settles around him, he feels solid once more as he declare, in a much more mature tone, "Sinyoumon!"

The hand of Devimon opens and moves from his floating body. Sinyoumon's larger then Pegasusmon with four pairs of wings while sporting an gold ornament upon his head sporting a golden horn. About his neck floats a solid gold ring that sports two inchs from his skin. His fur is bright white while bright blue marks upon his face, neck, and lowerback. His mane is braided with a silver ring holding

the braid together while his tail is that of a lion's with the tuff being a blue flame.

"Sinyoumon, Champion level Digimon, Vaccine. This Holy Beast is said to be the Bringer of Hope while signally a time of Great Dispair. His Exorcism's Roar is said to dispel dispair within all that hear it." Tentomon says in awe. *Oh great, I'm a sign of the future reign of the Dark Masters.*

"Your time of Darkness has come to an end, Devimon. File Island shall be cleansed and peace shall return to the isle." He declares to the evil Digimon, who just scowls at him.

"Sinyoumon! It is you who shall fall this day! File Island is mine! And from it, I shall cover this world in Darkness so complete as to destroy all Light!" The giant Devimon declares.

"We shall see." Sinyoumon states calmly and charges Devimon, crying, "Exorcism's Roar!"

The attack causes Devimon to flinch while it rips through the area hit by the attack. He's actually kind of surprised that it did any kind of damage given that Devimon has consumed how many Black Gears and Ogremon. He easily dodges Devimon's Touch of Evil and counters with Exorcism's Roar, being so close to Devimon causes the area to peel and burn.

He is sent flying due to a back hand, he stablizes and dodges an attack called Death Hand. Narrowing his eyes, he draws on the energy of Shoya's Digivice and then fires an Exorcism's Roar, this causes Devimon to bleed data while placing a hand over the injured area. He chargers the evil Digimon as he calls upon the power within said Digivice.

"Golden Charge!" He declares and becomes covered in a bright, golden light. Devimon's incoming hand is destroyed upon coming into contact with the light and the light dims, he does slam into the body, causing Devimon to fall into a cliff side.

He is sent flying when Ogremon comes out of the chest, slamming his bone club onto his head. Sinyoumon stablizes himself within a few feet of the ground. Taking a calming breath, he centers himself, doing his best to recall the recent conversation with Shoya about accessing the others' Digivices power.

Sure, as Devimon's hand is restored and gets up from the ground, saying something about lacking in power, he finally feels the connection, it's not all that different then those times when they've faced Apocalymon and need to restore themselves back into their original forms. Devimon exclaims about the light as he feels a huge amount of energy, an energy he finds rather hard to keep hold of and knows that he needs to release it very soon.

He raises into the air and declares, "Exorcism's Roar!" The energy flows from him and he's more then a little relieved to have all that power out of him. The attack ripes into Devimon and soon, Devimon bursts into data while a bright golden light explodes from within.

His job done and exhuation coming onto him. he returns to his rookie form of Folamon. He lands on the ground the others recover and celebrate the victory. For himself, he'd rather have something to eat, although he can just graze some grass. Food is rather easy to come by for him as Folamon as he can eat the plant that's around them unlike the other Digimon.

Loop 6

TK can't help but sigh, this loop for whatever reasons just seem to cause him a headache. Maybe it's due to the fact that they Woke at the point where Matt was saying goodbye to him and wouldn't change his mind about going even when he pointed out what kind of trouble could happen with Matt away. He even tried to use the Sad-Puppy-Eyes but his 'older' brother managed to resist, which he put down as still being slightly disoriented from the sudden Waking.

Well, that happens, so it's rather common. He thinks as they run towards the door that Myotismon is heading for. *Then DemiDevimon proved to be extra annoying while I was modifying those rides, doing his upmost to get me to cry and argue with Patamon...*

"Patamon..." He mutters.

"Yes?"

"I'm tired of this, could you?"

"You really want me to?"

"Why the heck not? Besides, you can get it while you do it. Just don't beat him up too badly, wouldn't want the... pansy to get deleted so soon." He states.

"Oh, I am **SO** going to enjoy this!" Patamon chimes in and as the latest Digimon comes to delay them once more. Louder, the rookie says, "Don't worry, I got this!"

Within seconds, Angemon deletes the latest hurdle and takes careful aim. With a single cry of Hand of Fate, the Digimon pulling the carriage and the carriage are deleted. Before Myotismon could react, Angemon throws his staff which flies, nailing the Ultimate in the back of the head.

"Lord Myotismon!" Cries Gatomon and a number of Digimon who aren't through the Gate pause and turn around.

"Wow... First Devimon and now it seems Myotismon isn't able to fend off Angemon." Tai comments, he sniffles a snort.

"The Gate!" He shouts and that gets the rest of the group in gear, although not without some comments from each respective Digidestine while Angemon has Myotismon in a head lock while using his staff to keep the Utlimate kneeling on the ground, "Say Unclemon! Come on and say it!"

"Never! Crim-" He shakes his head as they race pass while Gatomon and DemiDevimon argue over what they should do. He ignores the fact that Angemon just cracked the Ultimate's neck, paralyzing the vampire like Digimon for a few days.

"Don't look back! Keep going forward!" He cries as he snags the cat Champion, surprising her enough that as he leaps through the air, he crosses over into the Real World with her. He's fairly sure that the others followed his example.

TK woke to the Digimon arguing with Gatomon, he glances at the others and shrug, he's grown use to traveling between the dimensions so he typically wakes from traveling through the gate sooner then the other Digidestine. He smiles at the sight of the Tag and Crest of Light about Gatomon's neck, Gatomon looks slightly dazed, likely due to Patamon informing the Champion that she's the partner Digimon to the eighth Digidestine and likely used the explianations that he learnt thus viva the time when the light of the Digivices boosted his power to defeat Devimon.

He's fairly certain of that due to them cooking up that story and feeding it to the others in previous Loops where Patamon and him rescued Gatomon from Myotismon's evil clutches. TK leans back and stares up at the sky, he feels so much better, that headache he had since DemiDevimon made his appearance has vanished now that they are in the Real World or should it be, Human World?

The Digimon continue their discussion to the point where the other Digidestine wake up and wonder what they are arguing about now. Only to get slightly freaked out at the sight of Gatomon wearing a Tag and Crest. He sighs, sure, Myotismon will crossover, just not right away.

Last time they did pulled something like this, it took the vampire wanna-be about an hour Human time, to get the spare pack of cards. Given a minor trick he did to the cards in Gennai's possession, they'll ownly reveal themselves after a full day had pass in the Human

World since TK and the others got here, well, mostly himself as the trick is connected to his Digivice.

Soon enough, the others brought up other consures then whether it's true that Gatomon is the eighth child's Digimon or not. Mainly concern about how long it'll take before Myotismon joins them in the Real World. He doesn't comment on that, only asking them about how are they going to smuggle the Digimon onto the bus.

He smiles, it's been far too long since they beaten Myotismon into entering the Real World and he can't wait to get home so he can begin doing something that took some real thought, after all, Patamon's more then capable of destroying the vampire wanna-be and the Dark Masters, Apocalymon... well, they're getting there, still, being able to destroy half of that Digimon's body with one shoot isn't that bad, particularly when Pataomon is only a Champion, as MagnaAngemon, it's still a mess as some parts of the huge Apocalymon don't get the chance to enter into the Gate of Destiny, only as Seraphimon did no parts of said Digimon remain to reform and give them trouble.

Loop 7

"Oh God..." TK murmurs as he Wakes to find himself, unsurprisingly in the Digital World, but older then eight years old. "Let's see... hmm, rather late in too..."

He rubs his chin as he plots, Patamon flying over, also likely thinking over just what they would do now. They hold a whisper conversation between them, not really paying much mind to battle going on between MagnaVeemon and Chimeramon or the falling debris, it didn't take much more then a thought to have a shield up to protect them from such.

With a soft snort and a smirk coming from one of them, TK heads for a certain portion of the base that belongs to Ken while Patamon is rather smug for convincing TK to go along with what he has planned.

Not that TK put up much of a fight at when Patamon makes a point concerning an unused item within his storage space. One made by a certain Digidestined when he had been on a power trip, and it wasn't TK who made it, shockingly enough, it had been Mimi who 'created' it, AKA ordered it made(that had been a very strange loop, particularly as they had to escape her lab of all things).

Once at the reactor that connects into a certain depressing place. Patamon becomes Angemon while he summons the device from his Digivice. TK hangs back, letting Angemon work with the device while he does his best to repress that whole Loop. Oh, sure, they didn't have to worry about any Digimon, hell, what Mimi... TK finds a spot to sit cross legged, it seems that he's got to get serious about repressing that Loop if he recalls Apocalymon's time in that particular Loop.

"Ok, I think it's ready to go!" TK opens his eyes and blinks a bit as his gaze refocuses, allowing him to see in the near dark space once more. "Kami help us if this thing reacts like it did when she had it up for that practice run."

"Come on, it could allow us to visit Takato and Guilmon or the other Digital Worlds Connected to a Human World." Angemon points out. "I believe it will work, don't you?"

"Oh, sure, it'll work, the question becomes, if it'll work too well." He murmurs, pushing that 'test' out of his mind. After all, he hadn't enjoyed getting used as a bartering chip as Mimi does her best to create some kind of permenant deal with that planet full of boundiful women, nor did he enjoy the fact that Mimi had figured out how to age him eitehr. *Make my body match my mind, I nearly died damn it!*

He's not even going to entertian the thought that he spent the rest of that Loop in a clone body. Nope, he's not even going to **think** that he died as if he did die in a Loop, it's suppose to restart after all so he clearly didn't die. And Matt allowed him to get tattooed as a joke, that's that. There's no way that Mimi figured out how to keep the

Loop from restarting, none at all, that's his story and he's sticking to it.

Then, as the device does what it does, the world shifts as his eyes widen. Within seconds, darkness engulfs him. Upon waking, he finds himself under ground and wills a orb of light to appear over him, giving him a better look at his surroundings.

He glances towards this collapsed being. Getting up, he glances up to find a gate of some sort up at the ceiling, he can see the device from the back, or what they had thought was the back it seems. With a slight shake of his head, he walks over to the being, he holds out his Digivice and light erupts from it, flowing through the air into the being that is his partner, given the fleshiness, TK mentally label his partner by his human name, Shoya, as it's clear that this dimension doesn't allow for Digimon to arrive as is.

Within seconds, the winged being gets to his feet. TK studies Shoya's new appearance. "The four eyes seems to be over kill." He muses and Shoya moves a hand over his face to find that yes, he now possesses four eyes, one set of eyes are where you'd expect them, the second set are up by the temple area, although the head isn't very humanish, more like an ape's really.

"A mirror if you please." Shoya asks and he nods, after all, he, too, wants to check himself out just incase anything about himself is different. With two large mirrors out of his storage space, he notices that he possesses this small horn in the middle of his head just above his eyebrowse while he's got the thin beginnings of antlers near his hair line.

Other then the horn and antlers, he's got some glowing marks under his eyes and at his throat. Raising his shirt, he finds more glowing marks there, which causes him to conclude he's got them all over his body. "Well, only minor changes for me. Big ones for you, Shoya." He says as he stores the mirror back in his storage space.

"I've got a lot of muscle, not sure if I can fly though." Shoya mutters, moving away from his mirror, which means he's done with it. While Shoya looks around, he stores the mirror away and with a parting glance, follows Shoya, leaving a trail of tiny glowing orbs so they can find their way back.

After about an hour of walking around, they decide to head back to the place they woke in. "Think a rope will do it?" Shoya asks.

"It could but the problem will be the translation between the two. It'll likely knock us out. We'd need somebody to haul us up." TK says as he sits down as he summons a portable game system to entertain himself for a bit, after all, he's fairly sure the others will come looking for them.

After four hours, according to the portable game system at least, although distortied but still understandable. TK looks up and waves while Shoya is already up, waving both his arms. Within a few minutes, as they look up, Yolei and Hawkmon are looking 'down' with startled expressions. *"TK, is that you? And is that... Patamon?"*

"Yes! Could you find some rope to lift us back through? There's not much to see down here!" TK shouts with his hands cupped about his mouth, the portable game system having been sent to his storage space with a thought.

"Right! Hawkmon, stay here while I go and get the others!" Yolei tells her partner. He doesn't hear Hawkmon's reply but Yolei does vanish from his sight.

Some minutes later, the others appear along with some rope. Soon enough, two strands of rope are sent through. Glancing towards Shoya, they approach and create a make shift harnass about their bodies. "Are you guys ready?" Shoya shouts.

"The ropes are secure, you two can climb up!" Davis shouts. He sighs but begins to climb up the rope. Sadly, he was proven right about not being able to make it through the portal without fainting as

their bodies get translated back into their original forms, causing them to fall back towards the cave floor.

"TK! Patamon! Are you guys ok?! TK! Patamon!" He wakes to both Kari and Gatomon shouting their concerns. *"Let me go! I want to go check on them!"* Kari says.

"It's not safe for you to do that, Kari!" Yolei says as he checks himself over before looking over to Shoya.

"We're fine but I think you'll have to pull us up! When we tried to go through the portal, it caused us to faint! I think it's due to it trying to restore us to our original looks!" He shouts up.

"Thank god you two are ok!" Kari cries out.

"Are you sure you can't climb up, TM? Maybe you didn't tried hard enough!" Davis calls out before yelping a bit. *"Ouch, that hurt Yolei!"*

"They already tried that, for all we know, next time they'll cause the rope to snap!" Yolei snaps angerily at Davis, it's clear that this whole thing is worrying them. *"Who knew Ken built something like this during his time as the Digimon Emperor?"*

He flushes a bit at that conclusion but doesn't see any reason to correct that assumption. It takes a few minutes before they are ready to pull them out, their partners Armor Digivolved into their respective forms and they pulled Shoya and himself out. He blacks out and wakes to find three of the four about him, staring down with worried looks.

"Is Angemon alright?" He asks as the others sigh in relief. "Well, he's kind of fuzzing..." Is Yolei's reply and he sits up, glancing to where the Digimon are circled around Angemon's phasing body.

With a soft sigh, he pulls out his Digivice and holds it towards Angemon's body. Light shoots out and within seconds, Angemon is

once more solid and awake. "Wow, how did you know that would fix him?" Cody asks.

"Well, it worked when we landed in the cave that's on the other side of the portal." He says truthfully as Angemon returns to his rookie form. The others relax and he stands up, he then turns to look into the portal, wondering when he'll have the chance to turn it off and sent the device into the storage space.

"Well, now we have to figure out how to get rid of that portal." Yolei says and he nods in agreement. "I guess Ken wasn't satisfied with conquering if he built a machine to access other dimensions." She adds with a frown and he wanted to wince but doesn't.

"Well, it wasn't a success given to what happened with Patamon." Cody states and the others agree. The others, including the Digimon, debate how to deal with the portal.

As Patamon flies over and lands on his head, he takes some time to figure out how to get pass the portal. The top has a gap that Patamon would fit through without touching the portal. So far, nobody has mentioned having Patamon fly over that gap and decides, after a few minutes of debate turned arguement, to say, "Well, it's not like anyone is fool enough to enter into the ex-Digimon Emperor's base so we can come back later to deal with the portal."

The others agree, if only due to all the excitement of the day. He leads the others out of the base and then through the Digi-Port. He doesn't try to sneak over to use Izzy's computer, he doubts anyone will mess with the base. Once they arrive home though, even before he accesses the gate, he spends a few minutes setting it up so that if anyone is tracking the opening of the Digi-Port they won't track it to his apartment building and they return to the area where the base is.

"Well, we're back." Patamon states in a dead pan way. He chuckles at his partner's tone.

"You just need to fly in that gap between the ceiling and the portal. Turn off the device and I'll then sent it into storage." He explains and within second, Patamon spies the gap and then flies through it.

Within a minute, the portal fades as it closes. Walking up to the device, he touches it before sending it into his storage space. "Well, that's that." He says with a sigh.

"True. I wonder what the others will say when they come and find the portal gone." Patamon states.

"Well, we'll just have to bring the ceiling down, once we disable the core." He says as he walks to where the engine is. Summoning the Crest of Kindness, he places it into the spot and once the core is down, he uses his Digivice to retrieve the Crest back so he can send it into his storage space.

Then, suddenly, he's Folamon and he glances towards Shoya, giving the other a dirty look. "Come on, I've collapsed the ceiling how many times? Besides, it'll give ya more experience in your Champion form." Shoya points out with a grin.

"I have to point out, it was your idea to used that portal device." He points out to Shoya.

"Yea, but you are the one who wanted to keep that portal device." Shoya states with his arms crossed. With a snort, he looks into himself and within seconds, he is Sinyoumon.

As he is about to fire off an Exorism's Roar, he hears a faint, "Hello? Hello!" Sinyoumon glances over to Shoya with a questioning look.

"Hey! We're over here!" His partner calls out and soon enough, they are joined in the chamber by Joe and Gomamon.

"Who's that?" Joe asks with a slight worried expression. Gomamon answers, "That's Sinyoumon, a Champion Digimon and a Vaccine. He's a Holy Beast type."

"And I'm Shoya." His current human partner says as way of greeting. "We found a gate that landed us here."

"Ah, I see, I'm Joe and this is Gomamon." He notices a particular look on Joe's face as the older teen studies Shoya's face.

"You look familiar... You know Matt or TK?" Joe asks and Shoya replies, "A cousin of their's, can't recall how closely related we are though."

"Oh, well, you do bear a striking resemblance to them. You could almost pass as their sibling." Joe says as he finally decides to come flying down to the ground.

"You guys expecting trouble?" Gomamon asks him and he replies gruffly, "Well, it does look like a battle scene around here."

"Yea some friends of ours just took down the sleaze known as the Digimon Emperor." Gomamon says, causing Joe to sigh. "What, I'm just telling them the truth."

"Good to know, those Control Towers were causing property values to drop." He remarks and Gomamon chuckles while the corners of Joe's mouth twitch upwards. "It is nice to meet with you both." He bows his head to the pair.

"You as well." Joe says, returning his bow. "Dido!" Gomamon says with a wide grin.

"Well, it is rather late, perhaps we should leave. It's rather creepy in here." Gomamon says, shivering a bit. "I wouldn't be surprise to find a ghostmon or something in here."

He agrees, after all, this chamber is usually connected with the Dark Ocean. Although the connection is current shut off, he's fairly sure that it can be open again. *Guess we won't be able to destroy the base right now after all...*

"Mind giving us a lift as well?" Gomamon asks as Shoya climbs up onto his back. "I don't see why not." He admits and soon, he's flying out of the base with Joe and Gomamon on his back.

He heads for the gate, once everyone is off his back, he returns to his Rookie form. "Huh, you're a big one aren't ya?" Gomamon remarks to him and he folds his wings onto his back.

"I've known others to be as big as me." Folamon remarks, they say their good-byes. Soon enough, they are in his room. They both glow and he is returned to being human and Shoya into Patamon.

He can only imagine what Joe and Gomamon will report about the whole event. For now, he's hungry and tired. Leaving Patamon in his room, he grabs them a meal and then when they are done, takes the remains back to the kitchen. Once he's done cleaning them, he heads to his room, Patamon is already fast asleep and he soon joins his partner in dream land.

Loop 2c

I really, really hard Piedmon. Sinyoumon thinks to himself as he is sent flying as Shoya and Kari are climbing the rope. *Why do we always have to climb that rope in order to defeat him when we are at this point?* He wonders as he hits the ground, skidding over the surface of the ground.

Shaking his head, he watches the pair. As he gets to his feet, Sinyoumon sways a bit and cries out, "Shoya!" The rope gets cut and as the pair fall, he soon feels energy surging from Shoya to himself.

"Sinyoumon Digivolves to..." He declares and his whole being alters, he assume a more human form. "KishiAngemon!" Four pairs of white feathered wings come from his back while he's chest, arms, and legs are covered in golden armor while about his head is a golden metal

band while his blond hair is short and spiked. A broad energy sword is in his right and a upon the shield is the Crest of Hope is in his left.

He easily catches the falling pair. "Well, this is unexpected... An Angel, huh?" He can hear the words 'finally'. "Thanks KishiAngemon!" Kari says and he hums in agreement.

As he puts the pair down, KishiAngemon turns to face the angry Piedmon. "Be careful." Kari says and he says calmly, "Don't worry, I'll get him."

He holds his shield up and aiming it at the very displeased Mega Digimon. He pulls his left arm back, ready to send the shield flying. "Holy Shield!" He cries, throwing the shield at Piedmon, the shield becomes a disc of golden energy, it cracks one of Piedmon's swords as the Clown uses the sword to block the shield.

His sword clashes with the other one as he comes charging in seconds after throwing his shield. As he pulls away from Piedmon, his shield is back upon his left arm and he uses the shield to defend from Piedmon's Thrump Sword. With a push of his left arm, the swords are tossed to the side.

He twirls the energy sword and then charges, crying out, "Holy Cursade!" His energy sword thins and lengths. He slashes at Piedmon, although the Mega tosses the white cloth, his attack destroys it. "That's one trick down." He states and Piedmon gives him an ugly look.

"Well, it's been fun but... Ending Snipe!" He cuts the attack in half with his sword, although he does get some damage from the electricity. He closes in and slices at the Mega, Piedmon tries to punch him but he uses his shield to block and then slam the shield into Piedmon's chest before bringing his sword down, it slices through the cloths of Piedmon's chest but the Clown manages to back up.

On and on they go, each of them using a mixture of special attacks and physical ones. When he manages to steal those in the form of keychains, he pulls back and lets loose his most powerful attack. "Heaven's Shackles!" From his shield, chains with shackles fly out and clamps upon the exhausted Mega's body. The shield moves from his left arm and raises into the air, facing while floating above Piedmon's captive body.

Then, the shield becomes a disc of golden light and quick as a fox, slams down, destroying Piedmon. With the Mega gone, the shield returns to his left arm. He then quickly places the transformed Digimon and Digidestined. Half a minute later, they regain their true forms and seem confused.

He returns to being Folamon and soon, Mimi arrives with reinforcements. He enjoys the break, after all, he knows who they'll face next.

To Be Continued . . .

Digimon Loops: TK 5

I don't own Digimon!

Loop 1

TK types away at his mom's computer, it's rather old but then, he is only six years old, which is two years younger then he's use to being. He goes through the lines of data a third time and finding no error, he presses enter. Slowly the code is transformed into a minor Gate and his Digivice's image forms upon the screen.

Within seconds, it materializes out of the computer viva the screen. He watches as it lands before the keyboard and the computer then shuts down. He carefully gets up on the chair and every so gently grabs the device, he pockets it a minute before his mom comes in and scowls him about 'playing' with her computer.

Getting sent out of the room, his mom boots up the computer while he heads for his room. Once within, TK takes out his Digivice as he sits on his bed. He checks to see if it's functional before looking around. He grabs a few items, things he gathered up before even touching the computer to get his Digivice transferred to him.

With his pack on his back, he heads out of the front door and once his shoes are on, he opens the door once he assumes an older appearance. Check to be sure he has the spare set of keys in his pocket, he walks to the elevator and waits for it to arrive so he can leave the building.

The few looks he gathers as he walks down the street aren't that surprising, TK knows he looks dashing and he chose to appear as such. He finds a lotto place and flirts a bit with the young woman in front of him to pass the time. Soon enough, he walks away with his

ticket and in the company of said university student for a quick coffee date as she needs to be back for an afternoon class.

TK pulls out his Digivice and checks the time, he hurries off to school. He's got the prefect excuse, his mom was busy and forgot to send him along or walk him to school. His appearance alters within a block of the school and he smiles, knowing that the lotto ticket will be safe in his storage space. *Tonight is as good a time as any to check and see if time is still lopsided... Hopefully Patamon isn't an Egg or in that lab...*

- - T - -

Yip, I'm too early, by centuries it seems. Folamon thinks to himself as he soars over the castle that would one day become Myotismon's castle and way into the Real World. It's a hard concept to wrap his head around but it doesn't stop it from being true.

It takes him some time to find a way into the castle and to find a perfect perch to watch the human like digital beings moving about the lab. He didn't notice any Digi-Eggs or Digivice let alone Tags and Crests. It seems as though they were still in the process of either creating or locating suitable Digimon. *Could be wrong and they're having trouble matching traits to Crests.*

Observing the various digital humans move about the lab, typing away at the computers, or just tinkering with the machinery, Folamon turns as leaves. Once more in the air, he wonders what he should do next now that he's confirmed that it'll be some time before he can look forward to having his best friend and fellow anchor, Patamon, around with him.

Well, whatever I want to do, I have a lot of time to be doing it. He muses to himself. Although to be fair, he hadn't expected to arrive in his Rookie form when he used his mom's computer to create a Digi-Port but that's what happened. He concluded that the Digital World wasn't ready for human visitation and took advantage of his current form to make good time to arrive at the castle/lab where the others

and his own Digimon was created/gathered with their Digivice plus Tags and Crests.

- - T - -

And I'm no longer alone! Folamon thinks as Patamon's Egg hatches. Within seconds, his form alters and he assumes his human form right as the shell breaks apart to reveal the Baby. "You wouldn't believe what I've been up to without you around." He whispers to the young Digimon who seems to be blinking rapidly at him, clearly not believing he's here.

"Huh?" Before Digivolving all the way to Rookie.

"I arrived two years early, I've spend centuries, thousands of years, hanging around the Digital World, sometimes between trips to and from the Real World. It's been crazy but the time shift is getting shorter, which might explain why it was so easy for us to fix it in the first place. To have time between the two Worlds go at the same rate." He tells Patamon. "Did I mention I was Folamon for those years?"

Patamon snorts softly, slowly shaking his head. "Well, it's not like I could be born faster and how often do you think you Waking before your eight will happen?" The orange Rookie remarks.

"Point, but I still would have loved to have you around. You wouldn't believe just who I've befriended just to have some company." TK tells his partner as he looks off at the very familiar mountain. He hears somebody's stomach growling and with a sigh, he grabs the leaf bundle he created over and placing it on his lap as he leans back onto the tree trunk, his shoulders helping to keep him steady while Patamon eats to his heart content of the various food stuffs he had gathered.

With Patamon's first meal out of the way, they sat on the branch, watching the sun climb higher into the air. His body complains about the way he is sitting but given he had been perched up here as

Folamon, he's just happy he kept his balance on the branch, it did help that he already had his back facing the trunk.

"So... did ya do anything to the D-Four? Like pranks and such?" Patamon asks him, breaking the comfortable silence between them.

"Of course, although I admit, it was rather difficult figuring out which of the Digimon were going to Digivolve into them but I got them." He assures his partner.

"Videos? Or just pictures?" His partner presses, causing him to chuckle.

"How about having the footage edited and added music to go along with it?" He asks Patamon and from the look on his friend's face, it's clear he wanted to see it NOW!

Within seconds, a tablet appears and once the password is entered, he presses the play button and Patamon's blue eyes are fixated to the screen while the music plays along with the slap stick sounds to help with the prank. It wasn't long before Patamon is laughing so hard he was crying and almost fallen off the branch, quickly using his ears to hover over the branch while still laughing roaringly at the various pranks and the reactions the caused with the victims.

A glance down shows that the other Digimon partners have gathered around, curious as to where the laughter is coming from. He already set up a sight barrier to keep them from recognizing him as a human, to them, he still looks like Folamon.

He just grins, he knew he did a very good job of editing the various footage all together along with sound effects and picked the right set of songs to go along with each of the four.

Loop 2

"Are you sure these will allow us to send Emails and share data, even allow for us to play multiplayer games together? Automatically stores into our storage space?" Zoe asks, a frown upon her face while looking at tiny connective port. "It looks like it's barely a flash drive."

"It works as long as you have your Digivice on you." TK informs the group. He is a bit puzzled about both Thomas and Zoe as they have been disturbingly normal throughout their time in this universe. Although to be fair, he usually does his best to stay out of their way as much as possible so for all he knows, they've been acting like this for the last few times they've met in this universe.

"It works, the previous attempt was a mother board you had to install on a computer or connect it to one." Takato explains and he nods in agreement. "It was a pain to remember to store the computer that had it before the Loop ends."

He had given Takato twenty of them, he's not sure how many Takato had lost to the Loop but he's also fairly certain that Guilmon's partner knew how to create one by now as well. It wouldn't surprise him if at least seven had been dismantled just to be sure on their workings and likely to repair it or recreate it. That version had been a bit glitchy with large time pauses every few hours. The latest one is one they created together, they even figured out how to patch the connection through their Digivice instead of using the Digivice as the key to open such a connection.

The happy part about that is that he didn't have to take each Digivice and install such a connection. There's something universal about Digivices, even if the version looks different or even has functions different from another version. "I don't think I'll ever understand how you can toy around with any Digivices and make sense of its codes." Thomas states with a shake of his head.

He gives Thomas a frowning confusing look until he realizes that Thomas doesn't know about Gennai or even Digi-Gnomes. Then his confusion clears up while Thomas gives him a minor glare. "I don't

suppose Takato's shared with you the DVDs of the cartoon series based on my universes adventures?" He asks Thomas and glances over to Zoe, both seem to be looking over at Takato.

"Neither of you asked what that cartoon is based off of when I tried to offer it to you. You were more interested in me then 'some cartoon'." Takato reminds the pair. "You weren't even the least bit interested in the fact that I came from a world where a group of college students claimed to have created Digimon."

The pair look a bit guilty about that, finding out that they missed out on a massive amount of information that could help in their endeavors. Having some mercy on the pair, even if they rarely showed any when they had been pursuing their... previous goals.

Loop 3

Hikari Yagami? TK can't help but think as he walks along next to the girl as they enter the building. She had come to watch her brother, Taichi, participate in this V-Pet tournament. Although he's only been Wake since he woke this morning, he hadn't really thought that he Woke in another world but clearly he had.

He touches the Digivice in his sweater pocket as he gets his first glimpse of Taichi Yagami, who turns to give them a puzzled look before smiling and greeting them. "Hey Hikari, who's your friend?"

"This is TK, we just met outside." Hikari tells her brother, a bit shyly. "TK, this is my brother, Taichi."

"Hello!" He says cheerfully. "Nice to met ya."

Taichi smiles more warmly and replies, "Nice to see you too. So, you came with a parent or sibling?"

"Nope, I was just looking around. We just move here." He explains. "My mom's rather busy with her new job." He adds, which is true as

he did take a moment to check through his memories of his time in this universe.

"What does your mom do?" Taichi asks curiously.

"News reporter." He answers, adding, "My dad works for a tv station. I don't see him or Yamato much, though hopefully that will change."

"Your parents' aren't together anymore?" Taichi asks with a hint of sadness. He feels Hikari reaching out with her left to grasp his right, he didn't fight it and they held hands for a few seconds before they let go.

"Yea... but I've gotten use to it." He answers truthfully.

"Ah, well, I better hurry and get registered. See you afterwards, ok?" Taichi says and they nod, murmuring their agreements.

"So... what do you think of my brother?" Hikari asks him as they head to stand in line to get into the stadium.

"He's nice." He says and Hikari nods. "And I think he's lucky to have you as his little sister." That causes her to blush and duck her head, it seems this version of his best friend is rather shy.

A bit after they found some seats, Taichi joins them, Hikari asks why he isn't in the back with the others. To which Taichi says simply, "I don't have the right kind of Digimon to be allowed into the tournament."

"What kind of Digimon do you have?" He asks curiously and Taichi replies, "Zeromaru is a Veedramon."

He frowns as he considers that tid bit of information. "Oh." TK says while Hikari does her best to make her brother feel better about it. *Wonder how different a Veedramon is from an ExVeemon?*

- - T - -

Taichi didn't really know what to make of having his sister here at the stadium, let alone the boy she's befriended. He's been through a lot of Loops and never in his experience has his little sister come to watch him participate in this tournament. He knows she's never befriended someone matching TK's description either. In his experience, a small change means something big has changed which leads him to believe that something, likely involving TK or his little sister is going to happen in the near future.

"I don't suppose you have a V-pet?" He asks the young blond after the first round. TK looks over at him before answering, "I didn't buy one nor did my parents. Yamato didn't see the point in them, but then, he's more into music then into raising a pet."

"You ever wanted one?" He asks and TK's eyes flash in amusement for a second, but he saw it and it only confirmed that TK is involved in the change to the Loop. "I don't think I'd want to own a Digimon."

He takes note that the eight year old didn't really answer the question. "How about you, Hikari? Did ya ever want one of the V-pets?" TK asks his sister, he looks over to Hikari, suddenly wondering what her answer will be.

"Well, I like the idea of having a pet with you all the time but, well, I'd like one that I can cuddle with too." Hikari answers and TK as a soft smile, nodding.

He looks away, he didn't know what he should feel about TK involving his baby sister in their discussion. Soon enough, the pair of them talk about previous pets they had and what kind of pets they'd want in the future. *He better not be planning to use Hikari in his devilish plans.* He thinks to himself.

Soon the tournament is over and as he escorts the pair out of the stadium, his little sister and the likely future foe are talking rather animatedly about the fights. Being rather truthful with himself, he's never seen Hikari so relaxed, so open with anyone who isn't a family

member. *Worry about it later, it's not like either of them will be following me into the Digital World.*

As they are about to exit out of the building, the typical event happens. It matters not if he's the one to hunt down Neo to demand that challenge, something always happens that causes the two of them to have their match that sends them into the Digital World. Sure enough, a slight cough and he turns to find an adult wanting a word. "Ah, why don't you two head out? This shouldn't take long."

"I want to stay with you, Taichi." Hikari says upon grabbing his sleeve. He looks down, rather startled by that, usually Hikari does as he requests. Looking down, he finds a very determined look upon her face and he gives in.

A quick look over to TK shows that the blond as a sad-like look in his eyes while sporting a smile. He looks back to Hikari, TK pipes in, saying, "I wouldn't mind keeping Hikari company."

Hikari sends TK a smile while blushing slightly. *Oh boy, that's not good.* He thinks as he realizes that his kid sister seems to have a crush on the blond.

"They can come, Neo just wants a quick word with the owner of the glitchy V-pet." The woman says and soon guides them to the back into the stadium. *The typical reason for wanting to met with me.* Taichi thinks to himself.

- - T - -

TK is sure to keep a good grip on Hikari's wrist as they fall through the Gate. It's rather raw, like the one that usually opens when they are at the campsite. *I guess I will get to see a Veedramon.* He thinks to himself as they finally land.

"Are you ok?" He asks Hikari, he had done a maneuver so that he is under her just as the land came into sight. Within seconds of asking

that, Hikari gets off and is bowing to him, apologizing for landing on him.

"It's alright, Hikari. I didn't want you to get hurt." He tells Kari's alternate counter part.

"TK!" He hears Patamon cry out and by the time he's standing up, his partner is on his bare head. Hikari seems a bit speechless about what just happened.

"This is Patamon, Patamon, this is Hikari Yagami." He says as way of introduction.

"Nice to met you." Patamon says and Hikari nods, "And you, Patamon."

"I thought you don't own a V-pet?" Hikari asks after a moment.

"Well, I don't own Patamon nor do I have a V-pet. It's kind of difficult to explain our relationship." TK admits to Hikari.

"Hi-chan!" Looking to the side, they find another Rookie, this one Salamon.

"Well, I guess I know what you mean. I don't own one either." Hikari says before calling out, "Hey Sally-chan!"

As the Salamon leaps into Hikari's arms, they hug each other, clearly glad to be with one another. "Sally, this is TK and his friend Patamon."

"Don't you have a name?" Sally asks Patamon.

"Well, I guess Shoya is a name." Patamon admits and he nods in agreement.

"Then why introduce him as Patamon?" Hikari asks and he admits, "Well, the usual times we call him Shoya are when he's not a Rookie."

"You mean you can Digivolve?" Sally asks Shoya, to which Shoya says, "Well, I can become an Angemon but I've got a more interesting Digivolution form call Pegasusmon. You want to see it?"

"Sure!" The pair agree and with that, Shoya flies to a spot.

"Digi-Armor Energize!" He cries, bring out his Digivce, summoning the Digi-Egg of Hope from his storage space.

"Patamon Armor Digivolve to..." Light engulfs Patamon and then, breaks apart to reveal Pegasusmon. "Pegasusmon, Flying Hope!"

"Ohh, awwww." The pair chime in, causing TK to smile. It wasn't long before they move to examine Pegasusmon, his partner clearly enjoys the attention.

Suddenly, some attack lands near, they all turn to find a group of Digimon refilling a cannon. "Climb on! Hurry!" Shoya commands while his partner kneels down to allow them easier access to climb onto his back.

Once they are all on, Shoya flies up and away while a shot from the cannon misses them by a wide mile.

- - T - -

Taichi arrives at the castle of Lord HolyAngemon with both Zeromaru and Gabo, well, after playing a minor joke on Gabo they went straight to the castle. An alarm rings out as they get within sight and as he looks around, he finds Hikari running towards him with a Salamon next to her. "Onii-chan!"

"Hikari?" He stammers out after hugging his little sister. "What... how?"

"Well, TK and I got sucked into this bright light and we found ourselves falling. TK managed to grab a hold of my arm and then, I landed on him. I got to meet his friend Shoya, who's a Patamon and

then I introduced Sally to them both." Hikari tells him excitedly. "Shoya Digivolved into Pegasusmon, when we got fired at, we climbed onto his back and flew here, where Sally said it was safe." She is smiling up at him.

Then, noticing Zeromaru, his baby sister greets the blue Champion Digimon. "Hello there, I'm Hikari Yagami and this is my friend Sally." She says to her partner and Gabo.

"I'm Zeromaru, Taichi's partner and this is Gabo, he's our guide." Zero says. Sally smiles as she nods her greeting.

"So... TK's here and he's friends with a Patamon?" He can't help but repeat. Finding it hard to believe.

"Yea, and Shoya is also capable to Digivolving into an Angemon too, at least, that's what TK claims." His shy, often sick sister says with a nod.

"What's a Pegasusmon?" He asks, turning to look at Gabo, expecting the Rookie to know.

"Ah... I know that it involves a special kind of Digi-Egg." Gabo stammers.

"It's an ancient form of Digivolving that requires a Digi-Egg sporting a special symbol called a Crest. A Patamon Digivolves into a Pegasusmon using one sporting the Crest of Hope." Lord HolyAngemon explains, coming up to his right as he had turned to his left. "It is very surprising that young TK and Shoya know of it and found one of these Digi-Eggs."

Ancient form huh? And just what does a Crest of Hope look like? He wonders, sure, this was something new to learn and something to look into later, like another Loop, but for now, he's more concerned about what TK and his friend are up to. "So... what does a Crest for Hope look like?" He asks.

"It's kind of an image of a sun rising over a mountain peek." TK says and he looks to find TK moving from a jog into a fast walk. Spotting a Patamon on the boy's head, he assumes that is Shoya. The blond comes to a stop and turns his gaze to Zeromaru. "So, this is your Digimon, the Veedramon?"

"I prefer Zeromaru." His partner states in a huff and TK nods, the boy's gazes turns to Gabo and he notices the slight widening of the eyes, it's clear that TK recognizes Gabo.

"Hello, I'm TK and this is Shoya." TK says politely to Gabo.

"I'm Gabo, I'm a Gabumon." The Rookie says proudly and TK nods slowly before turning to Lord HolyAngemon.

"It seems that he found us, so your offer for assistance proved unnecessary." TK says, addressing Lord HolyAngemon. "And I believe Taichi and Zeromaru are better suited to the task you need done." The eight year adds.

"I believe you are correct, Takeru, but I hope Hikari, Sally, Shoya, and yourself will continue to enjoy my hospitality." Lord HolyAngemon says with a soft smile.

"I believe we'd be delighted to, sir." TK says and looks over to Hikari, who picks up the hint and agrees with TK.

"We'll see you later, Onii-chan. I want to see more of the castle!" Hikari says and he nods, smiling gently as the two eight year olds and their Digimon friends leave.

"Let us retire to my study, if that is alright with you, Taichi? Zeromaru?" Lord HolyAngemon requests. "We would be delighted to, sir." He says with a glance towards Zero, who shrugs and gives a bit of a nod.

I believe TK is more familiar with the Digital World then I expect, he'll keep Hi-chan safe for now. He decides as they fall in step behind the

minor parade of guards as Lord HolyAngemon heads into the castle.

- - T - -

"So, how long have you been Looping?" He is startled and glances to his right to find TK standing there, Shoya no where in sight.

"What gives you that idea? Your crazy." Taichi says, nervously chuckling to brush off that statement.

"Well then, I guess proper introductions are needed. Hello, I'm Takeru Takaishi, commonly called TK. I'm the Digidestine of Hope, my partner is Shoya, he's a Patamon. I'm usually a part of a group of seven, later eight, kids send through a Gate into a Digital world where we need to combat Evil Digimon who plot to take over that world and throw the balance of the worlds out of balance." TK says and continues, "Taichi **Kamiya** , your double who prefers Tai, is the Digidestine of Courage and partners with Agumon. My brother Yamato Ishida, commonly known as Matt, is the Digidestine of Friendship and partners with Gabumon."

"Hikari **Kamiya** , commonly known as Kari, is the Digidestine of Light and partners with Gatomon, Salamon's Champion form." TK adds and his eyes widen, his mouth opens a bit. "I'm also a Looper, as in stuck in a Time Loop that resets itself when I'm getting close to being in my late teens and Wake to find myself eight years old again. Once more getting sucked through a Gate to met with my Digimon partner and best friend for life. I've met with three other Loopers who also part of groups who save their Digital World and we tend to met during some crisis that's named after a crystal."

"Your serious aren't you?" He asks and the blond nods. "I've got a double in your world?" Another nod. "Who's got a little sister, who becomes your... girlfriend."

"Well, we've never really dated and not just because of your double. We're best friends as we were the only eight year olds in the group and when we got older, we didn't become anything more, likely due

to that friendship. Now? It'll be too weird to date her as I'm thousand of years older then her." TK explains with a sigh, the blond walks over and sits down next to him.

"So... you got a number of interesting stories to tell then?" He asks and TK nods. Then, as TK holds out his hand, a photo appears and he picks it up, studying the group of kids plus Digimon, not just their partners from the looks of it. He stares at the image of his double, Tai, and then at Kari, he notices the whistle about her neck. "Who's the one in pink?"

"That's Mimi, her partner's Palmon. Hmm, well, remind me to ask for your Digivice later, I'll add a storage space to it so you can keep personal effect you don't want to lose when Time resets, might as well give you the Dimensional Connection too, so you can chat with people who are in the same situation." The blond goes on to tell him a bit more about these fellow Loopers, "Takato's partners with Guilmon, they Bio Merge into Gallantmon. Zoe typically becomes the Legendary Warrior of Wind, it's something about collecting a pair of figurines that allow her to do it. Thomas works for some kind of agency and is partners with Gaomon."

"Bio Merge?" He tries to wrap his mind around it. "Well, it allows the partner to fight along with their partner." TK explains with a shrug and he just nods, handing the picture back to TK.

"So, when do you plan to share your story?" He asks and TK replies, "Later, like when we have the time to exchange such epic tales."

"Sounds good." He agrees, he's already looking forward to hearing more about his double and his sister's double.

Loop 4

TK Wakes in the middle of the cave where Kari and himself retrieve their Digi-Eggs of Hope and Light. *Rather close to the beginning of our adventures.* He muses to himself, which gives him plenty of time

to do a number of things concerning movies, tv series, and getting a number of manga published to go along with those series. *Wonder if Takato or Thomas have any games they know are hits and willing to send them here?* He wonders as he acts out the 'scene'.

As he goes for the Digi-Egg of Hope, Kari says, "I guess you're more nervous then I thought if your reaching for the one with the Crest of Hope on it."

He blushes a bit and moves a step to stand before the Digi-Egg of Light. "I guess I am. I mean, I don't want another partner..." He confesses and Kari smiles a bit in understanding.

Well, this is different. I wonder what kind of Digimon Patamon will become using the Digi-Egg of Light? TK wonders as he reaches out and grasps the white Digi-Egg sporting the Crest of Light.

As they hold their 'respective' Digi-Eggs in the air, he does note that green light is coming from the spot where he grabbed the Digi-Egg of Light while pink from the Digi-Egg of Hope. Soon enough they Digi-Armor Energize and Patamon becomes a... land bound fish sporting boxing gloves. "That's... unexpected." *And kind of familiar actually...* He thinks before turning to look over at what Gatomon became.

Gatomon became a goat like Digimon named Oryxmon. "Well, that's more useful then a fish on land." He admits and the others agree, Patamon returns to being Patamon, he sighs.

"I'm sure we'll be fighting around water... eventually." Kari says to comfort him and he nods. "Yea, I guess so." He says as Patamon comes to rest in his arms.

"Let's go Oryxmon! Coming Cody?" Kari says as she heads out after a minor quake, it means that the others out side could use some help. "You guys go on, I think Patamon and I need some time alone for the moment."

"Right, see you soon TK!" With that, the other three leave.

"That seemed too familiar for my liking, TK." Patamon states and he hums in agreement. "I'm reminded of Joe for some reason... Might have been something from when our earlier Loops that we stop from happening." He muses and his partner nods.

"So... what are we going to do about this? I mean, we can't be productive members of the team if I'm a fish out of water." Patamon comments and he hums as he thinks on this. "Well, there's always that Robin Hood plan... We'd have to do something to your Pegasusmon form to make it... not recognized as Flying Hope. Turn the gold into ivory, alter the basic coat along as with hiding the Crest of Hope..."

Patamon hums and quickly moves to stand a few feet, within seconds, Pegasusmon stands before him. Taking his altered Digivice, he holds it out and after a few attempts at altering, which it resists for about a minute. The coat color goes a ghostly silvery blue, the helmet plus chest piece are very different not only becoming ivory but not as sharp while the Crest on the chest piece is gone, and the armor leggings are much shorter, made out of ivory, and lacking in gems and finally, the belly is a dark grey. "I even feel different. I better not have been transformed into a Virus TK..." He winces a bit.

"Well, it's a disguise and to be fair, I'm not sure if the changes are only in appearance... We'll figure out later how to make the changes only to the appearance, leaving the core Data alone." He assures his partner before assuming an older, darker look that sports a face mask to cover his lower face and a hood to cover his shockingly white hair, his eyes are likely a bright purple as he was going for shocking after all. He climbs on and within seconds, they walk through a dark shadow and appear outside under an overhang.

Within seconds they are flying over the battle, surprisingly enough, it seems Oryxmon is doing rather well, having already shattered a Dark Ring on one of Tyrannomon. They watch the battle as another Dark Ring is destroyed. Then, suddenly, a swarm of Dark Ring appear and once more, the freed Tyrannomon are re-enslaved and

the fight continues. Each Dark Ring they destroy, another replaces it and it's taking its toll upon the Tyrannomon. "Guess we best reveal ourselves." He says to his partner and with a snort, his partner does a nose dive.

His best friend roars in a very animistic way and within seconds, they've zipped about the battle field, destroying all visible Dark Rings. They rise into the air quickly and vanish into the shadows, returning to the cave. Within seconds, he comes running out with Patamon.

"Sorry but some stones blocked the entrance. What did we miss?" He asks, he spoke the truth, although he did use his Digivice to clear it.

"Some other guy appeared and destroyed all the Dark Rings is what happened!" Yolei shouts. "They vanishes over there." She gestures towards the spot they had vanished in their disguises.

They spend a good twenty minutes searching for a sign of the odd pair but nothing turns up. In the end, with evening pressing in and they needing to return home, they leave, although not without Davis rubbing it in that his Armor Digivolution not helping them in their fight with the Tyrannomon only to be told that it's not his fault concerning what Patamon Digivolved into. He smiles his thanks to the others for their encouragement.

Upon returning home, he summons out a laptop that wouldn't see the market until a few years. He checks his messages, finding a few of them concerning an upcoming gaming event for all of them, including Taichi. He answers them before checking to see if Takato's online. He leaves the laptop alone as he heads to get something to eat, upon returning, he fines that Takato's on but busy.

He sends him a message asking if he knew of an incident concerning him ever using the Digi-Egg of Light. As he does some other stuff using the computer, he gets a beep and opens the link to video chat with Takato. *"What do you mean? Surely you can*

remember what happened and how Joe accidently swapped your D-terminals." His friend and fellow Anchor says to him.

"Hmm, that does sound familiar but I get the feeling I've been keeping the whole event from happening so we haven't experienced it since our early Loops." He admits to the boy who could pass as a relative of Kari's due to them having the same hazel red eyes. "Reason I'm asking is that I'm currently the Digidestine of Light, Kari and I just picked up our Digi-Eggs."

"Really? You and Kari switched Crests? I guess this is the first time it's happened huh?" Takato asks and he nods. *"So, what have you guys got planned to help in the fights? I mean, there haven't been many water battles which means you don't have much use of having Patamon become Manbomon."* His friend in another dimension adds.

"Well, I used the one I have in storage to have Patamon become Pegasusmon, then I used my Digivice to alter him... It was rather creepy and Patamon mentioned feeling different." TK tells Takato.

"Well, I don't think I've ever tried to recolor any of Guilmon's evolutions, well, not using my Digivice any way. It could be that you did alter him, caused him to become another kind of Digimon. Think you can create a picture using your Digivice?" Takato asks and he does so, doing his best to recall the details of the ivory armor down to the color of the mane and tail.

As he waits, he checks on his coding and sipping a drink. *"Well, congratulations on either creating a new Digimon or simply managing to alter his coloration. I'm not getting any profile on my Digivice so it might just be some kind of expression of Pegasusmon. Might want to use your computers to scan him in that alternate form just to be sure. Now if you excuse me, I've got put some finishing touches to a prank."*

TK nods and soon enough, Takato logs off from their chat. He puts the finishing touches on his program before sending it out onto the

internet. He then closes the blinds and curtains of his windows, checking to be sure his mom is absorbed into whatever she's doing. He even uses his Digivice to engulf the room in a ward. He then begins to sent a lot of the stuff in his room into his storage space before summoning the equipment he needs to run the kind of scans needed to check on that alteration.

Patamon is kind enough to move to the platform and without much fanfare Pegasusmon is standing there. He runs a few scans to be sure nothing is wrong before redoing what he did in the cave. Once his partner is in his recoloring and alternate armor, he begins the scans. Sure enough, there is some glitches and with aid of the equipment, he fixes the data until the only changes are appearance, the attacks just needed to be repaired as the change does seem to not allow for special attacks, although it does seem that it increases the physical capabilities but figures they'd need the special attacks in future fights.

"Well, I don't feel funny any more." T-Pegasusmon, short for Transformed Pegasusmon, states. "I got an idea, why don't you try some other alternate coloring just for practice? It should be safe enough with this equipment out."

"You sure you want to go through with it? We are pretty much done." He tells his partner.

"If you can alter yourself so easily, we might as well get use to doing it to me. I mean, Halloween and pranking." T-Pegasusmon argues and he gives his partner a slight smile.

"Ok, fine, as long as you want to, I guess we can go ahead and do this. How about you picture what colors and armor you want? It might cause less Data glitches and fragmenting." He says and for the next two hours, they not only continue with Pegasusmon alternate coloring, but alternate colors and looks for his partner's Rookie, Champion, and Ultimate forms. It surprised them both that HolyAngemon is a valid alternate form for MagnaAngemon, not that they ever figured out what became of the other wings when

MagnaAngemon mode changes into HolyAngemon, could be that they combine to form such large set of wings or even into the robe.

Tired, they spent about twenty minutes putting away the equipment and putting the room back to the way it was. Once done, they head to bed.

Loop 5

As he blinks, he glances about, sure enough, he's Folamon and in a forest. "Guilmon...?" His head perks up and he flies over to find an eight year old Takato sitting up.

"Nope, no Guilmon around." He tells Takato. "I'm also going out on a limb and say, you're now the Digidestine of Hope or maybe Digidestine of Digital Hazard?"

"Wait, how would you... TK?" Takato's eyes widen while taking him in, clearly stunned at the fact that he's a Digimon.

"Folamon, the flying foal monster. Rookie level vaccine. Attacks are Hyper Senses, Cloud Vapor, and Silver Rain." Folamon states, he knows he resembles Pegasusmon, only younger looking and lacking the armor, plus sporting more blond appearance with the mane being orange. "My Champion form is Sinyoumon, never advanced beyond Champion." He tells Takato who only wordlessly mouths the name Sinyoumon.

"Takato! There you are, ah, I see you have one too." Matt comes charging over with his partner under his arm. "Are you ok? Anything ache?"

Takato's eyes seem to be bug out at how Matt is treating him along with calling him by his name. "I'm fine, Matt." Takato says, finally finding his voice and while Matt finally nods.

Soon enough they run into Tai, Izzy, and their respective In-Training Digimon. "This is going to be one strange Loop..." Takato murmurs and he shrugs, remarking softly for Takato to hear, "Just remember, you don't have modify cards and you've got an older brother."

"I take it Patamon and yourself have swapped places before?" Takato asks as they wait for Mimi to join them, along with a certain Champion Digimon chasing them. He hums in agreement and Takato then asks, "What does he look like when he's human?"

"Well, orange hair sports a clearly a family resemblance with Matt and I." He tells Takato before grabbing the back of Takato's shirt and turning tail seconds before a roar causes the others to see what made that sound. Once at the cliff, he puts Takato down before kneeling, Takato quickly climbs onto his back as he takes to the air, more then ready to help the others in firing off an attack at Kuwagamon when the others Digivolve into Rookies.

Their attacks cause Kuwagamon to fall down, for about a minute. Then Kuwagamon gets up and causes the cliff to fall, not that it bothered Takato or himself as he's already in the air. That doesn't mean he doesn't follow after the others as Gomamon summon those fish to form that raft. "I wonder how Guilmon and Patamon are getting along?" Takato wonders as they follow after the raft and he shrugs as he flies after the rest of the group.

"Well, they've gotten along before without either of us, I don't see how now will be any different." Folamon informs his current partner and fellow Anchor.

- - T - -

"Where's Takatomon?" Guilmon asks the preteen Patamon as they head to the bakery. Shoya's had a rather interesting two days, he pretty much had expected Guilmon to be with him from day one but found out otherwise.

"Well, it could be that he's with TK, I mean, I'm here and he's not." Shoya tells Guilmon, it's not the first time they've been on their own, only difference is that this time, he's human and currently the other Rookie's partner. "Since I have Takato's Digivice, we can contact them tonight and confirm it." He adds and that cheers Guilmon up.

"I wonder if Takatomon really is a Takatomon!" Guilmon chimes and he smiles, shrugging, although out of the two humans, he knows TK is capable of becoming a Digimon so chances are, Folamon is partners with Takato instead of the other way around.

To Be Continued . . .

Digimon Loops: TK 6

I don't own Digimon!

Loop 1

TK yawns mightily as he gets up, walking out of the tent. An gray Eevee he named Shade follows him out, the Everstone collar's tags clicking as Shade stops to scratch around the head. Finding a nice spot, he relieves himself as he looks up at the half moon and seconds later, at the stars. As he finishes, he turns around and smiles at Shade, taking a few steps, he bends down and scratches behind Shade's left ear. "Sorry for waking you, Shade. Let's get back to the tent."

Shade yawns and stands up, the Eevee turns around and leads the way back to the campsite. He pauses to counts the other tents, it's an odd to be with the others in a Pokemon Loop, particularly interesting to see their partners as humans with their own names. Zeromaru's official name Aoki 'Zero' Yagami, older brother of Taichi and Hikari, although Hikari isn't a Looper although she does recall being a close childhood friend of Shoya and himself. *Likely due to his being a Champion at the beginning of their adventures.* He muses privately as he looks towards the shared tent of Takato and Jiro Matsuki.

The tent after the Matsuki brother is Shoya's tent, Zoe's tent, Thomas' tent, and Thomas' younger brother officially named Cale Norstein. He notes that Thomas' and Cale's canine Pokemon, Thomas' is a Houndoom named Grace and Cale's Growlithe name Stripes looking in their direction. With a whiff of his scent and Shade's, the pair of canine Pokemon's heads drop down upon their forepaws, already to go back to sleep.

He enters his tent and crawls over into his sleeping bag. As he zips it up, Shade comes to rest near his feet. Giving the Shiny Eevee a smile, he rests his head down upon the pillow. As he lies on his back, he reflects upon the three years they've spent traveling, earning Gym Badges, entering tournaments, and generally enjoying not having to save two worlds. *It's not unlike a vacation, I mean, how many worlds let ten year olds go out and explore the world without a parent?* He muses sleepily as he shift slightly and begins to drift off once more.

- - T - -

:TK-sama! Time to get up!: Shade chimes as he nuzzles his trainer's cheek. He woke upon hearing Aoki getting up to begin cooking breakfast, he stuck his head out of the tent and found Aoki releasing Flicker the Litwick, having her re-start the fire. Grace and Stripes barked their greetings to Flicker before turning around to wake their trainers.

TK grumbles and turns his face away. He cocks his head to the side and then tugs on his ear, that wakes TK-sama up. *:Morning!:* He growls softly, his tail wagging behind him.

"Good morning to you, too, Shade." TK greets him after yawning and sitting up. TK pats him on the head and with that, he darts out of the tent, spying Hikari's Ninetails named Lorna sitting before Hikari's tent as a guard.

:Morning Lorna.: He says shyly to the much more evolved Pokemon. Lorna nods, replying to his greeting, *:And to you, Shade:*

: Big Brother!: A brown blur comes out of Shoya's tent and tackles him. Young Voss, hatched just last month, believes him to be a sibling and he never really corrected the hatchling and to be fair, he kind of liked the title.

:Hello Voss, had a good sleep?: Shade asks the normal colored Eevee. *:Yip!:* Chimes Voss, then adds, *:Shoya-kun let me sleep on*

his chest!:

He licks Voss' nose and the young Eevee gets up, he moves to lick Voss' face and Voss pulls away as he moves to do his ears. *:Not bath time, Shade-nii-chan!:*

Shade gets up, chuckling as Voss darts over to welcome TK as his trainer gets out of the tent. "Voss! It's good to see you too." TK says to the hyperactive Eevee.

Soon enough, the humans are all up and out of their respective tents. After the humans ate, they release those Pokemon still in their PokeBalls and soon enough, they get their breakfast as Jiro and Takato wash the dirty dishes while Shoya and TK fed their monsters. As everyone finishes, the larger monsters are once more in their respective PokeBalls, which means besides him, Victoria the Lucario and Angus the Croagunk.

Before they split up, the humans pick some point on a map to meet up in a few days' time. Takato and Jiro are the first to head off from the group, fairly quickly they all did, even Zero departs from his siblings, Taichi and Hikari, which also means that Hikari does the same. He says good-bye to Voss and to Lorna as Shoya leaves.

:And there goes your, little brother.: Victoria teases him and Shade sends the Lucario a slight glare. *:And your... girlfriend!:* He blushes at that, stuttering, *:Lorna isn't my girlfriend.:*

:Not for a lack of wishing.: Victoria states, walking pass as he had slowed his pace. With a shake of his head, he picks up his pace and does his best to keep pace with TK while the two taller monsters stride about a foot ahead of them.

Loop 2

"Oh that can't be good..." TK murmurs as he Awaken to him staring up at the full moon, it's misty, and as he glances about, he finds

standing stones. His cloths appear to be old fashion sort. *Not in Japan am I?* He wonders to himself.

Suddenly, he turns and something huge plus grey lands on him, biting him near his neck. Panicking, he causes his Digivice to light up and within seconds, the monster is tossed towards a stone. As he touches the bite wound, he gets a good idea of what attacked him. Light from his Digivice keeps the man-beast at the stone, he slowly gets up as the locals come into view, their guns pointing at him first before gasping and pointing them at the man-beast.

"By God, he's got wings!" A horse man exclaims upon looking at him, he glances over his shoulder to find rays of light forming a pair of wings behind him. *Just my luck...* He thinks with a slight frown as he feels the spot where his hand is knit up.

Pulling his hand away, he finds some blood on his hand as gun shots echo as said gunmen fire at the man-beast, who only growls and snarls as the bullets enter into him. The light remains, holding the cursed beast to the stone, while the glow around him fades. "Are you alright, Mr Talbot?"

"I believe so, gentlemen. I guess we wait until dawn to learn the identity of the cursed one?" He inquires, nodding towards the man-beast.

The others glance at each other and then back at the cursed man, the werewolf. "If the blessing of the Good Lord holds, then that does seem sensible." Many of the men were already in the process of reloading their rifles.

"I guess it wasn't the bear." One of the grizzled men remarks as people come along with strong drink. A number of children soberly studies the wolfman before their mother/fathers/uncles/aunts escort them back to the village or camp. An old woman comes to check on him, asking softly, "Were you bitten?"

"Yea, but I doubt I'll end up like him." He says softly. She gives him a look but he smiles slightly, he doubts his Digivice would allow him to wind up as a mindless killing beast.

To be fair, this is the first time I've dealt with this sort of thing, well, outside of the Buffy the Vampire Slayer world. I wonder if Taichi's experienced something like this? He wonders as the old woman, Maleva, used some cloth to wipe the blood away from his now healed bite wound.

He doesn't react much to the pressure of Maleva's fingers to said area. "There isn't any bruising." She finally states and he nods, not surprised.

A mug of something warm is handed to him and he drinks it, it's rather bitter but then, he's fairly sure that it's beer or something similar. After all, it's odd to be an adult and expected to drink said kind of drinks. *And other activities.* He muses to himself as he glances towards the werewolf.

As time marched on, some of the men fell asleep while other come and go, likely just wanting to get away from the monster. Dawn finally arrives and those awake, poked and prodded those that fell asleep. Before their eyes, they witnessed the fur falling out, the claws shrink to become nails, sharp fangs turn into normal teeth, and the muscles relax. Gasps ring out as the light fades and they realize who is the monster in their mist.

"Sir Talbot!" He gets some pitying looks as they make some connection between the elderly man and the events that let to him being in the area. As his 'father' wakes someone fires their rifle, within seconds more of them go off, killing the man who just minutes ago had been a man crossed with a beast. Soon the gun smoke clears and they can all see the result of the gun shots.

Then, one of the men turn to look at him. They shift their weight as a few begin to clean their rifles. "He was bitten, right?"

"Ye weren't around! The Good Lord protected him! Even healed that bite wound!"

"Wings of Light were coming out of his back. The Lord is merciful."

Around and around the conversation goes, a number of the men wished to end his life while those who were around to witness the Lord's Blessing defended him. End the end, they decided that come the next full moon, he'll be placed in a cell and if he transforms, well, they'd know whether or not the Lord Blessed him. And so, his horse is returned to him and his so call father's body is placed on a wagon. He is lead back to the manor with a number of men dispersing as they go through the local village.

An elderly man, clearly Sir Talbot's friend and servant look grimly at the wagon. The woman, who wasn't anyone he recognized looks a bit happy to see him well, although she seems disturbed by the wagon. As he stops the horse, he says to the pair, "My father is dead. Many men lost their lives last night and when it was revealed what he was..."

The man nods in understanding, he gets down off the horse and the woman, a lady of a noble house more then likely, gives him a hug. "I know you weren't very close to your father, but I will miss him." She whispers to him before pulling away.

"Did anyone... get bitten?" The breaded elderly man inquires and some of the men glance at him, uneasily. "I see."

"Come next moon, I'll be entering into a heavy secure cell. If I transform, I will likely share my father's fate." He states simply and the man seems sadden by this while the lady seems puzzled.

"Surely you are joking..." She says and he looks her in the eyes, stating simply, "We managed to capture a wild thing and come dawn, we watched its fur fall out, vanishing as it did so, talon like claws become simple finger nails, and the face relax into that of a man's. The Good Lord sent his Blessing, allowing us to keep the beast

pinned to a stone until dawn. It may be hard to believe but we saw what we saw, my Lady."

- - T - -

They really tried to make it as secure as possible, didn't they? He muses as he approaches the cell. "The bars are of silver, the priest blessed them." One of his escorts explains, he nods in understanding but doubted that them being of silver would really stop a werewolf.

What reading he did, which turned out to be very little information upon the subject, and the conversation with Maleva before the gypsies left seems to imply that the silver needed to be in his heart to be effective. Not that he thought he'd transform, he had already done so a week after the incident and found it rather easy to control the instincts of the new body. Dark golden fur covering him from head to paws, a huge canine head, strongly built body, a preference for being on all fours, and a slightly bushy tail. Transformed into said state seemingly added an extra four feet but that could be explained viva lengthening of limbs and the up right ears.

The hinges need to be oiled as they squeak as the door opens and then thumps closes. They lock the door and soon enough, they pull back from the cell. He stands around in the center of the cell, waiting for the moon to rise. The sky darkens and after a while, the full moon slowly reaches its post.

After a while, he grows tired and sits down upon the ground. In time, he lies onto the ground and dozes off. He wakes to the sound of the door opens. "I guess the Good Lord has indeed blessed you, Mr Talbot. Yer free to go." One of the townsfolk says as he sits up, stiffing a yawn. He nods as he gets to his feet, walking out of the building, he finds his horse waiting for him along with his dead father's servant.

As they ride home, he inquires to the elderly Muslim, "So, have you decided whether you wish to remain here or return to your

homeland?"

"I believe I shall, you do plan to sell the estate and the lands I believe." To which he nods, as he plans to leave Britain behind, heading to America, buy a huge trace of land and just enjoy a minor vacation. He'll be sure to record his condition, taking samples to sent to Thomas, who's been studying various sciences.

Soon he heads to his room, and falls asleep once he gets out of his dirty cloths.

Loop 3

The gun is finally empty, not that it seemed to cause pause from the shambling corpses. A few thuds ring out, it seems that some of the animated bodies trip over their own fallen. Then, suddenly, meaty slashes echo and he looks up to find Shirou moving silently among the herd of zombies, beheading them quickly and effectively.

"You alright, TK?" Shirou Emiya, one of the fellow anchors of this Loop, asks him.

"Yea, I'm just a bit stunned that at how many rounds I managed to get off." He tells the Looping Magus. "I still would give my right arm for that plasma gun in my storage space." He adds as he dusts off his leather pants, made out of cow leather.

"You aren't the only one aching for modern convinces, or should we call them future convinces?" Shirou muses as he moves among the bodies, marking each fleshy limb with a rune.

"Whatever works." He says as he comes out from the building he had taken shelter in. He would have headed to the second level if the stairs hadn't been sporting magical traps, it's bad enough that just holding a hand over the first step passively activated part of the trap's function. Reason why he was even exploring the town has to

do with looking for anything useful for the group's mission of killing Raven.

"Weird West indeed." The nineteen year old, blond anchor curses as he watches as Shirou finishes up cleaning the area of dead bodies and parts. The fire is mystical in nature, leaving no smoke at all.

"Indeed." Shirou agrees, coming over to where he's standing.

"I mostly just found them stored away in the buildings. They didn't start coming out until I tripped the mystical trap that's on the stairs." He reports to the Magus Killer. "Just having my hand over the first step stirred these guys into action."

Shirou's eyes hardened and marches through the doorway. He falls into step behind Shirou, it wasn't long before they stand at the bottom of the stairs. It didn't take long for Shirou to cause the trap to glow and he watches as Shirou goes to work in dismantling the array. Shirou heads up the stairs and he stays down on the main level, doubting he'd want to see what's up there.

After a few minutes, Shirou comes down, saying in a tense tone, "The cellar."

He gives a sharp nod and they head into the back, it takes them a few minutes to find the entrance and he summons a ball of light. With Shirou in the lead, they walk down the stone steps. He notices a smell that grows stronger. He didn't know what they found as it didn't look as gothic as he expects it to be, but then, to him, it just looks like a table with a pyramid of scrolls upon it.

Beyond the table and the scrolls, there were barrels and looking up, he shivers slightly at the sight of animal skulls strung up about the ceiling. There seems to be runes upon the skulls, not that he can see them clearly, only that they glow. Suddenly, a bunch of arrows fly up and destroy the skulls. It takes a few rounds but Shirou gets them all and he glances towards his fellow anchor, watching the bow disappear.

Shirou walks over to the table and begins to quick read the top scroll. Soon Shirou reads each scroll and then, he destroys them. "Just a record of what the warlock did here." Shirou states.

"Let's go get the others, we're going to burn this whole town just to make sure we got everything." Shirou says, already marching pass him, heading up the stairs.

He merely nods, rather glad that Patamon wasn't around for this loop.

Loop 4a

TK shares a look with his... 'cousin' who's name is Shawn, but then, his current name is Terry as he had checked his wallet. "So... you two are also Loopers?" Asks Gwen while Ben just studies them.

All the while InuYasha, currently named Ivan, seems to be freaking out over the lack of his demonic powers. Yes, InuYasha as in the half-demon from a rather famous Manga and Anime. "Yea... are either of you familiar with this universe?" He asks.

"Nope, but I likely involves aliens." Ben speaks for the first time. "It always involves aliens." Ben remarks with a sigh while Gwen gives Ben a look of disappointment.

"So... where are you guys normally from?" Gwen asks and he shrugs when Shawn shoots him a questioning look. "Well, I'm usually at a camp site in Japan and eight years old. Shawn is usually not human and in the Digital World. As for 'Ash', I'm fairly sure that he Wake to find himself pinned to a tree and a teenage school girl clinging to him."

"How do you know that?!" Ash demands, suddenly in his face.

"Well, for one, you have complained that it wasn't a new moon and your introduction as InuYasha. There's a popular Manga that got

made into an Anime series by the name of the male main character, who's a half-dog demon." Shawn pipes in, even Ben's expression shows how interested he is in that fact.

"So I'm famous from your world, huh?" Ash states with a rather prideful look upon his face.

"Well yea." He agrees.

"So wait, you're some half-demon," Ben asks, pointing to Ash first, "and you are some kind of Digital Entity," Ben points to Shawn before turning to look at Terry, "and you are what to him?"

"Shawn is usually something call a Digimon, short for Digital Monster. Species name is Patamon, though I guess if you want a name, Shoya. I'm his human friend and partner, I help him as Patamon assume higher forms." He explains as he holds up his Digivice. "My name is usually Takeru, or TK and I'm typically the Digidestine of Hope."

"And that's your status symbol?" Ash asks and he sighs. Within seconds, a laptop is resting upon the floor. "A little modification to the code and I can use it to store things. It also allows me harness the power that is the reason why I was chosen in the first place."

"Did it take you a few to get it right like it did for Gwen to create her storage space?" Ben asks as he sends the laptop back into his storage space.

Before anyone could answer, a voice over the intercom of the mall tells them that the mall is closed and for them to vacate the entrances. With a lazy shrug and a fixed scowl upon a certain grumpy Anchor, they began to walk away from the mall. "Well, no, I worked with a friend of mine on making modifications, it worked out rather well." *And then there's that code to alter my appearance, but I did that on my own. The rest of the powers didn't even need me to enter any kind of code.* He thinks to himself.

"So, what about Ben and yourself? I mean, other then aliens, what's your universe like?" Shawn asks Gwen as they walk pass this construction site, only for some one to sigh, Ben it turned out, and says, "Oh look. What are those lights up there?"

It was said in such a flat tone that everyone stopped and looked at Ben for a few seconds before looking up at the sky. Sure enough, there's something coming down from the sky, heading for... the construction site they are just walking pass. "I guess we better go greet the pilot and hear what they have to say." Gwen sighs and they all follow her into the site.

Loop 5

"I can't believe you... you... you sold me, again!" TK shouts at Zoe, they were walking out to the spot where the Spring Summoning is going to be held. "It took me three days, Zoe, THREE, to break that magic nulling collar and then two days for my reserves to be full enough for me to use magic to get off that ship!"

"I don't see why you are upset, you were going to be marrying a queen and she, according to that diplomat, has a fine taste in women. It's not like you'd have much to do, living in the lap of luxury with so many beautiful women, you could finally get the practice you need in the matters of the bedroom." Zoe informs him in an off handed matter, causing him to just give her his best glare, which did seem to cause a minor flinch but nothing more.

"I am so going to get you back for all of this. You won't know when or the how, but it will happen." He informs Zoe in a deadly serious voice. With that, he focuses on their surroundings. He didn't have a single doubt about who he'll be summoning, the question is, what form will Patamon show up in?

Soon enough, they each take their turn at summoning their familiar with him summoning Patamon in the form of a Pegasusmon. A quick

kiss sealed the pact, with him whispering to Pegasusmon, "Not One Word."

"Wouldn't dream of it." Pegasusmon whispers back under the disguise of nudging him in the shoulder and he gives his partner a blank look. He snorts and turns to watch the last few summons.

Zoe's turn is the second last, just before a certain Void Mage who isn't an anchor, which he is very thankful for, and can't help but wonder just who she'll summon, her Human Spirit or her Beast Spirit. As Zoe takes her place and does the spell, he's focus upon the spot where the familiar will appear. Smoke begins to appear and then, with a pop, smoke explodes and as it clears, he drops his jaw as she managed to summon a Pixie from Monster Rancher. The sub-breed called Janne, which is a cross between a Pixie and a Durahan.

"Is that an Angel?" "Looks like one, doesn't she?" "Look at that armor..." "... kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss..." "... on the lips! That would be so sweet!" "... dreams to night!"

"So, I'm Zoe, student of this fine academy, and who might you be?" Zoe asks politely while Pegasusmon murmurs soft curses for about a moment before realizing that he isn't a rare Pixie type so the Janne won't be bugging him. His partners murmurs turn to prayer as the Janne answers Zoe, her summoner.

"I am Benita, member of the Sky Wardens." The now named Benita states in Japanese, not that any of their classmates know the language. "How did I come to be here? And for what purpose have I been... summoned?"

He didn't like the smile that is slowly creeping upon Zoe's face. He quickly climbs upon Pegasusmon's back and says, "Fly West! Go, go, go!"

Soon enough, Benita is flying after them, demanding a duel to the death over Zoe's stolen virtue. *I don't care what it takes, Zoe will pay!*

He thinks as he clings to Pegasusmon's mane for dear life as his partner does some evasive maneuvers to avoid Benita's attacks.

Loop 4b

He studies the crow outside of his window with a slight grin. The crow seems fine and as he opens the window, the black bird flares its wings and caws at him. The crow tries to flap its wings but it's stuck fast in the magical glue that keeps the bird firmly stuck in place along with the bait bowl that's been emptied. As he manages to get the beak, he is already concentrating upon the crow, it relaxes and he quickly plucks the crow from the glue and tosses it into the air.

Within a second, it has recovered and flying away. With the crow gone, 'Terry' begins to clean up the spot, the glue already vanishing now that the crow is gone. *Now a crow added to the list. It's still a small list but it's growing.* He thinks as he leaves his room, making sure the window is secured shut.

His first acquired animal had been a stray male dog, a husky-border collie mix during his tour of an animal shelters. His second was a cat, also during that visit of an animal shelter, a grey tabby who had been surrendered to the shelter and neutered, not that it affected the morph. Not long afterwards, they used the morphs they acquired to sneak into the local zoo, him using his cat morph while the others used the forms of dog, rat, or ferret to sneak in.

As he places the bowl into the sink, he runs the hot water for a few seconds until it was hot before filling the bowl with said hot water. "Three months already? My, my, how time flies..." He murmurs to himself as he finishes with filling up the bowl with water, he turns it off once he gives his hands a quick through the water, turning the cool water on a bit so it wasn't that hot.

Unsurprisingly, Ash went straight to the power house animals which are namely bears, wolverine, badger, lion, tiger, hyena, and, after much convincing, a dophin. Gwen's collection of animals involved a

number of venomous beasties along with a bat, hyena, rhino, and a dolphin. Ben also did those that Ash did but he also did three venomous snakes, bat, monkey, gorilla, elephant, and a scorpion. Shawn's collection of animals were a tiger, black bear, leopard, great horned owl, elephant, monkey, otter, mountain ram, bat, badger, and dolphin.

Soon enough, the frying pan is warm enough that be takes the glass with the egg yokes within it and pours it into the pan. He places the now empty glass into the sink and begin scrambling the eggs as they begin to cook. The bowl waits near to be filled along with what he likes to add to his scrambled eggs. He glances up as his mom comes into the kitchen from the front, at a glance he could tell that she hadn't had a good meal in the last twenty-four hours given the way she is slowly making her way to the fridge, likely for one of her store bought shakes in a can.

Once she got one, she is already gulping it down. "Have a good day at school, sweetie." She tells him before she heads out of the kitchen, likely up to her bedroom. He sighs, it seems that she forgot that yesterday was a Friday and that today, Saturday.

He didn't like her like this, but at least she wasn't a Human-Controller, just a writer, of all the jobs she could have ended up with for a loop. Typically, she works the same job she usually has when they were in their home loop. This loop proved to be a rather interesting one in more way then just the appearance of those other anchors from other universes or the alien invasion that's going on, although it's an interesting weapon they have to fight said alien invasion to begin with.

Lion, wolverine, rhino, cheeta, and dolphin from the zoo, picked up that mustang from that neighboring ranch, animals I've trapped and then released beyond that crow have been a fox, coyote, and hare. Used that tranquilize gun to get a white tail deer stag, bobcat, wolf, and beaver. Then I found that wolf spider, managed not to squish it when I found it, freaky experience being one, not sure why Gwen acquired all those bugs. Fifteen in total for me, not sure what the

others have picked up on their own time. Even Shawn's been pretty quiet about his list of animals. He reviews as he turns off the stove before picking up the pan, slowly and carefully pushing the eggs into the bowl.

Soon enough, his breakfast is ready for him to eat it. He is slowly getting use to not having to make enough for both Patamon and himself, although he'll likely return to the habit when they return home. Sitting at the table, he glances to an empty seat, he can't help but feel lonely at times, particularly in the morning and when Patamon possesses his own family outside of he himself. Majority of the time, they're twins, sharing the same parents and older brother.

Thankfully, either Matt or his father seem to exist here, leaving it mostly his mom and himself. Shawn's father is his mom's brother for this loop, not that they get together much as a family. As he muses, he finishes his breakfast, but doesn't feel like getting up right away.

Pushing his dishes and glass off to the side, he summons a laptop and the morph granting cube that's connected to the computer. He checks the reading and copying program going on, blinking in surprise, it seems that it finished about two months ago. With a thoughtful hum, he summons an external hard drive and copies the whole alien device information onto it. Once that's done, he unplugs it and getting up, he finds some tape and a marker, writing Morphing Cube on the tape, he puts it on the hard drive. No longer needing it, it returns to his space pocket.

He disconnects the Morphing Cube but leaves it out. He'll phone Gwen to come and take it, as per their agreement when they returned to search for the cube. Putting the side panel back on, he then begins typing away at the computer, bringing up a decryption program and sets it to work upon the alien information, hopefully, at some point in the future, he'd be able to fix the program to allow for longer period of time in a morph. With the program running and the battery still fine, he banishes the computer and cable back to his storage space.

Taking a few seconds to clear away his dishes, he gets onto the phone and dials Gwen's number. The reason why he has it? They're pretending to date and thus it wouldn't be unusual about the sudden phone calls between them.

The phone rings a few more times before Gwen picks up and he gives her the coded phrase that informed her that the Morphing Cube is ready for her to come and take it.

Loop 6

Well, at least there doesn't seem to be any Pixies around here to bother Shoya... TK thinks as he slaps a bug that landed upon his cheek, walking through the swamp while his best friend and partner flies above. They woke up upon a beach with bits and pieces of wood from a ship. Neither of them recalls being on a ship... as of yet. It might come to them in dreams over the course of the next few months.

They didn't salvage much from the wreck, so he's more then thankful for the storage space he created within his Digivice. He's got plenty of sets of cloths within that space in his current size and he did wonder if he might yet need to get Izzy's and maybe Ken's help with creating a portable washer and drier for his cloths instead of relying upon waking in a place where laundromats are common. He slaps a spot on his left hand as he follows the solid land that winds through this portion of the swamp.

TK's pretty sure that Shoya is either humming or whistling a jolly tune, likely giddy about the fact that he's not getting mobbed by a large number of typically female monsters. *Can't blame him after what Zoe arranged for me during our last encounter in Familiar of Zero Loop.* He can't help but shutter a bit and make a warding gesture to banish those memories.

With a shake of his head and slaps his neck, killing the bug trying to drink from him. He does his best to ignore the smell as he gets

worse. Something dark and shadowy slowly pops up on his horizon, as he heads there, he finds a spring at the foot of this mouth of a cave. Wrinkling his nose, he can't help but make a face as he studies the cave. After a few minutes, he believes he makes out some kind of statue, surviving many attacks viva the wind and the rain.

"Shoya! I've found a cave for us to explore." He calls out upon pressing a button on his ear piece.

"Roger, TK, coming down!" And within minutes, the trees rustle as Shoya comes down through the trees. He uses his left arm to cover his eyes, waiting for everything to settle down.

"Spooky looking, sure you want to explore it?" His partner asks as he summons a pair of flashlights. He hands one to the angel looking Pixie once his has been turned on.

"Might as well. Anything we find we can use later once we get back to civilization." He reasons as he begins to wade through the spring, heading into the cave. He is glad to find that within a few feet, the cave floor is dry and he notices seems within the walls, clearly making the cave a man-made structure. It's not the first time they come across some ancient abandoned building/city/underground building.

They found a few more decorations in the form of dull tiles arranged in patterns or in the form of beings or symbols, icons more likely. Then they ran into spots that clearly witnessed a fight or two. Thankfully, they haven't ran into a skeleton, just rubble or rusty weapons that were likely broke in use. They found cave-ins when the path diverges, even ruined stair cases, although they could likely get up to that level. They didn't see a reason to do so at this point of time, might as well explore where they can before venturing to areas the could be unstable.

They come to a large open space and all about the area are scraps of rusted metal along with Lost Disks. "A grave yard of monsters." Shoya murmurs, it's clear that the sight before them as they sweep

the area with beams of light from their flashlights affected his partner, best friend, and fellow Anchor a heck of a lot more then it did him. *That should be expected I guess... If it were littered with human bones...* He does his best to dismiss that thought and the trail that it wishes to lead him down.

He slowly begins to walk through the gate way and a loud metal screech erupts. "Oh Hell no..." He swears as he looks down to the edge of the door way, it takes him a few minutes to find the laser trap line as things slowly begin to fall to the ground. It's clear that some kind of guardian, likely made out of something durable, is slowly waking.

"Too late to run for our lives, isn't it?" Shoya asks in a flat tone and he studies the hallway.

"No, I think we have a clear path out of here, see that up there? It's jamming the sliding door, keeping it from closing. The real question is, do we want it to destroy the whole ruin as it chases us?" He informs his friend.

"... Right." Shoya sighs and they prepare to face the guardian. Him summoning a plasma gun for himself and some vibrating sword for Shoya to use that Thomas made, all Thomas wanted in exchange for the sword had been two magical staffs that he created and a simply robe that's got a like three spells enchanted upon it, a repair spell, a cloaking spell, and an armor spell, all of which came that Familiar of Zero loop. The flashlights had been banished back to the storage space and with a bit of thought, an orb of light appear high in the air above them, giving them a very good view of the stone dragon lumbering towards them.

Loop 4c

:Who are you people?: Demands the Andalite surrounded by robotic creations sporting some kind of lazer cannons and four legs. *:I'd like an answer now.:* All four eyes narrow at them.

"Great, another trigger happy alien." Murmurs Ben, he sighs while Ash snaps at the young appearing Andalite.

"We're here to answer that message you sent out. F'eh, if this is how you welcome us then we should have just ignored like I said we should have."

:That doesn't explain where Prince Jake and the other Animorphs are.:

He blinks and replies before the others could do so, "Wait, your a local anchor for this universe? If that's so... then, well, the other native Loopers have likely taken our places in our universes." *Or took the place of those who did at any rate.* He mentally adds to himself.

:You guys are also, as Marco says, in the Groundhog Day mode?: The Andalite inquires, his tail relaxing a tad, well, that's how he judges it, not like he's familiar with the species after all. They all nod, well, except for Ash.

"Yea, we are all Loopers as Terry said. Ben and I are usually dealing with a larger array of aliens then what this universe offers." Gwen states.

"F'eh." Ash grunts, crossing his arms, not bothering to explain anything about where he came from. While Shawn pipes in, "Ash is usually a Half-Demon in Japan that's typically five hundred years in the past. His actual name is InuYasha."

"Shawn and I also come from Japan, although in a more modern setting. My real name is Takeru 'TK' Takaishi, Digidestine of Hope and Shawn, usually called Shoya when human, is my Digimon partner and best friend commonly called Patamon." Terry informs the Andalite whom's eyes widen.

:I have watched the show called Digimon and read a few volume of InuYasha in its original language.: The alien states as a stick eye

looks at Ash and at himself. *oes that mean you two also have fake names?:*

The young Andalite looks towards Ben and Gwen, Ben piping in, "Well, our last names are different, but Ben and Gwen are our names. We're also cousins and our grandmother is an alien, which makes us quarter Anodite."

The Andalite takes a moment and he can't help but wonder if the alien is sighing, although the tail seems to become more... relaxed. *:I see, well, we could likely continue this later. We kind of have incoming Yeerks.:* Andalite states. *:You may call me... Ax.:*

Terry swears that the stalk eyes grinned but concludes that they should find a more... ground level place to continue their conversation.

Loop 7

"Joso!" TK cries out and lines made out of blue energy flare up, soon enough a cube is created upon the scroll. He groans at how the lines don't match up, his cube is just a cm larger then the design on the scroll's square.

"Well, that certainly looks better." His 'older' brother remarks. "At least you didn't cause the scroll to get launched at the ceiling like you did a few tries ago."

"Damn it, Shirou, can't we call it quits for today? I'm expected to leave at midnight to go patrol the school." Eight year old Takeru Sumimura asks. "I'd like to get some sleep before I leave."

It so didn't help that he didn't have his Digivice on him as he does this. He's sure that if he had it on him, he'd have done this perfectly each time he preformed this technique. *Though he does have a point about it might be taken and put someplace I can't get at it...*

"Well, given your accuracy is much better and you've got the shape down, I guess we can call it. But tomorrow afternoon, we'll resume." Shirou informs him in a firm tone and he nods.

After watching Shirou leave the dojo, he gets up and walks over to the scroll. He starts at the square before looking at the palm of his hand and back again. With a slight shake of his head, he rolls the scroll up and putting it away, he heads for the bathroom to have a quick shower before heading to his room. Soon he's done and he pauses as he turns to look at his current father, who's walking towards the kitchen, having returned from speaking with his publisher.

"Evening... dad." He says, it's rather hard not to say mom as he's use to living with his mom. "I think Shirou is in the kitchen."

"Thank you, Take-chan!" His current father says with a smile and ruffles his blond hair, heading for the kitchen. He smiles softly while a bit of sadness shines from his eyes, he's rather unused to the affection he's getting in the few hours that he's been Awake here in this universe.

He quickly arrives to his room and it's not long before he's yawning widely and deeply. He gets into his futon and within a few minutes of banishing his thoughts, falls asleep. His alarm will wake him at eleven for him to change into traditional Kekkashi attire and head for the school.

- - T - -

"I can't believe I'm a ghost dog!" Inuyasha growls as they head to the school. TK simply sighs, the usual half demon has been circling around that statement since they headed out. He's given up trying to get a word in edge wise although with their destination in sight, he won't be the only one to suffer from Inuyasha's ranting.

He gets onto school grounds, he slowly looks around, taking in the school and getting a feel for the area. Ignoring Inuyasha, he rams

the butt of the staff into the ground and does some stretches. *Man that staff got heavy!* He thinks as he goes through the stretches.

As he finishes, he senses something join them in the school yard. He snatches the staff and glances expectantly at Inuyasha, who is growling while looking up at the roof. His gaze follows Inuyasha's own and he notices some kind of bird perched on the roof.

He brings up his right hand, his index and middle finger up while the rest of his fingers plus the thumb are curled inwards to the palm. "Joso!" He cries out with a quick upward motion of his right hand.

The tell tale glow of his blue kekkai forming appears and the bird Ayakaishi tries to fly out of the range of the kekkai but a green tinted kekkai snags the tail as his kekkai forms around the Ayakaishi, it crows and curses as he glances to his right and then to his left to find Rachel with her own ghost dog hovering near.

"Nice to meet you face to face, Rachel-chan!" TK says with a cheerful smile.

"And you, TK-chan." Rachel returns with a grin while Inuyasha is already in muzzle to muzzle with the other Ghost Dog.

"I can't believe You ended up here! Didn't I say I'd skin you, Laharl, when we meet again?" Inuyasha snarls while Laharl merely pulls back, head going up and begins to ooze with arrogance and sports a condescending tone, "I'd like to see you try! Ahahhahaha!"

He winces slightly at the laugh while Inuyasha snaps and bites down on Laharl's body. The pair fight as Rachel and himself watch, he frowns at Inuyasha's antics but then, he doesn't interfere as he doesn't under stand the history between the pair.

With a sigh he says, "Metse!"

Rachel activates her staff and the Ayakaishi's remains enter into the metal hop. "Well, this is going to be a fun loop, huh?" Rachel muses.

"Well, it'll certainly be lively." Is his reply as the pair of Ghost Dogs continue to cause a scene between biting each other to cursing each other.

To Be Continued . . .

Shadows that Dance: MLP:FiM

I don't own My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic!

"Why am I the one to take this," Swift Growth points his right hoof towards the magical collar that's been in the family since it's creation, "instead of, I don't know, Well Traveled? Or Star Tracker?" The brown stallion with grass green mane and tail sporting a Cutie Mark of a brown acorn seed within the shape of a mighty green oak asks.

His mother, Metal Honing, a steel colored mare sporting copper colored mane plus tail with a Cutie Mark that is a grinding wheel, sighs and replies, "Your cousin Star Tracker is busy with a study group with Professor Galaxy Mapper for the weekend as for your older brother, he left with that trade caravan heading north."

Swift Growth's father, Fields Crown, a dull yellow stallion sporting dark brown mane and tail who is the proud owner of a Cutie Mark sporting three bundles of golden hay. His father adds in a solemn tone, "And you can do with a trip away from here given your break up with Jewels."

Swift's ears go droop and he looks down at the ground, scrapping his right hoof along the wooden floor of their house. He hasn't taken that particular break up very well, even though it's been two weeks, but then, they had been going out for two years. The mare will be leaving to try her luck in a larger community then Plowville, after all, the mare's special talent is that of a jewels smith. Swift still possesses cloak clasp that Jewels made for him for his last birthday.

"A change of scenery is what you need, son and, hopefully, by the time you get back, you might find that the hurt of the break up is a bit less." His mother says, moving over and placing a hoof onto his right shoulder. Swift looks up and over at his mother before looking towards his father.

With a sigh, he nods as he says, "I guess... Going to be leaving tomorrow morning?"

"That sounds fine. I'll even make your favorite!" His mother says with a bright smile as she lowers her hoof and Swift gives them a slight smile, although he still has his doubts about this trip.

Finally, I'm almost there! Swift Growth thinks to himself, the moon's light brightening up his path. The Mare in the Moon seemingly looking down upon the world this night. Not that it bothers him as it's been five days since he set out on this delivery. He honestly thought it would have taken longer but the Pegasus ponies seem to have scheduled lovely weather throughout the time he's been traveling.

The path leads into this forest that seems to act like a barrier between the sandy cove and the remains of old farmsteads that followed the dirt road. The upcoming cove has this small village, he hadn't learn the name of, resting under the shadow of this cliff. The village's primary trade goods are seaweed and pearls, both items the village folk harvest from various water farms. There had been a marble quarry but it must have run out or they'd still be selling it.

As Swift enters the forest proper, he begins to feel that he's being watched. After a few minutes, the young stallion's ears flicker around before flattening upon his head. Swift moves out of a trot to a walk as he slowly looks around. He thought he heard something flying overhead and as he looks up, he doesn't see anything, there isn't any clouds in the sky so he continues to have a clear sight of the moon.

Feeling rather jittery, Swift Growth lowers his gaze and with a quick glance to his left and then right, he picks up his pace, once more entering a trot. His ears continue to flicker around as he continues to feel as though someone is watching him. It's something that is beginning to think that he should try running down the path, hoping to out pace his watcher. He didn't like this feeling and with the

shadows of the forest beginning to look a great deal more eerie then he has experienced before.

That's how they die, they run, they trip, and the monster is on them before they can recover... By Celestia this is beginning to look like start of a horror story. Swift thinks to himself, swallowing heavily and beginning to feel a bit of panic stirring itself up within him.

Swift does his best to keep his breathing deep and even, as he is beginning to feel the panic within lessen, a stick snaps under the weight of something, causing him to freeze. Swift does his best to control his breathing, refusing to give into panic and run headlong down the dirt road. He doesn't move, so focus on fighting the rising emotions that he only sees a shadow suddenly before him and yellow, feral eyes looking into his own, ocean colored eyes.

Then there wasn't any panic, only a desire to sleep, which Swift Growth followed through with.

As Swift returns to consciousness, he feels his whole body encased in dirt and he couldn't **move** ! There's no fighting the panic that engulfs him and he tries to buck, move from up and down, right to left. Somehow, his snout breaks free of the dirt and within seconds, he's moving his body up, breaking through the soil and he's roaring in fright and anger. Within seconds, he's flying in the air, his wings flapping.

Then Swift is once more in control of himself, his panic gone, vanishing like dew before the morning sun. As he looks around, he finds himself puzzled by something, something that's kind of at the edge of his mind. As he looks around, he notices a pair of shadows waiting for him below. It's then that something clicks and he freezes, his wings stop flapping and thus, he falls to the ground.

As he nears the ground, an instinct enacts itself and he lands on his hooves, having uses his wings to slow his descent to the ground so he can land like he has seen his cousin Star Tracker done. His wings

fold to his sides and he studies the pair of ponies that are a few feet away. One of the ponies is a unicorn, a jet black mare sporting granite gray mane and tail looks on with a note of interest with her blood red eyes.

The other pony seems to be a Pegasus of bone white fur, dark purple mane plus tail, with feral yellow eyes. The wings of the Pegasus mare sport a clawed 'thumb' and the feathers of the wings seem rather tiny compared to the feathery wings he's seen upon other Pegasus. Swift also couldn't help but notice that this mare's ears seem a bit larger then they should be.

After a few minutes, Swift decides to look at his own wings, his eyes widen at the sight of his own body, as his coat is now as white as freshly fallen snow. His own wings mimic the wings of that white mare, the 'thumb' moves this way and that, just as he thinks of it. He fans out his left wing and is rather startled by the lack of feathers on the down side part, it reminds him of dragon or bat wings, with 'fingers' fanning out with webbing between them.

As he closes his left wing, his gaze turns to his bare flank and then his midnight black tail. It was the lack of his Cutie Mark that really unnerves him, Swift doesn't recall any stories about how to *lose* a Cutie mark. *If I don't have one... What happened to **ME** ?! Why do I now have **wings** ? Why is my color... not what it was?* His mind continues to cycle through with those thoughts.

Surprisingly, his emotions see... distant, he did feel panic, fear, uncertainty, curiosity, and thirsty. He blinks his eyes and looks up from the ground that he was gazing at as he was wrapped up in his questions. Swift looks towards the pair of mares and walks over until he's within, what he deems a comfortable distance. Neither mare seem overly hostile, the black mare seems to be faintly... amused while the white mare seems to be delighted by him.

"What happened to me?" Swift demands, channeling his mother as best as he could, including a minor glare.

"You were reborn as my Child." Answers the white mare, she's sporting a look of fondness. "At first, I just thought you were a meal, but then you didn't *run* ! You fought your fright and that made you interesting."

"Then, when I had you sleeping, I checked your bags. What a delightful item you had brought into our territory! And for Arcana Bolt to boot." The mare continues and Swift takes a step back at the mention of his Great Uncle. The mare smiles, he gets a good view of the teeth that are now like those of a predator.

He runs his tongue along his own teeth to find, they have been transformed into similar fangs. The white mare chuckles softly at his reaction. "Welcome to the family, *Swift* Dream. I am your Sire, Ruin Dreams and this is your older sister, Eternal Dream." Ruin Dreams tells him, he can't help but gap at the two of them.

"Now, why don't you two get to know each other? A nice warm meal for the two of your to bond over." Ruin Dreams says before turning her back on him and taking off into the air, leaving Eternal Dream with him.

"Come along, brother dear. Might as well get something in you before you Frenzy." Eternal Dream says as she trots pass him. "And trust me, you won't want to go through *that* ."

Swift look upon Eternal Dream's flank, finding it also bare. With a glance towards the direction Ruin Dreams has flown off into, he turns and follows Eternal Dream. His mind reeling from this whole experience, he rather hopes that this was all just a dream that he'll wake from. He might not know what he is but he sure as Celestia's sun know he's going to wish he'd just stayed within that hole in the ground.

As Eternal Dream leads him out of a cave, he looks up at the sky, there's a cloud in the sky and the moon isn't as full as the last time

he's seen it. "How long was I out?" Swift asks as he trots behind Eternal Dream.

"It's been seven nights since your were drained and given our Sire's blood then put into the cursed soil." Is Eternal Dream's answer. "To be honest, that's a fairly short amount of time as the average tend to be three weeks but then, you were an Earth pony, so it was either you'd come out of the ground in four weeks time as a vengeful skeleton or within two weeks as one of the two types of Vampire ponies."

Swift swallows heavily, his eyes wide at the thought. "How many turn into skeletons?" He asks, his tone sports a bit of horror and dread at the answer.

Eternal Dream turns her head and replies, "One out of four become Vampires, the other three go that route. Then again, Earth ponies do have a rather strong connection with the earth compared to Unicorn or Pegasus ponies. It's why they all transform into either a Unicorn or a Pegasus pony before coming out of the soil and taking their place among the Clan's ranks."

"I see." Nope, not really, but then, he does feel rather disconnected to his surroundings. Which continues to make this rather surreal for him.

Eternal Dream doesn't comment, just returns to guiding them through the path that seems to lead into the forest. He stops to look off in the opposite direction and notices some distant light coming from that spot. Swift guesses that's where that village is located. He bites his lower lip, wondering if he could out run Eternal Dream to head in that direction, maybe find his Great Uncle and see if he couldn't reverse this... Vampire condition.

Suddenly, he's lifted off his hooves and is floating towards Eternal Dream, her crimson eyes staring into his own, unknown to him wine red eyes. "You go in that direction now, and you'll Frenzy. Then

Arcana Bolt will show up and that will be the end of you." The mare tells him in a matter of fact tone.

"If I were like the others, I'd let you go do just that and see if you're lucky enough to leave the town in one piece but I am not. Relative or not, there's no *known* cure for being a Vampire beyond cutting the head off and its body turning into ashes." Eternal Dream states in a dead pan tone. "So just stick with me and you won't end up doing *something* you'd regret."

With that, Eternal Dream's magic lets him go and he opens his wings before he touches the ground. He hovers there, watching Eternal Dream resume trotting down the path. He turns to look at the town again, he so wants to ignore what has been told to him, a part of him wishes to fly towards the light, and yet... He looks towards Eternal Dream and flies after her, once he's close, he lands on the ground and trots after her.

He doesn't like the idea that it can't be reserved but at the same time... He doesn't know anything! He doesn't know what a Vampire is, the closest would be a kind of bat that drank the juices out of fruits, as they don't really grow fruit trees at the farm, the problem never came up so he never paid the finer details of that species of bat any mind.

Everything is just disjointed and nothing *feels* right! He's no longer an Earth pony stallion by the name of Swift Growth and he's not sure if he's really a Pegasus slash Vampire pony named Swift Dream either. Sure, at some point he'll likely feel more like Swift Dream but isn't right now! He's not even sure who to trust or if he really wants to continue with this existing as a Vampire. Maybe death by his Great Uncle would be for the best... and yet... that seems so... shallow and a cheat.

Then there's that thirst that seems to be growing since they left the cave. Swift discards his thoughts as best as he can and focuses on this rather solid feeling. It's there and it feels so much more real out

of this whole experience. It became an anchor as they enter into the forest, the path ending a few feet back.

Within the forest, Swift's ears flickers about, he swears he hears a bunch of something beating. Some are like a tapping, tapping very quickly and lightly. Others are beating to different beats, some calm while others switch between the two. Others beat softly and at an even pace.

He walks towards the nearest even pace beating, as he cocks his head to one side then the other, he pin points the source. Holding his head near the ground at the spot, Swift leaps back a bit as a whole opens up. He glances to find Eternal Dream sporting a look of concentration, looking back, he finds two rabbits coming out of the hole.

He flinches back as terror seems to fill the eyes of the two rabbits, Swift also realizes, with a touch of dismay that he's been hearing the heart beats of the animals around him. As he looks towards Eternal Dream, he tries to hear her heart beat, only to find there isn't one. He touches his chest and finds he also didn't have a heart beat.

A rabbit is thrust before his muzzle and without a thought, he bites into the rabbit and by the time he realizes that his thirst is being satisfied, he finds himself unable to let go until there's nothing left to *drink* from the rabbit. As he opens his mouth, the bloodless body falls to the ground and he looks over to Eternal Dream. The drained body of her rabbit remains held in the air as the mare is looking satisfied.

"We drink blood?" Swift states, for once, the dullness of his emotions is keeping them from overwhelming his mind. "And I can hear the heart beats of the..."

Eternal Dream flickers her eyes as he speaks, saying, "And you are too young to be able to control the amount of blood you'll drink from any source. If you had gone to that town, somepony would have died as you wouldn't have stopped drinking until all of their blood was drained. In a few decades, you might be able to safely move around

the village and take small amount of blood from various ponies without alerting the villagers to your presence."

"As for the hearing, yes, most Pegasus Vampire ponies possess super hearing, then there are others possess a keen nose for tracking beings whom's blood they've tasted." Eternal Dream explains. "Unicorn Vampire ponies possess tend to possess Far Sight or, the rare few, metamorphic abilities, like altering their forms like changing their hooves into paws sporting claws like cat's or growing spikes and scales about their bodies."

"So... You possess Far Sight?" Swift inquires curiously and Eternal Dream nods.

As they stand there in silence for a while, Swift listening to the heart beats of the creatures around him. He slowly begins to guess which heart beat likely belongs to which animal. His mind wonders, there's so many things he wants to ask and yet... He didn't know where to start!

As he looks towards Eternal Dream, Swift notices that her mind seems occupied. He looks around and then at his wings, which he spreads. He tenses his legs and leaps into the air, his wings flapping. He flies around the forest, doing his best not to hit the branches of trees, snapping the smaller branches or rattle leaves off of them. The noise scares off the number of animals and he climbs higher into the air, flying out of the trees tops.

He looks around as he hovers in the air. Having seen the tricks Star Tracker done, he wonders if he should try any of them. He's new to his wings, so he doesn't know his limits with them.

A shadow moves over him and pass him, he looks up and finds that he's not the only Pegasus Vampire flying about over the forest. Every single Pegasus pony he sees flying about seems to range among the wide range of whites and grays. The eyes of those other Vampire ponies are shades of yellow, orange, or red. Stallions and mares

seem to be hunting, none speaking, as they listen for something to eat and diving into the forest below.

Swift counts those he sees before they dive down or rise up out of the forest, heading back to the cliff that the village rests in the shadow of. Having counted three score and six, he hears Eternal Dream murmur his name softly and he dives down. "Are all Pegasus Vampire ponies white or gray?" He asks as he comes to land near Eternal Dream.

"So far it seems to be. Much like Unicorn Vampire ponies tend to be shades of black or blue." Eternal Dream explains.

"How large is the... Clan?" Swift asks.

"Near six score Pegasus and seven score Unicorn." She replies and he can't help but be rather startled by the numbers.

"How is the forest not depleted?" He can't help but wonder and she chuckles softly.

"We don't need to feed nightly nor do we need much blood to sustain ourselves. A rabbit every four nights is usual, the need for more blood tends to be when there's going to be a battle with the local Hunters decide to try for the mines." Eternal Dream explains. "It also helps that Arcana Bolt has set up a fertility field about the local watering places within the forest that's aimed at rabbits and hares. It keeps us from preying on the villagers."

"Is that why the Clan can keep so many members among its ranks?" He asks, he did know something about the food chain. The more prey there is, the more predators that can be within the area.

"Doesn't anyone leave to start up another... Clan?" Swift inquires, he dreads that the answer is yes.

"No, we can't leave this location. We have to stick by the curse area with the mine. Nor can we pack any of the soil that's affected by the

curse in a crate and leave with it." Eternal Dream tells him. "The magic in the soil expires within days."

"We've tried to sort through the area seeking the focus of the curse but found nothing as of yet." She adds, moving back the way they came.

"What happens to those who don't spend time near the cursed area within the mine?" He asks as they leave the trees behind.

"They lose all sense of self and are tend to get destroyed come morning as they don't remember that Celestia's Sun burns us if we are cause under it's glow."

"So... only way to get destroyed is beheading and sunlight?" He asks and Eternal Dream hums.

"Getting set on fire hurts and causes damage that takes nights to heal from, as long as you fed nightly but as I said, you can heal from that if you get away."

Soon enough, they were within the cave and follows Eternal Dream through the caves until they came to a much more open area, there are various Vampire ponies moving about, most Unicorns seem to be practicing their magic while the Pegasus Vampire ponies are going through what he assumes to be combat maneuvers.

"Eternal! Over here! We could use another horn over here." Cries a light blue Unicorn Vampire stallion.

"Just fly up there speak with Cries Doom, she'll start you on basic maneuvers." Eternal Dream tells him before turn towards the Unicorn Vampire, calling out, "Coming Bone Armour."

Watching Eternal Dream gallop away, he feels rather without a touch stone and looks up. Taking a deep, calming breath, Swift gets into the air. As he gets close to the group, he ask, "Cries Doom? Eternal Dream said you'd set me right?"

A mare sporting a coat that's a darker grey around the chest area and fades out to an off white away from said area. Her mane and tail being midnight black in color. "Ah, your Ruins Dream's latest Child huh? Well then, to the back with you. Watch the others in the unit and mimic what they're doing." Cries Doom tells him and looking at the group, flies to where he's been told to.

"I'm Rusty Vault, Child of Shadow Vault." A stallion sporting dull orange mane and tail who's coat color is a pearl white.

"Swift Dream, Child of Ruin Dreams." He says to the stallion who introduced himself.

Soon enough, the orders were given and he does his best to keep pace with those more experienced members of the unit.

Swift Dream stares down at the village that has long since been transformed into fortified city known as Sea's Grace. The moon isn't in the sky, lighting up the night for anypony, but then, it didn't matter as he can easily hear where the ponies were located within the city. Hunters patrol in groups of four with weapons at the ready, unlike the city guards, they wear leather studded armor.

Day belongs to the City Guard, night however, belongs to the Hunters and Vampires that they defend against. There's been tension of late among both the Vampires and the City ponies. The tension among the City ponies is between those who's families founded the city and those that arrived when it became 'safe' and 'profitable'.

The date it became 'safe' was when his Great Uncle managed to hammer out a treaty between the Vampires and the villagers, that the Vampires would feed only from the animals of the forest and in doing so, the villagers would ensure that the fertility magic that ensures that there's always plenty of rabbits and hares would be maintained. There were number of considerations between the two

groups and for a a century after the treaty was signed by both did see peace, for a time.

Three hundred years later and the treaty is on the verge of being broken. All because the latest group of rulers are dismissing the 'myths' of Vampirism in the area. That they can cut down the forest so they can set up farms so they don't have to keep importing food other then seaweed. Swift reviews. *Improving their lives and maybe, start going into the mines to see if they can't find ore or gems to help fuel their workshops.*

Swift glances upwards, towards his Sire, nieces, nephews, and friends. All were Clan and thus even those few enemies he has among the Clan are kin. To his right, he sees his older sister and younger sister among those preparing to blacken the area, leaving all within the blackness blind, not that it would matter to his fellow Pegasus Vampires as they have plenty of experience in learning how to fight 'blind'.

The signal is given and as the city is now covered in an inky blackness, the treaty will be meaningless after tonight. Not that it was offering much protection these last few decades from 'rogue' Hunters. Thankfully or not, the Hunters had forgotten that the only way to destroy a Vampire was beheading or Celestia's Sun as they wouldn't have left members of the clan on fire and not taken more action then that.

The next target beyond the Hunters and the wealthy will be all the books within the city. Can't make it easy for them to turn the tables on us, now can we? Swift think with a sour note to his thoughts.

The stallion looks off in the direction the sun rises, wondering what Celestia's reaction will be upon hearing about this. He's never met the Princess of the Sun, she had only sent a representative to note the event of the Treaty between the villagers and the Vampires. Which makes him wonder if she wouldn't have books about their weaknesses within her library.

The City below has been part of Celestia's realm since its founding and it's likely that if it had been more established when Vampires started to come out of the mines, it's likely they would have fought against the Royal Guard or even have Princess Celestia visit their cavern home with sunlight wrapped about her, killing the 'infestation' of undead from her lands and curing the cursed area that enables their creation and sanity to continue.

The raid upon the City continues, ponies crying out in alarm, then cursing, other begging for their lives, and others just plain giving orders. Swift Dream remains where he's standing, ears flatten back as the cries of the population continues. He hadn't seen the point in joining those in the attack as he thought there was a more peaceful option. They have plenty of ways to send messages beyond the range of cursed mine using magic and given the centuries, each of the Unicorn ponies had plenty of spells within their possession that they spent time and effort mastering.

The raid ends and as the Pegasus rise up from the darkness, flying back to the mines the magic lets up. Without a word, everypony turns for the mines, some teleporting directly there while others deciding to clean up the area before teleporting away. Swift stays still, listening to the after math of the raid.

As dawn nears, Swift opens his wings and takes to the area, he circles the City. He couldn't help but frown as he thinks he sees a glow flare up but deciding he's seeing things, heads for the mine. He flies to his spot he dug out that is above the spot he was reborn. He uses this spot when he wanted some time away from communal sleeping area.

He's sure that the next night and the following nights, he'll learn his punishment for not following through with the attack. Those that claim to be heads of the various Vampire lines had made it plain that all who didn't could expect a punishment. After all, he hadn't been the only one who had been against the raid and, he doubts it, might not have been the only one who didn't join in the attack.

Curling up in the small space, Swift closes his eyes and falls asleep. Unsurprisingly, nightmares assault him.

"So... we went from two hundred to eight." Swift Dream murmurs as he looks about the others, they were all Pegasus Vampire ponies. "It seems Great Uncle Arcana Bolt expected us to attack the village and left magical instructions to destroy those that attacked it."

They were all mourning the lost of friends and family. "We will mourn our friends and family. We will go through the books and items. The books we will store in the Vault to be preserved by the magic within. The items... we will talk about once we have them gathered up." He tells the others and all seem to be in agreement.

Then, Shadow Cloak, Child of Bone Cloak, asks, "And then we'll avenge them."

"That is doubtful to be of help, Shadow Cloak." Calls Doom, the remaining Child of Cries Doom, snaps.

"To what point would raiding the City be a good idea when we know it's enchanted to destroy Vampires that attack within its walls?" Grey Wolf, Child of Shield Wolf, snaps at Shadow Cloak, giving the charcoal coated Pegasus stallion a glare.

"Even to get disable the enchantment, we'd need magic! And I don't see a Unicorn among our number!" Calls Doom growls.

"Then we find a Unicorn and turn them!" Counters Shadow Cloak.

"It'll take decades before said Unicorn Vampire to master the magics needed to counter the ward!" Grey wolf points out.

"You'd think our Unicorn siblings would have noticed the enchantment before the raid." Murmurs Diamond, Child of Amber.

"Enough!" Swift bellows at the others, flaring his wings.

"We have suffered! We are FEW! We need to protect the Mines!" Swift Dream tells the others in a matter of fact tone. His wings once more folded.

"They are going to be coming here! They are timid now but they are gathering their courage! They will be wary and it is likely that the Royal Guard has been called." He states, looking at each of them.

"And they can't find evidence that some Vampires survived! We will pull back to the more warded areas and we will stick below the tree line." Swift explains.

"Pray that Princess Celestia won't be visiting these mines for I doubt the wards and enchantments will keep us hidden from *her* **light** if she decides to *flood* the mine with **it** ." He growls, looking at Shadow Cloak and Deer Bane who look ready to disobey. "Or have you forgotten that she is the *Princess* of the **Sun** ? You remember the **sun** don't you? How we burn to death when *exposed* to it?"

The seven lower their head, likely out of guilt. "Time is on our side, they considered us myths by the time we did the raid and will do so again." He reassures the group.

"The Forests will be destroyed and made into farm land." Deer Bane, Child of Bane Crushing points out after a few minutes of silence.

"I know, but they won't destroy it all at once. Our forest will grow smaller but they may create ranches. We can feed off of the cattle, sheep, and pigs that are usually raised on ranches." Swift assures Deer Bane.

"Chickens are common too. They are about the size of rabbits." Diamond pipes in.

"I don't see why we can't try and talk with the City ponies." Silent Grace, Child of Silent Wind, murmurs softly. The mare is a quite one, fairly shy, even though her coat is a bright red with mane and tail that sports different shades of purple.

"Might as well send a letter to Princess Celestia about our reason for the raid!" Snaps Shadow Cloak.

"That... might not be a bad idea. I mean, we weren't destroyed by the enchantment. The guilty ponies have been destroyed." Calls Doom points out.

"But we're Dark creatures! Why would she let us continue to exist and risk us making more of our kind? And doing that raid again?" Shadow Cloak asks.

"She would demand oaths and likely cleanse the cursed site after studying it to make something that will ensure we keep our minds." Grey Wolf replies with a frown.

He lets them talk, it's not like it hadn't dawned on him that they might be able to make peace with the Princess of the Sun but at the same time, it's likely then that that course of action will ensure they were the last of their kind. It could be that Princess Celestia will have greater resources in finding a cure and... that has always appealed to him. Yet it horrified him as then he'll be... who? After all this time, Swift knew he can't be Swift Growth but without being a Vampire pony, he wouldn't be Swift Dream.

Would he still have his wings? Could he deal with the raw emotions that being alive would bring him? So many questions and so much unknown. *We're gambling with our futures now. There isn't any pony to turn to for aid beyond those gathered here.* With a sigh and closing his eyes, he takes a deep breath.

"Right, that's enough. We have work that needs to be done. We can continue this at a later date." Swift tells them, he rears up and opens his wings. Within seconds, he's in the air, heading for the communal sleeping grounds.

Soon, he hears the gentle flapping of his fellows and is pleased. For now, let them focus on preserving what they can of the Clan's history and magical practices. He won't be happy to search the dwellings of

those he known on a personal level, but then, it's likely the feeling is mutual with the others, which means none of them had to search through the rooms they didn't want to, leaving it for one of the others to do so.

Continue?

Maybe.

The Lost Gate Ch 1: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"Are you sure you want to play on *that* server?" The department head says with a great deal of nervousness as the finger hovers over the enter button.

Takato cocks his head to the side, not sure what's wrong with that particular serve. "Yea, I'm sure." The sixteen year old Tamer informs the sale's clerk.

"Its just that, the company has been having some... difficulties with that serve." The clerk says and before he could say something, Guilmon cries out from playing the demo the store has for Nintendo Wii, "Ah nuts! Takatomon, my game ended again."

"Guilmon, that's why it's called a demo, it's not suppose to allow you to play the whole game." The goggle wearing teen reminds his partner once more as he turns to look at his partner and closest friend.

Takato Matsuki turns to face the clerk once more and asks, "Could we please hurry this up? He gets bore easily."

In the end, the clerk hands over the two RPG VR consoles that were pre-programed to log onto the selected internet server. As they left, Guilmon hummed tonelessly to himself as they head to the bakery, after all, they did have to drive all the way across town to find a shop that still had the consoles in stock.

They arrived to find at least ten remaining and Takato had allowed his partner to pick out a colour he wanted for his console while he just grabbed one that was black in colour. Guilmon picked out a red

one before the large rookie got distracted by the Wii demo that the store had up.

"Hey Ryo. Monodramon." Takato says as they bump into the other Tamer who's accompanied by Monodramon, for the moment at any rate.

"Hi!" Guilmon chirps with childish enthusiasm as the red Digimon waves a hand. Ryo smiles and nods at Guilmon before claps hands with Takato.

"So, what's in the bag?" Ryo asks and Takato answers, "Just two Sanctum of Forbidden Realms RV consoles, one for me and one for Guilmon."

"Really? Which server do you have programed? I'm on the server Eternal Hunting." Ryo says and Takato answers, "The Lost Gate server for both."

Ryo whistles and after a receiving a few minor tips from his fellow Tamer, Guilmon and Takato say bye to Ryo and Monodramon, continuing to where his motorcycle is.

There were perks to working for Hypnos and owning a special driver's license so that those of them that lack flight abilities could legally own and drive their own vehicles.

About a year ago, Kenta and himself signed up for motorcycle class since neither of their families had the room for them to own their own cars, not even those new smart cars. There had been some problems with the teacher but Yamaki had heard their reasons for wanting something smaller to drive and had arranged for a special instructor to come in and teach them and the rest of the Tamers, though Impmon made a few remarks about the 'wimpy' looking bikes that the instructor had brought in and had been promptly told that he might as well learn how to ride properly and had to pass the examine in order to get his license.

"Ready Guilmon?" Takato asks his partner and the large red rookie Digimon hums in agreement. "Digimodify! In-Training Program activate!" The yellow goggle wearing teen says as he swipes a specialty card that's meant to transform the large dino looking Digimon into his much smaller, and even more hyperactive, in-training form of Gigimon.

It wasn't long before Takato's partner to appear out of the shell of light in his in-training form. "Ready to go for a ride, Gigimon?" The teenage Tamer asks the small red Digimon, kneeling down to pick up the Digimon before the little guy decides to go off to investigate some sound or smell.

"Ready, Takatomon!" Gigimon declares and leaps into his hood of his jacket, a hood designed for the little Digimon to ride in while Takato drove the motorcycle. Within seconds, Takato makes the last few adjustments to the hood to make sure that there isn't any chance for Gigimon to try and leap out.

Once his jacket is zipped up and the bike has started, Takato puts on his red and black helmet before swinging a leg over the seat of the red bike that's decorated with the same black triangle designs that are on Guilmon's body.

Within seconds, Takato signals to get into the flow of traffic and once allowed in, he's on his way home.

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As Kouji finishes making the final adjustments to his visor, making sure that it sits comfortably on his face before he lies back onto the couch. Once Kouji feels ready, the Chosen of Light presses the power button and within seconds, light fills his vision for a minute before it vanishes, leaving him in a grey room that has a large book resting on a pillar.

According to the instruction book, that book is the menu that will allow him to begin his game but first, he has to create the character

that he wishes to play.

Once Kouji Minamoto touches the logo with the words, Create Character on it, the door located to his right opens and Kouji walks towards the open door then through it and finds himself in a new room that has two statues, one depicting a man and the other a woman.

Kouji rolls his eyes as he walks over to the man's statue and in a flash, the two gender statues vanish and he finds twelve statues depicting the twelve playable races of Sanctum of Forbidden Realms the RV game made by Wireless Software of Frontier Gaming, or the W.S.F.G.

Kouji studies the humanoid horse and walks over to get a better look at the steel plate by the feet, though he had read about the twelve races offered, the book hadn't gone into description of which were which.

Thowrahein: *A race of herbivores that prefer the open plains and prairies of Forbidden Realms. They live in a tribal structure and produce some of the finest Shamans in Forbidden Realms.*

Kouji backs away before walking to the next, which is a feline humanoid. Once more, Kouji reads the plate by the clawed feet.

Nudian: *A race of carnivores that are one of the Forbidden Realms most adaptable races that can be found just about everywhere. Their society structure is varied and are very fine Warriors.*

Kouji sighs as he backs a ways from statue and heads for the rabbit humanoid.

Zajacith: *A race of herbivores that prefer the dense forests to live in. They live under chiefs and produce fine Druids.*

The next statue depicts a canine humanoid and even without reading the plate, Kouji knew which race he'll choose, but even so, Kouji

walks towards the statue and reads the plate.

Seathien: *A race of omnivores that are one of the Forbidden Realms adaptable races that can be found just about everywhere. Their society have a tendency towards chiefs and are very fine Warriors.*

Kouji stands straight and touches the stone statue of the Seathien. Within seconds, a light engulfs the area and suddenly he's in an area that has a 'living' Seathien standing in a center of the room in a circle that has runes on the floor.

Kouji raises an eye brow and begins to look around the room. It wasn't long before he realizes that there wasn't much beyond a certain book that's hovering a few feet from the 'living' Seathien.

The book contained not just fur patterns that were typical of the different canine genus that exist but also body structure, like having the large ears that a certain type of dessert fox has or the short ears and face of a famous white fox that lives in the north.

It takes time but in the end, Kouji choose a steel grey coat to cover the body plan of a humanoid common grey wolf and Kouji closes the book.

Once that's done, the room flashes and the book that Kouji had in his arms had vanished and has been replaced with a scroll that's asking for his character's name.

Kouji takes the feather pen that's hovering next to his right hand and writes Beowulfmon before touching the check mark at the bottom of the scroll.

Once more there is a flash and Kouji finds himself in a new room, only this time there were five different outfits, they were for Warrior, Shaman, Druid, Rogue, and Knight.

The Knight and Warrior classes were similar but there were differences like how the Warrior is more attack oriented while the

Knight more defensive oriented, it's similar how the Shaman and Druids play out, both were magic users but a Shaman's magic is geared towards striking hard and fast as while Druid's magic is geared towards support magic like giving others blessings during combat to help increase their endurance in a fight. The Rogue was pretty much a stealth fighter and more often then not prefers using range attacks then getting up front and personal.

With a sigh, Kouji takes the Knight out fit and places it by the 'living' statue that will soon be his character. Once more their is light and this time, when Kouji's vision clear, the teen finds himself in a room, lying on a bed.

And so begins my time in Forbidden Realms. Kouji thinks within his avatar Beowulfmon the Seathien as he sits up right in the bed.

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From within his avatar, Marcus Damon evades a punch thrown by his Digimon partner who, too, resides within a character avatar of one of Sanctum of Forbidden Realms races, that of humanoid Kangaroo called a Ropodidian using the name of Flameburst who's a Warrior.

Marcus's own avatar is a Warrior humanoid bear of the race called Kuridae and Marcus decided to call his avatar Kumamon.

In Kumamon's body, Marcus suffers a hit from Flameburst the Warrior Ropodidian. "Ha ha! Got you good, didn't I Boss?" Flameburst asks as the kangaroo like avatar leaps back to evade his Rapid Assault attack.

"Oh yea, Flame? Try this on for size!" Kumamon calls out and he uses Dash Circle to get behind the red furred humanoid Kangaroo and then Earthquake Slam to stun Flameburst.

It was a KO within seconds and so a Thowrahein shaman moves in to heal Flameburst. "If I didn't know any better, I'd think you two

hated each others guts, Kumamon." Kumamon turns to face Agunimon the Rogue of the Salalien race, a tallish squirrel like being who's fur is honey colour.

Agunimon is also the head of the guild that Flameburst and Kumamon had joined once they reached level ten. The guild's called The Children of the Digital World, something that just seemed to strike his funny bone for some reason. Kumamon hadn't wanted to join a guild unless it was as head of the guild but he just couldn't help it, not with that as the name.

It hadn't been long before Kumamon and his partner Flameburst to be given the rank of Arm's Master. Kumamon takes pride in the fact that as long as Flameburst or himself were part of a dungeon party, they had about a eighty percent success rate, though both Flame and himself are working hard to push that up to ninety percent.

"If we didn't push ourselves in a simple sparring match, how can you rely on us to lead you guys to victory if we slack off in our training?" Kumamon asks Agunimon and the squirrel humanoid smiles as the honey furred Agunimon answers, "I didn't know, learn to rely on our skills to get us out of a fight seems to come to mind."

Kumamon gives the shorter Agunimon a grin before turning to see if Flameburst is up and ready for another go.

"Later." Kumamon says to Agunimon, heading towards the avatar of his Digimon partner.

Author's comments **:** I've had this set of stories called The Lost Gate on my DeviantART profile for a number of years. Some comments I received mentioned how similar this fanfic is to Sword Art Online. I received a comment about how similar this is to Sword Art Online and that was the first time I heard of the Anime/Manga. I want to say that I have yet to read or watch said Anime, even now that I have read the Wikipedia entry.

Current Avatar Information **:**

Kouji is Beowulfmon, Seathien

Marcus is Kumamon, Kuridae

Agumon (Savers) is Flameburst, Ropodidian

? is Agunimon, Salalien

Takato is ?, ?

Guilmon is ?, ?

The Lost Gate Ch 2: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

Ok, now just to think up a name of my Arvidian. Takato automatically cases aside any names related to his partner and best friend, Guilmon and his advanced forms of Growlmon, WarGrowlmon, Megidramon, Gallantmon, and Gallantmon Crimson Mode. The hazel red eyed Tamer also discarded Goggle-Head and variations like G-Head and maybe end G-Man.

And so he began to muse about other names that he could use. He even tried HazardWarrior, FutureDreamer, and even HolyKnight. So Takato finds himself frowning as he tries to find something that's not already taken.

In the end, he wrote V-Aero and pressed the check mark symbol and for a few seconds, he thought that it wouldn't go through, but it did.

The room changes and he finds himself now expected to decide on a class. With a shrug, he picked the Shaman outfit for his avatar. Within seconds, he finds himself in a room settled on a wooden perch, likely the way the Arvidian race sleeps.

As V-Aero takes time studying his new body, he also takes time to notice the tiniest of details when it comes to the feather's colour. The greyish blue colouration works pretty good and he selected the build of an eagle type, that of a Harpy eagle from the rain forests of South America.

It wasn't long before V-Aero flexes his arms and then his wings, taking time to notice the talons that tip his feet and then compared them to the ones on his fingers. With a sigh, V-Aero leaps from his perch and lands on the ground, his talons clicking on the stone that makes up the floor.

Now to find Guilmon. Takato thinks as he moves out of the set of rooms that were meant for his avatar, V-Aero. It helps that he had a very good idea where his partner could be found.

It didn't come as much of a surprise to find a Roptera with bright red fur around his neck trying to fill his plate to the ceiling. With a sigh, V-Aero approaches the bat like avatar.

"... Don't you think that's enough?" V-Aero asks and the Roptera turns to blink at him before cocking his head to the side with a thoughtful look.

"Takato?" The Roptera asks and he nods as he answers, "I've chosen V-Aero as my avatar's name."

The furry face brightens and it wasn't long before the avatar of Guilmon grins widely at him. "I chose Takatomon as mine!" V-Aero groans as he drop his head to his chest as his right hand goes to the back of his head and rubs the back of his head for a few seconds before addressing 'Takatomon'.

"That was the best name you could think of?" V-Aero asks his partner and the Roptera that is his Digimon partner blinks innocently at him before replying, "I guess I could have tried GuilmonBread or even Pineapple-head."

"Ok, I was wrong, you could have come up with other names." The Arvidian says.

"Excuse me, but I don't suppose I could have some of those steaks?" A new voice asks and with a blink, both Takatomon and V-Aero turn to look at the canine avatar that's addressing him.

"That reminds me, didn't you study the steel plate by the legs when you picked out your avatar, Takatomon? You picked a race that isn't omnivorous, although they do eat some kinds of insects just not red meat." V-Aero asks his partner as he finds it so strange and kind of freaky to be calling his partner by that name.

"Oh, but I can eat bread, right?" Takatomon asks and he nods as he says, "I guess so."

And then he turns to the Seathien and says, "Sorry about that, I'm V-Aero and this is my good friend, Takatomon." V-Aero would have grin if it weren't for the beak, although Takatomon grinned brightly for the both of them as the Roptera takes the steaks and transfers them to the Seathien's plate.

"I'm Beowulfmon." The grey coloured Seathien says and then bows slightly in greeting, a bow which he returned. "Glad to meet you, Beowulfmon." V-Aero says and Beowulfmon smiles slightly as he nods in agreement.

"I don't suppose you mind keeping an eye on him while I fill up a plate myself? He's kind of like a little kid, his eyes sometimes are larger then his stomach." He admits and Takatomon says, "And then most of the time my stomach is larger then my eyes!"

Beowulfmon smiles slightly and nods. "I'll give it a try." The Seathien says and he nods his thanks.

With that, Takatomon follows Beowulfmon while V-Aero moves to the beginning of the buffet.

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Privately within his avatar body of Beowulfmon, Kouji can't help but feel a tiny bit out of his depth as he tries to keep Takatomon from eating things that his avatar body can't handle, which turns out to be a tab harder then he thought it would be.

He can't wait for the Arvidian avatar named V-Aero to rejoin them to take back this job. Though Beowulfmon had to admit it was rather odd to find someone with a name so similar to a Digimon's name. *Although, I take it its mostly the 'mon' at the end of the name that's the problem. Although, that does make me wonder if I'll encounter others using such names.* Beowulfmon muses to himself.

"Takatomon! That's not something you drink!" V-Aero says causing him to look to see what the red furred Roptera is trying to do now. "Isn't it soup?" Takatomon asks and he could see that V-Aero sighs as the birdman's body sags.

"It's for washing your hands in to get rid of the grease." He answers before V-Aero could inform the humanoid bat. V-Aero nods in agreement with his answer and Takatomon says, "Oh... oops."

"Don't worry, boy, these things happen, after all, some of this stuff comes from different cultures and I'm sure the there even going to be stuff that I'll need help identifying." V-Aero says in a warm and soft tone, he can't help but think that these two were brother in real life.

It's already clear which of them is the elder brother. "So, you waiting for someone?" V-Aero asks after a few minutes and he shrugs.

"Not really, I'm just sticking close to the town, doing minor quests." He admits and V-Aero nods thoughtfully.

"Been on long? We've just finished our character creation so we haven't been out of the building yet." V-Aero admits and he smiles slightly. "I've only been on for about four hours game time." Beowulfmon replies.

"Yea? Did you have trouble getting them to set them onto this server?" V-Aero asks him and he blinks, finding it to be an odd question as he shakes his head. "No, not really but then, it's only been out for a week and there were people lined up behind me." Beowulfmon answers.

"It's been out for eight months where I'm from. Most of my friends have them but I never bothered until recently, when certain... things grew too quiet and I grew bored working at my parent's bakery." V-Aero says and now he's puzzled since he's fairly sure that Japan was the first place to have the VR consoles released in the world.

Both V-Aero and himself were busy thinking about this, although V-Aero did keep an eye on what goes on with Takatomon. He's impressed by how patient V-Aero is. "How old are you two?" Beowulfmon asks.

V-Aero smiles as his eyes seem to sparkle as he says teasingly, "I thought we're not suppose to revealed that kind of information." Beowulfmon feels a flare of embarrassment for a few seconds before V-Aero says, "I'm sixteen though I rather not talk about how old Takatomon here is."

"I'm fifteen." Beowulfmon says, it's been about two years since his group's adventures in the Digital world.

"Well, I guess that evens out who's the sempai between us, huh?" V-Aero muses slightly and he nods in agreement.

"So then, you think we could form a group together? After all, I think we're getting off on a good start of a wonderful friendship." V-Aero states with a hint of a twinkle in his eyes.

He gets thoughtful for a few seconds before nodding. "I guess that makes us friends." Beowulfmon says as he holds out his hand to seal the deal and V-Aero claps hands with that out stretched arm. "Friends." V-Aero agrees.

For once in his life, he actually had an easy time making a friend, something that might have more to do with V-Aero's winning personality though.

Author's comments **:** And here's the second chapter of the story. Just to be clear, the three classes are Druid, Knight, Rogue, Shaman, and Warrior. As stated, Druids are more for buffing in this game while Shamans are more offensive with their magic. Knight is more defensive and Warrior more offensive in battles. Rogue is more for quick battle and sport the usual traits that come with the name, like stealth and lock picking.

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Takato is V-Aero, Arvidian, Shaman

Guilmon is Takatomon, Roptera, Druid

The Lost Gate Ch 3: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"Hey Kouji! Wait up!" He pauses and turns to find Takuya Kanbara jogging to catch up to him.

"Hey Takuya." Kouji Minamoto says with a slight smile as the Chosen of Fire matches his pace.

"So... Did you get one?" Takuya asks him after a few seconds.

"I did. Did you?" The Chosen of Light asks and his friend's face falls. "They sold out by the time I arrived with Zoe and Tommy." Takuya says with a sigh.

He gives his friend a pitying look before returning to watching where they're going. "So... what's it like?" The brunet asks.

Kouji presses his lips together as he tries to think of a way to describe the experience, after all, he had played it most of the weekend. He smiles as he recalls most of Takatomon's antics and how V-Aero seemed to have his hands full keeping his little brother out of trouble.

"Well, it's pretty unbelievable and very realistic. There were times where I forgot that the body wasn't even my own." Kouji then get thoughtful.

"So... you met a girl or something?" Takuya asks with a sly smile on his face and Kouji sends a minor glare in the brunet's direction. "Keep your nose out of my love life."

"Or lack of one." He hears a familiar voice pipes in and Kouji just sighs. "Not you too, Koichi..." He groans as they turn to enter through the gate of the high school.

"It's not often I get the chance to act like a brother." Koichi Kimura says as his twin takes his place at his left side. Takuya snickers and Kouji once more just sighs as he shakes his head.

"So, what were you two talking about that involves Kouji's love life?" Koichi asks and Takuya answers, "It seems that Kouji managed to get a RV console for Sanctum of Forbidden Realms."

Koichi whistles and he tells them, "I'm on the Lost Gate server. My avatar is a knight Seathien named Beowulfmon."

"Such an original name." Takuya muses with a roll of his eyes. Kouji elbows the brunet who still likes to wear a hat with a pair of goggles over it.

By the time they entered into the school, the had to split up to go to their lockers. They'd hook up during lunch with Zoe and JP.

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"Hey Takato! How was your weekend?" Kazu calls out as the visor wearing Tamer waves him over. Takato smiles slightly as he watches Kenta just seems to hang his head while his partner, MarineAngemon seems to decide to try and cheer Kenta up.

"It was fine, Kazu. Guilmon and I spent most of the weekend playing Sanctum of Forbidden Realms on the Lost Gate server." Takato tells the pair once he's seated at the table.

Henry waves from his seat while totally focused on reading over his notes for his test for his next class, which reminds the reddish hazel eyed goggle wearing teen that he had the same test.

"Really? You got on that server? I heard rumors about that one. Like how none of the players from the same ward ever hook up when they set a time and a date." Kenta says while Kazu's chewing what's in his mouth.

"I know the department head mentioned that there were problems with it. I figured I'd investigate them to see if there's any truth to those rumors. I mean, it can't be as bad as they make it out to be, right?" Takato muses and Henry glances at him while Kazu and Kenta seem to shake their heads.

"I think you just jinxed yourself, goggle-head." Takato turns to his left to find Jeri and Rika standing at the head of the table.

"Now now, I'm sure Takato's self appointed task will pan out." Jeri says as she moves to sit directly across from him, next to Kazu while Rika takes a spot to his right.

"Knowing goggle-head's luck, he'll likely stumble upon some kind of conspiracy that's going to threaten the world." Rika states in a bland tone and most of those at the table chuckle though Takato suddenly felt a chill at the thought.

"I'm kidding, Takato. Lighten up already." Rika says before taking a bite out of her sandwich.

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"What is it?" A voice booms within a dark cave.

"Sir... we might have a possible candidate. He calls himself V-Aero and he's on the inter dimensional server." A nervous PetitMamon says.

"Show me." The voice demands after a few minutes and within seconds, an image of an Arvidian with greyish blue coloration. "I see..." The voice says.

"He's been seen in the company of these two." The PetitMamon says as two new images appear, a Seathian and a Roptera.

"So... He might have his partner with him as well." The voice muses, likely more to themselves then to the small Digimon.

"We'll see if he's the one. Try and guide him to the mystery keep, we'll see if he and his friends met with the keep's lord." The voice orders and the PetitMamon salutes the mega before hurrying out of the cave to make sure that the orders are set in motion.

- - ***N*** - -

"Is... that... all... you... got?" Marcus Damon rasps out as he stares at the Ogremon that's his opponent.

"I'm... not done... yet!" The champion level Digimon wheezes as the green champion Digimon uses his club to keep standing.

Marcus gives the champion a feral grin as he straightens up while his partner calls out an encouragements. "Way to go, Boss! He's one his last legs, just one more punch at you'll win!" Agumon shouts while a few in-training Digimon hop up and down in excitement.

"Let's end it!" Ogremon growls as the champion tries to stand without using his bone club. "Gladly!" Marcus says.

Within seconds, both the champion Digimon and himself charge forward at each other, his fist raised while Ogremon has his club hold up.

As they get close, something beeps. Marcus and Ogremon pause while Ogremon asks, "What was that?"

"Oh great, not again!" Marcus growls and reaches for the latest com device that DATA Squad send through the gate so that he can talk with his friends and family.

"Can this be quick? I'm kind of in the middle of a fight here." Marcus says when he noticed that it was Thomas phoning him.

"And how many fights have you been in today already?" Thomas asks dryly and he growls in reply.

Author's comments **:** And here's the third chapter of the story. A Mysterious Digimon with a beef with Zeromaru, the villain makes an appearance.

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Takato is V-Aero, Arvidian, Shaman

Guilmon is Takatomon, Roptera, Druid

The Lost Gate Ch 4: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"Hey Beowulfmon! How's it hanging?" V-Aero asks as the birdman approached with the batman.

"It's been interesting." Beowulfmon answers as he observes the pair. Takatomon grins while V-Aero nods at him, after all, unlike Takatomon and himself V-Aero had a beak.

"How about you two? Anything interesting happened in the real world?" The Seathien asks. "Let's just say I think I jinxed myself on yesterday." V-Aero replies while Takatomon's grin broadens.

"Oh? How so?" He inquires as they begin to head to the job billboard before checking their mailbox to see if any of their auctions panned out.

"Well, I don't know if you know this but there have been problems with this server. People make appointment to show up at some point in the real world and wait for their friend to show only to find that they don't. Then when they log in they both get into an argument about how the other didn't show up at the appointment." V-Aero says before adding with a shrug, "Stuff like that."

"Weird." He muses and V-Aero nods in agreement. "Yea, I guess you can say that's why I picked this server. I want to get to the bottom of it, though I'm doing so in my spare time." V-Aero says and Beowulfmon frowns for a few seconds until he remembers something.

"You mentioned your parents own a bakery, I guess that counts as a part-time job." He admits and V-Aero blinks before chuckling. "Yea, I guess it does." The Arvidian admits.

"Oh, look! There's a post with your name on it, V-Aero!" Takatomon says as the Roptera points at said post.

"Really? That's odd... I didn't know there was a mystery keep. I wonder what level it is." V-Aero muses as his hand plucks it off of the billboard.

"Well, it can't be that hard of a dungeon if you received an invite." Beowulfmon muses and Takatomon hums in agreement.

"Well, I guess we'll head over there once we're done checking on our mail and getting our stuff repaired." V-Aero muses and Beowulfmon nods in agreement. "Sounds like a plan." He says as V-Aero touches the accept opinion on the post.

Within seconds the letter breaks apart into data and vanishes, although when they open up their mission log, they'll likely find the post details written within it.

- - ***N*** - -

Freaky looking keep. I wonder who designed it. V-Aero muses privately to himself as they come out of the forest that stood between Beowulfmon, his partner, and himself and the mystery keep.

"I don't like this, V-Aero... Something isn't right about that building." Takatomon says softly. "I kind of agree with him on this one, V-Aero." Beowulfmon says and he sighs.

"I get that feeling too, but, well, we do have Town Keys so we can teleport out if it gets out of hand." V-Aero reminds the two, although he, too, would love to back out of this but he just knows that they'll find something worth while at the keep as well. Something that might be the first piece of the puzzle that will help shred light on what's going on with this server.

"True." Both Beowulfmon and Takatomon say at about the same time. V-Aero would have smiled if it weren't for his beak. "Then let's

do this before we grow roots." V-Aero states and Takatomon pipes in, "Ooo, that sounds like fun, could we try that next?"

Beowulfmon chuckles while the Arvidian hangs his head as he mentally groans within his mind. *Guilmon...*

After recovering, V-Aero allows Beowulf to take the lead as they walk down the path that leads straight to the keep's lowered bridge. They did pause as they each moved to the edge of the bridge to look down into the moat that surrounds the keep.

"Impressive, although I find that the hints of glowing red to be mildly disturbing." Beowulfmon muses and V-Aero sighs as he nods in agreement while Takatomon hangs upside down from the chains that were there to pull the bridge up at a moment's notice.

"Takatomon... What are you doing?" He asks as he turns to stare at his partner. *It still feels weird calling him by my nickname.* V-Aero muses as he waits for his partner to answer.

"Bat's hang upside down and I'm a bat, so I thought why not." Takatomon answers and Beowulfmon replies, "True, but I think there are safer places to roost, Takatomon."

"So please get down so that we can continue into the keep." V-Aero says and within seconds, the Roptera has both feet on the ground and they were ready to continue through the gate of the keep.

"You know, I'm kind of surprised none of Takatomon's items fell out of his being while he was hanging upside down." Beowulfmon muses and V-Aero sighs.

"Well, at least we don't have to lend him anything because of it." He reasons and Beowulfmon hums in agreement before taking his place at the lead of their group.

- - ***N*** - -

Well, well, well, what do we have here? A cream colored Nudian muses as she stares down from the battlements.

Author's comments **:** Sorry about the lack of uploading of the next chapters, I'll be correcting that tonight.

Current Avatar Information **:**

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Marcus is Kumamon, Kuridae, Warrior

Agumon (Savers) is Flameburst, Ropodidian, Warrior

? is Agunimon, Salalien, Rogue

Takato is V-Aero, Arvidian, Shaman

Guilmon is Takatomon, Roptera, Druid

? is ?, Nudian, ?

The Lost Gate Ch 5: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

V-Aero can't help but feel that something seems to be watching them. *That's not unusual, after all, this is a dungeon.* He muses as Takatomon and himself follow Beowulfmon through the courtyard. They all have their weapons already in their hands, Beowulfmon has a sword and shield, Takatomon has his staff, and he has his mace.

Once they're close to the doors leading into the keep, a loud voice suddenly booms down at them, echoing about in the courtyard. **"Yet more victims to hazard my domain. Pitiful whelps! Enter if you dare for it just might be the last thing you ever do! Mewhahahaha!"** The voice declares and the doors leading into the building are suddenly thrown open as the voice laughs.

"Oh yea, that's definitely a classic villain dialog, wouldn't you agree?" V-Aero muses as they eye the inside of the keep. "At least we know what kind of place this is, right?" Beowulfmon muses in agreement and Takatomon looks faintly puzzled about what they're talking about.

With a sigh, he decides to clarify for his Digimon partner. "It means that we'll be facing mid-bosses before we face the owner of the dungeon." He tells the avatar that contains Guilmon's consciousness. "Oh..." Takatomon says with his eyes lighting up with understanding.

"Well, we might as well head in. Although I'm curious as to what kind of enemies we'll be facing. After all, this game doesn't do undead or the living dead." Beowulfmon states and he nods in agreement, true, they had done other quests but mostly those had been gathering and hunting missions in wilderness area. "We might face demons or

devils." V-Aero muses thoughtfully as they watch as the torches along the walls flare to life.

The knight Seathien just nods as they glance about, trying to decide which direction to head in. In the end, they kind of played a game of rock paper scissors to decide who picks the direction they'll walk in. Oddly enough, Takatomon won the game, but then, Takatomon didn't have any difficulty shaping his hands into any of the other two shapes with his new hand structure.

Within seconds of winning the game, Takatomon moves a few steps away from them and then closes his eyes as he points with his right hand. Within seconds the Roptera spins about on his heels. They wait patiently for his partner to stop spinning about and he marks the direction that Takatomon's pointing in. "Oh, there isn't any doors over there." Takatomon says in embarrassment.

"Don't worry about it, Takatomon, that door there is closest to the spot you're pointing too." Beowulfmon says as the gray Seathien points to said door leading into a hallway. "Ok! Let's go!" Takatomon chirps cheerfully and he mentally smiles as he watches his partner take the lead, leaving a bemused Beowulfmon and himself to trail behind him.

- - ***N*** - -

"So you want me to investigate this server just because you're getting complains from people who can't connect in the real world?" Marcus asks Thomas while Ogremon seems to be amusing himself by playing rock paper scissors with his partner, Agumon. Unsurprisingly, the green champion manages to win two out of every three games, much to Agumon's annoyance.

"It's a little more complicated then that, Marcus." Thomas states. "But the jiff of it is that we're being hired to check this server out simply because some rich guy's daughter didn't make a love connection." He states and Marcus is pleased to see he can still get under Thomas's skin despite being a world away from the rich teen.

"Will you take the job or not?" Thomas asks and he snorts. "I'm already on that server as a Kuridae warrior named Kumamon. So, sure, I can check it out for you." He tells Thomas with a lazy grin on his face.

"Who sent you one and how?" Thomas asks and he shrugs as he replies, "Some Floramon merchant had a few boxes of them in stock. So Agumon and I just bought them from her. They already were programed to go to the Lost Gate server. I didn't know they're being sold in the real world though."

"How could... When did you get them?" Thomas asks and he pauses to think about it. "I believe it almost a year ago, why?" He asks while Agumon cheers after beating Ogremon in their game with those few in-training Digimon bouncing as they add their cheers to his partner's cheering.

"They've only been out for two month now." Thomas states calmly. He can't help but blink as this bit of information gets kick around inside of his head. He then lets out a whistle as he realizes how unusual that seems to be.

"Makes you wonder if a Digimon created the game, doesn't it?" Marcus muses, he can't help but wish there was a tree or something for him to lean on, he is injured after all and he wouldn't mind spending the rest of the day resting his body. He wonders if he shouldn't just sit down on the ground as a minor bout of dizziness makes him feel off balanced.

"If what you're saying is true, then you almost might want to track down this merchant to find out where they got this merchandise. It just might be the key to solving this mystery." Thomas states and he hums in agreement.

Within seconds, they're saying bye to each other and he presses the disconnect button before he pockets the cell phone. *Well, I guess I better start trying to locate this merchant.* He muses as he turns to

watch the small group of Digimon circle about Agumon and Ogremon as the two play tic tac toe.

He can't help but grin in amuses at their antics as he walks over to the group.

- - ***N*** - -

"Huh? What's this? Sanctum of Forbidden Realms? I wonder if Neo dropped this..." Taichi muses as he stares at the box that contains a pretty advanced looking VR console.

"I could always track down Rie and give it to her so that she can give it to Neo." A eighteen year old Taichi Yagami muses. After all, Neo had mentioned he's got a lot of running around to do. With that plan firmly in his mind, Taichi unzips his book bag to put the game and system into it, then he zips it back up.

With that done, he heads out of the University computer building, heading for the bus stop since he hasn't saved enough money to pay for the repairs of his van. He had a pretty good ideas on where to find Rie Saiba now that his classes are over for the day.

Author's comments **:** And here's chapter 5.

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Guilmon is Takatomon, Roptera, Druid

? is ?, Nudian, ?

The Lost Gate Ch 6: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

Beowulfmon hurriedly tries to block the blow coming towards him. The blow hits his shield squarely and he hears V-Aero cry out, " *Bolt* !" A thin stream of lightning shoots from V-Aero's out stretched taloned finger, hitting the troll-like Swornite in the shoulder.

He slashes at the purple being with his sword while V-Aero gets ready to cast another spell. " *Rose Aura* !" Takatomon says and as the Swornite hits his shield once more with its claymore, the Swornite grunts as it receives damage because of the effects of the Rose Aura. " *Flare* !" V-Aero cries out and a small fire ball finishes their foe off.

Within seconds the fallen body breaks into data and reveals their loot. "Your turn Takatomon." He tells the Druid and with a nod, the red Roptera moves to bend down to collect the items on the ground. "I got come corn bread." Takatomon says with a smile on his face.

"Alright, I guess we can take a break to recharge our health and mana." V-Aero muses after exchanging looks with him. With that said, they each take out some food and something to drink. They didn't talk as they sat on the floor of the hallway, slowly regaining energy as well as lowering their hunger as well.

"So, do any of your friends have Sanctum of Forbidden Realms?" Beowulfmon asks the pair of brothers. Takatomon glances at V-Aero and the Arvidian replies, "Most of them do, although I never paid it much mind as to which server and what type of avatar they have. Although I do know that one of them is on the Eternal Hunt server."

"So you're giving up gaming with friends to try and figure all of this out?" Beowulfmon asks and V-Aero gets a thoughtful look in his

eyes. "It's nice meeting new people, after all, we wouldn't have met if we choice to go gaming with one of our friends on a different server. Besides, it's kind of nice to get away from real life, even if it is only for a few hours. Everyone needs space at times." V-Aero muses thoughtfully and he blinks before smiling slightly as he nods in agreement.

"I guess I get what you're saying. There are times when I really want to throttle a very good friend of mine over the littlest things..." He muses and then glances at the two of them. "I take it you're parents wanted you to keep an eye on Takatomon, right?" He asks and V-Aero looks a bit startled before a slight look a bemusement enters into the Arvidian's eyes for a few seconds and then it's gone.

"I don't find it a chore, looking after him. As much as he does do the craziest things for the oddest of reasons, I just find it hard to imagine my life without him, in this world and in real life." V-Aero tells him and Takatomon looks like he's going to cry.

"I can't imagine my life without you too, V-Aero!" With that, Takatomon launches himself to hug the shaman of the group. They part after a few seconds and he can't help but find the scene touching. *That's some bond they got there. Makes me wish Koichi's here with me.* Kouji thinks within the Seathien avatar.

He gets to his feet and within seconds the two brothers did so as well. "We best continue onwards." Beowulfmon says and the two magic users nod. "Although, before we go, how about you? Any of your friends got a hold of this game?" V-Aero asks.

"No they didn't. From the sounds of things, it's back ordered too. It'll be a while before they'll get a hold of one." He tells the elder brother. "Oh, well, hopefully they're not too jealous of you then." V-Aero says and he just shrugs as Takatomon begins to fidget for a few seconds with his staff out and ready.

"Let's go." Beowulfmon says and with that, Takatomon takes the lead with him trailing at the end of the group. He felt pretty lucky to be

friends with the pair before him. They helped him feel pretty welcome even though they haven't met before they bought this game.

- - ***N*** - -

There they are. She muses to herself as she studies the small group, noting the way they stayed alert as they glanced about the large library within the keep. She found it fascinating, watching two of the three ears swivel about on the tops of their head. It's more then likely her own ears did the same but without a mirror handy, she couldn't tell for certain.

So then, will it appear? She wonders as she watches, waiting for the boss to take form before this band of heroes moving about on the floor. She's currently moving about on top of the book shelves, leaping from the top of one sturdy book case to the top of another as she follows the three in hopes for the library boss to reveal itself to them.

After all, she's spent countless days trying to kill this boss in hopes of getting the dagger that is said to drop from this boss. It never matter how many times she's appears in the library, the boss only appears to parties and her last party pretty much didn't make it through to this part of the keep.

It wasn't long before the party of three ran into a small band of Swornites lead by a sorcerer with a pet wind elemental. The Seathien knight goes on the defensive, nothing new with that, while the Roptera Druid weaves a support spell while the Arivian Shaman casts a few bolt spells to get the attention of the sorcerer before charging forward to attack with his mace.

The three manage to kill two of the six Swornite before they're forced to retreat. They drink a few potions as they move around the bend. She watches as the Swornites stop a few book cases away from the party and wait for the party to either show themselves or for the sorcerer to respawn.

With a frown, she takes out one of the mandatory items, a telescope, and looks at one of the party members. She can't help the gasp of disbelief as she read the level that the Knight was at. Within seconds, she checks the Druid and the Shaman, she blanks out for a few seconds before she begins to feel a headache bloom within her mind.

How the blazes have these three manage to make it to the keep at their level? Let alone manage to kill... She frown and then turns to spy down at the enemies below, checking their stats. *Ok, this is offically weird, last time I was here, those guards were about level fifty, how come they're at level fifteen?* She wonders and with a sigh, she realizes that she'll have to go down there and chat with those three if only to find out what they're doing here at a dungeon that's suppose to range between level fifty to seventy.

Once the telescope is back where it belongs, she silently leaps from book case to book case, enjoying the sensation of weightlessness that it brings. Within seconds she jumps down onto the floor, standing before them as they all turn to stare at her with a great deal of surprise coloring their expression.

"Ok, what are you noobs doing here at this dungeon?" She asks before pausing to say, "By the way, I'm Nekowomon."

"The cat woman monster?" The red Roptera asks as he cocks his head to the side as he regard her. "..." She really didn't know what to say to that since she's never given much thought to what that name sounds like.

Game Data Entry: Swornites

The Swornites are a humanoid race that have purple skin. Their most distinctive features are their tusks that jet out of their lower jaw, long thin pointed ears, and three double jointed horns growing out of their foreheads like a crown. They grow to be about six feet in height

and have a wide arrange of eye colors from silvery blue to hot pink to ebony black.

Unlike the twelve playable races, the Swornites have given up co-existing with nature, as such, they're use of magic reflex this despite their ability to summon and control elementals. All of this race's magical abilities are geared towards causing pain and suffering to other. It is not unheard of for Swornite sorcerers to grow powerful enough to part the barrier of their world to bring forth netherworld demons to their world. When they do so, they graduate from being sorcerers to deamancers, demon summoners and users of fel magic.

It should be noted that Swornite sorcerers have been known to experiment on non-sorcerer Swornites, thus resulting in many different forms of Swornites be they four armed varieties of warrior Swornites to those that have natural armor in the form of bony plates growing out of their bodies.

Swornites are a common race that can be found in most of the uncivilized lands. They don't get along will with other races be it the playable races or other villainous races that inhabit the game world of Sanctum of Forbidden Realms.

Game Data Entry Done

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? is Nekowomon, Nudian, ?

The Lost Gate Ch 7: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

Well, this is unexpected. V-Aero muses as the Nudian Rogue stares at them wordlessly. Then after a few minutes, Nekowomon just sighs as she scratches the side of her head as she gets a puzzled look on her face. Then with a sigh she says to them, "Back to my question, what are you three low level players doing here at this dungeon?"

"I got an invitation to visit here." He pipes in and within seconds, he passes Nekowomon his quest log book. It wasn't long before the Nudian's eyes try to pop out of her head. "But... but... how? Why? You're not even at level twenty yet!" Nekowomon shouts with her hands thrown up into the air before she begins to pace with his log book still in her left hand.

None of them really understood what Nekowomon says as she paces about their hiding place, it's more then likely that she's talking in her species' native tongue. Besides, the vibes she's giving him reminds him of Rika on the war path, somebody's attention that you don't want on yourself at this point in time.

"I wonder what got her all tied up in knots?" Beowulfmon whisper at him and he would have frowned in thought as he tries to decide whether or not to answer the knight.

"Shhh." Takatomon shushes, complete with a index finger before his short muzzle and returns to watching the cream colored Nudian mutter about in a foreign tongue. He blinks in bemusement, kind of surprised that his partner shushed somebody.

"Keep quiet and still, avoid her piercing eyes when she glances in your direction. This is very typical behavior for a woman to go

through." He whispers softly to Beowulfmon after a few minutes of Nekowomon not paying any attention to them.

He could tell that Beowulfmon was confused but it seems that his friend did try to follow his advice. Then finally, with a heavy sigh, the cream colored Nudian Rogue stops ranting in her native tongue and then after a few seconds, gives herself a shake before turning to look at them. "Sorry about that, it's just that, well, I'm kind of frustrated about my lack of progress in regards to summoning the boss of this library."

"No problem, although I take it nobody's gotten an invite before?" Beowulfmon asks and Nekowomon nods. "I've never heard of anyone receiving one, true, there are a few quests for this dungeon but mostly people come here to try and get rare loot items. I've been trying for weeks to loot this dagger from this boss but he never shows unless there is a party. My previous attempts at getting a group together haven't gone so well." Nekowomon admits and then hands his quest log book back.

"I knew I should have joined a guild but I do prefer to be freelance." Nekowomon admits with a sigh. "Which guild were you thinking of joining?" He asks the Nudian.

"Well, there was the Moon Hunters, Vampire's Promise, although I was very tempted to join this one guild called The Children of the Digital World." Nekowomon muses and V-Aero almost choked but managed to cough while his partner's eyes light up at the thought of joining a guild, making new friends. "What a... unusual name for a guild." Beowulfmon says and he finishes coughing to echo that agreement.

Nekowomon's emerald eyes light up in amusement as she shrugs. "Anyway, I don't believe you gave me your names." Nekowomon says, changing the subject and V-Aero blinks before glancing at his two friends. "I'm V-Aero, the Roptera is Takatomon, and this is Beowulfmon." He tells the Nudian since neither of the other two seem to be eager to say anything at the moment.

"V-Aero, huh?" Nekowomon muses and gives him a calculated look before turning to study the rest of the party. "Interesting names." Nekowomon muses and he cocks an eyebrow at her which causes the cream colored Nekowomon to look away in embarrassment.

"Ok then, I guess this means you're not interested in teaming up with us to face this boss?" He asks and Nekowomon's ears perk up at the mention of the word 'teaming up'. "Concerning you're the only ones about, I guess it couldn't hurt." Nekowomon says in a casual way that would have caused him to smile if it weren't for the beak.

"Yea, we made a new friend!" Takatomon says cheerfully and within seconds, his partner envelops Nekowomon in a big hug, much to the Nudian annoyance and embarrassment. "I think she's had enough, Takatomon." Beowulfmon muses and within seconds, his partner lets go of Nekowomon.

"Is he always that emotional?" Nekowomon asks softly while Takatomon moves to the edge of the bookcase to look to see if the Swornites had moved. "He's young." He admits in his partner's defense and Beowulfmon nods in agreement.

"Well, I am willing to pay money for the Dagger of NetherGate if the boss drops it as loot." Nekowomon says and V-Aero nods in agreement as they seal the agreement with a handshake. "They're here!" Takatomon calls out in a sing song way.

I blame myself for leaving him alone with Calumon, Impmon, and Terriermon that one Halloween as I helped my parents hand out that candy. He mentally groans as he begins to power up his lightning spell as Beowulfmon and Nekowomon move to aid his partner as Takatomon tries to fend off the Swornite warrior's attack.

" *Bolt* !" He cries and within seconds the attack snakes through the air, hitting the enemy in the face, causing the Swornite to yelp in pain. Within seconds, Beowulfmon manages to run the Swornite through with his sword while Nekowomon stabs the enemy in the back.

Loot appears and as the others move to face the rest of the Swornite group coming towards them. He picks up the loot before charging up another Bolt spell as his partner finishes charging up an aura spell. Nekowomon managed to dispatch one of the Swornite rogues with only three strike while Beowulfmon struggles with two enemy warriors. His spell hits one of them while his Digimon partner finishes casting a healing spell.

Loot continues to appear about them with Nekowomon's help they finally finish off the remaining Swornites without getting too injured. "Ok, let's roll to see who goes first." Beowulfmon says and within seconds, they all have dice out and he shakes his head as Takatomon cheers at getting first pick with Nekowomon coming in second, him third, and finally, Beowulfmon fourth.

Within a few minutes, the loot's been picked up and they finish healing up. "Ok, is this the group defending the boss or is there another group we'll encounter?" Beowulfmon asks Nekowomon seeing as she's their expert at this dungeon.

"There's a group of Swornite sorccerors that guard the librarian office that the boss appears in." Nekowomon says and with that, they motion for her to lead the way to this office. It made him wonder just what this boss will be like considering what kind of enemies they're encountering so far.

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The Lost Gate Ch 8: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"Well, that was fun." Beowulfmon muses as they finish gathering the loot dropped by the last group before they enter into the office. V-Aero hums as he turns to regard his partner who's currently gliding about the library, leaping off of the top of the book cases whenever he needed to get higher in the air.

"He's a pretty young, isn't he?" Nekowomon muses and he nods in agreement. "He is but I won't want to change a thing about him." V-Aero replies as he recalls the time he raced through a black space with loads of Guilmon look-a-likes flying about in the air.

"Yea well, I think it's time to face the boss so we can head home." The white Nubian says and Beowulfmon nods in agreement. With a sigh, he calls out, "Takatomon! We're heading in now! Are you coming?"

"Coming V-Aero! Weeee!" His partner calls out as he comes gliding down to the ground. "That was fun, I can't wait to do it again!" Takatomon declares after folding the wing membrane back, turning his wings back into arms complete with fingers and a thumb.

"I'm sure we can find a place were you can fly to your hearts content, boy." He says and the Roptera flashes him a bright grin before his partner takes out his staff. He mentally sighs as he checks the time, it's getting late and he has school tomorrow, so they need to head off once they're done with the boss.

With a nod from Nekowomon, Beowulfmon opens the doors and they entered into the office. Within seconds, wind seems to whirl about some diagram on the floor. Within seconds, a transparent figure of a some kind of badger person seems to appear before them. Black

scale armor clads the ghost while a rapier and a dagger is being held in the humanoid badger person's hands.

"Feel my wrath! By the name of the Lord of this Keep, you shall go no further!" The transparent boss says without moving his mouth, at all. With that said, the ten foot tall ghost charges them. Nekowomon moves between them and the charging specter.

V-Aero casts Bolt while Beowulfmon moves to aid the rogue. Within three minutes, they kill the boss, it seems that like the others enemies they encounter here in the library, the boss wasn't at a very high level. As Takatomon casts healing spells, he moves to loot the boss since it was his turn.

"The dagger's here." He says and Nekowomon sighs in relief more then likely. It didn't take long before he hands the dagger over while receiving money in exchange.

"Finally." Nekowomon says as she pockets the item. "Well, see you around, Nekowomon." Takatomon pipes and the rogue nods in agreement. "Yea, I guess I might." Nekowomon says and Beowulfmon takes out a Town Key.

"Well, nice dungeon crawling with you, Nekowomon. See you guys later!" Beowulfmon says and soon, there's a flash of light. . .

- - ***N*** - -

"Hey Koichi! How's it going?" Takuya asks once Koichi answers his cell phone. "Hey Takuya, it's going pretty good. I just finished my Biology homework, you?" Kouji's older brother asks as he turns down the volume of the TV.

"Doing pretty good. Anyway, is Kouji there with you?" Takuya says and he blinks. "No, he's not, why?" Koichi asks the Digidestine of Fire. "Has he phoned you?" Takuya asks and with a frown, Koichi hums a negative.

"He's not picking up his cell." Takuya says with a sigh. "Have you tried the house phone?" Koichi asks and his friend answers, "Yea but I just got the answering machine."

"I got a spare key for their place, if we meet over there, we can check in to see what's going on." He suggests and Takuya sighs as he says, "Hopefully nothing's wrong." Koichi agrees and within seconds, he's heading out of the house after writing a quick note for his mom.

- - ***N*** - -

"..." Beowulfmon was at a lost at what just happened. "Shouldn't you have vanished?" Takatomon asks and V-Aero nods in agreement.

"That's strange. Try it again." Nekowomon says and with a nod, he does so. "I'll try." He says and with all eyes on him, he once more tries to activate the key and once more, it flashes but he's still in the library's office.

"Maybe I should give it a try." V-Aero muses and within seconds, the light flashes but the Arvidian remains where he is with the key still in his talon hand. "How odd..." Nekowomon with a frown and Takatomon scratches the side of his head.

"Should I try?" Takatomon asks and V-Aero nods as he waves his hand. "Give it a go then." V-Aero says and sure enough, it doesn't work for the Roptera either.

"I guess it's my turn to try." Nekowomon says but V-Aero holds up his hand. "Wait a moment, if you do get out of here, are you going to get us some help or what?" V-Aero asks and he blinks before he nods in agreement.

"You seem to think I'll be able to." Nekowomon says and V-Aero tries to explain, "You weren't part of our group when we entered here. So whatever is keeping we three, from exiting out of here, might be geared to prevent us from leaving."

"Makes sense." Beowulfmon agrees. "So I take it you want me to phone the authorities?" Nekowomon asks and V-Aero sighs. "I suggest finding a guild and ask them for help since it we might need them to get out of this keep." V-Aero says and he nods.

"We need help now, not tomorrow." He muses. "Fine, if I get to the local town, I'll contact the most available guild that I can find." Nekowomon promises as she holds a Town Key in her hand. Within seconds a flash of light occurs and they find her gone.

"She got through whatever is keeping us here." Beowulfmon says and V-Aero nods with his hands over his chest. "So... now what do we do?" He wonders after a few minutes and Takatomon seems to be going through the bookcases, taking and piling some of the books on the floor.

"I'm going to build a fort!" Takatomon pipes in and V-Aero chuckles softly. "Well, we might as well help, right Beowulfmon? After all, we can't leave the game until we leave this dungeon." V-Aero says and with a sigh, he moves to help the humanoid bat collect books from the bookcases and help piling them by Takatomon, he felt a strange sense of Déjà vu as this does remind him of an other certain Digital library. . . Only this time, the Digital white cat vanished without causing the library to vanish.

- - ***N*** - -

"What do you mean by 'you just found them under a bridge'?!" Marcus bellows after getting a lucky break and finding said merchant on a boat floating down the large river.

"Shouting won't help it not be true!" The merchant cries from her position in the air, being held up there by Marcus's grip at the front part of the Floramon's leafy vest.

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The Lost Gate Ch 9: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"Hey Kouji, you home?" Takuya shouts as he rings the door bell for like the twentieth time since he arrived. The chosen of Fire can't help but be antsy, after all, he hasn't been this worried about a friend for a very long time, like when they were in the Digital world and they were facing off against their enemies during their adventures.

You better be ok, Kouji or I'm totally going to find a way to kick your ass like a soccerball from here to kingdom come and back! Takuya declares mentally as he moves from the door to try and peer through a window. In the end, he returns to the porch and begins to slam his fist onto the wooden door's surface, more to have something to do then in hopes that Kouji would come answer the door.

In the end, with a sore fist, he moves to sit down on the stairs, wondering why Kouji's dog hasn't as of yet began to bark. He lost track of time when he took out his cell phone and began to play one of the many games he's downloaded on it. "Any change?"

He perks up and looks up to find Koichi standing before him. Feeling his face redden slightly, he pauses the game before pressing the power button lightly so that the cell phone would go back to its main display. "No and Jouta hasn't barked once since I arrived." Takuya tells Koichi as he stands up and moves to the door with Kouji's twin trailing behind him.

"Well, I can't say I'm surprised since dad did take Jouta with him to enter into an amateur dog show." The chosen of Darkness muses and he blinks, kind of surprised about that. "I think that in a few minutes, our step mom will be coming home after having a girls night with her friends." Koichi adds as Koichi uses his key to unlock the door.

Once the door is open, Takuya moves to turn on a light switch and when the living room lights up, they find Kouji resting on the couch with his VR console running. "Kouji... Kouji!" He says as he gently shakes the chosen of Light but other then a slight hum coming from the machine, nothing happens.

"Try turning it off." Koichi suggest from his position of behind the couch, Takuya glances at Koichi, noticing the worried look in his eyes. Nodding in understanding, after all, he did have a brother of his own to worry about and Tommy's kind of his presto little brother as well.

Takuya presses the power button and then waits for the humming to stop but it doesn't, the little gadget doesn't seem affected by this at all. With a frown the chosen of Fire presses the power button once more and yet again, it doesn't shut off. Within seconds, he keep pressing said button but nothing continues to happen.

He turns to look up at Koichi and finds that Koichi seems to be biting his lower lip. As he watches, Koichi moves to Kouji's head and yelps in pain as he tries to move the visor from Kouji's head. With a frown, he turns to the cord and decides to try yanking it out. And then . . .

And then he finds Koichi kneeling by him with a very worried look on his face and Koichi asking if he's alright. "Huh? What happened?" Takuya asks as he begins to feel how his back aches and that he's beginning to get a headache to go along with it.

"You tried pulling out the end for the visor and after a light show, you were sent flying into the wall." Koichi says and as he tries to get up, Koichi puts his hands on his shoulders. "No, don't get up, I've already called for assistance. You were pretty out of it, just staring blankly down at the ground, not even blinking." Koichi tells him and that explains why his eyes were threatening to tear up.

"No change?" He asks and Koichi nods as he answers, "No change."

- - ***N*** - -

Great, just what I needed to find, a bawl taking place in the guild hall. Nekowomon thinks scratchily as she watches as well over twenty avatars fight it out, she manages to spy out a few of the more well known guilds among the number. Glancing about, she finally spot three avatars, a Salalien, a race of humanoid squirrels, a Thowrahein, a race of humanoid horses, and a Naidith, a race of humanoid spiders.

"Excuse me, I'm kind of looking for some help..." The cream colored Nudian says once she's by their table, she couldn't help but flinch slightly as something large lands a few feet to her left. "What kind of help?" The Salalien asks in bemusement.

"Well, you see, three newbies are stuck in a dungeon." Nekowomon says and the Naidith seems to chuckle. "When aren't they?" The humanoid spider muses and she frowns. "Let me try this again, three newbies somehow got invites to the mystery keep and when they tried to teleport out, their Town Keys aren't working."

That got their complete attention. "What level are these newbies?" The Thowrahein asks and Nekowomon answers, "They're almost at level fifteen."

"Then how could they get a mission to that dungeon?" The Salalien wonders and she sighs. "They received invites to visit. I should also mentioned that the enemies they've currently encountered have underwent a level adjustment as well. But the main thing is, something is keeping them from teleporting out of the dungeon's library." Nekowomon says, making sure to re-empathize the problem.

"It sounds like the mystery dungeon's gone buggy." Naidith muses, making a small joke. "Regardless, I guess we should see if we can escort them out. I'm Agunimon, by the way, head of the Children of the Digital World guild. To my left is Meadow Runner and to my left is Master of Webbing." The Salalien now known as Agunimon says and she can't help but raise an eyebrow at the two.

"Err... Nekowomon." The white Nudian says and Agunimon smiles in a bemused kind of way. "So, who are we rescuing?" Master of Webbing asks and she answers, "Beowulfmon a Knight Seathian, Takatomon a Druid Roptera, and V-Aero a Shaman Arvidian."

With that, they get up and head out of the guild hall. "I'll send a message to Kumamon and Flameburst to see if they're on. If they aren't, then we'll head out on our own." Agunimon says and Meadow Runner pipes in, "Oh boy, we wouldn't want those two to skip out on a chance to kill things, huh?" Master of Webbing snickers while Agunimon just sighs, making her wonder just what that's about before deciding that she'll either find out sooner or later.

I just hope nothing's happened to them. Nekowomon thinks with a frown as she follows the three towards the mail box.

- - ***N*** - -

"Well, it looks well constructed, doesn't it?" Beowulfmon muses and V-Aero nods while both of them ignore the fact that help hasn't arrived before they finished construction. "How is it that the roof is staying on?" V-Aero wonders while Beowulfmon shrugs.

"Does it really matter?" Beowulfmon asks and V-Aero sighs while somewhere within the book fort, Takatomon seems to be dozing, it seems that the Roptera got tuckered out, not that either of them blames him, after all, it is late and they did have school in the morning.

"I still have homework to do..." Beowulfmon admits and V-Aero sighs as he lays a comforting hand on the Seathien's shoulder. "Well, we could always try going through that secret passage and see where it leads." He tells the knight, after all, boredom is what likely lead to Takatomon falling asleep on them since they were the ones to put the finishing touches on the outside of the fort, namely the archway that leads inside.

"I'm kind of amazed the boss hasn't respawn yet." Beowulfmon muses and V-Aero shrugs. "I guess..." He says before they both yawn.

"I say we give them an hour to make it here before we try that," V-Aero waves a hand to the hidden door they uncovered when they took the books off the shelves, "After all, I'm sure we could use some new to do and a change in scenery." He finishes.

"Agreed."

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The Lost Gate Ch 10: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

Koichi watches as Takuya is guided out of the house and into the back of the emergency vehicle now that Kouji has been loaded into the back. He steps up into the back and sits opposite of Takuya as the doors close. Once his brother is strapped in, the siren is turned on as they begin to head to the hospital.

He had phoned Takuya's home to tell the Chosen of Fire's parents about Takuya's accident. They would likely be meeting them there and then he phoned home to leave a message for his mom. Before he shut the door and locked it, he had left a written message for their step-mom.

Hopefully, they'll be able to figure out what's going on with his twin. He really hopes its nothing major either.

- - ***N*** - -

"Takato honey! It's time for bed!" Mei Matsuki calls out before entering into the living room. The mother of Takato Matsuki frowns as she walks towards the couch to find her son lying on the couch with the latest game console active.

"Takato?" Mei asks as she bends down to shake her son. Getting no response, she tries shaking her son while calling out her son's name but it doesn't seems to wake Takato up. With a worried look on her face, she moves to try and turn off the game system.

On seeing that it doesn't work, she calls out to her husband. "Takehiro! Dear, I need you to phone Henry's apartment. Something's wrong with our son! He's not coming to and I've tried turning off his game console!"

- - ***N*** - -

Taichi Yagami sighs, he had just finish talking to Mari when he encountered her leaving Rie's apartment building when he decided to check there for Neo's sister. Taichi got into a conversation with his old enemy now friend about things and learnt that Neo already had his VR console, a silver colored one, so the black one within the box he found after talking with Neo didn't belong to his friend.

Then asking if it could be Rie's, Mari had giggled and told him that Rie's already using her's at this moment. Taichi sighs, not really sure what to do with it, Taichi stands outside of Rie's apartment building, trying to decide what he should do with it now.

I guess I could always make a Lost and Found poster to post about the school to see if anyone lost it. Taichi, partner to Zeromaru decides. Once that's decided, the eighteen year old turns his back on the entrance doors leading into the apartment building, heading off in the direction of the nearest bus stop so that he can head to his dorm to make said posters.

- - ***N*** - -

Marcus Damon and his partner Digimon, Agumon, finally stop walking in the direction of this bridge that the Floramon merchant and found those VR consoles. Although it's more then likely that all of the evidence that could give them a lead as to who's behind this game and its game console.

"This is going to be a bust." He states as they eat some dry food stuffs. Agumon hums in agreement as the rookie Digimon speedily stuffs his face while Marcus found himself not feeling that hungry.

"I mean, I doubt there's going be any leads for us to follow when we reach this spot!" He continues while his partner nods rapidly in agreement. "Man, I feel like pounding something right about now!" Marcus growls as his free hand clenches into a fist.

"So we're going to do a dungeon when we're done eating?" Agumon asks and he nods. "That we are, I don't know about you, but this just feels like a wild goose chase." The teen declares and then hurries to finish the food in his hand before Agumon tries to steal it from him.

- - ***N*** - -

"Since when does this dungeon close up?" Master of Webbing wonders as they stare blankly at the keep who's draw bridge is now resting at the side of the keep's wall. "I think we might have other problems to deal with." Meadow Runner states.

Nekowomon turns around to see what it is that has captured Meadow Runner's attention. "Oh boy." She says as she watches as Swornites riding Pack Drakes begin to come out of the forest behind them.

"Crap, the lowest among them are level fifty-three." Agunimon curses. "This is about to be difficult, isn't it?" Master of Webbing muses and Meadow Runner hums in agreement while Nekowomon nods her head in agreement. "Seems so." Agunimon states calmly while taking out his weapons, they all mimick the humanoid squirrel as they prepare for the upcoming fight against the Swornite raiders.

- - ***N*** - -

Henry stares at the limp from of his friend, Takato Matsuki. He had phoned Rika and asked if Renamon and her could go check on Guilmon to inform him about what's going on with his Tamer. After phoning his dad and then Yamaki, Henry then proceeded to get a call from Rika telling him that the same thing seems to have happened to Guilmon.

"Terriermon, don't touch that cord. We don't know what could happen if we disconnect it." Henry warns his partner while pacing about behind the couch, trying to come up with ideas about what could have caused this to happen.

"Momentia, Henry! I'm sure that our goggle-head will be fine if I try . . . this!" Terriermon moves quickly in grabbing the cord and then leaping off of the couch with the cord in hand. "Terriermon!" He shouts and then watches with wide eyes as lights begin to flash before a thin strip of lightning zaps out of the main part of the console to hit Terriermon in the back.

"Terriermon!" Within seconds, Henry's bending over to check up on the rookie, praying that Terriermon's alright. "Mo... men... tia." Terriermon manages to say after a few seconds while he picks up the little green Digimon.

"Terriermon..." He says with a sigh as Henry holds his limp partner. As he glances to Takato's resting form, he's relieved to see that no harm seems to have come to the goggle-head of the group.

"What happened?" Mei Matsuki asks as she enters into the living room. "Just Terriermon being Terriermon. Nothing's really changed with Takato though." Henry tells the concerned mother of his friend. "Mo... men... tia." Terriermon manages to say once more, causing a slight smile to appear on his face as well as Mei's.

As Takato's mother leaves the room, he glances at the clock, wondering when that team Yamaki send will get here to pick them up.

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The Lost Gate Ch 11: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"Will we find food in there?" Takatomon asks and Beowulfmon hears V-Aero sigh while his head droops down to his chest. Beowulfmon just shakes his head as he works on opening the door.

It took him a lot out of him but the door finally opens. "Now we just need some light." V-Aero muses and Beowulfmon nods in agreement. "Too bad there isn't a stick here bout that we can use as a make shift torch." The Seathien says with a sigh.

Takatomon moves to the entrance and then, suddenly, a piercing cry comes from the Roptera's throat, one that causes him to wince while V-Aero's feathers flatten a bit. Before their very eyes, Takatomon keeps doing it for a few minutes before stopping. *I guess it's just something to do about his race being based on bats.* Beowulfmon muses as Takatomon moves into the passageway.

Glancing at V-Aero, he moves to follow Takatomon through the passageway with the Avrvidian taking up the rear. As time went on, Takatomon got better at using his special talent so that it doesn't cause them to get headaches. The stairs spiraled down in a tight circle, Beowulfmon notices that V-Aero seems to be having some slight problems concerning his wings.

Then, finally, they make it to the bottom and there's a large opening that leads into a hallway. V-Aero sighs in relief and he turns to regard the birdman with a touch of bemusement. "Feel better?" He asks and V-Aero nods as his feathers seem to perk up before V-Aero gives his whole body a shake before his feathers return to their normal positions and fluffiness.

"I never thought about spreading my wings until I entered into that cramped stair case. It felt like I was buried alive..." V-Aero explains and he could only guess what that felt like. "Shh!" Takatomon says as the younger member of the party turns to shush them with a finger before his short muzzle.

"We're not alone!" Takatomon says softly as they halt before their friend. Beowulfmon moves a few steps in front of Takatomon and begins to sniff the air as he tries to hear whatever Takatomon has heard. He didn't really smell anything but he did hear metal clink as if something is walking about in metal armor.

"They're huge!" Takatomon hisses softly as he turns to glance questioningly at the Roptera. "How huge?" V-Aero asks softly and Takatomon blinks as he get a thoughtful look on his face.

"Let's see, the picture I get is they stand this tall," Takatomon says, stretching to the very tips of his toes with his right hand stretching at high as it can go. "Then there's this big at the shoulder." Takatomon says after a few seconds and once more, his arms stretch to the side.

"I wonder if they're Swornites..." V-Aero muses as Takatomon turns to take the lead once more. "I guess we'll find out." Beowulfmon says as he takes out his weapons, V-Aero hums in agreement. With that, Takatomon begins walking and they try and match the youngest member's pace.

- - ***N*** - -

Oh look, there's a message from Agunimon. I wonder what he wants. Kumamon muses as he opens up his mailbox. Within seconds, he grins as he reads it. "We're off to the mystery keep, Flameburst! It seems that there's trouble and a group of newbies need help getting out of it." He tells his partner who begins to grin in response to his own.

"Right, boss!" Flameburst cries out and they head off to get their stuff repaired before heading off to join Agunimon and his group. *And maybe this will be the lead we need to find out who's responsible for creating this game and its system...*

- - ***N*** - -

Rika sighs as they wait for those men that Yamaki had sent to gather up Guilmon for examination. The latest call from Henry, they learnt what happened when somebody yanks on the cord in hopes of snapping Takato out of the game. She couldn't help but be relieved that she had cautioned Renamon about touching parts of the game system.

"I wonder what's keeping them in that world." Rika's partner, Renamon, muses and she can't help but shrug. "It just might be a system error." Rika muses and then sighs as she finally spots a group of men in suits with a stretcher coming down the path, heading in their direction.

Stupid Goggle-head.

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The Lost Gate Ch 12: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"What kind of Golems are those?" V-Aero wonders as they stare at the towering forms of moving armor as they patrol within a large room that seems to be a fork. Within the armor that seem to hover in the air, purple spheres of light seem to be moving about in the inner sphere of the armor, giving the armor a purple shine as the suit moves.

The armor itself is an off white with bright emerald runes on the flat parts of the armor, mainly the chest pieces and on the arm guards. The majority of the Golems seems to have horns that point backwards on their helmets with a select few, about three really, have horns that point forwards, giving them the impression of bull horns. These three weren't as broad 'shoulder' as the rest and they seem to float higher in the air then the others, giving them the impression of them being taller then the others of the group.

None of the strange Golems, if they're really Golems, had legs or any sort of weapons, making them wonder what kind of attack they can expect from the patrolling group of floating Golems. *I guess we should just get this over with.* V-Aero thinks as they all put away their spy glasses, hoping to get information about these strange guardians that were blocking their path.

With a glance at Beowulfmon and his partner, he moves out from behind one of the side of the entrance way. One of the floating suits of armor spots them and they freeze. Dreading the coming battle that's sure to come, he could only hope that he doesn't end up in some kind of coma when they're defeated by these hovering guardians of the Keep.

"Which of you is V-Aero?" A very gender neutral voice asks once the three slender suits of armor come towards them. "I am." V-Aero says and within seconds, a purple light seems to engulf him before the voice says once more, ***"You and your party are expected."***

The other Golems that weren't the three before them move to the sides of the room. "Which door is the one we need?" Beowulfmon asks after a few seconds. ***"For use to tell you, you will be needed to answer a question, though, be forewarned, if you answer it incorrectly, you will be sent beyond this keep with your memories altered so that you do not recall any of this. Do you wish to answer the question or try your luck in choosing a door?"*** The voice asks as once more, the three strange Golems come to stand before them, they had moved to the side to allow them into the room so that they can study the door.

They glance at each other and then with a sigh, V-Aero answers, "We'll try the question." The three suits of armor glow for a brief second before the voice gives them the question, ***"What does Taichi and Zeromaru make when combined?"***

He blinks as he asks himself. *What an odd question. Is it even relevant to this game?*

- - ***N*** - -

"Sir? Is that really the question you want to ask?" A PetitMamon asks his boss. "If he really is who I think it is, they should be able to answer this question, proving once and for all their identity! Then I shall get my vengeance on him, one that I've desired for so long!"

The shadowy being leans forward as the Roptera's mouth opens, likely to answer the question his programed minions have asked.

- - ***N*** - -

"Don't the chi in Taichi mean one? And Zeromaru means zero zero?" Takatomon asks and Beowulfmon turns to give the younger member

of the party a look of disbelief while V-Aero sighs. "One hundred I guess." V-Aero muses and their attention is grab when the suits of armor flare up in a purple light.

"That is correct. You have passed the test, you many proceed Zeromaru." The voice says and before anyone could say anything, the light grows bigger and their surroundings seem to vanish as the light causes him to become temporary blind for a second.

As his vision returns, Beowulfmon glances about, noticing that they're now in a huge room with a large army of Swornites. "Great, just what we need, a face off against an army of minions." He mutters and V-Aero hums in agreement while Takatomon says, "Huh, what's this?"

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The Lost Gate Ch 13: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

As V-Aero and Beowulfmon turn to look at Takatomon, his partner pulls some cord that's hanging there. Within seconds, the floor behind the horde of Swornites begins to open to reveal a strange being that holds a Gabumon within its energy based body, one who's shape takes the form of a humanoid lizard with quills growing out of its head like hair. What passes as armor for this being is made out of energy that's a different color.

"A Digimon . . ." He hears Beowulfmon says and he adds in agreement, "A Gabumon." V-Aero mentally frowns, trying to think of why that Gabumon is here, in this game. "He's not in the greatest shape, is he?" Beowulfmon says softly and he nods in agreement while his partner sighs.

"Why couldn't it have summoned a table filled with food?" Takatomon wonders and he chuckles slightly as V-Aero shakes his head slightly as he readies his weapon. "I guess if we rescue the Gabumon, we'd be allowed to leave the game." Beowulfmon muses as the Seathien moves to stand before Takatomon and himself.

"Likely." He agrees while Takatomon twirls his staff for a few seconds before holding it firmly in both of his hands. " *Rose Aura* !" His partner declares and the Swornites begin to come towards them.

"So we met face to face, huh? Let's see how well you and your party will do against my army of Swornites, enemy of my master, Zero!" The energy lizardman declares as the spear that the being is holding points right at him. "Why do they keep calling you Zero?" Beowulfmon wonders and he shrugs, already charging up a spell while Beowulfmon moves to fight one of the grunts that's gotten too close to their group.

That's what I would like to know. Although, it sounds like this Zeromaru must have been something if one of his enemies has went to all of this trouble to get vengeance on him. V-Aero muses as he watches as his spell hits one of the Swornites that were coming to flank Beowulfmon, causing said enemy unit to focus its attention on him.

Grimly, he begins to engage said unit in battle, careful to make sure that Beowulfmon didn't get over his head while Takatomon casts healing spells on them. V-Aero can only hope that his partner remains unmolested by the Swornites since otherwise, they'd be more or less screwed up in this battle since he highly doubts that Beowulfmon and himself will have time to pull out their collection of healing potions to help restore their HP.

- - ***N*** - -

As Flameburst and Kumamon arrive beyond the forest, they can't help but pause at the sight that greets them. *Where did all those Swornite raiders come from?* Kumamon wonders for a few seconds before letting out a war cry as he leads the charge forward, head long into the nearest bunch of units that were moving to flank a cream colored Nudian.

Within seconds, two of the eight raiders have fallen, one to his partner and another to him. "Looks like you got a bit of trouble, eh?" Kumamon muses as he slams the butt of his axe into the ground, causing a minor earthquake while Flameburst uses Blade Rush to attack one of the stunned raiders. "You could say that." The Nudian says before she moves to take out another of the stunned raiders as he moves to attack one as well.

In time, Kumamon makes his way to his Guild Leader. "Hey Agunimon! How are you guys holding up?" He calls out while Master of Webbing's Fire Storm hits in the middle of the enemy's main body while Meadow Runner stays close to the shaman. "Well enough, Kumamon. I'm not sure where these reinforcements are coming from

though. No matter how many we take out, they receive the same number of back up units." Agunimon says before sighing.

"Frankly, it's beginning to get a little tiring." The Salalien leader says and Kumamon hums as he casually kills one of the Swornite rogues that were mixed in with the grunts and the spearmen while the main body made up of Raiders come in from behind the wall of walking units. "So you haven't managed to get into the keep to get the newbies out?" He asks and Agunimon nods in agreement.

"Keep is closed up, the bridge is drawn up so we can't get in." Meadow Runner pipes in and Kumamon glances towards the keep to see that as Meadow Runner has said, the bridge was up. He frowns, not liking that one bit.

"I can see why that's troubling." Kumamon admits before he declares, "Then we should find out where the reinforcements are coming from and put a stop to them!" Agunimon and Meadow Runner exchange looks while Master of Webbing points out, "And who can we spare to go do that?"

"I'm sure that between Kumamon and myself, we should be able to make it to their back lines." Agunimon muses thoughtfully and he nods in agreement. "Which would leave Flameburst behind to help us." Master of Webbing muses and he glances at his partner and the cream colored Nudian.

"Although... Who's the new recruit?" Kumamon asks and Master of Webbing answers, "She's not a recruit, she's the one who asked for our help. It seemed Nekowomon had hooked up with said group inside of the keep before they found they couldn't use their keys to leave the dungeon, they asked her to find help."

"I see." Kumamon says and so, they drift over to where Nekowomon and his partner are fighting before Agunimon and himself head off to do their mission to investigate where the reinforcements are coming from. "You're in charge of their safety while Agunimon and I are

gone, ok Flameburst?" Kumamon tells his partner and his Digimon partner nods in agreement.

"You got it boss!" The Ropodidian says as he gives him a salute before refocusing his attention on the incoming attackers. With that done, Agunimon and him began to fight their way towards the edge of the battle field that's littered with not just enemy troops but also with loot from fallen Swornites.

Hold on tight, Agumon! We'll put an end to their supply line of back up troops. Kumamon thinks as Agunimon and himself slowly make their way towards their target.

- - ***N*** - -

"Koichi?" Takuya asks and he moves to the side of the bed where his friend is resting. "Yea Takuya?" Koichi asks as he stands where Takuya can see him.

"Any word about what's going on with Kouji?" The Chosen of Fire asks as Takuya turns his head to look at him. "Nothing." Koichi admits with a sigh and as Takuya is about to say something, the door to the room opens and Takuya's parents and younger brother enters into the room.

As Takuya's mom rushes towards the bed, Koichi backs away, he couldn't help but notice the worried look on Takuya's family. For a moment, Koichi can already imagine the looks on his mom, his dad, and his step mom's face.

The Chosen of Darkness sighs as he moves to head out of the room, leaving Takuya alone with his family, he did have the room number that his twin is resting in, he might just head over there to see if there's any change.

Kouji . . .

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The Lost Gate Ch 14: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"So, what's the verdict?" Rika asks Yamaki when the blond arrived into the room where most of the Tamers were waiting with Takato's parents. All of them waiting on news of what's going on with Takato and Guilmon. Those that were pacing quit as everyone turns to look at the head of Hypnos, waiting for Yamaki to answer her question.

As the door closes behind him, the blond man's lips press. Then Yamaki finally says, "We have yet to know the true cause of what's keeping Takato and Guilmon in the game world. We do understand why we haven't been able to shut down their connection though."

The tension in the room is felt by everyone as they wait for Yamaki to continue speaking. It didn't surprise Rika when a dead zeppo lighter appears in the blond's hands. "At this moment, Takato and Guilmon's conscious minds are not currently housed inside of their bodies at this moment. Since this technology is new to us, we're not sure if this is what's suppose to happen or if someone has trapped them within the game on purpose." The lighter clicks before opening once more to be clicked shut once more.

"Will Takato snap out of this unharmed?" Mei asks and Yamaki answers as the lighter in his hand clicks closed. "We must have faith in your son's abilities. After all, he has his partner with him so we know that whatever is going on with them, they have each other." Yamaki replies.

- - ***N*** - -

"That's the cheapest looking Gate Arch I've ever seen!" Kumamon hisses and Agunimon can't help but agree as they stare at the feeble wooden gate that's lashed together with ropes and chains. The few

sorcerers that were manning the Gate Arch are accompanied by enslaved elementals.

"Just think of it like this, Kumamon, we'll have an easier time destroying it then the one at Ashglow Temple." He points out and Kumamon grunts in agreement, the memory of losing so many party member during that quest in that dungeon. Agunimon can't help but be thankful that they had a few high level Druid capable of reviving the dead, it help a great deal in that dungeon.

"I guess so." Kumamon says and the Salalien sighs. "Anyway, I believe I can get close to set up a few of these bombs as long as you distract the lot, which shouldn't be too hard, all things considered." Agunimon says and Kumamon flashes him a feral toothy grin before slowly stalking forward, towards the edge of their cover.

With a shrug, Agunimon soon wills himself to vanish from view before slowly moving to circle behind his current location so that he can set up those bombs in hopes of destroying the the Gate Arch before the next squad of Swornites teleport here using said gate.

- - ***N*** - -

" *Bolt* !" V-Aero watches as his spell hits the transparent lizardman who currently holds captive a Gabumon. The lightning spell hits the boss, streaks of lightning arc over the surface of the armor while V-Aero charges forward to get in close to hit the boss with his currently enchanted mace.

Beowulfmon and Takatomon were both finishing off the few remaining Swornites and they should be joining him in fighting this boss. Just managing to duck under the incoming spear point, V-Aero's mace hits the energy based lizardman in the knee cap with the head of the mace entering and exiting out of said spot with little effort. Caught by surprised, V-Aero reacted too slowly as the spear hits him in the side, sending him to the floor on his left side.

"V-Aero!" Takatomon yells out and V-Aero rolls as the spear point tries to spear him. *It really doesn't help that these wings are making it slightly painful to roll about on the ground.* V-Aero thinks as he unfolds his wings once he's on his knees.

Then as the spear comes towards him, V-Aero flaps his wings as he quickly jumps backwards. The spear misses him and it wasn't long before Beowulfmon comes to block the next blow with his shield. "I really need to get one of those." V-Aero mutters as he rotates his left shoulder before extending his left wing fully before refolding it up onto his back.

"Good to know you're already thinking about the future." Beowulfmon muses as the Knight moves to engage the boss in closer quarters. With a sigh, V-Aero rummages through his pack for a certain potion. Once the Arvidian drinks the potion, he feels a great deal better and filled with more energy.

Giving himself a shake, V-Aero once more moves in to aid the other two members of the party in attacking the being that holds a Digimon captured. The boss hasn't said a word since that bit about calling him Zero, which is fine by him since they hadn't really come here for a chit chat. *Although, this is the most single level grinding experience that we've been through as of yet.* V-Aero muses as he moves to fight along side his partner, Takatomon.

"I think if we get that Digimon out of there, the boss will vanish." Beowulfmon states as they pull a few feet away from the lizardman. "It's worth a shot." V-Aero admits and it wasn't long before both Beowulfmon and Takatomon were eyeing him.

"What?" V-Aero asks. "Well, you do have a set of wings that aren't your hands..." Beowulfmon says and blinks in startlement at that statement. "Well, I guess that's true." He admits with a sigh as he turns to regard the rookie that's floating about in the boss's midsection.

"I'll need a running start to get into the air though." V-Aero tells the pair and they both nod in agreement. So, as they move towards the boss, he moves to the other side of the room. "I hope this works." V-Aero mutters out loud to himself once he feels his wings touching the wall behind him.

After a few seconds, he finally begins to run towards the lizardman made up of transparent energy. With his upper body leaning as forward as it can go while he keeps his balance, he begins to flap them and slowly, very slowly, his talon feet were no longer clicking on the floor.

Veering to the right, V-Aero slowly climbs into the air. Soon he's circling a few feet below the ceiling of the room. *Ok, I can see the appeal of having wings.* V-Aero thinks to himself as he finally feels confident that he's not going to plummet to his death.

Giving himself a mental shake, he focuses on why he's in the air. Within seconds, he enters into a dive that's to take him right into the heart of the boss. Just as he enters into the body of the boss, V-Aero managed to have his hands outstretched so that he might grab the rookie.

His eyes close automatically as he enters into the energy prison that holds the rookie Digimon. V-Aero feels numb as he begins to breath once more. "Watch out!" Beowulfmon cries out as his beak parts as he coughs a bit.

Then, suddenly, everything goes white . . .

- - ***N*** - -

" **TAKATOMON!** " Guilmon finally shouts and suddenly, the red rookie is already rolling to his side as the virus rookie has already pulled off the visor to look around.

"Guilmon, calm down!" Renamon says after teleporting into the room after hearing his holler. "Takato was right next to the boss when it

exploded! Is he alright? Is that Gabumon with him ok?" Guilmon asks, his yellow eyes pinning Renamon just by looking her right in her eyes.

"Holy crap! How did that Wild One get in here?" Someone calls out in the hallway.

Current Avatar Information **:**

Kouji is Beowulfmon, Seathien, Knight

Marcus is Kumamon, Kuridae, Warrior

Agumon (Savers) is Flameburst, Ropodidian, Warrior

? is Agunimon, Salalien, Rogue

Takato is V-Aero, Arvidian, Shaman

Guilmon is Takatomon, Roptera, Druid

? is Nekowomon, Nudian, Rogue

The Lost Gate Ch 15: Digimon

I Don't Own Digimon!

"Watch out!" Kouji shouts only to find himself in a very unfamiliar room and connected up to a machine. "Kouji!" He hears Koichi say in a concerned tone.

As Kouji breathes rapidly, it takes him a few seconds before he manages to finally calm down. "Kouji?" Koichi asks him and Kouji smiles slightly as he turns to look at his twin.

"How did I get here?" He asks and Koichi seems to relax a bit as his brother explains the events that lead not just him, but Takuya to be checked into the hospital. *Well, I guess that answers that.* Kouji muses to himself with a sigh.

"So, what happened? I mean, you did shout pretty loudly when you woke up." Koichi asks him. "We got an invite to a dungeon called the Mystery Keep. We hooked up with a high level rogue while in the library who had been trying to farm for a dagger that drops from the library boss. Once we defeated the boss, we tried teleporting out but only Nekowomon managed to teleport out while V-Aero, Takatomon, and myself were stuck." Kouji explains.

"In time, we grew bored so we started building a fort with the books that's collected on the cases. After clearing off this one section, we found a hidden door. We decided to wait a bit for a rescue party before exploring it." He admits with a sigh, his mind replaying the trek through the spiraling stair case. "We then came to a large fork with floating golems. We were giving the choice between picking a door or answering a question."

"We picked the question and once we answer it correctly, we were teleported to a place where we encountered a horde of enemy units

and when Takatomon pulled this cord, a energy lizard boss showed up." He can't help but frown as he thinks about the Digimon that was floating within the boss. *I wonder what happened to that Gabumon. . .*

"What's wrong?" Koichi asks. "Floating within the boss was a rookie Digimon, Koichi. And what's odd is both V-Aero and Takatomon knew what a Digimon was as well." He admits as he recalls how V-Aero named the species of said Digimon.

"What do you mean?" His brother asks and Kouji replies, "They identified said Digimon as Gabumon, how would they know that if they haven't encountered Digimon before?"

Before they could continue their conversation, a nurse enters and it wasn't long before he's getting a check over.

- - ***N*** - -

"Where am I?!" Takato glances over to the rookie Digimon that's just woken up. Guilmon pipes in, "Hi! I'm Guilmon." And then Calumon pipes in, "And I'm Calumon, you want to play?"

The Gabumon's eyes widen as the rookie turns to look in their direction while he's getting examined by one of the medical staff in the employment of Hypnos. "Humans!" The rookie wearing a fur pelt cries out in alarm as he also points at them.

"..." Nobody really seems to know what to say to that. "Well, yea. I'm Takato by the way, Guilmon's Tamer." Takato tells the panicky rookie. "Where am I?!" Gabumon demands. "You're in the human world." Renamon says, appearing in the room, startling him and the Digimon.

The Gabumon's eyes widen and then, the rookie faints. "..." Nobody really knows what to do with the Digimon, so they just decided to wait until the rookie woke up on his own once more. *I wonder what*

happened to Beowulfmon... Takato wonders while Guilmon begins to poke the Gabumon's furry pelt.

- - ***N*** - -

"What the . . .!" Before their very eyes, the enemy Swornites, be they Raiders or Grunts, they all vanish, leaving loot behind. "Look at the Keep!" Flameburst cries out and Nekowomon turns to see what it is that's grabbed the Ropodidian.

"The keep..." Meadow Runner says, trailing off. "It's disappearing!" Master of Webbing cries out and she could only just stare wide eyed at the sight. "The newbies . . ." Nekowomon states, remembering why they were there in the first place.

"They can't survive that." Flameburst says and she agreed with that. "But still, why is the keep disintegrating?" Master of Webbing wonders and it seems that nobody has an answer, even when once the remains of the building is gone, trees rapidly began to grow.

"I guess that's one dungeon's that's closed indefinitely." Master of Webbing says dryly before they begin to move about the area, collecting the loot that's laying about. "This is going to take a while." Nekowomon muses as she pauses in sorting through her bags, making sure she's got enough room to put away the most of the rare or uncommon items that she's finding laying about.

Luckily, a few of the items that have been dropped were improved slot bags, allowing her to carry a larger amount of loot away from this site. *This has definitely been a profitable night. Too bad Neo's not on that much or that the others have their own consoles. I'm sure Taichi would enjoy this game.* Thinks Nekowomon, trying to figure out which of the races would appeal to her good friend, Taichi.

- - ***N*** - -

"Well, that sucks." Kumamon states and he knows that Agunimon likely agrees with his statement. "True. Although if they're vanished

here, they might have vanished where the others are." His guild leader muses and with a shrug, he returns to collecting loot off the ground, a task that slowly caused him to drift away from Agunimon.

Hopefully, this isn't a dead end that I fear it is. Kumamon thinks with a sigh.

- - ***N*** - -

"Sir? Is that suppose to happen?" PetitMamon asks now that the Mystery Keep has been reduced to a forest.

"That dungeon's served its purpose. Now, now we can start the next phase. Have the patch ready to be released by the end of the month. For now, we'll allow Zero and his friends to recover from the feedback." PetitMamon's boss states and the little Digimon nods. "It will be as you've ordered, master."

As the screen vanishes, PetitMamon heads out to go speak with those in charge of the software of the game.

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? is Agunimon, Salalien, Rogue

Takato is V-Aero, Arvidian, Shaman

Guilmon is Takatomon, Roptera, Druid

Rei (V-Tamer) is Nekowomon, Nudian, Rogue

Invite Only: Danny Phantom

I don't own Danny Phantom or Vampire the Masquerade!

Looks like I'm not the only one to receive an invite to this particular party. Muses one Daniel Fenton, a relatively young member of Kindred society. He's not very eager about this, if anything, it is rather suspicious given that he is without a clan.

Caitiff is the official name among those who are Camarilla. There were many nicknames that applied to his 'clan', none very flattering. *So why invite me to this shindig?*

No answers come forth as Danny comes before the gate of the manor. "Invitation?" A fuzzy voice asks and he rolls down the car window, flashing the invite at the camera.

A buzz activates and the gates open, he puts the invite on the seat next to him before driving through. As he pulls up to the entrance, a human is waiting for him. Putting the car in park, Danny is sure to grab the invite before opening the door and stepping out of the car.

The man approaches and without a word, gets into the vehicle. Soon his car is driven away while he walks through the door, another servant opening it for him. As the door closes, the servant escorts him to the hall where the party is held.

It wasn't long before he is in need of his manners as he approaches his host, Vlad Masters, or should he say, Prince Masters as the Ventrue has recently ascended to the 'throne' of the city in the recent decade after the previous Prince was driven to disgrace due to a ghost. He's not sure the details on the event, as it had happened before he arrived in the city as a mortal, let alone when he was Embraced.

"Welcome, young Daniel. I hope you didn't have any trouble with security." Prince Masters greets him, no hand offered to shake.

"I ran into no trouble as I had kept the invite on my person, sir." Danny replies, not feeling comfortable being near the Kindred that can call down a Blood Hunt on him if he gives the other the slightest reason. "I thank you for the invite." He states.

Soon enough, he drifts off towards a familiar face, Tucker Foley of Clan Toreador who's speaking with the infamous Sam Manson of Clan Brujah. Danny had previous spoken with Trucker concerning computers and a few other selected topics. Unlike the typical Toreador, Tucker's passions are geared towards all things electrical, waxing poetry about his PDA and Smart Phone.

Although they look to be the same age, Tucker had been Embraced six years ago and hasn't aged a night, physically and only recently has been allowed to stand on his own two feet. He does enjoy Tucker's company previously, even if it kind of creeps him out when Tucker begins to hold the PDA or Smart Phone to his cheek and begins waxing poetry about how much he loves the item. *Although this is the first time I recall him speaking with Sam.*

As he gets closer, Danny reminds himself that they are in an official social setting. "Evening Mr. Foley. I don't believe we've met, I'm Daniel Fenton of the Caitiff." He says, he does his best to keep from grinning at the look that Sam gives him as she crosses her arms and gives him a frankly, blank look.

"Ah yes, Dan... Mr Fenton, it's good to see you. I hadn't expected that you'd receive an invite as well." Tucker says with a wide grin and eyes seem to be dancing with suppress laughter.

"A Caitiff, huh?" Ms Manson murmurs, her eyes glowing with suspicion. "Funny, I would have thought that our Oh High and Mighty Prince was going to only invite those with... Class and Breeding." There's a lot of venom in her tone as she adds that, causing him to become rather self conscious.

"Well, it surprised me as well, but well, here I am." Danny replies, not particularly liking the look Sam is giving him. He can't help but fidget under her seemingly accusing gaze.

"Ah, this is Sam Manson of the Brujah. As you can see, she's rather suspicious of Prince Master's motives for this party tonight." Tucker pipes in. "Which, of course, is par course of her clan. You know, rebel against authority and protest against the brutality of turning animals into Ghouls."

"So she's not against humans becoming Ghouls?" He asks curiously.

"Oh please, there's like, six billion humans in the world and barely any wild places left for free born animals to roam! I bet in fifty years, there won't be any tigers left in India let along in Russia!" Danny takes a step back as Ms Manson speaks rather passionately about how soon the only beautiful predators will be the ones behind bars, in zoo breeding programs.

It's clear that Ms Manson is very passionate about this as she continues, it kind of sounded like a usual topic for her. Danny glances towards Tucker and notices that the Toreador looking faintly bemuse as he nods his head at what he assumes are familiar ques. A few of the others that were near all see to have no trouble ignoring the passionate rant from the Brujah.

Moving closer in a clear and noticeable manner, he whispers to Tucker, "Is this something she usually preaches about, I take it?"

Tucker just nods his head and within seconds, Ms Manson turns to him, asking, "Don't you agree, Mr Fenton?"

Before he can decide how to answer that, Prince Masters wants their attention. It seems everyone's attention swings towards the Prince. "I would like to have everyone's attention." Once it's silent, the Prince continues, "Now then, I'm sure many of you know each other and many of you have likely noticed a fresh face. As I see he hasn't had

a chance to mingle with everyone, I shall be the one to introduce him."

The look in the Prince's eyes as he look directly at Danny made him wish he could turn invisible right then an there. "Daniel Fenton, Clan Caitiff... or at least that's how he calls himself. In actuality, he is of Clan Salubri."

Clan what? Danny wonders as outrage begins to ring out among the Court.

"CUT! And what the hell, Vlad?! That wasn't something you were suppose to share!"

*** * * * ***

Ghost Writer's niece, *Can't believe he even has a sibling* , interrupts the LARP, glaring at Masters. Vlad lets out an annoyed grunt as he puts on the airs of someone who's far too important for someone like her. "I don't see any reason to draw it out. It's not like I am willing consented to continuing this fantasy, the sooner this game is over the sooner I can go back to recreating my life."

"Oh, so you no longer wish for my help in that?" Maleficent, a ghostly sorceress that he had the... pleasure of meeting about couple of years ago, inquires as she comes floating down from her perch.

Vlad looks rather uneasy while Cassie, the niece of Ghost Writer, continues to glare daggers at Masters. "And you signed a contract!" Cassie snarls, her hands going towards the pack she carries around. "This one!"

Cassie holds up and out the contract. Most of the other people at the LARP seem to be upset over the ending of the scene as well. Then again, most of those present were here because they wanted to be here, it's the odd one out that didn't volunteer to be part of these sessions of role-playing. *If not for the blackmail of that particular incident , I would have likely been dragged into it by Sam.*

He glances at his steady girlfriend, sure enough, Sam has her arms across her chest and an annoyed look upon her face. *I still think it's scary that the two of them are in the same room together.* Danny thinks, glancing towards the Sorceress before looking back at Sam.

"Yes, well, I'm sure I can do it by myself." Vlad stubbornly states and he shivers at the cold smile that graces Maleficent's face.

"Perhaps after the breech in contract has been addressed." Maleficent mentions and that seems to cause Cassie's eyes to light up.

"What kind of effect is this breech?" He asks curiously and Maleficent turns to look at him, delight in her eyes, kind of making him wish he hadn't spoken up.

"Oh, I'm sure I that Cassie's imagination will lend itself to something suitable." Is Maleficent's reply. He's more then glad when her focus is once more on Vlad.

"Give me time and I'm sure I can have something to pay the breech." Vlad says, it's clear he's confident in finding a way to buy out of whatever this breech is.

"That's stupid. In the story, Maleficent is a vengeful Fae and according to stories, the Fae are really big in keeping to their word." Sam says, somehow coming to stand next to him. "He won't be buying his way out of this breech."

"You know, something about her is really familiar..." Tucker says. "Something about a gym class..."

"Ah, well, yea, she did show up a couple of years ago, back in high school." Danny admits, *No point in denying that we haven't fought before.*

Cassie floats down to the floor and, soon, moves about Vlad, who protests and continues to wheel 'n' deal his way out of the

ramifications of breaking his contract. Sure, it's likely that the pair used the old Stick and Carrot route to get Vlad to sign the contract but Masters did fall for it. He feels a bit of pity for the older Halfa but then, it's not like the other has done much to try and ask for forgiveness from the general public or whatever.

"You know, did we ever find out why she was at the high school? I mean, she's fairly classy and likely has refined tastes, so what could she want with teenagers?" Tucker muses, it's not the first time that his best friend has shown he is attracted to Maleficent.

"I don't think I ever asked her while I was interrupting her at the school." He states with a shrug. *Not that I didn't find out about it later.*

"So... she threatened you? I mean, if Sam says she's vengeful then..." Tucker asks. "I mean, Cassie said you were the first to agree to attend this LARP."

"I can honestly say she didn't threaten me with magic. We just talked." Danny tells Tucker. *About how I should tell Sam, at least, of the Race and promised not to tell anyone about it unless I wanted them to know if I agree to participate in this LARP.*

"Really? She just showed up out of the blue, no shots fired from you? Not even a misunderstanding?" Tucker exclaims, giving him a look of disbelief.

"What can I say? She got me in a good mood." He says, adding, "It was like she was waiting until I was before showing up."

"Sorceress." Sam points out.

"A cat." Cassie says abruptly. "He'll be a natural as a kitty cat."

"Now wait a..." Vlad didn't get a chance to finish his statement as a white flash erupts, momentarily blinding those looking at Masters. As his vision returns, Danny begins to chuckle and quickly, the room

erupts in laughter while a navy blue and silvery white tom cat is standing where Vlad once stood.

Quick as a whip, Cassie has Vlad in her arms and within seconds, causing the cat to purr. He's pretty sure that Vlad didn't stand a chance while one of the LARPers addresses Maleficent, "Ah... are we going to continue with the LARP? Is it the end of tonight's session?"

"I do believe this is the end of tonight's session but you may stick around and enjoy the refreshments." Maleficent addresses the room and soon, people begin to do as they want.

"So... who'd going to be the new Prince?" Another LARPer asks curiously.

"I'm sure Cassie will come up with something." Maleficent replies primly. Soon enough, Maleficent fades from view, either becoming invisible or just teleporting away.

"So... refreshments?" Tucker suggests, motioning towards the bar. They were serving drinks, both varieties.

"I think I got some homework to do." Danny admits.

"The job of a hero is never over." Tucker states.

"I think I'll stick around. See you at the apartment, ok?" Sam says, after giving him a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Sounds like a plan." He says, giving her a warm smile. He takes out the keys, dropping them onto her hand. "Just encase you want to leave before Tucker."

Sam nods, they hug each other and once she's stepping away, Danny transforms into his Ghost form. With a thought, he turns invisible and takes off, phasing through the walls and ceiling. Once he's above the gate, he finds himself trapped in a green sphere.

"A moment, please." Maleficent says and he turns around to find her behind him. The sphere vanishes as they look at each other.

"You know, I thought we already had our chit chat last month." Danny states to Maleficent.

"We had a discussion then and now we're having another one." She tells him. "You do realize you had nothing to be ashamed about. I was the one who fell for the taunt by a known rival."

"Yea, well, I rather not be on the receiving end of horse jokes." He states.

"Very well, but you still have the medal and my offer be there when you tell her is still there." She tells him and he nods.

Turning, he continues flying through the air. Letting himself enjoy the way the wind moves through his hair and across his skin. For now, not letting what ifs and could be plague his mind.

The End

Author's Comments: Yea, I started this back in October 20th of 2014 and just got around to completing it tonight. I had a bit of a run, preparing for a D&D game that I'm the DM of and was itching to type some more.

To learn more about how Maleficent and Danny meet, check out the earlier chapter entitled **Maleficent's Choice** which is Chapter 64 .

Strawberry Goblin Part 1: Re:Monster

I don't own Bleach or Re:Monster!

A mist slowly curls about the floor from the window. A fat gibbous moon shines through the window as a sleeping teen sleeps on, oblivious to the Hollow outside of his window. The mist continues to pour out of the shell like mask while stalk eyes numbering half a dozen watch its back for any restless Shinigami or Spiritually empowered humans seeking to stop it from its self appointed task.

The mist slowly fills the room as minutes tick by, slowly raising to blanket even the teen upon the bed. Seeing this, the Hollow shifts the properties of the mist, soon it changes from a sleeping mist to a highly poisonous one with paralyzing properties. Not that the Hollow need have worried, the teen sleeps on and within seconds, the poison takes hold.

It chuckles softly to itself as it seems that its task went on without a hitch. Its eyes turning to focus on the dying ex-Substituted Shinigami.

Thud!

The Hollow's head is pierced with a glowing arrow and the Hollow breaks apart while a pair approach, one of them sporting a face painted up.

He watches expectantly as Ichigo expires only... no soul appears within the room. The Captain curses but waits and waits for the teen's ghost to appear only it never does.

Day 1

Ichigo feels warm and at peace, sure, he feels something next to him but it doesn't really concern him much. It seems sudden but, he feels like his body it going through something, he's getting squeezed out and soon, that warmth is gone, the cold shocks him enough for him to open his eyes. Everything is out of focus and he whimpers, he knows he's whimpering and his body begins to shiver.

Try as he might, his limbs seem foreign and he can't really believe the sight of a green face looking down at him. There's a cry and sounds erupt, not that it matters to him as he's more interested in getting warm again.

Soon enough, something covers him and after a while, he gives up on trying to make sense of what's wrong with him along with this situation. He feels so tired as he feels himself being put down. The last thing he manages to do is to look to his left. A green baby of some kind is laying there and it takes him a second to realize, that they were the same size!

With that, he finds himself unable to stay awake.

Day 3

Ichigo slowly wakes to find that he seems to have grown much larger then the day before and with more control over his body. In fact, as he sits up, he studies his green skin hands and even gives himself a pinch. His face soon sports a scowl as he realizes, he has no fucking idea what happened to himself or how he ended up in his current circumstance.

He gets up and glances to the sleepers that surround him. He makes sure that the cloth is knotted before carefully picking his way pass the other sleeping whatever they are. He comes to a stop near the entrance of the sleeping quarters as he looks to the left and then to the right.

He picks a direction and its not long before he comes across an older looking green skinned being. "Hey, where are we?" He asks

and the other comes to a stop to answer him.

"Our home cave. If your hungry, go grab something from outside to eat. Your grown enough to feed yourself now." With that, the other continues on their way.

He scowls after the older one, but now that its been mentioned, he does feel rather hungry. He places his right hand over his mid-section as it grumbles. With a 'tsk' he follows after the older one, soon he comes to the entrance of the caves and without much of a look back, heads out into the sunlight.

The sun's light is bright, he quickly shields his eyes for a few seconds as he listens to the sounds around him. Everything is as it should be and yet... Minor things came across as different, he's not sure what as he lowers his hand and he walks into the forest, although he's sure to pick up a sturdy stick off the ground. It's not like anyone handed him anything to defend himself with, which could mean that it wasn't dangerous around here or they just don't hand out weapons to those who don't know how to use them yet.

"Better safe then sorry." Ichigo murmurs to himself as he explores the forest. He keeps an eye out for anything that looked like it could be food.

After a few minutes, he comes across something that pretty much wasn't a normal rabbit. For one, it sported a horn and for another, it raises up onto its hunches as it spots him. They stare at each other, he slowly begins to scowl and makes a shooing motion.

Only as he's turning away does he realize his error as he barely has enough time to use his stick to parry the incoming horn as he is leaping backwards. "Well, well, well, aren't you a blood thirsty rabbit?" Ichigo remarks with a slight smirk while the horned rabbet moves to charge at him once more.

"I could use a fight, so thanks for proving me with one!" He says as he charges. He finds it hard to push the horn out of the way using

the stick but he does manage to punch the sucker with his free hand.

Again and again, the horned rabbit charges him and he, barely, manages to keep the horn from nailing him. He gets a few scratches and he is getting frustrated at how the rabbit seems so intent on fighting him instead of fleeing. His stomach growls as he pants as he rests his left hand upon his mid-section.

The stick had been discarded due to it snapping on the fourth whack on the rabbit's body. He growls as his face becomes stony, wishing he had grabbed a large stone instead of a stick. *Or demanded a knife or something more sturdy then a stick! They could have given me a warning about insane killer rabbits too!* Ichigo mentally growls, wishing for Zangetsu as this fight would have been over by now.

"Goblin Ore! There you are... oh gods, a Horned Rabbit!" The rabbit turns to the new comer and charges at them.

Ichigo moves, grabbing the rabbit by the neck. Keeping the horn before him, he does his best to strangle the blood thirsty beast while the one who called out to him, calling him Goblin Ore seems to have stopped panicking.

"Get a rock and smash its head!" He snaps at the other, glancing towards the non-bald green being. With a nod, Goblin Bei, looks around for one as he continues to wrestle to keep his grip on the neck of the horned rabbit.

Soon, Goblin Bei approaches with a rock being held in both hands and it takes a few tries but the rabbit's skull is smashed. He lets goes and signs, he feels the adrenaline rush leave him feeling drained while Goblin Bei. "Thanks for your help, I couldn't have done it with out you, Bei." He tells the other.

"Really?! But... but you didn't get speared by its horn! You were the one who kept it from spearing me!" Goblin Bei exclaims, some tears seeming to threaten to fall.

"Are you a... girl?" Ichigo can't help but inquire.

"What did you take me for? A boy?!" Goblin Bei exclaims with a glare before she huffs and looks away.

So... the girls are the ones with hair? He muses and notices that Goblin Bei seems to be drooling a bit at the sight of the dead horned rabbit. "So tasty looking..." She murmurs to Ichigo's amusement.

"What to share it?" He asks and Bei's eyes light up as she gives him a quick look. A bright smile and she reaches to grab the dead rabbit.

He can't help but stare as she wrenches a leg off and begins eating it *raw* . He kind of gulps at her before realizing just how hungry he is. Seeing him looking at her, Bei offers him the rabbit.

With a hum, he takes it by the neck. He looks at the horn and takes hold of the skull plus horn. It takes a bit but the horn snaps off and he studies it for a few seconds before his stomach whines at him. Using the horn, he does his best to gut the rabbit.

Though disgusted at himself, he finds himself enjoying the raw organs and meat. It takes Bei and himself some minutes to finish off the meat and organs. They both relax, their stomachs filled with a filling meal and after some minutes, he asks, "So... you were looking for me?"

"Oh, yea! Goblin Gran wished to give us a lesson and I volunteered to look for you! They said you got up earlier then the rest of us to forage for food but hadn't returned." Goblin Bei answers and he nods in understanding.

"Well, we best be heading back then." Ichigo says and gets to his feet with his right hand grabbing the horn he snapped off. Bei does the same and he takes the lead, heading back in the direction he recalls coming from. He wonders just what kind of lesson they'll be getting once they were back at the home cave.

Day 7

Ichigo takes some time to study the spear he's crafting using a flint flake to shape the point along with cutting off the minor little branches that had been on it. He had used a large flint hand axe to cut the branch from the tree once he settled on it being perfect for his needs. He spent the last three nights figuring out how to chip flint to get the necessary edges for him to create what he wishes out of wood as he's not allowed to touch, let alone use, any of the metal weapons in the treasury.

"Hey Ore! Will this do?" Goblin Bei asks as she approaches, she's carrying a thin branch that's been recently torn from a tree trunk.

"Yea, sure, just put it there, in the pile." He tells her and she smiles at him. With a nod, he hums as he adds the new spear to the small fire pit he has going to harden the tip. He's got three done so far.

"I don't see why you put them in that fire." Goblin Bei remarks and he picks up one of the previous two.

"The point is harden." He explains, offering her the chance to touch it for herself. Bei does touch it and it's clear she does notice that he was right. He puts it back down.

"How many before we go hunting?" Bei asks curiously as he picks through the pile for the next branch to be shaped into a spear.

"I think went we have six." Ichigo replies as he pulls his chosen branch from the pile. Taking a look at the flint flake, he reaches for the large piece of flint and chips another flake off the chunk.

Goblin Bei moves to sit across from him, watching intently as he uses the flint flake to cut off the excess bumps and branches along with the bark. He goes through a few flint flakes while also being sure to take the spear from the fire pit, even adding a few of the cut off bark and branches to keep the fire from going out.

"Can I try?" Goblin Bei asks and he nods in agreement, handing her the latest flint flake before chipping a new one for himself to use.

He keeps an eye on Bei as she works on mimicking him while working on his own. It takes her longer and he even allows her to chip her own flint flake, which causes Bei to beam at him with pure happiness at the trust he's putting in her.

She is my twin sister... she's family. Ichigo thinks, his thoughts drifting off to the various answers he pumped out of Goblin Gran. There's so much that he doesn't really understand, particularly why he ended up reincarnating as a Goblin instead of human. Given the choice, he would have pick human as that's what he was before and pretty much what he expected to continue to look like after he died.

How did I end up in this world? Why do I still have my memories? They are still here, nothing's faded... He thinks as a slight frown grows, though he's staring at the wood in his hands, his gaze is more inwards though. *Then there's the fact that I can Rank Up if I met the right requirements. Into a Hobgoblin, whatever they are.*

Goblin Gran had been rather impressed with the questions he's asked but a number of her answers hadn't left him very satisfied.

Then there's the part concerning how Bei and himself had been conceived, he feels anger well up within about the fact that his father, Hobgoblin Pu, had *raped* their human mother. He didn't even know which of the eight captive women were his mother and from the sounds of things, Bei and himself also have some half older siblings from previous rapes, from both sides. Some they were related to through their mother and the others through their father.

Yes, there's low fertility between Goblins but that didn't make what they were doing with those women right. Yet, he doubts he'd be able to do anything about their situation as he's just a young Goblin. He didn't have any kind of pull among the community to do anything to improve the situation.

He's so tempted to leave but that wouldn't do anything, which he couldn't tolerate as he so wants to do something! Sure, he's a monster but he's got morals damn it! It wasn't black and white either, just shades of grey, which annoys him so damn much! Humans have recently taken an interest in this part of the mountains along with the forests that surround it. There have been attack on the community by humans in the past and likely will in the future. That doesn't excuse the treatment of those women who were taken captive from the last group to attack but at the time, the community need to replace those it lost in those incursions.

There's on going friction between Humans and Monsters, but at the same time, there's friction between various Monster species, which prevents them from joining together to repel the incursions of the native Humans.

It's a powder keg here and something is going to spark it, causing everything around here to go to Hell! Fuck damn it, I am not a politician! What the fuck can I do to settle things peacefully? Goblins aren't even that high up in the ranks of Monsters! He rants to himself. *And nobody seems to care about what that could mean for the future of the area!*

With a slight closing of his eyes, he gives his head a slight shake. It takes him a few seconds to remember what he was doing and he takes some time to inspect the spear. He focuses on finishing it after he checks on Bei's progress, it seems she hadn't noticed him drifting off from the task at hand.

By noon, they each had three spears each while he also had that horn from killing his first horned rabbit. Between Bei and himself, they had grown use to hunting the blood thirsty monsters and had started to collect the horns from those rabbits they have killed.

Today though, they were doing to try hunting something different. They heard about some otter monsters hanging out at the large river north west of the caves. Ichigo's fairly sure that the skins would make fine fur lined cloths. He has been practicing skinning by doing

so with the rabbits, making some knapsacks out of the leather for the community, which earned him some gratitude from those of his age group. He doesn't bother wondering at the blood relation between himself and the others, he's content with just the one sister at this point.

It takes them sometime but they do find the minor waterfall that feeds the river. They scout around the area until the spy their quarry, they number four but they were much larger then the horned rabbits they had grown use to hunting. Climbing the nearest tree, he takes sometime to study the otter monsters, they seem to be about the size of boars but longer in the body. They also have brightly color fur, primarily lightning white with a rich light blue for the underbelly, chin, and neck.

He motions for Bei to join him in the tree. Once she's safe within, Ichigo moves up onto a more solid and longer branch. He takes a spear and prepares to throw it using the spear thrower he made before making any spears. With a spear balanced upon it, he readies himself and picks out a target.

The spear arches as it is launched from the spear thrower and hits the lower back of one of the otter monsters. It bellows out in pain, the others become alert and another spear arches through the air, killing on viva the ribs, likely piercing the lungs. The remaining two are on the move, charging towards their tree, the injured one is doing its best to join the healthier ones.

To his minor shock, a ball of water is launched up at him from the injured one. It startles him as he never expected any kind of attack other then teeth and claws coming from what he considered a beast, sure it's a monster but it still came across as a simple beast. Thankfully, Bei manages to keep her wits and kill the one had almost made it up the trunk of the tree. He pulls out the horn and waits until the other otter is directly under him before leaping out of the tree, the pointed end getting it in the back of the skull.

The injured one hisses and launches more balls of water at him as he pulls the horn out of the dead otter monster. He does his best to get in close, it quickly lunges at him and bites him in the shoulder while pinning him to the ground. He does his best to bring the horn into play, it's clear that these otter is stronger then him and he knows he has to end this soon. It takes him a bit but finally, he stoves the point into the throat.

It thrusts about, he manages to get out of the way and does his best to keep distance between himself and the thrashing monster. After some minutes, it stop and with a whine, the last breath exits out of the monstrous otter.

He stares, he knows he's going into shock, how can he not know? He begins digging around within his knapsack and begins to apply pressure onto his wound. It's really bad given the size of the muzzel compared to himself. Bei quickly comes to his side and he does his best to tell Bei how to help.

He fights against falling unconscious, long enough for Bei to arrive with the freshly picked herbs that he asked for. He does black out as Bei begins to prepare them to be applied to his bite injury.

Day 8

There's a coolness upon his upper body. It takes Ichigo some minutes to recall what happened before he blacked out. He turns his head to the left to find Bei sleeping next to him, cuddling his left arm. "Bei..."

"Ore... Ore!" Bei exclaims once she's fully awake. She looks happy and worn out. She's soon blabbing on about the events that happened after he blacked out on her.

Of how she finished putting those herbs and berries on his wound and binding it with that cloth he had turned into bandages, she had done her best to drag all the dead otter monsters near him. Of how she then went in search for a minor cave, finding one a bit up behind

the waterfall. Of clearing it out of seven colored bats before bringing him into it and then working on the otter monsters, skinning them like he taught her along with creating meat racks after butchering them, again as he had taught her.

"I'm proud of you, Bei. You remembered to keep a calm head and what I taught you instead of panicking and forgetting everything in that moment." Ichigo tells her and she tears up upon hearing that. "I couldn't have asked for anyone better to attend to me."

I just wish... it never happened in the first place. I should have stuck to attacking them at range instead of going close quarters with that one. Injured or not, I almost died because of that. He mentally berates himself while Bei does her best to regain control over herself.

"Is there anything else I can do for you, Ore?" Bei asks him as she leans over him.

With his right, he brushes her blond bangs as he pokes her in the forehead gently. She backs up and he sits up, he gets a better look at their surrounding before turning his attention to his bandages.

"We better unwrap that and see how bad it is. Clean it, get fresh herbs and berries, apply them, and re-bandage it. We'll have to make more bandages out of my cloth, I guess we'll have to fashion pants out of the otter skins." He tells Bei, who nods.

"I'll go and the herbs and berries! Wait until I get back to unwrap that, ok? Also, here, you haven't eaten anything other then those nuts yesterday!" Bei says, once she's grabbed a few slices off meat off the nearest meat rack, handing it to her.

"Remember, no unwrapping until I get back, Goblin Ore! I don't want you trying anything until I get back!" Bei tells him sternly and he nods as he can't help but remember the Twins from his previous life. He feels his throat tighten at the expression as she takes a moment to study him.

Confident that he would do as she asked, Goblin Bei heads out, leaving Ichigo to regain control over himself as his right hand balls up about the meat. It's hard to believe that he's only eight days old, it already feels so much longer since he's been reborn as a Goblin named Ore. Yet, he still can't get over the fact that he'll never see his old friends and family ever again.

After a while, feeling emotionally drained, he begins eating the meat slices that Bei had handed him. Once he's done, he gets up and answers the call of nature. He looks out of the cave, doing his best to use only his right hand to cup water so he can quench his thirst.

He moves to go through his knapsack and takes out the chuck of flint, noting that it's a bit smaller then it had been, likely due to Bei making skinning flakes. He smiles slightly as he feels proud of his pupil as it seems that she's eager for any skill he can teach her. Looking over at the racks of sliced meat, he reminds himself that he won't always be eating raw meat, that one day, he'll teach Bei how to cook, once he gathers the necessary equipment and ingredients.

For now, he'll have to settle for teaching her how to roast and smoke meat, when they, again, had the free time. Bei returns but not alone, he is on guard as the strangely green human like being walks behind his twin sister. "Goblin Ore, meet Hobgoblin Xan! He says he can heal you! Isn't that great?"

Hobgoblin? This is the Rank Up from Goblin? Ichigo can't help but think as he studies the much taller and not bald goblinoid. "Ah, nice to meet you?" He murmurs.

"Well! Let's take a look at that bite, shall we? I must say, I'm impressed that you knew the right herbs to send Goblin Bei for concerning your injury. Not many bother to learn how to heal using herbs." Goblin Xan remarks as the blue hair Hobgoblin directs him to sit.

He does so given that if Xan is an expert doctor, that the other was much more familiar with herbal remedies then he, given that

Hobgoblin Xan must be older then them both. He keeps his face stoic as the bandages are unwrapped and Hobgoblin Xan tuts at the look of the wound. He gets a look at it and his heart drops as it looks rather infected.

Then, Xan touches him and he stiffens as the hand lights up, then the light spreads into him. Before his eyes, the infection heals and then the wounds soon close until it looked like he never got bit in the first place. He also feels cooler, he hadn't realized how hotter his body temperature had been until now. "How... how did you do that?!" He can't help but exclaim in awe.

He knew that the Medical Crops could do something similar and it brings up the question of, could he learn to do the same. "I've trained to become a cleric. It took me months to learn the ropes of it but, well, I must have done something right or else I wouldn't have been able to heal, you know?" Hobgoblin Xan explains in a modest tone.

"Wow, really? That's pretty cool! You must be in high demand for your services back at your community!" Bei gushes while Ichigo notices something flash in Xan's eyes at that particular statment.

"I've pretty much been traveling on my own, you know, exploring, looking for other Goblin communities. I've only met one other besides my old one. I guess there's one near here?" Xan asks and Bei nods while Ichigo does his best to figure out if he should press the issue of what happened between Xan and his birth community.

If my luck holds true from my previous life, I'll get my answers in the next few days and it'll end with I facing the bad guy. He mentally muses with a slight frown. He sits back and listens as Bei and Xan trade questions and answers. What looks pass on Xan's face at certain question, he made note of but still didn't press.

After a few hours, with Hobgoblin Xan's help, they bundle up the meat in the otter skins, using a local plant root as rope, and carried the bundles back to the home caves. The older Goblins were surprised to see both Bei and himself alright while also welcoming

Hobgoblin Xan. It wasn't long before Goblins gathered around to listen to how Bei and himself killed those monster otters. Many were clearly impressed that, yet again, Bei and himself managed to bring back meat to the cave. Much to the gratitude of the whole community, then again, most of them harvest plants for food along with insects, which means that few if any Goblins bother to learn to hunt.

Or survive their first hunt to grow better at doing so. He muses as he recalls how blood thirsty those horned rabbits are and the likely high mortality rate that occurs due to that aggression.

Day 10

"Please! Take us with you, Gobore! Gobbei!" Goblin Hu and Goblin Mu exclaim, bowing at them both. Goblin Mu sporting light brown hair and her cloth done up toga style with a snaggletooth coming from the bottom right lip while Goblin Hu was one of those that sport totally white eyes. Goblin Hu and Goblin Mu are in the same age group as Bei and himself, which could make them cousins or maybe half siblings viva their father.

"Fine, but you'll have to do as I tell you." Ichigo states, slightly annoyed as he had just finished some armor for Bei and himself to use. Yesterday, they found some armored tanuki, they were devil to kill due to the plates, which he quickly realized the potential so he had them hunt for as many as they could before evening set in and the more powerful monsters begin to roam the area.

He made leather shirts with over lapping plates for Bei and himself most of last night. He's also boiled some leather to be used are shin and arm guards while using wood and leather to make each of them shields. He had thought of using the collection of horns to make armor but created some spear throwers out of them instead, which had been hard work.

Picking up a couple of spears from the pile, he plans them before the kneeling pair of Goblins. "Here, you can use these. If anything

comes at you, stab it with the pointed end." He tells them and as he turns, he glances towards Bei, she kind of seems to have mixed reactions like anger and yet pride with excitement pretty much overwhelming everything else. Then again, this will be the first time they'll be wearing armor for protection.

They killed more horned rabbits, giving the two new comers time to learn how to use their spears. As they get into some tall grass, Bei cries out as she whacks something, he runs in her direction and seeing the snake, slams his shield into its striking head as it sails over Bei's own shield.

"Night Viper!" Goblin Mu cries while Goblin Hu manages to stab the tail and Bei's spear enters into the night viper's back of the head, killing it.

"We just killed a Night Viper! Gobbei, that was amazing!"

"Did you see Gobore just hit it with that thing on his arm!"

The two gush between them while he uses a flint dagger to cut off the head in case it's venomous. He does his best to hold the neck of the body so that the blood will drain from the body while the three talk excitedly. As they quiet down, it's decide to move out of the tall grass before they get attacked again.

They walk out and when he deems that he's got as much blood as he could out of it, he curls the viper's body before adding it to the wooden basket on his back.

By noon, he begins to look for materials for crafting. He couldn't carry much and looking at Goblin Hu and Goblin Mu, he realizes that he should have lightly given them their knapsacks so they could help carry stuff for him.

Hindsight is twenty twenty. He concludes as he leads the group back to the home caves. In the entrance way, Hobgoblin Xan seems to be

rather popular with the Goblin women as the Ranked Up goblinoid is telling them tales of sights he's seen in his travels.

The other Goblins perk up at their arrival and the four of them were soon swarmed as the Goblins help to take the heavy meat baskets from Bei and his backs. He feels someone looking at him and looking up, finds Hobgoblin Xan looking at him with that same expression as before. The one that is puzzlement mixed with thoughtfulness.

What? I shouldn't share what I hunt with the rest of the community? Waste all that meat? He mentally muses towards more experienced Hobgoblin, but like usual, the other wasn't a mind reader so he receives no answer to his mental inquiry.

Day 11

With rain coming down, Ichigo decides to teach those interested in how to make those baskets that Bei and himself had been wearing yesterday. As he's doing that, there's some wrestling going on that Bei has joined in on. She's won against a number of opponents and is currently taking a bit of a break.

As he looks over the group of thirteen, they were busy weaving the thin stripes of wood between the stick frame work. Some among his pupils seem to be further along then the others but he didn't see any need to make corrections as they all seem to pick up on said mistake before he pipes in to point it out. After a few minutes, Ichigo looks towards another group, it seems Hobgoblin Xan has decided to mimic him and seems to be giving a lecture on healing herbs and berries along as what they can be used for.

After sometime, the basket weaving is over and one of his students, Goblin Sou, challenges him to a friendly match. Accepting, as he's been kind of itching to test himself against his fellows, he follows Goblin Sou to the make shift ring.

"Ready, Gobsou?" He asks and the other grunts.

His opponent charges at him headlong and being familiar with this tactic, he dodges out of the way before moving behind Goblin Sou, locking the arms and doing his best to lift Goblin Sou off the ground. Then he moves forward, doing his best to pin Goblin Sou to the ground, pushing the other's face into the dirt floor.

Soon he is declare the victor and he lets go. Soon enough, another challenger steps up and so it goes. He has it slightly tough due to his body being inexperienced in the moves he recalls from his previous life and so it takes its toll on him but he continues on until he's won against all challengers.

Then Bei politely asks him to step away so they can then continue with their matches. It's clear that Bei wishes to try and mimic his success in the ring and he grunts as he walks out. He finds a spot to sit and watches her, already thinking about the fact that he'll need to work out if he wants his old hand to hand skills to become ingrained and instinctual.

He's pretty sure Bei will be willing to help him and learn somethings from him as well.

As even falls, he heads to his workshop to begin to work on creating some armor for Goblin Hu and Goblin Mu for when they come out hunting with Bei and himself. He looks up to find Hobgoblin Xan entering.

As he works, they talk about things and he gets some answers to his questions that Goblin Gran hadn't answered to his satisfaction while answering his share of questions that Hobgoblin Xan puts to him.

It was an informative few hours.

Day 14

What the hell is that? Ichigo can't help but think at the sight of a dog headed monster. It's wearing armor that harkens back to samurai attire along with a katana resting along his shoulder.

It takes him a few seconds before he recalls hearing of a monster that fitted what he sees before him. *A Kobold.* He recalls, although to be fair, he kind of imagined a dog walking around on its hind legs when he heard of them from Goblin Gran.

He holds up his arm, signally for them to wait. He stands and approaches the Kobold, walking up to it. It turns towards him, clearly narrowing its eyes as it prepares to draw its sword.

"I just want to talk." He states, he can't help but noticed how the Kobold's eyes flicker with surprise, at him although he's at a lost as to why.

"And what, Goblin, do you have to talk about?" The Kobold inquires in a tone that pretty much oozes superiority and indulgance.

It was a tone he's heard plenty of things in his previous life and he's also beaten those who have used such a tone before. "I was wondering where I can find the ore for iron. Given that you have such a fine sword, I thought I would ask you."

The Kobold snorts and its muzzle becomes the equivalent of a sneer or he assumes it is while the Kobold replies after a few seconds of having such a sneer plastered upon its face, "Like a lowly monster like a Goblin knows anything about metal working. Just because some stupid human female decided to make you some armor, piss poor attempts at that, doesn't make you special."

He glares at the Kobold and gives the signal for the spears to be thrown. Anger bubbling within and though the Kobold manages to deflect the first doesn't keep it safe from the other two. Once the two were in the Kobold does he move forward with his flint knife.

He guts the Kobold, causing it to get this surprised expression. Wrenching the katana, which is huge and he needs both of his hands to even hold it, he uses all his strength to cut the Kobold's head off. The others surge forward, congratulating him on the deed.

It wasn't long before they strip the cloths, armor, and anything else from the body. Then, much to his horror, the three begin to *eat* the Kobold!

He glances toward the head of the Kobold, realizing that yea, not only had he pretty much order its death but it seems he's expected to *eat* it as well.

Looking up, he can't help but wonder how this became his life and promises that no matter how long it takes, he'll get back at the one who killed him. *Maybe even do the Goblin thing and eat them.* He thinks before Bei asks if anything is wrong.

"Nothing beyond wishing I could weld this better." He answers, lifting the katana slightly and they seem to accept that answer. It takes him a few more seconds and the expectant looks from the others before he had his first taste of the Kobold.

Sadly, it wasn't hard to keep the meat down so he joins the others in consuming what they can of the Kobold. What they didn't eat, they striped from the body and added it to what they've killed already as well as carry the armor and stuff back to home cave.

The armor, katana, and the non-edible stuff joins the treasury and he gets another look at the eight women that are held off to the right of said treasure room. He swallows hard and turns his head from them before walking away, already noticing that it seems that at least one of them seems to be pregnant again.

Day 18

They return to the waterfall with the intent on doing some fishing. Hobgoblin Xan decided to join them, claiming he wanted to search for more healing herbs and such. Ichigo figures they camp in the cave that Bei had found earlier so he can teach them how to smoke meat and fish.

Using some flint axes, they begin constructing the smoke house and he demonstrates how it works using the horned rabbits they caught along the way. Using make shift wooden nails, he tests to make sure its sturdy outer cover of the newly constructed building.

He digs a minor fire pit and lights a fire, invoking slight awe with Goblin Hu and Goblin Mu. He feeds it some dry wood and leaves it to burn within the smoke house. He instructs Goblin Hu and Goblin Mu to check on the cave, giving them each a torch encase those bats had returned while Bei and himself approach the river with fishing spears.

He takes his time studying the fish within, noting a few fairly large suckers within. He looks towards the waterfall as a swarm of seven colored bats fly into the sky. A few minutes later, the pair looking slightly worst for wear approach but both seem very pleased with themselves.

"Right so, you see the fish? You want to aim slightly below the image of the fish on the surface." He explains as he hands Goblin Mu a fishing spear while Bei gives Goblin Hu one. "The surface image is slightly off from where the actual fish is located within the river."

"Now, what me." He tells them and remembering his own advice, he patiently waits until he found one that's large enough and still enough for him to try for. With a slight throw of the spear, he pulls the spear out and the fish is caught on the many wooden slivers that make up the point. It wiggles but unable to escape.

Each of the other Goblins look delighted and then serious. Each moving along the river, finding a spot and looking for a sizable fish to spear. As he puts the fish into a basket, he returns to the river to try his luck again.

By the time evening has fallen, Goblin Bei speared six fish of varying sizes, Goblin Mu speared four fish, Goblin Hu speared the most at nine, and himself at four more besides that first one. Hobgoblin Xan

joined them with a basket of herbs while also adding some fruit and mushrooms to their meal.

He made sure to wake throughout the night to check on the smoke house and ensuring that the fire is still going on. Adding fresh branches to keep the fire going. He isn't sure if he's doing this right but, he figures you had to start some where.

Day 22

"It's Hobxan!"

"He's with Gobore and the others!"

"Their still alive?!"

"Look at all they brought back!"

Ichigo feels his eyebrow twitch at the various comments that the approaching Goblins murmur out loud without a thought of their feelings.

"Yea! The meat was smoked! It'll keep longer that way!" Goblin Bei boasts, not at all bothered by the various comments.

Hu and Mu also add in their own boasts, "I caught the most fish out of all of us! Even more then Gobore!" Hu boasts.

"I made this cloak out of various seven color bats all by myself!" Mu boasts.

In the end, he just sighs and allows his various burdens to be taken from him. They had each been using a thick pole to carry what they couldn't carry on their backs or on their person. He made some bark boxes for the meat and in the leather bags held various raw material that he found, namely salt in that bat cave which he used to saturate the fish to absorb the moisture from the fish while also adding it to the roasted meat, adding flavor to the fresh horned rabbit meat.

He looks towards Hobgoblin Xan, there's a look in the others eye that he didn't like and made him uneasy. He trusts his intuition on the matter and something going to happen, something he'll need to do something about.

Day 28

Ichigo gets up and soundlessly, moves towards the entrance. Sure enough, like last night, Hobgoblin Xan is sneaking out of the caves. Tonight, he'll follow the other into the night, dangerous or not, he wants some answers, damn it, and he'll have then tonight. Taking only a horn from a horned rabbit with him as he didn't want to lose track of the Hobgoblin.

He counts to twenty before following after. He keeps the snapped horn in his right hand as he does his best to move through the forest, heading west for a few hours. Barely keeping Hobgoblin Xan in sight until Xan is standing in a clearing, approaching someone stationed on a large stone that stands at the center of the clearing.

"Are things arranged, Hobgoblin?" A cloaked person seemingly appears before Hobgoblin, asks in a contentment.

"All most, I just need to place the last one and..." Xan murmurs in a subdued tone.

"And another nest of *pests* is wiped from this world." The cloaked being remarks. Xan just looks away but the cloaked being uses a sword to raise Xan's head to look at him.

"Don't look so depressed, you want your community spared, don't you? Well, others must fall in their place." The cloaked one remarks. "So, why don't you go back and finish the job? Remember, it could be your community this is happening to instead."

Hobgoblin Xan seems to tremble but in the end, turns and leaves. He remains and manages to keep from crying out in shock as, after

sometime, another cloaked being appears within a foot of his hiding spot.

Soon there's three in the clearing as the one that appeared next to him, walk forward, into the clearing. The one of the rock also leaps down and lowers the hood, showing the features of a human.

This time, as they speak, he can't help but notice that something about the language seems different then from before.

"I think we should rid ourselves of that Hob, its getting close to wanting to rebel against our orders." The man sporting black hair and an golden hoop earring on their right ear says.

"As long as it thinks its nest is still alive, it'll obey. We could probably get another two nests out of it before that happens." The one who had spoken earlier says.

"We could have at least given it poison to give to the captive women." Says the third, who turns out to be a woman. "It would be a mercy for them then them dying the same way as their rapists."

"That would only arouse suspicion among the pests." The first speaker remarks. "Maybe we can do so when we don't need it any longer." He adds after a few tense seconds.

The woman doesn't say anything but marches off towards the other side of the meadow.

"Next she'll want to rescue them and welcome them back into civilized society." Remarks the first once they seem confident that the woman was out of ear shot.

He really didn't like that one. He'll have to make sure that one died painfully.

"It is a trying time working as we have." The second man states in a bland tone, making Ichigo wonder if hooped earring meant with the

man or this situation.

"Bla, we get the job done don't we? So what if some peasants suffer the same deaths as those pests? If they didn't want that fate, then they should have ended it before they got caught or bite their tongue before giving birth to litters of those pests."

With that, the man follows after their woman companion and the other man seems to watch the other walk away for a second before following suit. Neither turned to look in his direction, much to his relief.

He licks his lips and after sometime has passed, he moves around the edge, he has a good grip on the horn, although his right arm is shaking as he knew what he had to do. He didn't want to, by Kami, he didn't want their deaths to be at his hands but he has to save the community. There's only one quick way to do it as trying to find whatever was planted in the caves won't work as it'll take time to convince the others of what's what.

Finding their camp, he find all three asleep with only three horses. He focuses on the humans, it takes a while before the hoop earring falls into a deep sleep. With a soft prayer to whatever Kami is listening, he sneaks close to hooped earring. With a quick thrust, the point goes into the man's throat and the horses sound the alert.

He already nabs the dagger from the dead man's belt and slices the last man's throat, leaving him to try and stem the bleeding as he faces against the woman, who fights with a short sword and a long sword. He does his best to stay defensive as the woman coldly uses her advantage of height and reach to attack him. The look in her eyes is of steel and of resolve, he pities that he couldn't give her the fight she deserves but he has to use what he has.

As he back up, he is sure to grab the horn, seeing an opening, he ducks and rolls forward. He jabs the horn into her mid-section, thrusting it as high as he could reach. He moves to the side, slicing

her hamstring as he does so. He hurries her as she now fends him off with only one sword while the other hovers around the horn.

It takes an hour before an opening comes up. He takes it and although he is run through with the sword in his right shoulder, the dagger in his right flies into her forehead. She drops and he pulls out the sword from his shoulder. He feels something occur within him, but he ignores it for now as he searches through the pouches and sacks.

He finds a generous number of potions and without a thought, picks on of the health potions, downing it. It goes to work and he feels a hell of a lot better. He glances towards the tied up horse, he sighs. He feels so tired and something tells him, he needs to go to sleep.

With a sigh, he moves over into the woman's sleep roll and does so.

Your Level Has Reach The Designated

You Have Cleared The Special Requirement "Something" "Special Action"

You Have Cleared The Special Requirement "Something" "Special Action"

You Can "Rank Up" to "Hobgoblin-Variant"

Would You Like To "Rank Up"? *Yes* Or *No*

Would You Like To "Rank Up"? **Yes** Or *No*

Ok... whatever, I just want to sleep now.

Gobore has obtained "End and Origin"-Ruling "Divine Protection of Great God"

Gobore has obtained "Healing"-Ruling "Divine Protection of Demi God"

To Be Continued

Strawberry Goblin Part 2: Re:Monster

I don't own Bleach or Re:Monster!

Day 29

"Wha... what... you... and... I can't believe... dead..." Is what Ichigo woke to, he groans and sits up. He opens to eyes to find Hobgoblin Xan just staring at him with wonder and fear.

"Your community is gone. They were talking about killing you." He tell Hobgoblin Xan in a flat tone, only to find his voice seemed to have... changed. He looks down as he brings his hands up, his skin is now black and the sleep roll seems to be a heck of a lot smaller.

He senses Xan stiffening and he turns, looking into Xan's yellow eyes with his chocolate brown. "They figured you were getting ready to rebel, if not after the destruction of my community then one of the future ones. Given their attitude, you should be surprised, they themselves might not have destroyed your birth community but that didn't mean it was spared."

"People like that, if they rank something to be the level of an insect, then they don't see why they should keep promises made to said insect." He tells Hobgoblin Xan flatly. "What honor is there in a dealing with Monsters or keeping promises to such beings."

He gets up from the roll after Hobgoblin Xan doesn't respond, look off at some other point. Getting to his feet, he feels chilled in a spot that had been protected before by leather pants. Looking down, sure enough, the pants are ruined although he catches a glimpse of something on his chest. It appears to be a lizard in light blue tattooed on his right breast.

But the chillness to his parts keeps him from continuing staring dumbly down at the tattoo, although he glimpses his hair and it's orange, running a hand through it, he also finds it rather long, particularly in the back. He'll have to see if there's a mirror among the items to get a look at himself.

With a curse, he snatches the blanket from the sleeping roll, using it to cover himself. With that taken care of, he mentally goes through what he knows and stiffens at two skills he knows and yet, doesn't recall ever learning.

Spear of the End ? Complete Regeneration ? He questions to himself and as he review the almost month, he doesn't recall any Goblin using either.

"Hey, Hobxan, how does one learn Spear of the End ?" He turns to ask the other.

Hobgoblin Xan stiffens while staring wide eyed at him, it seems that Hobgoblin Xan's knees give out and he kneels on the ground. "You Ranked Up to a Variant, a powerful God Blessing on you but for it to be Great God of End and Origin..."

"Well, I also seemed to impressed the Demi God of Healing. I recall obtaining that Blessing as well." Hobgoblin Xan seems to be rather speechless at that.

After waiting for a few seconds for Hobgoblin Xan to recover his tongue. He begins his search for a mirror among the belongings. Oddly enough, he finds one among the man who's throat he sliced, he would have thought he'd find one among the woman's possessions. He nearly drops the mirror upon seeing his face, he look so eerily like his previous incarnation, given he was a teenager, it really didn't help matters much. His hair is the same shade of orange with his eyes... it's only the fact that he possesses black skin and pointed ears that remind him that he wasn't Human but a Hobgoblin.

As he recovers and begins looking for a suitable weapon for himself along with finding something to eat among the trail rations when he hears a cry, "I think I saw Hobxan enter this clearing!"

"Bei? Over here! He's kind of recovering but still in the waking world!" Ichigo calls out.

He looks off in that direction, it takes some minutes but soon, Bei comes charging into camp before coming to a stop. Her eyes widening at at the sight of him. "Yo, Bei. I kind of Ranked Up after killing this Humans."

"Goblin... Ore? No, Hobgoblin Ore! Wow! But, we were suppose to do it together!" Bei exclaims, he's pretty sure that the last part likely wasn't meant to be said out loud.

"Well, it was kind of something I just had to do. For the safety of the home cave." *To keep Hobgoblin Xan from continuing being their tool.* He explains. He didn't see any reason to let her in on the blackmailing the trio had been doing on Hobgoblin Xan as it really was up to him to tell the others, to explain himself.

Hu and Mu also join them, each looking rather in awe at him, likely due to him being a Hobgoblin Variant. He finds it hard to believe that just yesterday, he had been as tall as them and now, he kind of towers over them by a bit.

"Well, let's get this stuff back to the caves." He says, taking charge.

Soon, even Hobgoblin Xan aids in packing up, he likely should have expected that they also butchered the Humans, eating their fill before finishing with the task. He stifles a sigh at their action, it seems that Hobgoblin Xan also eats what he can. Thankfully, they didn't seem to pressing him to eat any of it, then again, he had eaten his fill of trail rations while they had been butchering the Humans.

It takes some time, mostly as he rigged up a sled for Hu to pull while Bei and Mu use a pole to carry some of the stuff and Hobgoblin Xan

and himself do the same between them. He can't wait to get back so he can work on creating cloths that fit his new body.

On their way back, they didn't encounter any being. Soon enough, they approach the caves and Goblins come out to first greet them then gawk at him. As they made it to the entrance, the Goblins swarm about and aid in taking the various items from them.

"Hobore killed three Humans! Can you believe it?! On his own!" Bei brags on his behalf.

"Blessing of a God is on him! A really powerful one!"

"Look at his hair! Why is it orange?"

"Is that a lizard marking on his right breast?"

"Oh! Tell us how you did it, Hobore?! Please!"

That sentiment is soon echoed among the various members of the cave. Bei sends him a puppy dog look and what remained of his resolve to retreat to his personal workshop without telling anyone what happen crumbles. *My sisters always seem to have that effect on me.* He admits with a mental sigh.

"I was near the clearing with the standing stone when some three humans arrive, I had been out looking for something to challenge myself with." Ichigo begins. "None among them seem to have noticed me hiding, one got fairly close but nope. I was safe."

"They seemed to have made camp at the other side of the clearing. As they headed in that direction, I waited. After some time, I followed in that direction, keeping to the forest edge." He knew the next part will be easier as it'll be a heck of a lot more truthful then the first bit of his story.

"Given it had been spur of the moment venture and I had thought I'd run back to the home caves at the first sign of danger. I had been

armed lightly." Ichigo explains.

"Thankfully, due to that, I didn't need much of anything outside of what I had. I waited until they were clearly asleep before killing the black haired one using the horn, right into the neck. As the horses sounded the alarm, I managed to grab one of their daggers. Within seconds, I slit the throat of the other one."

"Though this gave the third, which turned out to be a woman, the time needed to get out of her sleeping roll as well as arm herself. With a long sword and a short one, she attacks, using her reach to her advantage."

"As I was pushed back, I manages to grab the horn still sticking out of the dead one's throat. When I saw an opening, I roll in under her swing and jabbed the horn into her belly followed by cutting into her muscles of her lower leg by her knee. And so, all I needed to do was wait for her to tire. At the end, I got speared in my right shoulder while I sent the dagger flying into her forehead."

"I searched for a healing potion and downed it. With it, my wound healed and I soon grew tired. Making sure that the horses were still there, I walked over and fell asleep upon my foe's sleeping roll." He finishes. "Waking to Hobxan being amazed at the deaths of the three Humans, killed by myself."

"What happened to the horses?"

He shrugs, though it's likely that Hobgoblin Xan freed them. He didn't recall seeing them upon waking nor their bodies.

"They must escaped their restraints." Hobgoblin Xan states.

It takes a few minutes before he manages to escape being center of attention. He lets out a sigh as once within the workshop and then moves among his things within, noticing how much smaller and toy like his tools currently are. Thankfully, given his previous experience in making his tools, he should have an easier time of it.

He begins by going through the leathers he should still have about. It takes sometime but he manages to make himself another pair and then a shirt. He looks up toward the entrance, spotting Hobgoblin Xan standing there.

"You didn't..." Hobgoblin Xan murmurs, trailing off.

"It's your business, it's for you to admit to." He states simply at Hobgoblin Xan. *Plus, it'll only cause trust issues when we don't need them.*

Hobgoblin Xan comes into the workshop proper and moves to sit down, he finishes up with his new shirt. Putting it on, he moves to sit across from Hobgoblin Xan. Hobgoblin Xan looks him right in the eye and begins his tale.

"I had been meeting with a Human Cleric since I was three months old. A kindly old Human male who, at first, I thought was blind."

"By the end of my fourth month, I learnt otherwise and when I confronted him about why he was teaching me, he said that he had come to the spot to wait for his future student. That it turned out that student was to be a Monster, a Goblin, he had his misgivings about me only when I didn't alert my birth community did he come to trust that I was indeed who had been destined to meet and train."

"We were having skirmishes with a neighboring group of Kobolds and I so wanted to help my community that when I meet Victor, I mean the Human..."

"You can call him Victor, it's his name after all." He tells Hobgoblin Xan, who blinks before smiling slightly and continuing.

"Well, as I trained under Victor, I began to use what I learned to aid the injured. By the time I was a year old went I ended up joining a raiding party. It was there that I learn the opposite of what I was being taught by Victor. I learnt how to use poison to paralyze and kill. I used magic to heal my fellow Goblins."

"My efforts paid off and we finally ended the threat the Kobolds posed."

"Victor, he... he began to cover philosophy over who holds the right over who should live and who should die."

"It was confusing and I won't deny, I had a headache much of the time. The things we talked about... it only made me wonder about what was the point, of everything."

"For a time, I refused to eat meat or used my magic to heal injuries. When Victor asked why I had stopped, I exploded at him, telling him my doubts and why I thought he even began to talk about it. I mean, should any being beyond a God be responsible for taking another's life? Isn't there enough room for all races, Human or Monster?!" Hobgoblin Xan looks down at his hands which have become clutched in his lap.

He sympathizes, given the culture he's been born into, those were some hard questions to answer. Even with his previous life, he still questions his own place in the scheme of things or what purpose it serves for him to have been reincarnated here instead of joining the Soul Society like he expected upon his death.

"Right or wrong, beings will cause harm to each other. Some out of what they thought to be honor, others duty, and then there's those who do just because they like to cause pain or out of some sense that doing so will increase their power base." He remarks with a sigh and it seems to startle Hobgoblin Xan looks up at him.

"Humans aren't united as a single nation, are they? They must fight among themselves." He muses and Hobgoblin Xan nods, still kind of shocked that he clearly did know a little about philosophy or caught on quickly to how it works.

"Please continue." He requests and Hobgoblin Xan takes a moment before nodding.

"Yes, well, by the time I had lived to see spring thrice, I finally achieved Rank Up. I looked so different! I was so much taller and for a few days afterwards, I spent a lot of time going through the treasures we had collected. I was even allowed to be alone with the Human women, all eighteen of them..."

"By the time I headed out to visit Victor, he had died. He taught me how to read and write, he left a note. Telling me how proud he was, knowing that when I read it I would be a Hobgoblin and thus, I can do what I can to enact change among my community."

"Two weeks later, Humans were spotted and I approached them unarmed, wanting to speak with them. You met the three and they made a deal with me once I learnt what they had planned. I wanted them to spare my community and, well..."

"They let you think you did." Ichigo summarizes and Hobgoblin Xan nods.

"I should have demanded proof, a chance to visit before I came here."

"They would have killed you outright then. They couldn't give into your demand and if you had remain stubborn, then, well." He reassures Hobgoblin Xan.

"You seem worldly and yet, your are barely a month old." Hobgoblin Xan notes after a few seconds.

"I... In my last incarnation, I was called Kurosaki Ichigo, a Human from another world though. I ended up in a otherworldly war where a power mad asshole wanted to become a God. I killed him but I had to sacrifice my powers to do so. It had only been three months since then, maybe four by now. I don't even know how I died, only figured it out when I realized that I was a Goblin and yet, I recall my old life perfectly."

The look of amazement was evident in Xan's eyes. "Really?! And you still...'

"What they were doing made my blood boil and I while I could try to talk with the Goblins here about what you were planting around the cave, I figured the humans knew how to trigger it. I didn't know how they could and trying to get them to talk... I granted one of them a swift death, the other suffered, while the third, well, she died in battle so she wouldn't end up like those women we have. I think it's an end she preferred."

"The world I came from? Only Human existed. I use to have the ability to see the departed and then I met a girl... I ended up becoming part of a world that protected and guided the departed souls while fending off and purifying these angry ones called Hollows, those that entered into the World of the Living, they preyed upon humans and those departed spirits that lingered." He explains.

"The girl? She was what was called a Soul Reaper and if not for her, this Hollow would have killed by younger sister. I became a Substituted Soul Reaper and went on to purify the various Hollows that preyed upon my home town. In time, I got involved in the Soul Society and the brewing war between three of their traitorous ex-Captains and their army of modified Hollows." *No point in complicating things with details that don't really matter.* He decides.

"Wow, that's, well, wow." Xan states, wrapping his head around the information he shared. "No wonder you caught the Great God's attention."

He hums, guessing that by End and Origin, it was something not unlike Death and Soul or Spirit. "I haven't told anyone, it's kind of unbelievable story. Then again, you gave me the truth about yourself so I did the same."

"You should have told me earlier!" He turns to find himself getting slapped by Bei, who's clearly been there for a while, listening in on their conversation.

"And you! You, well, you shouldn't have trusted those Humans blindly!" Bei turns on Xan, much to his amusement while he rubs the spot his twin sister had slapped.

He's kind of noticing a pattern at this point and decides to apologize, "I'm sorry, but, can you blame me for not sharing that? How was I to know you'd believe me with such an insane, weird tale?"

Bei turns to him and says, "I believe in you, Ore and if you said that it was true, then, it is. Your not a liar." Then she gives it a few more seconds of thought before adding, "Well, unless you want someone to come clean with their secrets I guess."

"I'll have to remember that in the future." He promises and Bei presses her lips while studying him before giving him a nod.

"See that you do!" Bei states before walking over to some part of his workshop to begin work on a project.

"So, you and her...?" Xan asks leaning forward with a raised eyebrow.

"She's my twin!" He hisses back at Xan, giving the other a glare.

"Oh, well, really?" Xan asks and he just nods as Xan kind of bring a hand behind his head, clearly embarrassed.

"Why don't we go grab the stuff you planted for the Humans? That way, we won't have to worry about them going off if another unit of Humans come to check up on the progress of those three." He says as he gets to his feet.

"Oh, yea. Sure." Xan gets up and he's sure to grab a sack for Xan to use before following after Xan to dig up whatever things the Humans had given the other to plant about the cave.

Day 33

"So that's an Orc." Ichigo murmurs at the sight of the pig faced Monster that somehow managed to increase its stink. Once more, he is leading a hunting party consisting of Bei, Hu, and Mu due to his desire to spend some time away from the caves due to a conflicted issue within himself. He led them south for a bit and then east, towards a valley.

It took them some hours to travel to said valley and they were also keeping an eye out for caves to use for later in case they don't have time to get home before evening. They had found one, but it seems that a demon spider has built a web at the entrance. He's confident that they can deal with it later, likely with fire and spears.

He'd teach them archery if he knew the basics of it and just because he's seen Uryu fire those energy arrows doesn't automatically mean he can even begin to mimic what Uryu did with wooden bows and arrows. *And he likely did start his training with those before going around firing off those energy arrows.* He muses as he kind of wished he did know how to use one as it could come in handy about now.

He doubts he'd be able to approach the Orc at all, maybe the Monster would have allowed a Goblin in close quarters but not a Hobgoblin. Nor did he want to send any of the others to make contact. As he ponders this, the Orc seems to finally sense it wasn't alone.

Suddenly, something just stinks and the Orc is running, charging really... right in front of where they were hiding while holding up its mace. As he pinches his nose, he watches as an arrow hits the Orc. As they watch, a sword welder engages the Orc while a ranged fighter continues to fire arrows in the Orc's direction.

Elves. He realizes upon spotting the ears and how human they appear. The stink remains, even with the Orc dead.

"Well, that's what, the fourth Orc we've found in the last two weeks?" The sword fighter muses, neither seem to have noticed the group

spying upon them.

"Second Orc to be found in this valley. Must be an operation near." The archer considers thoughtfully.

"Must be southeast of here, likely at the other end of this valley." The sword fighter remarks with a grin.

Without a word more, the two follow the dirt trail that's evident near the top of the valley.

"I can't believe they just left perfectly good meat laying around!" Hu huffs after the two Elves have left their sight.

The others move forward, the stink lingers while he continues to look off in the direction the pair had gone as he moves to join the others where the Orc's body lies. He picks up the mace, noting that it's made out of metal. Which causes him to wonder if by operation, they meant mining operation.

"I wonder what Elves taste like?" Mu wonders and he sighs, not that he could blame them, he's hungry too.

The body is striped before they begin to butcher the body. He accepts a portion of an arm, noting that the Orc tastes like the animal it looks like. *Maybe I should just try experimenting to see what plant can enhance the flavor?*

"You know, maybe we should follow after? I mean, tomorrow, to see if we can kill one ourselves!" Bei muses with a slight wistful tone.

The other two echo that sentiment, then again, he wouldn't have minded getting into a fight with that sword fighter with his acquisition from the treasury, that woman's short sword. "We likely won't have to wait long, they should be sending someone out looking for this one later." He tells them. "If only to learn what killed it."

And ate it. He thought was pretty much implied as they quickly finish eating their fill and did their best to take the remainder of the body back towards that cave they came across earlier.

"Can we kill the demon spider without you, Hobore?" Hu asks politely and he nods, replying, "Sure, have fun."

He sticks near the pile of belongs along with the Orc meat as they huddle together to plan their course of action, with Bei pretty much being the leader of the trio. Sure enough, Bei started a small fire and they each picked a fresh branch, using some of the Orc's bloody cloth to wrap around one end. They set that cloth on fire and then put out the small fire. They set about enacting whatever plan they came up with.

Both Hu and Mu approach the web and set it on fire using the torches, the spider leaps from its hiding place while Bei uses the spear thrower to launch a spear at the spider. It kind of penetrates but it does cause the spider to go for Bei. The other two also use their own spear throwers to launch spears into the spider's body, both getting between the legs while Bei charges forward, waving the torch in its face.

He notes the 'hair' that the spider sports and unsurprisingly, the spider catches fire. The rest of the time is spent tag teaming the spider as well as launching spears into its body. Finally Mu tosses the torch into the cave and with both hands, charges the spider head on. The spear gets shoved into the mandibles of the spider. A killing blow as the spider.

"Might want to put out those fires before they give away our location." He advices as the three cheer at their success before scrambling to do as he suggests.

They use dirt to smother the flames, while they were doing that, he enters into the cave. Picking up the torch that Mu had tossed, he studies the walls, it seems that there's some old marks that were

made by picks likely. *Must have been a mine of some kind.* He decides as he touches the wall.

He continues on in with the torch, not that he needs it particularly as it kind of screwing with his vision but for now, he thought it could be useful as he doubts anything that favors the dark would willingly approach something carrying a light. After some minutes, he comes towards a path beginning to slant downwards while the other just goes off to the side. He follows that one to find the beginning of what appears to be evidence that miners had also lived within this cave.

With a hum, he turns around to go fetch the others. It looks like they have a nice spot to use during their time here. Though he might want to put some kind of trap before that tunnel leading down and in the hall leading to what used to be living quarters for the miners.

They spent time cleaning up the quarters as he heads out to gather a few samples of local herbs.

Day 34

Parrying the incoming mining pick, Ichigo leaps backwards and then to the right as the Orc tries to back hand him. The Orc bellows in anger as the other Monster tries to slash at him horizontally while he goes for the arm that's holding the mining pick, he gets the Orc in the wrist and the mining pick falls to the ground while Mu shoves a spear into the Orc's neck. He manages to slash the neck, it continues to try to attack him but soon collapses.

He looks around the clearing, noting that both Bei and Hu had also worked together to bring an Orc down between them. They were all panting, they had only just woken up to find the pair of Orc nosing around the cave entrance. Neither of the pair seem to think of sending one off, heading back to their camp to inform their leader of the presence of the small group of Goblins plus a Hobgoblin.

"Well, looks like bacon for breakfast." He murmurs out loud.

"That sounds good, I'll take a helping too!" Mu adds cheerfully and he sports the ghost of a smile before he clears his blade of Orc blood before sheathing it.

He begins to work on undressing the Orc, confident that if either Bei or Hu needed first aide they would have called him over to examine said injury. Mu seems to be testing the mining pick, though its a bit heavy for her in her current Rank.

Checking through the pouch, he notices those strange stones that upon touching made him think of a particular element. As he touches one now, he can't help but think of water. With a shrug, he puts it back into the pouch and adds it to the pile. Soon enough, they have their flint knives out and they were butchering the Orc.

Mu and himself pick which organs they want to consume raw before they continue with their work, being sure to carry the meat into the prepared area within the cave. They made sure that at least two of them stood outside while the other two carried in the meat. They then took turns heading off to the river that's at the bottom of the valley to clean themselves of Orc blood and extra.

Feeling refreshed from cleaning himself of such, he takes some time to enjoy his surroundings. *It's a beautiful world if you discount the whole, Monster eat Monster battle for survival going on.* He muses as he sits on a rock in a fresh pair of pants and shirt. His sword resting on his lap as he waits for Hu to finish cleaning up.

The days really add up. Ichigo reflects to himself. From his count, it's been thirty-five days since he was born and oddly, he doesn't recall meeting his father. He likely has seen his mother among the captive women that the community keeps for breeding purposes.

He can't deny that he's felt that particular urge. It's either much stronger now that he's a Hobgoblin or he was still too young to worry about it. He hadn't touch any of them, the last time he'd seen them had been before they left on this little trip. It also looked like they were about to have another generation of Goblins by the time they

returned from this trip, pretty much the reason why he wanted to leave the home cave honestly. *Is that even normal? Don't they worry about being able to support another generation soon so after already having one barely a month earlier?*

No answers were forth coming to those questions. "Ready, Hu?" He calls out, noticing that the Goblin is out of the water and in the process of getting some pants on.

"Ready!" Hu calls back and he nods, he gets off the rock and they head back to the cave.

The trip is uneventful and by the smell coming from within the cave, it seems that the two girls are doing some cooking, namely a simple soup with some edible plants and roots. Sure enough, the two were tending to their own fires. He looks up to be sure that the smoke is still escaping out of the recently cleaned smoke hole.

His attention returns to joining Hu in sitting where wooden trays plus bowls were waiting. He's crafted them in the days leading to their leaving the home cave. He spent two days preparing and packing what he thinks they'll need.

As the girls fill their own bowls and plates, he gets up, being sure to do so with his tray. Hu does the same once he's standing, they soon filled their respective plates and bowls, they sit down to eat. As they eat, they discuss their plans or rather, if their plans to explore the tunnel to day is still on.

"We're still going to explore that tunnel, right?" Bei asks him.

"Yea, we'll have to set up some traps at the entrance of the cave. We wouldn't want to get ambushed coming out of the tunnel." He replies.

"I wonder if we'll find some Spirit Stones? I mean, that's why this mine was created for, right?" Mu muses.

"Didn't any of the Orcs have any on them?" Hu wonders.

Ichigo shrugs while the others muse about what kind of Spirit Stones might have been mined around here. *According to Goblin Gran, the most common of these stones are typically of the four elements. Earth, Fire, Water, and Wind. I wouldn't mind finding a Lightning Stone, though the question becomes how to create a sword with one in it? I don't really want to go around raiding just to possess a weapon that already has one in it. I wonder if I can find stuff to pay for the making of one? Those Elves, they might be more approachable then the local Humans. If I had all the materials plus some other goods, might we come to an agreement?*

As he comes out of his thoughts, he finds that the others had gotten up for seconds and thirds. With a shrug, he takes his tray of dirty bowl and plate, adding it to last night's dirty items. They'll have to do some washing soon but, he's more interested in checking out of rest of the mine.

Seeing that he's ready, the others quickly finish their meal and go about grabbing their weapons along with empty knapsacks for any loot they may find within the tunnel. He puts on his armor before he checks his sword and is sure that his flint knife is securely on his belt while his knapsack's seams weren't going to fail on him. He also grabs some length of rope and a pouch with healing herbs and bandages.

Before leading the others out of the living quarters, Ichigo takes a look at the others. Each of them are wearing their plated shirts, pants, helmets, shin and arm guards. They each have two spears along with flint knives on their belts.

With a nod, he heads for the entrance. It takes them about forty minutes to gather and set the traps for the entrance. Secure in the knowledge that it's good to go, Ichigo leads to the tunnel that leads down, they have to disable the traps he set the night before but they manage it rather quickly. He's thankful that they don't need torches to see within the tunnel, it's in part to their racial abilities.

After sometime walking down the tunnel, it levels off for a few minutes until they come to a large room that sports a total of five tunnels, each spiking off in different directions. As he approaches a tunnel, one of the ones on his left, he jerks to look to where Mu is as she shouts, "Slime!"

He turns to watch as Bei joins Mu in fighting the Slime, which is green in color. They spear it and whack it with their respective spears, it doesn't seem to be working very well and as the Green Slime surges into the room, they back away.

With a frown, Ichigo holds up his right hand. He focuses on Spear of the End spell that he knows. A small ball of black energy appear within the slightly clawed hand and with a flick of his wrist, the spell flies towards the Green Slime and watches as the spell not only kills the Green Slime but also causes a slight crater to form where the Green Slime had been. He's rather surprised at how effective that spell was, particularly as according to Hobxan, the spell was the weakest out of the End Spells as all introductory spells were.

That isn't very reassuring. He thinks while Hu and Mu are surprised that he knew a spell while Bei seem more interested in the effects, even picking up this ball that seems to be all that remains of the Green Slime. "Let's get moving. That might attract unwanted attention." He states and motions for them to follow him down his chosen tunnel.

The tunnel he picks sports a colony of a variant of demon spiders that while tiny compared to a regular demon spider, they live communally and are bald with bone white color sporting glowing yellow skull upon the large part of its body without any horns upon the head. Being the size of a Hobgoblin's fist, they have a hell of a time killing the increasing number of demon cave spiders. He ends up using Spear of the End at least thrice before they retreat. He notes how he got splattered with some of the spider's innards.

He's slightly exhausted from using that spell in such quick succession. As they take their time, recovering, he finds himself

becoming tired, it doesn't take a genius to realize that it seems that the variant of demon spiders they just encountered seem to possess venom that induces the victim to sleep. Grinding his teeth, he turns to look at the others mostly focus on the incoming attackers, they slumped and soft snores coming from each, his eyes were having trouble focusing due to the venom.

He moves a seemingly heavy hand about the front of him collecting some of the spider bits and blood. He licks the stuff off his hand, which, kind of seems to help keep him awake. As the horde of small spider monsters approach, he does his best to consume more bits of those spiders. He even walks over to where the others are and pick spider parts from them.

As the horde of spiders approach, he is mostly recovered from the venom and engages them again, being sure to eat those he spears with his sword. After he's eaten more then a dozen in a row, maybe even three dozen, the venom of the spiders don't seem to affect him. He wonders if his acquiring immunity might have something to do with how many of the spiders he's consumed.

Not seeing much point to think about it, he mostly ignores the issue for now to focus on the spiders, even feeling up to firing a Spear of the End towards the nearest group of cave spiders approaching the sleeping companions. He isn't sure how long it takes him but the horde of spiders comes to an end and he collects the dead ones. With a look around the room, looking for any that he's missed.

Feeling rather tired and sore, he checks himself to find himself covered in bites and scratches. He attends to his wounds, cleaning them out. He considers seeing what his other spell, Complete Regeneration, can do but seeing no need to use it to heal himself, he mostly plays look out as he waits for them to wake.

He doesn't know how long they slept, as someone stirs, he doesn't really look in their direction, a bit more alert to anything that might come to investigate the latest noise.

"Ah Gods, my armor! My Helmet! My Pants!" He is slightly confused until he turns to find Bei, it had to be Bei given that the hair is blond, is nolonger a Goblin but a Hobgoblin, the usual green color variety but she does sport some markings, a rusty red in color upon her arms and forehead. He's thankful for the foresight of bringing additional cloths that were sized for Hobgoblins just encase the others Ranked Up while they were away from the home cave.

A glance at Hu and Mu reveals that they were still the same, which makes sense given how often it had just been Bei and himself gone hunting. It shouldn't take them long to also Rank Up. "I brought more armor and cloths meant for Hobgoblins for this reason."

"Eat at least two dozen of those. Hopefully, you'll pick up immunity to their venom like I did." He states, nodding towards the pile.

"Two dozen?" Bei murmurs with a slight frown.

"Four groups of six." He explains as Bei doesn't seem to know how many that was.

"Oh!" And Bei walks over, he adverts his eyes and head as she creates four piles of six out of the pile. She eats them, one after the other, as he gets up to investigate the tunnel where the spider colony claimed. He wants to make sure they got them all.

The deeper he went the webbing seems to sport cases of silk bundles. He cuts into each of the bundles to find mummified large rat monsters within in the first few. He gets into a large room where the bundles contain human remains along with what metal of their tools that remain. He finds a interesting knife, as he swings it, water bolts come flying out of the point. Experimenting shows that he can get water to appear without swinging it hard, mostly it just splashes out, which pleases him as he realizes that the knife possessed a Water Stone.

He puts it on his belt and continues. Most of what he finds in regards to metal items were simple iron and bronze along with coins made

out of gold and silver. He adds the coins to his belt pouch while adding the slightly rusty pick heads, belt knives, daggers, arrow heads, and axe heads into his knapsack. He finds raw ore at spots, piled up, likely once held in wooden barrels and crates. The webbing in this part is much older and has become sparse except at these other tunnels that lead into this mining spot.

He finds more spiders to kill as the cave variant of Demon Spider sense him within this part of their colony. After some minutes, he decides to come back with the others. He's sure they'd want their chance at killing more of these spiders as well.

As he returns, Hu and Mu have woken, Bei likely retreated back up to the living quarters to get armor that fits. It seems that Bei had passed along his suggestion to eat the small Demon Spiders. The pile looks low and the two nod in acknowledgement of his appearance.

"Found a large mine at the end of the tunnel. There's piles of ore just laying around as well as mummified Humans. Found some metal weapons," He says, swinging his knapsack from his shoulder and onto the floor. "Pick a metal knife yourselves. You'll need it. We can see what we can do about the rust later."

They eagerly pick through the knapsack, eager to own their own metal weapon. "Bei Ranked Up." Hu muses and Mu nods as they finish picking which knife they'd like.

"You two might be getting there too, you know. Before we head back, you two might be Hobhu and Hobmu instead of Gobhu and Gobmu." He remarks and they get these eager looks on their faces with a tint of hope.

"Really? You think we're that ready?" Mu asks him, her eyes sparkling.

"I don't see why you wouldn't. I mean, you both are at..." He trails off.

Mu touches her left index finger to her temple and after a second, replies, "Level eighty-nine."

Hu does the same and replies, "Level eight-nine."

Ichigo blinks and he touches an index finger to his temple, he is startled when information seemingly pops into his head. He lowers his index finger and huffs, kind of disturbed at the use of the word level. It reminds him of video games and causes him to wonder just what was the level of the three humans he had killed as it's likely the experience he got from killing the three on his own had been enough to push him to the right level to Rank Up.

"Eleven more levels for you two to go." He replies and they nod.

They can hear Bei coming, she jogging down the ramp, he smiles as Bei rejoins them. "Ok, ready to continue!" She says in a chipper tone.

With a nod, he leads them back down the tunnel, it seems that some of those cave spiders were in the possess of reclaiming the tunnel, thankfully, even if none of the others received complete immunity to the spider's venom, they had developed a resistance to it. Their moves did become sluggish and their hand eye coordination did slip, but they remained able to fight and move.

He does make use of Spear of the End , he is sure to space the spell attack out as they push their way into the mine. He's fairly tempted to just use his flint knife and one of the metal parts to start a fire to set the webs aflame but decided that would only alert the other inhabitants and something more dangers and powerful will likely investigate the cause. Ichigo doubts that the Demon Spider Variants were all that caused the mine to be abandoned, plus, they didn't know how big the mine is or what else could be calling these tunnels home beyond the Green Slime and the colony of Demon Spiders.

"Let's head back up. We can continue exploring tomorrow." He says to the group after they filled their own knapsacks with ore.

He lets the others take point, bringing up the rear of the group encase the spiders or something else try to attack them from the rear. *Going to have Bei weld an Orc mining pick tomorrow as she's big enough to hold it in one hand. Might have to see about carving some handles for some of the axe heads we recovered from those web bundles.*

We need to get them something for close combat beyond a simple metal knife. He muses as they safely make it to the living quarters, which seems to take hours given what each goblin is carrying in their packs. Once he's put down his heavy knapsack and done some stretches, Ichigo heads back to the tunnel to check the traps at the entrance.

To Be Continued

Aliens, Really? Really!: Animorphs

I don't own Animorphs and High School DxD!

By the Satans? Terry's mind comes to a stop as a blue eggish shaped space ship comes to land down upon the abandoned construction site. He's been trailing behind a group of human pre-teens, well, he assumes they were, the blond boy comes across as the runt of the group.

As the Devil tries to wrap his mind about the fact that something is actually happening in his territory, but it looks like he's already got to modify some memories. *Do I have to report to the Leviathan?* Terry wonders as he listens and watches as a blue being sporting four eyes, no mouth, and a long tail tipped with a fairly decent looking blade.

"Wait a minute, just hold your horses!" Terry exclaims, forming a T with his hands, one of the boys, Jake, pauses in walking into the space ship. "What is your military rank? How can you be sure you are the last of your ... race on this planet?" The member of House Oriax asks, moving closer, sure, he's ten years old but his **Mother** spent eight years ensuring he's educated well beyond his peers.

The dark green haired Devil becomes the focus of the whole group's gaze, most seemly forgotten he was there it seems by their expression. "That's what your worried about?! Really?" The darker skinned boy, M-something, exclaims. "That's your reaction to **All** of *This* ?!"

"I'm a Devil, more importantly, I'm the Devil in charge of this area." Terry states, it's not like it matters as they won't be remembering this at all. "Terrance of House Oriax, cousin to the current Great Marquis of the Oriax House." *More like second cousin.* He mentally adds.

"Yea, good one. And I'm secretly a nymph." Comes the snarky reply, it's clear none of them believe that and Terry sighs, including the blue furred alien.

Terry looks around before moving his right hand in a clear pattern, leaving sickly green glyphs in the air as he draws a Magic Circle in the air to secure the area of the construction site. He ignores the soft gasping and the suddenly intense looks as he finishes the circling. He takes a moment to study it before activating it by placing his hand at the center. The glyphs flash and vanish as magic pulses, creating a warded sphere that won't allow either intruders into or those within out of this place without his permission.

So much for a few years of vacation away from responsibilities to my race. He thinks sourly as he does his best to keep a professional look to his features. "Welcome to the Buffy level world layer." Terry remarks dryly after a minute of disbelief silence.

That seems to jolt the others out of their currently stump. "I'm a male, seriously, I really am." M-something states and he just nods.

"Yea, I know. You don't have the muscle to be a nymph." Terry states, his gray eyes glinting with some humor. It's a tidbit of information that likely went over their heads and he's fine with that.

"Now then, might we begin our beginning of diplomatic negotiations? Assuming that you have such power to do so on behalf of your race upon this world, of course." He says as he brings his arms to his sides as he turns his gaze to the bleeding out alien.

"Can you at least heal him?" One of the girls asks and he sighs while it looks like the blond boy seems to be in agreement with that sentiment.

"I don't know his biology, I don't know how his kind respond to magic, or I would have done so upon securing this area." Terry admits rather blankly. "At the moment, he's the only source of information about

his race, why they are here, and about the worlds beyond our galaxy. Trust me, if I could do anything for him, I would."

:Would you allow me to Acquire your DNA?: The alien asks and Terry frowns as he considers that. Doing his best to ignore the various looks he's getting from the pre-teens.

"I don't think that's outside of the realm of possibility. The question is more how would you go about doing that?" He asks after thinking it over, after all, blood of a Devil can be used for many things.

:I just need to touch you. You will feel relax for a minute or two but none the worst for wear.: Is the alien's reply and he lets out a sigh.

"I doubt that will be harmful to either of us." Terry admits and walks over in a careful manner, after all, he's kind of curious to see what will happen and why they needed his DNA.

Once he's near, he offers his left hand, doing his best to not stare at the tail sporting a sharp looking blade but into the alien's face. He feels a number of fingers touching his forearm, far more fingers then any being that he knows of owning. A relaxing feeling does wash over him but that's all. The feeling passes and he blinks his eyes rapidly before taking a few steps away.

"Ok, so, now what?" The blond boy wonders while Terry studies the alien, his eyes going towards the wound and back to the face. Noting that the wound hasn't healed.

:Just watch and don't freak out. It doesn't hurt, no matter how painful it looks.: The alien reassures the group, which just causes Terry to rise a skeptical eyebrow at that.

The alien closes both sets of eyes and then, slowly at first but faster, part of the alien begin to move, many shrinking while others just altering their shape. The face of the alien begins to sport a slit that after a few moments, becomes a mouth while the blue fur of the face retreats, leaving behind pale white skin, a shade lighter then Terry's

own. The nose changes and begins to grown out as the lower part of the alien's skull seems to become a lower jaw. It's not long before the face resembles that of a human, though the hair upon the head that remains is still that alien's shade of blue fur.

Terry sighs as the two girls blush and look away from the naked man that is laying where the alien had been. Blue is most definitely his natural hair color from what Terry can see and as he looks the man over, notices that yip, the wound is nowhere to be found. The body is clearly athletic in build, swimmer or runner, he can't really say as he's no really into sports of any kind to really tell. Again, the man is a shade paler then Terry himself and he can't seem to see any sighs of devil wings.

As the man opens his eyes, they sport the same color from before, maybe a bit more in human range of color shade but still the same. The blond boy gets up and help the man get to their feet and once upon his feet, the alien gets this look of surprise before examining himself, clearly stunned by something. "Dude, here!" M-something says, taking off his sweater and tossing it to the blond boy, who looks puzzled for a second before handing it off to the now human alien.

"This is... how? I only... What?" The alien wonders out loud in English, there's a few slurs with the s sound but passable.

"Well, good news, you're not a Devil. Unless you feel something on your back?" Terry inquires and he feels the others look at him, pointy in the chest area. "We have wings, we just don't deploy them all the time."

"I don't look, look like you." The alien says, drawing out the o sound in look and giving the last look a hard k sound. The offered sweater soon found a place tied about the alien's waist.

"Well, you can't ID Devils through our blood. We're magic race after all. We don't even suffer from inbreeding like humans or non-magic inherit species." Terry explains and it's clear someone's eyes light up at that detail while the others just seem to realize that yes, he is

talking about magic as if it were a thing, a real and influencing force in this world.

Straightening, he feels something take a rather big crack at the ward he placed in this area, his eyes moving towards the source. It's an odd feeling as clearly they weren't using magic to try and force their way through it, so he knows it'll hold but it's just, odd that he even **felt** them *try* . "Ok, what was with the, well, you know, one minute you were a blue centaur and the next, a man."

"It's called Morphing. I was directing Jake into getting the device from my ship so I can gift you all with it before dying to give you all a chance to escape." The alien explains and Terry's attention returns to the current man, focusing on the free information that the alien is handing out. "Though it seems that there is another option. As you can see, upon morphing, any wounds, injuries really, can be healed by doing so. Typically, you become a genetic clone of the DNA donor."

That explains his surprise then. And if that's the case then what could happen if he were to Acquire an Angle or Fallen? Terry muses but does his level best to keep his attention on the here and now. He'll have plenty of time to think on such things later.

"You can only stay in a Morph for two Earth hours or you would become what we call a *Nothlit* , never being able to return to your birth form." The alien tells them and Terry can't help but get a thoughtful look on his face while the alien continues on explaining about Morphing. "If you can Acquire more DNA of a certain species before assuming that shape, you can combine the samples to create a unique morph of that species. Which is why I am surprised to already have a unique human morph from just Acquiring Terrance's DNA."

"Thank you." The alien says in a very sincere tone upon looking at Terry. Terry just nods his head and the alien then gets a serious look upon his face, he just sighs and does his best to stand comfortablity as he's more then likely going to be here for a while and it's

beginning to look like he's not going to be modifying these humans' memories about tonight.

Call it a feeling but Terry is fairly certain that the alien will fight him on that subject and, at this point, Terry knew he'd be called a fool to not use that once they finally get around to making a bargain with this alien. Terry does his best to listen, ignoring the various shutters he senses from the ward. He's confident that his ward will hold against whatever energies are trying to force their way through. After all, if it's not magic then its nothing for him to worry about.

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Location: Underworld

As they get off the train, Terry leads currently human morphed War-Prince Elfangor-Sirinial-Shamtul, shorten to War-Prince or Prince Elfangor as his full name is a mouthful, even for a Devil like him, towards a clear space set aside for Devil to use for Teleport Circles. They had a meeting at 6 pm with the Leviathan of the four Satan concerning not just the War-Prince's presence in his Territory but also future contact between Devils and Andalites plus the whole Yeerks trying to enslave humans and have already deported a number of them beyond Earth. Devils will be coming into conflict with Yeerks sooner or later when it comes to collecting powerful humans, it just so happens that the Yeerks seem to be sticking to one location in the wide world that is Earth, so they have been flying under the radar for the most part.

Too be fair, the Sharing, the title alone seems to be something an Angel would coin. They've been pretty squeaky clean and doing their best to come across as a good organization in order to lure charitable people into their ranks to help promote the best values human tend to preach about. *I thought they had ties to one of the local churches.* Terry muses as he takes the both of them to the local market, it's 10 am and he did promise to play guide for the War-Prince.

It's been four months since their meeting and beyond doing his best to keep the resistance group coined Animorphs doing only spying mission with attempts at saboteur of what they can, he hadn't been very successful in his efforts but as they did assault the local pool without any warning to him so of course most of the escape Hosts were re-captured. They almost lost Tobias, the boy almost suffered the fate of getting stuck in the morph of a Red-Tailed Hawk, surprisingly enough, the War-Prince was very much on his side of that argument about wasting his life and abilities just because he had a crappy home life.

Terry himself would the very next day, begin to fake the needed documents, purchase a house, create a bank account plus fanatical history, and a job in his family's company branch he's head of, just so the War-Prince could officially adopt the pre-teen as his son. Allen Samuel Tenant is the name the War-Prince now goes by in human circles, emigrant from New Zealand and Head Developer of Project Era, it was just a made up project he created in his company. It seems the War-Prince actually does plan to make something, what he doesn't really know or care as the company was just a shell company for the Oriax House to laundry money from criminal activities that they have contract with. It's a cover that Allen seems to be happy with, it also seems to give the alien War-Prince a much needed distraction.

It wasn't just from grief of his comrades dying but he wasn't going to pry. Given time, Terry pretty sure that he'll find out what secrets the War-Prince has, not that it helps as he is curious about War-Prince Elfangor as a person and his surprising familiarity with human culture. Given that Andalites don't have mouths and seem to be strictly projectile Telepathic race, he can't help but think the fact he has a mouth and has to communicate verbally should have more of an impact. Then again, he's, and the Animorphs, not even sure how the race even feeds without a mouth in the first place.

He knows that the War-Prince often wakes up early, usually an hour before dawn, and uses a Crow Morph to fly out to the edge of the

limits to just run before returning back to the house viva the same morph, he's made sure that 'Allen's' day starts later in the morning just to give the alien as much time he needs for this ritual running. The alien also does so again after 6 pm, although it's not uncommon for the War-Prince to miss the evening run due to helping Tobias with school work or just spending time with the pre-teen. Terry can't help but wonder about all that running, it couldn't just to stay fit, right?

As Terry finally collections his thoughts for a few minutes, he allows the War-Prince to soak in their current location after making sure they were clear of the Teleportation Circle. "Welcome to Lilith's most popular shopping district. Lilith is the current Capital City of the Four Satans' Territory!" The now eleven year old Devil chimes as the War-Prince looks ready to do some exploring, his birthday was a month ago.

Taking the lead, he begins to walk towards the walk ways. "Before the current Satans came to power, Lucifaad had been the Capital of the Satans." He cheerfully explains, a few of the fellow walkers spare the pair of them any real looks, likely assuming that the War-Prince is part of his Peerage.

Not that Terry has received a set of Evil Pieces or even has one inside of himself. His **Mother** was very clear about her stance concerning those items and none really fought her on it. Not that he wanted something like it inside of him, but it grinds on him all the same that he wasn't even offered the chance to decline.

Terry keeps studying the War-Prince out of the corner of his eye, noting the way that the alien soldier's gaze keeps going up to the sky, likely due to surprise of the fact that it looks similar to the surface's own. "The current Satans have done much to match the sky with that of the surface, even going so far as to create an artificial moon and to darken the sky at night." He explains.

"Why go to all that trouble of creating something so big? Or altering this place's natural appearance?" Asks the current tourist.

"To help the Reincarnated Devils settle into their new life here in the Underworld." Terry explains. "And yes, humans do become Devils, just not in the style you've heard or read about."

Taking a moment to make sure that the War-Prince's focus is upon him, Terry explains how that they add to the Devil population. "You see, when our private civil war ended, our numbers weren't great. You look at us and think we're no different from humans, right? Well, not wrong, we are capable shape-shifters, some better then others in that particular field. We may live longer lives but it's unlikely any married couple can expect to have more then one kid every few centuries." Terry frowns as he considers something. "Needless to say we created something to transform other species into Devils. Maybe by doing so, our fertility rate might see a rise. Maybe not." He says before deciding on sharing something that might give the War-Prince food for thought for the future.

"Take for example the current Lucifer, Satan Sirzech. He was born before the civil war, which happened some centuries ago. He was born to House Gremony, the sole heir of the family's house." Terry explains. "After the Civil War, he married and upon ascending to his current rank, he left the House behind, leaving them without an heir. It's only now that there are rumors going around that only recently, he's parents have finally birthed a new heir, giving him, a fully grown Devil and married with his own wife, that he now has a younger sibling." He pauses, letting that sink in before saying, "Though truthfully, I think it's more his parents are trying more frequently to have another then now then there actually being a sibling at this point, but, well, if there really was one... They'd be keeping it hush hush for the usual reasons."

"I'm sure you've figured out that if there's Devils then what other mythical beings could exist, right? Like Unicorns? Maybe even Angels of a certain book, right?" Terry slows and turns his head to look over his left shoulder.

The War-Prince gives a slight nod and Terry can't help but smirk as he says, "All those myths have some truth to them. Yea, Angels

exist, and yea, some of them Fell from Heaven viva Sinful Vices, most notably, Wrath." With a snort, he continues, "I know a few Angels have skimmed close to my territory in the past, kind of odd but I dismissed it. They never lingered for more then a day or two."

And now I have a good idea of why they were there in the first place. The green haired Devil mentally muses sourly. It was one of the reason why the territory became available as the previous holder just didn't want to deal with that kind of fallout of dealing another Faction, particularly the Church investigation that has likely been launched due to the strange issue. Sloth was the Sin one Ulik Dantlion, Great-grand uncle of the current Great Duke of House Dantlion followed and abides to.

"Controllers praying to God of Heaven." The War-Prince murmurs, likely not noticing how a few of the surrounding Devils, including Terry himself flinches slightly that the mention of that god. "Couldn't they have noticed the Yeerk?" The alien asks, his attention once more focused upon Terry.

Terry looks away and begins to walk again as he thinks of a way to answer that, it's not like he's an expert on what magic Angels have access too. "They likely didn't see the point in using magic to examine the person in question." He muses in a thoughtful tone. "It was clear they weren't hurt nor was anything overly wrong with their respective lives that could match whatever urgent prayers they were getting. So, they left, not seeing any point in using magic when it could be depression."

"Magic isn't the solution to ever problem we run into and we ourselves have a limited, healthy pool of magic to draw from. Its why I can't set up a ward about the territory to mark all the Controllers, let alone keep people from getting to and from the pool." *Or cause the magical death of every Yeerk topside let alone in the pool. If it were just placing the glyphs into the dirt or common stone, then sure, in about a year, but I would need special materials, prepare the various sites, etc... Yea, not happening.* Terry privately admits inside of his own head. *If I was, I would be able to rival one of the Dragon Kings.*

"We may need to start looking for a space." The War-Prince states, jolting him from his mental muses. He nods stiffly and picks up the pace.

Terry finds a place renting private rooms by the hour that seems to be an illusion space. He picks one that has the room in a tropical location, not really paying any mind to his selection. Once secure within the room and making sure they were under a large tree, the War-Prince de-morphs, the process is rather quick and just as painful to watch as any of the previous times he's seen this happen. *How can that **not** be painful ?*

They spent the rest of the hour just going about the room, checking to see how real the plants and catching one of the animals to see if the War-Prince could Acquire DNA from them. The answer was, nope, they were as illusionary as the rest of the room. A few spot clearly were glitches and sometimes they encountered plants with the wrong color or bad shading. Terry wonders what the point of this brand of magic slash tech it was suppose to do but left off, he didn't need know, really. It was clearly still getting worked on and had years to go before its potential will be realized.

The room served to give the War-Prince some time in his true body without anyone the wiser. He did cast a privacy ward but nothing overly special, just one to obscure their looks and spoken conversation. Checking his watch, Terry notices its pass lunch and after some inquiries, heads for an Italian dinner for them to have a meal.

Once they were at a table, they talked about basic things like money, what's grown here, what's imported, what kind of history the Devils have with Angels and the Fallen, and him confirming or correcting what mythical beings and creatures exist. The War-Prince did sample many dishes, drinks, and desserts, heading to the rest room to de-morph as necessary as they wheedle away the afternoon at the dinner. Terry pays the bill with only a slighted eyebrow at the total, being sure to leave an average tip for the waiter.

They have an hour and a half to wander about before their meeting. Terry does his best to recall what places of note were nearest to the building they were headed for or if they could get a bit of a tour of the building. He does feel his nerves begin to get the better of him, he's just eleven for Hell's Sake! It's just going to be the War-Prince, the Leviathan, and himself. Alone. In a room. Together.

His first time meeting with a Satan and he's bringing her news of an alien invasion plus a news of life beyond their corner of the universe. It's something he's done his best to ignore but, well, as the meeting draws closer, Terry just wishes the meeting gets postponed or maybe canceled as his mind chews on the various parts of the events over the course of these pass months. Like involving humans, humans who he's not allowed to enter into any kind of contract with them viva his own with the War-Prince. Humans with knowledge of the Supernatural World, or, as he had accidentally coined it, the Buffy layer of the world.

Yea, Marco just loves making remarks related to that show. And yea, he did get nicknamed the Angel of the group, for some bizarre reason. For one, he's not a Vampire and for another, why to Heaven's Gates would he be a haunted corpse? He's a living being, thank you very much plus he doesn't wear leather in any color or given any of them a silver cross necklace. Not that the cross would have burnt him any...

Terry blinks as he finds himself staring up at the building where the meeting is to be held. "How much time until the meeting?" He finds himself asking the War-Prince.

"Fifteen minutes." Is the answer to that question and Terry can't help but wonder why he just didn't tell his House about this alien situation?

Then the thought of his **Mother** getting involved and Terry feels something settle upon him, giving him the needed push to head inside and to just, to just be numb. From everything he recalls about the Four Satans, he's more then willing to put his faith in them then

in any agenda his **Mother** would ever have. Terry would rather put his fate in their hands then his cousin's. After all, his cousin and other blood relatives were the ones to leave him to his **Mother** and her idea of his upbringing and education.

Once Terry speaks with the Devil at the desk, they sign in and he's given directions on which Teleportation Circle to aim, he heads does so, being sure to be touching the War-Prince on the cloth about the right wrist. They speak with Satan Serafall's secretary, he does his best to ignore the expression on the other Devil's face upon their realization that he's Terrance Oriax, not the War-Prince. He mostly just kept his mind blank, doing his best to stay comfortably numb as the War-Prince inquires and receives directions to the nearest rest room.

Five minutes pass before the War-Prince returns and as 6 pm arrives and passes, they are still waiting. As 7 pm approaches, the doors of the office opens and the secretary enters the office, the doors closing behind them. Ten minutes later, the Devil exits out, doing their best to look professional while doing their best to snubbly inform that they were allowed in and that they mustn't be long. As Satan Serafall's time was very valuable, its clear they thought they were wasting that valuable time.

Terry gets to his feet and with the War-Prince, merely walks pass, not really acknowledging the Devil. They weren't important right now, nope, and he's certain that once everything was said and done, someone might be looking for a new job. After all, this appointment was made four months ago, there wasn't any reason to keep them waiting for the past hour beyond trying to do some kind of power play or maybe trying to get them dismissed simply due to his age.

The door closes and Terry feels his emotional numbness fade as he finds himself coming to a stop at the sight of one Satan Serafall Leviathan. Black hair done up in a pony tail with blue eyes, she's currently wearing navy blue business suit. She seems to be fairly bored, if Terry could judge the expression.

"I know why those Angels were showing up." Terry blurts out after a few moments of silence, pretty much the only thing that really comes to mind. He winces at the lack of polite chit chat or, you know, manners but he just couldn't think of anything.

"Oh?" Satan Serafall draws out with a slight rise of her right eyebrow. Terry swallows, his mouth feeling rather dry as he nods.

"Well, ah, may I introduce War-Prince Elfangor-Sirinial-Shamtul of the Andalite Military. He can better explain the situation." Terry admits, yes, he feels like dirt but to be honest, he just can't help it. Plus, the alien should have more experience at this kind of thing, right?

"Greetings Serafall Leviathan. I am War-Prince Elfangor and I bare ill tidings for Earth as a whole." The War-Prince says, smoothly stepping closer to the desk. Once in the middle of the room, the War-Prince proceeds to de-morph and it's clear that the Leviathan's gaze sharpens while focusing solely upon the alien as the cloths that the War-Prince is wearing seemingly melts away as soft pops of bone and muscle realigning sound out.

:I am an Andalite and what I have demonstrated is technology that my race have developed that allows us to pass among other species unnoticed.: The War-Prince explains and the alien continues, *:Land Holder Terrance Oriax of House Oriax has explain that there isn't much he can do without informing either his House or the Satan of Foreign Affairs.:* Pause. *:I am to understand that you have the power to create more... firmer ties between our people?:*

The Levianthan glances at Terry before saying, "Yes, I have the full backing of my fellow Satans to make official stances on behalf of the Devil Faction." Pause. "Are you certain you have the backing of your military?"

:I am likely most highest ranking surviving officer of our forces in this part of space.: The War-Prince state simply and Terry just stands

back, very much aware that for now, he's just a piece of furniture at this point.

Serafall watches as the pair leave her office. She's rather thankful that the young Oriax Devil brought this matter to her personally and not to his House's attention. This way, they, the Satans, have time to think of how to break this bit of news to the seventy-two Pillars, allies, and other Factions.

A glance at the clock shows that it's been six hours since they started. She had locked the door, keeping her current secretary from eavesdropping on this meeting. *The beginning of many.* Serafall muses to herself as she leans back in her chair.

Aliens. They have an actual alien invasion happening in the US of A. One that's been on going for a few years already. She'll have to check to see who held that Territory before and subtly question them to see if they had any inking of this beyond the odd activity of Heaven's Angels.

Still, they have an infestation of Yeerks, a race of bug like aliens that infect a Host for a max of three days before needing to leave the Host to feed in a pool. *They have alien Hosts here as well.* Serafall sighs as she rubs the bridge of her nose.

I need a hobby, something to help relieve this stress. Serafall muses as she pulls her hand away and returns the chair back to its usual position. She needs to arrange a meeting with the others and break the news to them.

Still, it does make her wonder the effects of a Devil with this Morphing ability and they already have someone they can have as a lab rat. *Oh well, first things first.*

The End... Maybe?

Magic plus Morphing Equals Monster!: Ani

I don't own Animorphs and High School DxD!

A chill going down his spine wakes Terry from his day nap. Rolling off of his bed, he gets up, conjuring a plain white long sleeve shirt to cover his bare upper body as he quickly walks to his front door. He reaches the door as the bell rings.

Opening the door, the green haired Devil can't help but freeze at who's at the door. It's been two weeks since that meeting with Satan Serafall Leviathan and there hasn't been any new orders concerning his conduct or inquiries about his progress in learning to make use of the Morphing ability that he now possesses. "Satan Beelzebub, please, come in."

He moves to allow the older, more powerful Devil into his residence. Terry hadn't thought he'd have a face to face meeting with another Satan so soon. *I would have thought Asmodeus would be the one to contact me before Beelzebub.*

The elder Devil enters, a seemingly bored expression upon his face. Ajuka Beelzebub's green hair is a fair lighter shade of green then Terry's own. Almost gray blue eyes already moving from studying Terry to the decor of his residence as he closes the door and locks it. His mind still trying to catch up to the fact that there's a Satan right in front of him, who came to visit him instead of ordering him to visit them.

The Satan is already moving deeper into the house, Terry is slow to follow behind. "Office?" The Satan inquires.

"First landing of the basement, sir." Terry manages to state in a bland and, hopefully, polite tone. When he renovated the residence from

the previous owner, he made sure to have his office space in the basement instead of on the first or second floor.

They move towards the stairs as Terry continues to tries to remember the manners his **Mother** made sure to teach him. The Beelzebub moves to give him room before the door in a polite gesture to unlock the protections he set up within and about his office. Within seconds, they both enter into his office and its here that Beelzebub acts, Circles flash into existence and fuse throughout the space, securing it fair better then Terry likely could in the same amount of time.

A slight smile graces Beelzebub's face with a slight tilt of his head. Terry moves to take the seat behind the desk, an irony given that he's not the one in control of this meeting. As he settles down in the fairly comfortable chair, Beelzebub simply conjures a chair to sit upon. A throne like one that reminds him of the kind he's seen in the few RPG games he's played, mostly the table top kind as they have some very beautiful images within their pages.

"How may I aid you, Satan Ajuka?" The eleven year old Devil asks with his arms upon his desk. The time is twelve forty pm according to his computer screen that's facing him.

"Land Holder Terrance Oriax, how has your study of this Morphing technology coming along?" The elder Devil inquires.

"I have found it to be fairly thrilling, although I have had trouble keeping my magical nature from mutating the Morph." Terry takes his time to recall the trouble he's had keeping his magic from flaring up during the change into a Morph. "I Acquired a male Crow as my first Morph." *Oh boy, wasn't that fun? Three wings, four sets of eyes, and glowing green feathers...* "My first time, well, I recorded the whole event. The mutations to the Morph caused by my magic was very memorable, each time I tried, each result of my Magic were fairly unique with the most common mutation being green feathers."

Interest clearly graces Beelzebub's being and he continues, "It took seventeen tries of reining in my magic to finally take the form of a common crow. It wasn't an exact clone of the donor of the DNA, much like what happened with War-Prince Elfangor using the DNA Acquired from myself."

"My second selection for a Morph was a male African lion from the local zoo." Terry explains after a few seconds of silence. "Same problem came up only it took me only four tries before I assumed the form of a mundane lion and yet again, I didn't turn into a clone of said lion." *Yip, a lion that's eleven foot long, flaming green mane, eyes, and tail tip with sleek black fur, midnight blue fangs and claws.* "Oddly enough, the mutation was very stable and came up the same each time. I came up with a theory about why. Which lead me to Acquire a female ferret and a mare next, I had formed a few theories at this point that I wanted to confirm."

"Oh?" Pipes in Beelzebub and Terry nods, continuing on with a slight reddening of his cheeks as he is kind of embarrassed about the gender of the two he mentioned.

"Yes, it's impossible for a Devil to Morph into the opposite gender. I tried but nope, both times, male along with the fact that the smaller the Morph, the more unstable the magical mutations." *Acid dropping from saber like fangs, snow white sporting neon green, flashing pattern...* "Three tries to turn into a mundane stallion and seven tries for the ferret." *Leather wings covered in dark green fur, three hooves upon each foot, jaded ebony horn upon the brow, glowing white eyes...*

"I take it the stable mutation forms are still accessible by your self?" The current Chief Advisor for the Technology Department and Creator of the Evil Pieces asks.

"Yes." Terry says simply. "I can transfer the videos of each attempt until I succeed onto a CD if you would like to view them at your leisure."

"Only four... Morphs or have you Acquired some more since the last two?" The Satan asks and he frowns as he tries to think of how to answer that.

"As of yesterday, I did a trip to a relative's Minotaur ranch and managed to Acquire a young bull." Terry admits. "I haven't attempted to Morph into one, I didn't feel overly pressed to make an attempt. I also wished to have at least the War-Prince Elfangor present to record the result." *Not sure if my magic will mutate the Minotaur or if I end up simply in the form of a mundane bull.*

"I see." Beelzebub hums, his right hand moves under his chin as the elder Devil's eyes seem to be focus inwards. Terry watches his visitor, doing his best to keep his face blank while trying to keep his body relax. Though he doubts he succeeds very well to the Satan's likely experienced eyes in that regards, then again, the Creator of the Evil Pieces system seems to be lost in his own head, more then likely secure in the fact that he, Terry, didn't pose any kind of threat to their person.

As silence settles in the office, Terry resides himself to whatever plan the Devil has for him, for there's something the Beelzebub wants of him and he could only guess it has something to do with a test concerning Morphing. Why else would the Satan remain content to plot and plan over the previous report? *So, a demonstration, but here? No, I doubt it. Most likely his lab. Question will be if we'll be alone or with company.*

Terry glances down at his appointment book, most of today and tonight was mostly meant to be spent going over scripts from a high-school contest along with checking online for any new events the Sharing are setting up for next month. There's no point trying to blackmail the more public leaders of the Sharing, all that will do would be to bring the organization to the spotlight and increase their recruitment drive simply due to that same attention. Launching investigations would only cause them to gather new Controllers with higher access to human society.

"Well then, let us be off then, shall we?" Terry jerks his head, his focus is once more on his visitor. Beelzebub standing once more in his office, the conjured chair vanishing.

"Ah, oh, yes, of course." Terry stammers, pushing some magic into his own conjured shirt as he gets up from his chair. He then conjures some sandals for his bare feet just as Satan Ajuka Beelzebub begins to create a Teleportation Circle to the Underworld, likely directly to his lab.

Closing his eyes, he feels the magic take hold and within seconds, Terry opens his eyes to find himself in a lab along with the other three Satans lounging about and his mind just blanks along with his emotions. The three pretty much ignore him, casually greeting their fellow Satan. The red haired Devil is Sirzechs Lucifer, the one with no hair is Falbium Asmodeus, and of course, the lone woman is Serafall Leviathan.

It's not long before he kind of feels his emotions surging under the enforced numbness along with random sentiments. Terry finds his throat feeling rather tight and his tongue to be lead weight within his mouth. The muscles of his shoulders are already aching from keeping his wings from flaring from his back. The urge to flee, flee fast and far trying to crack the icy layer of numbness.

Then he hears a howl from another room, one that likely belongs to something large and most likely canine in nature. Terry turns his head towards the wall that looks like it can move to reveal the other room. *A hell hound?* He muses dully.

Terry finally moves from the spot, moving towards one of the tables while the Satans seem to be still talking among themselves. Looking about, it takes him a few seconds to guess where he's to stand to demonstrate his Morphing ability. *Wonder which Morph they'd want to see first?* He wonders as he does his best to not look in their location.

After about twenty minutes, Terry feels someone's eyes on him. His mouth goes dry as Beelzebub calls to him, "Please move to the circle, Terrance." He's not sure if he should be happy that Beelzebub remembers his first name or not.

Nodding stiffly, the youngest Devil in the room moves to the yellow circle, once in the center he turns to face Satan Ajuka. A number of machines come online, a few of the screens that he can see show himself at different angles. He does his best to keep his breathing as even as possible now that he has all of their attention focus upon him.

"Now then, please Morph either of your smaller animals." His fellow green haired Devil tells him and Terry decides on the crow. It's more familiar to him then the ferret, after all, it's the form that allows him to fly about, stretching his wings as it were.

Keeping his magic firmly under his control, Terry focuses on growing smaller and on growing feathers. Soft pops come from him as his bones alter while his skull slowly elongates while feathers grow. His vision alters and it takes a few seconds to stabilize. The changes that were physically finish and the final step has the instincts of a crow bubbles up. Familiarity with the crow's instincts allows him to keep his grip on the 'controls'.

"Good, good! Stretch your wings a little, please." Terry merely caws in acknowledgement, deciding not to use thought speak just yet. Flaring his wings, Terry crouches and leaps into the air, he begins to flap his wings.

After a few seconds, he climbs into the air and begins to circle about within the circle. Flying helps him calm most of his emotions while he feels the crow's interest in a number of shiny metal wires, chips, and the blinking lights. Terry allows him to cushion himself within the instincts for a few seconds, he hears a conversation but he doesn't listen to it, more interested in keeping the crow within from acting on its urges.

"Now then, please land but before you de-Morph, try casting a spell." It takes a few seconds for Terry to realize that was directed at him and without thinking, replies, sending to everyone in the room, *:Yes sir.:*

"What was that?" A startled voice asks and a bemused voice replies, "Though speak, it's the native way the Andalites talk. It's not telepathy, just thought broadcasting."

Terry moves into a landing, going for a hovering touch down. Once his talons click, it takes him a bit to dig deep within him, gently moving pass the crow's instincts to touch upon his very much restrained magic. Before touching, he tries to decide what spell to use before just deciding on a simple light spell. Light flares about him, startling his crow's instincts but he keeps the crow from reacting as he does his best to keep the light stable, waiting for Beelzebub to tell him to stop.

"Ok, thank you." Terry lets go of his magic and the light fades. He hadn't thought to see if he could use magic while in a Morph, he had been too busy trying to keep his magic under control when he Morphs into mundane beasts.

Stretching his wings a bit, Terry begins to de-Morph, the first part of the Morph to go was the last part to happen, the crow's instincts retreat from his mind and he didn't keep his magic in check as it helps speed his return to his natural form. Then he finds himself standing in the circle without his shirt or footwear, he quickly conjures a white shirt and sandals as soon as he notices this. His face heating up slightly over the fact he is under dressed.

"Well done, now then, please morph into either of your larger Morphs, don't rein in your magic please." Beelzebub states and he nods in acknowledgement.

Terry considers which of the two to use before taking in the size of the circle into account. *Stallion it is.* He decides and unlike with Morphing into the crow, he just focuses on the want to become a

horse and with very little effort, his body is already shifting as his wings from his back erupt from his back. By the time he falls forward, his hands sport three toes tipped with hooves and covered in dark green coat. The stallion's instincts surface just as his horn finishes growing and his body finishes growing, twenty hands in height.

"Impressive, most impressive." Terry hears the Leviathan say in approval, he flickers an ear towards that direction. "Indeed." It takes him a second to realize it was the Lucifer who spoke, he shifts his right wing a bit while he moves his head, looking towards Beelzebub while he feels the stallion within trying to take actions concerning the Satans, like chasing Asmodeus, Beelzebub, and Lucifer out of the room, herding Leviathan away from them, or fleeing the room due to the smell of an unknown canine.

The smell of the canine makes him nervous, Terry does his best to keep from entering a blind panic as he hears the soft growls from said canine. He shakes his head, causing his white mane to move back and forth and sweeps his tail. Once more, he hears more then listens to the conversation going on around him, he is more focus on keeping the stallion's instincts under control.

His ears go back as a particular canine growl bark echos, he flares his wings as he rears up as his control over the stallion's instincts overwhelm him. His wings flap as he lets out a bellowing throaty scream. His magic lashing out to the primal emotion, causing a bit of a wind storm to stir up. As he mentally fights to regain control, he hears a calm, soothing voice approaching.

As Terry wins, he finds that the Lucifer is standing next to him, gently stroking his neck. *:Sorry, I was warned that prey instincts can be overpowering, particularly their flight instincts.:* He admits sheepishly and privately to the Satan next to him.

"Give it time, it's quiet an impressive that you managed to stay as calm as you have been, given present company." The red haired Devil reassures him while continuing to stroke his neck.

After a few minutes, Beelzebub gestures for the Lucifer to move away, saying, "Alright, I have enough data as of now concerning this Morph."

Terry lets out a sigh and proceeds to de-Morph, which has him once more without either conjured item, which as he moves to stand, he recreates them. Oddly enough, he finds his emotions not as intense as before, although he does feel a bit mentally exhausted. Hopefully, he won't have as much trouble with the Minotaur's instincts, they were carnivores after all. Then again, I could just end up a mundane bull.

Ignoring that thought, he waits for Satan Ajuka to try to Morph the Minotaur. Terry notices that the Asmodeus is still awake, which he recalls is an unusual state for the elder Devil, well, according to gossip that has been passed to him. As his nervousness begins to rise, the Beelzebub says, "Ok, I believe I am ready for you to try the Minotaur."

Nodding, Terry closes his eyes and begins to visualize the young bull Minotaur that he Acquired. He feels his magic bubble like it seems to do before he Morphs for the first time. Then, after a few minutes, the image of the Minotaur fades as his magic stills. Then his body begins to alter, only this time, his magic seems to... hum? His own magic seems to be undergoing a change, not much of one but, it's the surface flavor, its texture, maybe, that seems to have altered. As he tries to pin point what about it had changed, he can tell that its only on the surface though, below, it still feels the same.

The pops end and as he opens his eyes, he feels instincts rise up, not fully like that of the stallion's or that lion's. The smell of the canine and the noise stirs the Minotaur's instincts, causing his ears to move and him to snort while giving his head a toss. He keeps a firm grip on his magic while asserting his own control over the instincts of the Minotaur, which do try to fight him but he finds fair easier to dominate then his previous experiences.

Confident of his control, he begins to take a look at his new Morph. Surprisingly, his coat isn't green, it's black though with a touch of white on his muzzle. His horns, from what he can tell, are as black as his coat. Moving his arms, he clutches and clutches the 'fingers'. Moving his tongue, he tries to see if he can form words but it's no go as he feels his throat being too thick and his tongue to be too heavy, inflexible.

"Hmm, that's interesting... Yes, how odd..." Terry hears the Beelzebub murmur softly. "Try that light spell, please."

He nods and his magic seems kind of slow, kind of sticky but as he draws below the surface, it reacts as it should. With his hands before him, he wills a ball of light to form in the space. His magic keeps wanting to do something different if he didn't keep his concentration on how his magic flows, which lightens his grip upon his Minotaur instincts but it seems that the Minotaur within seems fascinated with the ball of light so the bull's instincts are fairly calm, even though the canine seems to be come a great deal more active behind that wall.

Likely been fed Minotaur meat on a daily basis. He concludes while doing his best to keep the ball stable, which is taking more and more out of him in a mental sense. Finally, he loses the connection and finds himself panting, a bit physically weak from keeping the spell going.

"Seven minutes and thirty-one seconds... Hmmm... Interesting... Yes, thank you, you can revert now." Satan Ajuka Beelzebub tells him and he grunts while he feels hunger begin to take hold within the Minotaur's instinctive drive.

Given his exhaustion, both mental and magical, it takes some minutes to de-Morph and he just doesn't have the energy to conjure the shirt or footwear. Being fairly tired, Terry doesn't overly question who's the one to send him back to his residence, he wants a snack and his bed.

Within ten minutes, he's in his room, on his bed, letting his exhaustion carry him off to dream land.

As the young Devil vanishes, Serafall reflects on what she witnessed concerning young Oriax. "I thought we were going to have him try the Cerberus." Falbium muses.

"I learnt that he had just Acquired that Minotaur just yesterday and hadn't given it a try. It works out better this way, it'll be a reward at some point in the future." Ajuka states and she nods in agreement.

"Now we just need to borrow one of the humans. It shouldn't be that hard, given it'll allow us to see if they can Morph into magical beasts like young Terrance can." The Devil muses as she glances towards Sirzech with an expression of inquiry.

"Very interesting, and none of you heard him that time I was at his side?" The red head asks once more and she replies, "Yes. It's something they can do, select who they wish to converse with. Which aids in their spying on the invading bugs."

"Useful, that. Then they would need a way to converse. Interesting that they managed to keep that when transformed." Falbium remarks.

Then a musical tone echos and all turn to look towards Ajuka to find him already moving to answer the phone. "Why yes, he is here, hang on, I'll get him on the phone right now."

Checking the time, Serafall notices that she's going to be late for her fitting of her new costume for the new TV series that test audiences seem overly approving of. "Looks like I best be off. See you guys at our next meeting." She says before activating a teleportation circle.

To be continued . . .

Magicians are Human, Right?: Animorphs

I don't own Animorphs and High School DxD!

"... and that's why we need to know more about Devils." Marco states upon Terry opening the door. The eleven year old Devil can't help but tilt his head to the right as he look up at the much taller human teen.

"Real smooth, Marco." Rachel is clearly wearing a bemusing expression while Marco does his best to hide his embarrassment by countering with a comment involving how diplomatic Buffy can be in the show as Terry moves to permit the group of teens into his house. He wasn't really following the flow of the conversation going on between the blond girl and the usual joker of the group.

Once the Animorphs enter, Terry closes the door and locks it. The teens quickly moving to sit about his sitting room that's near the wide window, doing their best to bunch up, making him feel like the fox among the hens. "So... why do you need to know more about Devils?" Terry inquires as he moves to one of the chairs who's backs facing the window.

To be honest, he thought they'd work up the nerve for this conversation a month into their association. Particularly Marco given his mother is reported to being dead, likely wanting to be assured that his mother is either dead or still alive. *Heck, I figured Cassie would be inquiring into magic concerning how it's used to heal people.*

As a silence slowly takes on its own life, Terry reflects on the fact that, it's been little over a week since his unscheduled meeting with the Four Satans. It's nearing lunch time and it's a Saturday, so it's clear that they plan to do their best to spend this weekend trying to

learn something about the Supernatural World or about him, at the very least.

"Can anyone learn to do magic or do we have to make a pact with a Devil to do it?" Tobias' eyes widen, clearly suddenly wanting to sink into the floor, the kid can be very confident and rather bold when it comes to fighting, outside of it... *A cute, harmless looking rodent that most females coo over.* He admits to himself.

"Magicians do require the ability to make use of the energies commonly known as Magic." Terry answers in a slow manner. "As a Devil, I am a Being of Magic, although I will admit that not every Devil can use their Magic beyond simply existing."

"As for the whole making pacts with Devils in order to use Magic? Doesn't happen as often as it once did, what with them getting organized into their own World Council." Terry admits, after all, Melphisto is on that same council. "These days, Rating Games viva the Evil Piece system are far more popular these days then creating their own Order of Magicians when it comes to status among the newer generations of Devils."

"The Evil Piece system?" Cassie repeats and Terry sighs, unsure how any of them will react to the idea of humans converting into Devils through the means of magic items done up as Chess pieces. There's no denying that Devils have abused the system to their own ends, converting a human who they fancy only to discard them in some fashion when they find the next must have member of their Peerage, pretty much causing trading away the new Devil for an Evil Piece or treating them in such a way that they turn on their 'loving' patron, becoming 'Stray' Devils and having some form of bounty on them.

"Devils had a civil war between two differing thoughts on the course of how our race should continue on into the future. The Old Faction, as they are known, wanted to keep up efforts of enslaving humans. They believed in the ideals that the original Lucifer used to convince our Ancestors to his cause, that our very existence is about acting on

our most basic impulses, of us just slaughtering beings just because we could." Terry kind of dodges the question, doing his best to explain some history as to why the Evil Piece system came into being.

"Real heart warming stuff there, Angel." Marco pipes in and he glances towards the teen before leaning back in his chair, countering, "There's a reason the very name Devil causes people to imagination a chuckling, pain loving, soul crushing being then something a kin to ill tempered, whimsy, word bind, tricksters like the Fae or the kind of impression you get at the mention of a Unicorn."

"So never trust a Devil? Really not helping your image here, Terry." Jake points out and he shrugs. As far as Terry is concerned, they need to know not to trust someone just because they are a member of an 'allied' species. They would always be better off learning to trust individuals of a species then the whole species themselves.

"They lost, the Old Faction." Cassie states and Terry nods.

"And we didn't execute their whole forces due to the fact that our race couldn't deal with the fallout of those deaths." Terry tells the Animorphs and watches how long it takes for them to draw their conclusions to that statement. Once it's clear they kind of got the idea, he either confirms or corrects their guesses, "The new Satans saw that the path our race was on was going to lead to our extinction and fought to take over the leadership of our race. With our numbers at a new low, thanks to that civil war, we needed a way to quickly increase our numbers." He sighs, "We had entered into a kind of Cold War with Heaven and the Fallen, which has entered into some kind of presto-peace these days and couldn't appear to be weaken from said war, even when it's clear we were."

"So the Evil Piece system?" Tobias questions. Cassie's own face is rather unreadable at this point while the others' faces shone with curiosity.

"It converts other species into Devils." Terry tells them. "Not just humans, I'm talking about races like Dragons, Youkai, Gaints, Vampires, Werewolves, Reapers ..." Marco's expression at the mentioning of Vampires clearly means he's going to be talking about those by the end of the afternoon. "The pieces are done up like Chess pieces, with the King always residing in the Head of the Peerage, them being the King of the others. One Queen piece, a pair of Bishops, Knights, Rooks, and eight Pawns with those who end up with said piece being, oh so originally called after said piece that converted them into Devils."

Cassie's eyes narrow after a minute of thinking this over, he's in no rush to talk about this subject. "What happens if the piece is taken out?"

"Still a Devil, just lacking the boosts said piece grants." He replies.

"And these boosts are?" Rachel asks before Cassie does.

"Queen is as versatile as its game piece, granting physical and magical boosts." Terry begins to list said information. "Bishops get boost to their spells and natural magical abilities. Knight get a speed boost, Rooks strength and durability, and Pawns gain the ability to temporary transform into any of those piece with permission of their King in a fight."

"All I know is that the King seals a portion of the holder's magic, in doing so, it allows the various pieces to be used on the recently dead, the body needs to be intact for it to be successful." Terry explains. "I don't know how they were created nor do I own a set of Evil Pieces. It's something a parent of mine put their foot down on."

"So, how do we know if we have any talent in magic?" Jake asks curiously and he runs a hand through his green hair while the teens exchange looks, with Tobias somehow looking like a hopeful kick puppy.

"Well... I could get beginner books, it's more of a question of which style would be best. And yes, there's two styles that I'm aware of, Western and Eastern." Terry admits. "But the thing is, the War-Prince pretty much bargained to be the involved in any Supernatural deals involving you guys, so if you really want to learn magic, you're going to have to talk him into signing off on the thing."

They clearly hadn't known about that little fact given the various surprised looks. "So, he pretty much stepped in as our parental guardian in this huh? So, he's our what, God-Father?" Marco pipes up while Rachel asks, "So does this mean we have to stop this discussion here? I mean, I kind of want to hear about these Rating Games along with what fashions are popular among Devils."

"I don't see why I can't keep answering your questions, but I do have access to ViceWeb so we could move this to my office." Terry admits. "Plus access stream TV from the Underworld."

"Wait, you mean you can stream TV shows viva the internet?! Seriously? What's next, three D TV? Interactive movies?" Marco dramatically demands and Terry shrugs, saying, "Well, most tech gets used for a few years in the Underworld before being pushed into the Human world viva our human companies, unless humans develop such on their own, then we just take that and do some modding to fix a few problems."

"So... cars?" Cassie asks and as they stand, Terry replies, "Humans, same with fridges. I think we tried for electronic cars, but, well..." He gestures by the end and Marco snorts in amusement while the others smile in bemusement, waiting for Terry to lead them to his office.

Location: (Not Spoiling it!)

"Huh, so one just became active then?" A cultured male voice says into the phone. "Yes sir, and they have already fled. Heading towards

the area Angels have been most interested in as of late." The lackey's confirms, clearly unsure of this particular development.

"In that direction... It's got a new Owner, if I recall?" The first speaker asks and the lackey answers, "Yes, a Terrance of House Oriax, was ten years old when he was given the title of Land Holder, he is son of Helen of House Oriax, second cousin to their Great Marquis."

"Helen, huh? I haven't heard much from her in recent years..." The speaker muses, recalling said female. "Any idea who his sire is?" *She never married, not for a lack of trying on her family's part.* He muses with a humorless smirk.

"We've tried compiling a list of Devils who had known relations with her. None share Terrance's hair nor share enough features to confirm anything." DNA testing won't show anything, what with Devils being magical in nature.

"I'll review what you have assembled on young Terry then, be sure to send it, no matter how rough." The first speaker orders and the reply is, of course, "Yes sir."

"Is there anything more to report?" And then the lackey begins to give him update on other agendas along with profit reports.

All the while, the male's thoughts circle around the Sacred Gear that just went active and of the spawn of Helen Oriax.

Location: Jester's Spine Estate

Closing the file, Helen Oriax places the fold onto her desk with the others. The files were of humans that her Terrance has had regular contact with, human friends and owners of frequented restaurants to employees and clients. She had moved a few off to the side, studying the file concerning one Allen Samuel Tenant and his adopted son. "What kind of project do you think Project Era is about?" She asks the spy master, one code name Owl.

"It's a game system. This Allen is more interested in creating a title game for this system then in creating the system itself, which means he already has the system completed." Owl responds in a gender neutral tone, using a spell to eliminate any gender voice tone.

Helen hums as she taps the file, she has her suspensions about this Allen. No human has natural blue hair, not without a supernatural heritage lurking in the family tree. "He's trying his best to make it as realistic as possible, so I foresee it taking him a few years to get all of it into coding." Owl continues, though she wonders if this Allen has plans on 'discovering' a way to speed this up, likely some new software or hardware.

Helen's golden eyes flicker to the paused recording of her son and Allen entering into one of the Satan's office buildings. "Satan Beelzebub's visit does seem to indicate high technology is involved." *The visit to Satan Leviathan also indicates non-Devil ancestry.* She muses.

"No idea of how long their meeting had been?" Helen asks and Owl nods, replying, "The security spells the Beelzebub are slowly fading, we are unsure the number set up to begin with. The holes we carefully created within the wards for our uses have been either written out or trapped." The house that she had warded personally for her Terrance is now beyond her control, not something she likes one bit, but can't do anything about as of right now.

"We'll wait a year before suggesting an examination of the wards to see what needs to be re-powered or re-worked." Helen decides, not likely the fact she has to wait or that the house is not off limits in her magical security. "See if you can't get a human to try to get into his office by October to copy the computer's hard drive."

"I hear that Heaven is seeking to speak with the Satans concerning stationing an Angel in Terrance's Territory. It seems they have been assembling resources to investigate this odd issue of theirs." Owl informs her, this was new news to her and Helen glances at a

particular map on the wall of monitors that shows the sightings of said Heaven's agents, including those the Church had sent.

"Any new connection your circle has dug up?" Helen asks and Owl shakes their head, "Nothing beyond being members of this Sharing organization." Ah yes, that latest volunteer social club that's only starting to make waves among the humans of that State.

"Are we sure this Sharing has no Supernatural connections?" Owl asks her, as she's the one more active among Magicians, something it seems Terrance is following in her foot steps, unknowingly. Helen can't help a slightly smug at the thought, oh, Terrance knew she was skilled in Magic but likely doesn't know to the depth of her skills, knowledge, or even her full connections. She is fairly certain that she numbers among the top fifty magic users among Devils. "None." She says confidently.

"Terrance has been researching them by mundane means." Owl informs her and glances towards the masked Devil. "It's odd, they are a rather clean organization. No scandals or negative gossip." Owl continues on and she frowns, considering before remembering the date of its founding.

"It's a young organization, they must be putting pressure on their members to maintain a certain level of decorum. Give it time and its rotten core will begin to show." She says in a dismissive tone, after all, it's just a human social club, so of course its just a matter of time negative press begins to dirty the Sharing.

The next order of business is more in the usual vein, which rumors making the gossip rounds have a hint of truth to any news concerning Stray Devils looking to make a few 'bucks'. Soon enough, their meeting comes to a close, she having to attend a party concerning the newest TV Show that the Leviathan is trying to promote, some kiddie show for Devils involving a transparent plot of magic girl something, it's still looking for their lead, or at least that's what gossip says.

To be continued . . .

Discussion over Tacos: Animorphs

I don't own Animorphs and High School DxD!

Elfangor isn't sure what to make of the expression his son, both naturally and adopted, is making this morning. It's Sunday and the Animorphs, as they decided to call themselves, had spend most of yesterday visiting the young Devil, asking Terry questions about Devils and the like, probably. It kind of looks like the look those puppies and some adult dogs give but then, Tobias is human and thus lacking the fuzzy faces and expressive movable ears.

It stirs some kind of human instinct and although he's already reached over, ruffling his son's blond hair, it hadn't really gone away. So, as he walks out of the kitchen, the plates at the sink, he glances back at Tobias before continuing up to his room. He has a meeting to get to, it seems that Gafinilan-Estrif-Valad had survived the battle. Elfangor had created a minor web site using a particular, agreed on cypher to feel out if any of his fellow Warriors had survived the destruction of the fleet.

As he opens the window, Tobias asks, "Ah, well, we kind of what to learn to use magic. I mean, we're going to end up interacting with that side of the world and Terry mentioned that we need to you to sign off on it. So, will you?"

Elfangor blinks turning to his son, not really knowing how to response but there's this look, this one really seems to tug on his emotions. *Loren would know what that looks means...* He thinks to himself before feeling guilt over the fact that he hasn't broached the subject of trying to restore her memories. He hasn't dared look for her, not when he still don't know how far to trust the Devils with some of his most important secrets, those closest to his 'heart' as the human saying goes.

"If any of you have the talent for it, then I don't see why you can't learn the skills to make use of that talent." Elfangor admits after realizing that the look upon Tobias' face seems to be taking a more emotional wrenching turn. "At the moment, I have a lead to check on, to see if its genuine then we may have another experience Warrior to add to our ranks or at least, help train you."

Tobias' eyes light up and beams a smile as he agrees though that turns into concern at the idea he might be heading into a trap. "Do you want back up?" Elfangor shakes his head, saying, "I don't want you to change your plans on my behalf. I recall were going to a movie this afternoon, weren't you? You guys have this weekend to relax, after all."

"Yea, I guess..." Tobias admits and Elfangor wishes Loren was here, she desires to be a part of their son's life, aware of the invasion, and standing by his side in this. He begins to de-Morph, waiting until he doesn't have a mouth to say, *:And perhaps we can do something later tonight, when I get back? Just the two of us?:*

"Like going flying together?" The young teen asks and he nods his head in reply, which causes the blond to grin. "See you later then." And Tobias heads back down stairs, likely to make a phone call.

Within seconds, he's already Morphing into his Crow morph, he had done research on far flying birds and had recently acquired a duck, an American Coot, he hadn't been picky about gender. Once outside of the limits, he'll switch Morphs. Once done, he flap hops to the open window and once through, flies off, his mind on the location they agreed upon.

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Location: Meeting Spot

Elfangor notices a man near the agreed upon spot. He had been racing about the location, in the form of a grey squirrel, checking to be sure it isn't a trap. So far, so good, though he would prefer if his

Morph's instincts would stop wanting to follow after a particular female squirrel, he hadn't known the gender of the squirrel he had acquired up until now and he guesses it could be worst. He could be the female and the male could be trying to get his attention.

:Warrior Gafinilan?: Elfangor privately broad casts and the man stiffens, ah, so it seems his target has arrived. He climbs down the tree and darts towards the man as he is slowly glancing around the area.

"War-Prince?" He hears the man inquires just as he makes it to the other's leg. *:I see you have success in Acquiring a human morph.:* Elfangor muses with his tail twitching and it takes all of his control to stand still.

It takes the man a few seconds to notice him and there's a soft snort. He moves off to a few feet before he begins to de-Morph and soon, the other does the same. *:Sir, it is good to see you alive.:* The Warrior tells him.

:I feared the worst.:

:I almost didn't, to be honest. Visser Three himself tracked my ship down to its crash site. I was very despite and wounded.: Elfangor admits, he allows his guilt at his welcoming his dead by said enemy to show. *:A small group of natives had noted my approach and had arrived to the site. I had plans for a last stand while giving the group the basics on the enemy and gifting them with a way to fight.:*

With his main eyes, he studies Gafinilan's slow realization of what he just admitted. *:You didn't, right?:* His fellow war veteran and he gives the equivalent of a guilty smile to the other. *:You did? But, the the Law!:*

:I will deal with the fallout of that Law. And yes, I still have my ship along with the device.: Elfangor pauses. *:Humans are not the only intelligent race upon this world.:*

Gafinilan's expression becomes rather bewildered then serious. *:The reports seemed thorough upon this planet.:* Elfangor chuckles as he moves his weight a bit, before explaining, *:I have entered into diplomatic relations with the race known as Devils. I have spoken with their diplomatic leader and worked out the beginnings of our contact.:*

:They have abilities that are highly unusual and technology advancements ahead of the ones available to humans.: He continues. *:I Acquired one and the Morph was not a clone of said Devil. Nor did I Acquire their unique abilities.:*

Now it's clear that Gafinilan looks like he just smacked him with his tail blade, *:Are you sure? That is not how it works...:* Elfangor just nods and begins to Morphs. Once done, he says, "The Devil had dark green hair and had been ten years old. As you can see, I have blue hair and an adult. Oddly enough, the blood results say I am human. As I said, they are an odd race and they are not the only hidden species upon this world."

:Sir, my disorder, it's, well...: Gafinilan admits after some silence hanging between them and it takes Elfangor a few seconds to recall just what disorder Gafinilan suffers from. *:Mertil, sir, he's allergic to Morphing. He lost... he can't regrow his... tail.:*

Elfangor would have been horrified once, but now, now he can see how to use this, after all, he can't spend as much time needed in the Underworld, not when he's got a job`to hide behind. "They may have ways to treat your disorder and maybe, maybe, do something about the allergy, if only just once to allow Mertil to regrow his tail." He admits slowly. "You see, they have other ways to disguise themselves through their own abilities... Illusion spells I think, and we kind of do look like one of the races native here, I believe. Centaurs."

:You want us to ingrain ourselves with these... Devils?: Gafinilan asks and he looks into his fellow Andalite's main eyes as he says, "You'll be in a better position to see more of their culture then I, in the Underworld. Plus, their leaders are interested in our experiences

beyond this solar system along with what other threats there can be beyond just the Yeerks."

:If you are sure, War-Prince.: Gafinilan states in a neutral tone, the use of his title a reminder that he is the higher ranking Warrior between them. He sighs, but he's sure that Gafinilan will see why when the time comes, after all, just because most races on this planet don't have space travel technology doesn't mean they aren't more advance in other ways, capable of things their technological know how can't match, not right now.

"Please take me to Warrior Mertil." He asks once he checks to be sure his spelled cell phone is in his pocket. He'll need to phone Terry once he's seen Mertil with his own eyes. Terry should be able to ward whatever spot Mertil is recovering at before bringing them medical supplies, maybe a healing potion of some kind?

Terry leans back on a tree as he watches as the War-Prince and the other Andalite Warrior tend to the injured comrade, it looks like the fallen one's tail is half gone. He holds up his cell phone, looking at the number belonging to someone simply known as Uncle. It appeared on his contact list after Satan Beelzebub's visit. Glancing back at the injured Andalite, he presses the green phone button, moving his phone to his ear, waiting for someone to answer.

"Ah, young Terrance, what have you to report?" Satan Beelzebub asks and he replies, "Well, sir, it seems the War-Prince has located a pair of comrades. Both are suffering from racial ills that seems to relate to Morphing."

"In fact, it seems that due to their allergy, one of them is still suffering from their injuries concerning what happened about six month ago. It's likely due to lack of medical treatment and fearful reactions concerning local drugs." Terry goes on to explain. "The War-Prince wishes for the pair to reside in the Underworld for health reasons." It's clear that this will be granted, after all, access to the pair will be twenty-four seven by the Satans so they won't have to worry about

drawing more attention to his Territory, giving them a much more accessible source of information to mine, but it also means that the War-Prince will have his own people with first hand experience concerning Devils.

"I see. Hmmm, I will be there in a few minutes." With that, the Beelzebub hangs up and he sighs as he pulls his phone from his ear. He looks at the screen before closing the contact list and putting his cell phone back into his pocket. With that, Terry mostly waits to catch the eye of the War-Prince to give a nod, confirming that he's contacted one of the Satans.

About seventeen minutes later, a teleportation circle flares to life, which alerts the three Andalites to the arrival of visitors. The pair of Warriors glance at the War-Prince with their main eyes while their stalk eyes witness the teleportation of not just Satan Beelzebub but also Satan Leviathan. The first looks very much like he expects, it's the latter's appearance that has him, well, bewildered.

:Satan Serafall, a pleasure.: The War-Prince greets the currently robe clad Satan and he swears that the Beelzebub is enjoying the reactions the Leviathan is gathering from not just him but also the pair of Andalites. He's not sure what happens after witnessing a very cheerful smile beaming (beaming!), at the War-Prince.

Somehow, his mind just blanks, there's no emotional numbness at the fact that he's in the presence of a pair of Satan, just simple what's up with this scene? His mind seems to reboot as the Beelzebub begins casting spells on the pair of Andalite, illusion spells as once the circles of magical glyphs vanish, the pair take the appearance of Centaurs. The injured one is a red roan while the other is a buck skin.

"How strange..." Murmurs the buck skin, the name begins with a G as they examine their appearance. The red roan murmurs his own agreements, while the War-Prince just looks pleased. "I need to retrieve a few things... I had been trying to grow..."

:Just tell me where and I'll retrieve the items, Gafinilan. You don't want to leave Mertil alone with him, do you?: Prince Elfangor muses and Gafinilan seems to be whispering directions to the War-Prince. Just as the Satans plus guests were leaving, the Leviathan waves a girly wand, which causes a trail of rainbow before giving a minor twirl.

:Are you alright?: The War-Prince asks him, suddenly before him and with a hand on his right shoulder. "Huh, I... I don't think I want to know, I mean, she was just so... so..." *Girlie.* He trails off and it's clear that the War-Prince is rather worried.

"It's just... why? She just looks so different then she did just, oh Lucifer, less then a month ago? Is it the pressure? Am I the reason she lost it?!" Terry wonders out loud. "How will I survive the fallout of breaking a Satan?!"

:I don't think you are the cause. I believe she mentioned method acting? Yes, she's taking the, temporary it sounds like, lead role of a TV show as they couldn't keep a lead actress. She was just at the studio when Ajuka called her to alert her to this.: The War-Prince tells him and it takes him a few minutes of taking deep, calming breaths for him to give the older male a thankful look.

"Right, so, let's go get these items." Terry says once he's in control of his emotions and the War-Prince withdraws the hand from his shoulder. The Anadlite takes a few steps away before beginning to Morph, the moment he notices the feather pattern, he mimics by Morphing into his own Crow Morph, doing his best to keep his magic under his control.

A bit of a run and Terry takes to the air, being sure to keep his eye on the War-Prince, following after.

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Location: Underworld

Terry walks about the residence that will be housing the pair of Andalites, it's a few hours since the pair had left with the Satans and it had taken the War-Prince and himself about two hours to collect the various stashes that Warrior Gafinilan, he's not sure if he's even pronouncing that right as it's not a human name plus there's the fact that the race is gifted in minor telepathy, but they did find and collect the meager contents of each. He's rather impressed with what the Andalite had plans to do, namely, figure out a way to get documents and create a human identity. It looks like the Warrior had been deciding what level of educator he wanted to pass off as. Not that Terry doubted that the Andalite wasn't well educated, it's just that, well, he would most definitely arouse the interest of the Supernatural kind, maybe even received a personal visit by the Governor General of the Fallen himself, Azazel.

He comes to a stop before the sight of the War-Prince gently touching one of the alien saplings in the basement. It takes the eleven year old Devil a few seconds to realize that the basement seems to have been turned into a green house. Leaning against the door way, he pipes in, "You know, the Animorphs are just dying to know how it is you Andalites eat without a mouth."

Twin eye stalks turn in his direction as he receives an answer, *:I am not overly surprised about that. Although, are you asking to state your own curiosity on the matter?:* Terry considers that before shrugging slightly, saying, "They are growing more confident in their relationships with me. I think, soon, they'll be doing a similar Q and A session with you concerning Andalites that they did with me yesterday. I think they have been re-framing due to the fact that your an adult but it's going to happen."

:I promised Tobias that I would go flying with him tonight.: The War-Prince admits and he checks the time viva his phone. "You know... it's close to six pm. If you want, I could head back to pick him up to bring him here. Most would take the sight of a hawk and crow flying about to be Familiars of a pair of Devils."

:Familiars... Are they generally animals?: The War-Prince asks, one of the eye stalks begins to look away. Terry can't help the frown that forms upon his face as he tries to think of an answer. "Generally speaking, Familiars tend to be beings that have something of a magical nature to them, like just a small spark or capable to making use of their master's magic in some way when the bond is formed." He pauses before admitting, "I can't say what it's like to have a Familiar as I've never been given leave to give it a go. Now, I'm not sure if I could form that kind of bond given the technology I've been exposed to." *My Morphs could be occupying my magic in that kind of relationship.* Terry privately muses. "Not that I would know for sure, the Beelzebub would need to run experiments of a magical nature to see how your... Escafil device has effected me on that kind of level."

The War-Prince kind of just makes a mental noise of understanding and silence slowly grows between them. Terry wonders about what's occupying the other's thoughts. Unsurprisingly, his thoughts drift upon the fact that he hasn't eaten much for lunch and he's usually preparing dinner right now or waiting for it to be delivered about this time. Maybe they have food in the kitchen? I mean, do I have permission to leave? I doubt ordering delivery is permitted.

:Would you mind getting him? Might want to pick something up from the surface as I don't think I have any currency in Devils society.: And I don't want to impose on you any more then I have to. Seems to be implied, in Terry's mind at least.

"Sure, why not." He says as he moves to stand upright. "See you in a bit." The War-Prince does a human nod, Terry feels the eye stalk stop looking at him as he turns to walk back up the stairs.

It doesn't take long for him to find the front door of the residence and makes use of a Teleportation Circle to return to his house, namely the permanent Teleportation Circle that's in the second floor of his basement. Pulling out his cell, he phones the Tenant house as he's exiting out of the secure room, heading up the stairs. By the third ring, Tobias picks up the phone, "Allen?"

"Ah, sorry, Tobias, it's Terry. Just phoning to tell you to come over for supper as Allen wants to have dinner here." He informs Tobias. It takes the blond teen a few seconds to ask, "Is he ok?"

"He's fine, an old co-worker though... well, professionals are doing their best and hopefully, they'll be able to help repair the damage." He reassures. "Any requests for dinner?" The Devil asks as he makes sure to close the hidden door and fast walks to walk up the stairs.

"Tacos? If its not any trouble." Tobias answers and he reassures that it's fine before saying his good bye, waiting for Tobias to do the same, he hangs up. Terry then pulls up his contact list for restaurants and places an order at a place that he likes and who will also deliver said order to his place. They already had his credit card so they'll charge it to that without him needing to be down stairs to pay for it when it arrives.

Heading up to the door, he unlocks it and does a quick spell to ensure that when Tobias arrives, it'll open up and allow him in as he heads to have a quick shower and to change his current set of cloths, something casual formal given that it's likely he'll be seeing a Satan when they return to the Underworld. He feels and then hears the arrival of Tobias as he is rinsing his hair of the shampoo and by the time he steps out of the shower, their food arrives as he hears Tobias answering the door.

"Don't start eating here, we'll be eating in the Underworld." Terry shouts as he turns off the water. He wraps a towel about his waist before opening the door to walk out of the bathroom, being sure to turn off the light as he heads for his room.

"Underworld? Like Hell?!" He hears Tobias exclaim in surprise as he walks down the stairs. "Yea, Prince Elfangor met up with a Warrior and that the other Warrior with the Andalite was suffering injuries that can't be healed viva Morphing as they are allergic to the tech. To be honest, both are suffering medical issues in regards to Morphing so they'll be living in the Underworld until such time a crop of official

Diplomats on behalf of the Andalite people are appointed." Terry explains.

"Oh?" He's not sure at the emotions that ultimately plays out on the teen's face, though he thinks guilt made a play and he just nods. "Well, yes, it would be the best use for the pair as it gives the Satans someone to seek out whenever something unexpected comes up while you guys have something else going on, they can speak with either of them. It also will give Prince Elfangor people getting a full exposure to Devil technology and to see how magic interacts with their bodies, if only to see if magic can't help relieve their medical issues."

Then Terry takes a moment to give Tobias a look over as it dawns on him that there's a good chance that the teen before him will be meeting a Satan. "Ok, up stairs, we are going to need to change you cloths... Hmm, well, yea, might as well, yea... Well, I'll just remember to bill it to the War-Prince when it comes up..." He murmurs as he begins to herd the skittish teen up the stairs, being sure to place the order on the table with a minor warming spell to keep it 'fresh'.

"Wait, why? What's wrong with what I'm wearing?" Tobias asks in alarm but allowing him to be herded up the stairs.

"You recall the Satans, right?" Terry asks and Tobias nods, answering, "There's Asmodeus, Beelzebub, Leviathan, and, finally, Lucifer." As they enter into his room, he closes the door as Tobias finally gets why he wants to change of cloths for him. "Wait, wait, wait, hold up, you... I might... but!"

"No buts, you'll be meeting at least one of them, no matter how informal the occurrence but it will likely happen as we'll be at the residence where the two Andalite Warriors will be staying." Terry states as he moves to his walk in closet, there's a particular suit that's enchanted to bond with their first wearer, it's even enchanted to grow as the wearer does and if the enchantments are as good as they say, then it's likely one bit of clothing he wouldn't need to

enspell, temporarily at least, to remain with the wearer during the process of Morphing.

Picking it from its stored covering, he walks out and hands the set of cloths to Tobias, having him hold it before him so he can see if the colors work. "It's not the best match, it was made with me in mind but it's the only set of cloths that will work, particularly given you are the son of the War-Prince, adopted or not." Terry admits. "Might need to get Rachel to help pick out some semi formal attire for you all as well as formal, might need to make sure it's enchanted too..."

Tobias clearly looks like a deer in the head lights, unlikely really hearing what he's saying, likely focusing on the idea of meeting a member of the most powerful examples of Devil kind. Terry feels bad but he knew that they were bound to meet with a Satan sooner or later, sooner likely due to the Beelzebub wanting to see how Morphing affects humans.

Terry finishes conjuring him a set of nice, polish-able shoes that goes with the set of cloths that the young Devil pretty much talked him into dressing in. Tobias knew that the oddly green haired kid Devil had wealth but it seems he forgot that usually, when money is involved, it comes with lessons in politics along with manners. *Here I thought that the hold rubbing elbows with the high and mighty will come after the war, then again, I did just get adopted by an alien War-Prince, so, I'm going to have to learn to deal with this.* The blond teen thinks as he moves to stand before the full mirror.

The under shirt seems to be silk and green, he's sure that the shade of green had its own name but he's not Rachel. The jacket is a dark red and he's allowed to wear it unbutton with the inside of the lining being black. The pants were the same color as the jacket. Tobias can't help but be impressed that the cloths were comfortable and they also seem to have resized to fit his frame. As he turns slightly, he then moves his arms and such, checking to see how restrictive they could be.

Then he hears Terry hum thoughtfully and he turns to look at the eleven year old, not sure what to expect before the Devil turns and walks over to a box resting on a dresser. The kid opens the box and the blond spies necklaces and rings within. "What's with the jewelry?" He asks curiously and Terry answers, without turning to look at him, "Decorations, they help make the out fit. Don't worry, this emerald pendant will go with the under shirt."

Sure enough, Terry pulls out a necklace sporting a green gemstone set in a minor disk. "That's an emerald?" He asks as Terry hands him the necklace. "Platinum necklace and the disk is made from silver." The Devil tells him as he takes a moment to admire the disk and emerald.

"Mind helping? I don't know how to..." Tobias says and the kid nods, he moves down, again noting that the cloths weren't that tight. Terry takes the necklace and undoes the clasp, putting it about his neck before doing the clasp again.

Once Terry steps away, his right hand goes to the necklace, rubbing the emerald between his index and thumb. "Ok, now then, you can wait for me down stairs." Terry tells him and he looks up, startled before recalling that Terry had just finish having a shower about ten minutes ago. "Oh, yea, sure."

He quickly makes his retreat, closing the door behind him and continues down to the kitchen. The teen moves to sit down at the table, staring at the order that got delivered. It shouldn't surprise him as much as it should that Terrence could get a Taco place to deliver an order and have it already charged to a tab or something. *Wonder what kind of deal he has going on with the owner? Then again, he's kind of wealthy.*

Realizing he still has the pendant in his right hand, he lets it go and looks down to see it resting upon his shirt for a few seconds before trying to focus on something else. Like the two Anadlites that Terry had mentioned, no names but then, it might because Terry had been too occupied with things to recall them. *Didn't he say something*

about medical reason for them to be ambassadors? But wouldn't Morphing correct it? Or was it genetic? Something they were born with?

His thoughts a whirl along with the fact that, should he phone Jake about this development? He had mentioned that Elfangor was checking out a lead but it shouldn't take long given that his... adopted father to finish checking the lead out. Which was why he had been worried that something happened when he arrived home by four thirty something to an empty house. Tobias hadn't thought it much of a concern until about an hour passed with him reading the latest Dragon magazine.

Then the phone rang and, well, he was so very relieved to hear that Elfangor was fine and that they were eating supper at Terry's. Which meant that something unexpected happened, which lead him flying here. *He promised we go flying tonight.*

Which, he had been looking forward to. He likes spending time with Elfangor, he just does, long before the whole adoption or creating an ID for Elfangor to use in human society. *It's strange, living with him, so different then with my Aunt or Uncle.* Tobias reflects. *He's interested in my school work, how I get along with the others, even about my thoughts on Yeerks...*

"Ready?" Tobias flushes before turning to Terry, who's picking up the order of Tacos. He gets to his feet, his mind focusing on the kid before him, who's style of cloths do match what he's wearing only it seems that he's got a simple looking metal bracelet about his left wrist while wearing a matching pin on his right breast. "That style, is that tribal?" Tobias muses,

Terry explains in a bemused tone. "It's not tribal, it's a Celtic style. Most Celtic art is of a knot design."

Huh, yea, it does look like a knot. Tobias muses as he follows Terry down the stairs, heading for the office. Then they walk pass the office and he notices the rest of the basement, the washer and drier

along with a storage area. They come before a wall and he watches as Terry creates a single glyph that flashes away a few seconds later, a door shimmers into view and the eleven year old turns the knob, pulling the door out.

They walk through and the door closes behind him. Likely locking, leaving them in very dim light, then again, it's likely enough light for Devils. "Should I be watching my step?" He asks and Terry snorts, saying, "There's enchantments to keep people from stumbling. Unless you... oh, yea, the light, sorry, it's something I forget. Your human..."

He's not sure if he's thankful that their relationship is at the level that Terry doesn't think of them as, just humans. Terry comes to a stop, which means he stops and he hears minor muttering as a very tiny flame of pure yellow flicker to life then, it grows a foot before becoming a pulsing light and as he blinks, he suddenly finds himself able to see, only it's clear that nothing changed in the area. "Minor illusion, as long as I'm within ten feet of you, you'll see as well as a Devil. It'll fade in a few minutes, but by then, we should be at their residency."

"You sound pleased." Tobias mentions and Terry says pridefully, "It's something I've been working on before I came here." Then mentions, "I get ideas viva table top role playing games for giving me ideas when it comes to magic use." He notices a number of items and books that were likely related to magic, one room looks like a lab, the room across from it holds a minor smith work area, and then there's a large room that doesn't have anything residing within it, bare floor and walls.

They come before a secure door that is at the end of the room. Terry opens it with a simple glyph and he notices the circles upon the floor and the ceiling. "Permanent Teleportation circle. Hence why it's in this room compared to the others." Terry explains as he allows him in the room and then, physically, closes the door. He notices a flash of glowing something on the door as Terry walks pass.

It takes him a second to realize he should stand next to Terry and moves to do so. Then, Terry chants while making a gesture with one hand. Within seconds they are engulf in light and then, they are in a new location, much more well lit. Following Terry, he can't help but be amazed at the stone work, for the whole building seems to be made out of stone. "Wow, it looks so seamless..."

"It has been made using earth magic so, yea. I think granite actually." Terry says, there's torches sporting magical fire lighting up the place. *:Terry? Tobias, good to see you both?:* Elfangor stands near a large dinning room, eyes studying them both.

"Terry thought I needed semi formal wear." He explains to his adopted father. The adult's expression seems to be of puzzlement before giving way to understanding. *:Ah yes, of course. Well, my thanks then, Terrance. I owe you.:* Elfangor says as they continue to the table.

"Well, you might not wish that I had done so, given the price tag on this particular set of cloths." Terry says as he places the order onto the table and he rubs the back of his neck, fidgeting a bit as Elfangor continues to study him.

:The value placed on cloths... I don't understand it.: Elfangor admits and he can't help but smile and nodding in agreement. "Well, status is the bottom line what with people thinking the more money you have, the better quality of cloths you can get, which shows off how well off you are, and etc etc." Terry explains while ripping into the plastic bag while he takes a seat.

"Really, etc etc?" A female tone muses and he notices Terry stiffing at the very sound while he look in the direction to find a young woman sporting a robe, her hair in pig-tails. *:Ah, yes, I forgot to mention, Satan Serafall arrived not long after you left.:* Elfangor says and it takes a moment to realize that this beautiful woman is not just a Devil but one of the Satans, which very much wasn't how he imagined her looking like.

:Satan Leviathan, this is my adopted son Tobias Tenant. Tobias, this is Serafall Leviathan, one of the Satans of the Devil race.: Elfangor introduces them, the grown Devil sends a pleasant smile in his direction. "A pleasure meeting your son, Elfangor. It's nice to see that Holder Oriax taking such good care of you and your son." She says and it takes a moment to realize that yes, Terry likely didn't rank very high in Devil society, which he kind of knew as he wasn't the direct Heir of his House.

Terry doesn't say anything, but he does begin to unpack the order while Leviathan switches to a different language, focus is on Elfangor. He doesn't know it and doesn't understand how Elfangor could but it's clear that Terry does, although if Elfangor is replying between the pauses, it's likely private. Food gets handed out, with Terry sporting a rather blank and wary look while placing a Taco before the Leviathan before serving Tobias and then himself. He himself still hasn't gotten over the appearance of the grown Devil at the table, he had been expecting horn and her looking, more pale and, well, evil then how she appears.

The pictures of older Devils, well, they had horns or something that, well, kind of reminded one of a classic Devil but Serafall? Looks like a modern, rich woman, clearly has a power and is confident about herself. Even if the cloths kind of remind him of a much younger person. *Huh, I guess you really can't tell by looking at people can you?* He muses to himself as he begins unwrapping his Taco, then recalls what they brought for supper and feels bad for his suggestion, he send an apologetic look at Terry who notices but shrugs in reply, clearly, he hadn't expected to be feeding a Satan dinner either.

A soft hum causes them both to look over to Serafall and find her taking a bite out of the Taco, some of it falling onto the table, not that she seems to care. "Not bad, ground beef?" She inquires, glancing over at Terry.

"Yes, it is. I had been keeping it under a heating spell before we came." Terry answers in a respectful tone and Serafall just hums as

she takes another bite. He feels a bit better now, although he did wonder how she could tell the difference given how popular beef is. Tobias sends a questioning look only for Terry to look bemusing for a few seconds and focusing on eating his own Taco.

:I recall Minotaur meat is more typical then surface cattle, is it not?: Elfangor recalls and Serafall takes a moment to swallow before replying, "You recall correctly. In fact, not that long ago, Holder Oriax demonstrated that he can indeed Morph into a magical being. A Minotaur bull, a handsome specimen of one at that." The minor praise causes Terry to look down at the table, clearly wanting to disappear right then and there, might have something to do with the memory of that event.

"Huh, really? Was it more dangerous looking then the monster lion he Morphed into?" He can't help but ask and Serafall rises an eyebrow while looking at him. "Hmm, oh, he didn't demonstrate that one for us, he did mutate his stallion Morph on our behalf."

"Yea, it's kind of weird how when he tries for smaller animals, they just, well, they just go strange, like eldritch strange." Tobias continues on. "Never the same way either, I still remember when he tried to do his crow. He stopped mid-point when his feathers transformed into green fire and was consuming his flesh until we could see the bone. He reversed it before we got to see the final form but it would have look either awesome or nightmare inducing."

"Really? A Phoenix expression?" Serafall muses, the last one seems to be thoughtful while Terry most definitely wants him to shut up or for himself to disappear. Well, that's what Tobias is thinking Terry is feeling at this moment. Looking away from him and taking a bit of her Taco.

When Terry does look his way, his eyes are molten silver for a few seconds but it fades back into his grayish blue eyes. While Elfangor asks, *hoenix, are they common species?:*

"House Phenex has blood ties to a Phoenix, they have a particular fast regeneration along with affinity for fire. Its been a fairly long time since one has been seen." Terry answers after a minute of silence, glancing towards Serafall before focusing on his Taco. "Very true, if not for the Phenex traits, some would say there never was a Phoenix to begin with." Serafall agrees.

"Unicorns? I mean, I know that Terry mentioned them but, well, do they really only appear to virgins?" He asks and Terry chokes a bit then coughs while Serafall looks bemuse in his direction, "Terry, huh?"

"Well, Terrance is rather hard to say all the time and he never said we couldn't call him that. Then again, compared to being called Angel by Marco..." Tobias trails off with a shrug, although there's a slight widening of her eyes at the mention of Angel.

:Marco has nicknames for a lot of people. He calls Holder Terrance that due to a TV show that is popular, one of the characters is an ensouled vampire who's called that.: Elfangor explains. *:I believe the show is called Buffy the Vampire Slayer, usually forty minutes long without the commercials.:*

"I see, well, to answer your question, yes, Unicorns do come to virgins and we use that tactic to harvest their horns." Serafall answers and Terry hurries up to add, "The horn grows back when a participial medicine is applied when cut off."

He relaxes as the image of piles and piles of de-horned horse like beings getting killed just for their horns. Serafall looks puzzled as to why Terry mentions this for a few minutes before it seems to dawn on her what kind of image that painted. Tobias could only imagine what Cassie's reaction would have been if his image had been correct, then again, she might still be rather put out at the simple practice of knocking the Unicorn out, cutting its horn off, and maybe having medicine applied to the spot where the horn had been. *Better then what happens with Rhinos or even Sharks.* Tobias mentally admits as he continues to eat his Taco.

As he finishes, Serafall is beginning on her second, a semi comfortable silence hangs in the dinning room. Then, the sound of hooves on stone echo from the direction Terry and himself had arrived at. He turns to find two adult Andalites along with another grown Devil with lighter green hair then Terry. "Ah, saved me some, Serafall dear?" The unknown Devil asks while he studies the two Andalite, he notices that the tail on one seem to lack a fur coat. The two's main eyes seem to be on Elfangor while their eye stalks taking in their surroundings.

Elfangor moves towards the pair, saying to everyone, *:I will return, I wish to show them where the green house is.:* Everyone nods or murmurs their understanding, it's clear that Prince Elfangor wishes to speak to them in a more private setting.

"So, you must be Tobias Tenant, I'm Satan Ajuka Beelzebub." The Devil introduces himself while Terry had been trying to hurry in his mouthful to do the introduction. "Nice to meet you, sir." Tobias says while Ajuka moves to sit on Terry's left, boxing the young Devil in on either side. "Good to see you once more Terrance."

"He also goes by Terry it seems." Serafall muses to her fellow adult. "Terrance is a mouthful it seems."

"Oh, is that so? Terry then." Ajuka replies and Terry clearly struggles to keep from repeating his previous embarrassed actions. "Beef?" Ajuka muses after swallowing a bite.

"Indeed, Terry and Tobias brought Tacos from the surface." Serafall responds and he reflects that yet again, his expectations didn't meet with reality as Ajuka doesn't look the mad scientist part nor the pair of crazy wizard/cultist. Again, no horns or hooves, nor does he sport a uni-brow of any sort. Well groomed and seems a bit more personable then Serafall, at least, that's what he's picking up from how he interacts with Terry.

"You managed to regrow the end of the tail I see." Serafall muses in English, waiting for Ajuka to finish swallowing. "It was simple enough

to trick the allergy in that area, given time, I could come up with a treatment that will allow Mertil to Morph without any side-effects, well, serious side-effects at least."

"And Gafinilan?" Serafall asks before taking a bite out of her Taco. Ajuka takes a bite and considers the question, he glances at the remainder of the order and Terry takes one of the last three, passing it to him with Serafall moving back to allow this. "I will need to go through the records the Andalites have on the genetic disorder but, it's just as well that Gafinilan won't be needing to Morph to living here, not like on the surface. It would have speed up his condition, Morphing so often and for so long." Ajuka then volunteers, "I have already begun work on creating an illusion bracelet for Gafinilan, one that will be able to activate at will."

"Can they learn magic?" He asks before he's taken a bite out of his second Taco. Ajuka replies, "Don't know, but I'll have fun seeing if they can't. I know that Gafinilan is interested in the effects of Morphing has one Devils along with how an Andalite or even Human would fair in Morphing a magical creature."

"A profitable partnership, huh?" Serafall says in a teasing tone while the Beelzebub merely smiles and take a bite out of his Taco. He glances at Terry and the young Devil moves his shoulders just slightly to show he doesn't fully get it either.

Elfangor returns as he asks Ajuka about illusion magic, mentioning that Terry's been allowed to teach them, if they show potential viva going through beginner books. It's clear that Ajuka knows how to speak to his audience given Tobias does understand the examples and explanation. *:Thank you, for restoring Mertil's tail. We, as a people, can be harsh in certain regards to conditions. Being handicapped like that, it's one of them.:* Elfangor says sincerely.

He blinks, that's kind of shocking, but then, Tobias begins to kind of see why, given his exposure to Morphing. After all, losing an arm or even a leg, it grows back when Morphing is involved. *Not being able*

to Morph, oh, yea, no regeneration. He admits to himself. "Seems kind of harsh." He states out loud.

:It can be, but before Morphing technology was developed, the lost of your tail blade, it tended to end a Warrior's time in the military as tail blade fighting is still part of what makes a Warrior, a Warrior.: Elfangor explains. Tobias looks at Elfangor's own tail blade, seeing it in a different light, now, although, he finds it kind of hard to get a grip.

"An Angel or Fallen without wings." Serafall muses. "Or a Devil denied the ability to use their Family Trait or Magic." Ajuka adds, which means that the Devils understand a slight better then him.

"Galfinilan and Mertil?" Serafall asks and Elfangor replies, *:Grazing, they may be spending the night in the green house.:*

"Understandable, they have been on the run for some time. Having a safe place, it will take time for them to adjust." Serafall muses and Elfangor nods.

"Well then, I might as well retire. I will come tomorrow to speak with them. Good day, all." Serafall says once she moves to stand. Ajuka joins her, it's not long before the pair depart, neither using the circle by the front door.

Terry pushes the last Taco in his direction once he grabbed his second once they return to the dinning room. "Did you graze too?" He asks curiously and Elfangor does this eye smile, replying, *:Yes I have. Finish up and we'll go for our flight. Perhaps Terry will join us, give us a bit of a tour?:*

"What, we'll fly here? In the Underworld?!" He can't keep the excitement, he just thought they would be teleporting back to Terry's then flying home, but this, well, this was something he hadn't expected.

"Most will take a look at three birds, two crows and a hawk and think Familiar, not freaky nature thing needing to be investigated." The

eleven year old Devil explains, which was pretty cool.

He hurries to eat his third Taco, more then eager to see more then just see the interior of a manor. For now, life is looking good.

To be continued . . .

Mind Blowing Events to Come: Animorphs

I don't own Animorphs and High School DxD!

Sniffing, Terry chirps at the scent of rodents pee trails in the vents as his ferret instinct wants to follow but he re-frames as he's got a mission to do for Satan Beelzebub. He's not alone as Tobias and Marco are currently in Flea Morph and somewhere upon his back. Jake is with the War-Prince while Rachel and Cassie are doing their task together. Pressing forward, the current Devil in the Morph of a ferret does his best to count the number of intersections to reach their goal while ignoring the conversation a bored Marco has started and seems more then happy to keep going with little input from either Tobias or himself.

Marco's conversation is circling around at least three fact it seems, the first is he wasn't with Jake, the second seems to be the fact he's an insect, and third, why the Beelzebub couldn't wireless connect to whatever tech the Yeerks use. Everyone has a transmitter to install in computers of Controllers, they spent the last two days learning how to do this quickly, well, except for him, his transmitter is meant for one of the computers on their Bug Fighter or better yet, the Visser's Blade Ship. So Terry received different training with Gafinilan concerning his transmitter, with the War-Prince joining the next day to help.

It's been two weeks since the War-Prince had met with the pair of survivors and by that Wednesday morning, Terry had received two packages, one from the Satan Ajuka Beelzebub and the other was from his **Mother** . Both contained beginner books, only the first contained books from both styles of Magic while his **Mother's** were of a more modern style of the Western practices plus a note containing a name of a ingredient dealer who accepts human currency to give to his small Order of Magicians along with hints of him bringing them by her estate as a reward in their progress. He's

found the modern texts easier for the Animorphs to understand while the older books that the Satan had far more ways to practice, given that collection had both styles instead of just the one.

So far, Tobias and, surprisingly, Marco have proven to have fairly decent control over magic, both coming across as a Jack-of-All-Magics out of the group. Much to her personally disappointment, Cassie is proving to be talented with illusions instead of the simplest healing spells. Rachel is, unsurprisingly, proving to be very talented at the more destructive spells, namely fire and lightning. Finally, Jake's coming along as the spell casting medic that Cassie was hoping to be, which causes some tension between the two as it seems there's some attraction going on between the two. Sure, they had only been experimenting with Magic for less then two weeks but, clearly, having experience with Morphing tech has only helped with the visualization aspect needed in Magic. So far, their magical reserves haven't affected their Morphs like Terry's does.

Which is likely why Terry's been partnered with the pair as they are more generalists then specialists, more then capable of being flexible in the coming task of getting into the Yeerk's ship bay. It's Terry's mission that the last one they need to do as they had done Tobias' first and once done with Marco's, they took a break until they were given directions to where the Yeerks keep their ships hidden viva text message from Gafinilan's phone. So, they flew in their respective flying Morphs to the least secure location.

Terry feels the urge to scratch and hears Tobias apologizing while Marco just continues on trying to sing popular songs using bug themes. *:When did he start singing?:* Terry privately sends to Tobias as he perks up at the look of the vents before him, it looks they were nearing the end of this portion of the trip.

:Stopped paying attention, huh? Can't blame you, then again, you are focus on navigating, so it's understand able.: Tobias replies privately and Terry just didn't see the point in correcting that assumption. *:Not sure, it went from talking about a comic book fight between the Hulk and Superboy, giving his reasons for why he's right*

compared to why Jake's out of it, thinking that Superboy could survive such a fight given he doesn't have Superman's full powers. And they say I'm a geek...: Tobias likely didn't want to send the last part but Terry didn't reply as he's busy coming to a stop by a vent leading down.

Terry's head bobs about as he takes a few minutes to judge the shaft leading down. *k, I'm jumping, so, try not to leap about on my back.:* He tells the pair and waits for them both to confirm before launching his ferret body into the space that drops down. He lands on a metal grade and it takes him a few seconds to recover from the fall before looking down, through the grade to find a dark room.

:We are at the supply closet. You guys can leap down and de-Morph.: Terry tells them after taking some minutes to listen to the room below. *:Finally!:* Marco states and it takes a near ten minutes for a small ball of light to glow, revealing the two humans in the room below.

"I really like the fact I create my own flashlight." Marco whispers while Tobias levitates himself up to move the grade for him to enter into the room and replaces it before floating down with him on Tobias' shoulders. Once Tobias' feet hit the ground, he races down to the ground to de-Morph while he hears Marco softly chanting an illusion meant to hide them from view and Tobias isn't far behind to do something about any noise they make.

Their illusions won't last very long, just long enough for Terry to de-Morph and to cast a more complete illusion for them to hide behind. As he finishes, the door opens and a hand turns on the light of the room, it looks like eight people are standing by the door, each holding what looks like a flashlight but isn't. The front three look around the now lit room, but they just don't see the group of three. Marco moves, doing his best not to touch the woman as she enters the room.

"Is it clean?" A man's voice asks from the hall, but the question isn't to the woman that's moving about the room as a reply comes from

the hall once more. "Not getting any readings beyond us, not even any rodent piss trails." Another Controller says after five minutes of them slowly moving, doing their best to not touch or move anything as two more Controllers enter into the supply room.

There's a sigh from the Controllers, a tension seems to vanish among the group and they quickly put away their weapons. Marco is clearly bemused by this while Tobias just has a pitying look. Terry just doesn't really care, they still have to get onto one of the ships and it'll take him at least ten minutes to install that transmitter, not including the time it would take for him to find the right connections needed for said installation. Sure, they'll be Teleporting away once done, but they are looking to be spending maybe thirty minutes here.

The door closes once the lights are turned off. They wait a few minutes before Marco moves to open the door slightly and then motions someone is still there. Terry motions a go for Marco to open the door once Tobias finishes an illusion of the door still being closed. They slip out and they do their best to close the door without a sound as the stationed guard is busy chatting softly into his microphone, it sounds like a planning of a party about someone being out of the Yeerk Pool for a whole year.

The three of them just shrug, its not something they expected to ease-drop on, but it makes sense, in some way, that sure, a military action is going on but that doesn't stop the grunts from doing things like celebrating an anniversary by planning a part or just gossiping about co-workers. Terry can see that neither Marco or Tobias liked the evidence that Yeerks could be, well, personable or, you know, have friends. *It's easier to write off the enemy if they weren't people to you.* Terry recalls, it's a summary he wrote for a test some years ago.

They walk down the hallway, pass large rooms that sport medical supplies, going down the stairs so they can get to the last basement landing. They move out of the way of Controllers walking up or hurrying down the stairs. It takes them a good five minutes to get to the bottom of the stair well, a large group of Controllers had been

heading down, to help increase the security of the hanger as paranoia is very much alive and well among the personnel of this particular underground hanger. This location sports a strip mall on the surface, he doesn't recall the name but it's location was built about four years ago, he recalls that there had been a large purchase rush of land in this part of town and they renovated it.

Was it one person or was it various shell companies? Terry wonders as Marco provides the next illusion so they can open the door. They find themselves in a short hallway that ends with a much more secure door, one sporting not just a scanner for the head, given the height, but also something that is a card reader, he's seen an example of those back at his **Mother's** estate. Looking around, he notices that some renovations have been done in the last two to three months concerning the hallway given the fresh looking patches on the cement.

Terry returns to studying the door once he's spied the two cameras along with what maybe weapon turrets. Frowning, he rubs his chin as he considers something, deciding that they need to do so, he gestures for the two towards the door they used and Tobias does the illusion this time and he sets out to find a Controller for them to mesmerize. "Ok, we're looking for someone important so I can mesmerize them into coming down here." He whispers to the pair, pulling them into a huddle.

"Compulsion?" Tobias asks while Marco muses, "Layered one, maybe? Might have to, given it's two beings." Terry smirks as he feels smug, prideful even, as the two work out, without him having to say anything, which of them would do what.

It takes them searching their third floor from the security door before they found someone that looks important enough to approach the hanger without rising any kind of flags. Although, Terry isn't sure but he thought one of the guard Controllers might have seen them. Given no alarm went off, he puts it out of his mind, figuring that he's starting to get stress from maintaining the complex illusion that has a touch of electronic recording interference. He's only eleven years

old, just because he's got rather large reserves for his age doesn't mean he can keep the illusion up over the three of them for hours on end, maybe it it was just him, yea, but it's more effort with the three of them.

Once the layer compulsion has been set, they wait at the security door for about fifteen to twenty minutes for it to take effect. The scanner turns out is meant to scan for a Yeerk within the skull, which, makes a great deal of sense and likely something they can take advantage of by Acquiring Yeerks. It's something Terry can see the advantage of said tactic but its not something that either the Animorphs or the War-Prince would like to use.

Behind the security door is just a bio scanning room looking for animal and Andalite DNA patterns on the Controller, thankfully it seems they don't have some kind of data bank full of DNA of Controllers so they are not testing for outside human DNA. Then again, that just might be due to the red tape that could be involved in adding to said fictional DNA bank on a daily basis. The door opens and Terry is relieved to see the hanger, as they slip in through the door, they begin heading for the nearest Bug Fighter, he doesn't see the Blade Ship and is kind of happy as they figured that it would be guarded when unused inside the hanger.

Once on the Bug Fighter, Terry lets down the illusion once they have made it deeper into the ship. The slight pounding of his brain and slight sheen of sweat, it's clear he was starting to feel the strain of the illusion on a more physical level then just magical. Then again, he's a Devil, it's not surprising that it would start effecting him in a physical manner far sooner given his magical nature. "Just give me a few minutes, I need to recover from that."

"Sure, no problem." Tobias says with sympathy while Marco is more interested in snooping about the ship. "Huh, so, these are the controls, huh?" Marco muses and Terry glances at the console, it takes him a few seconds to recognize the arrangement. "That's the weapons... huh, why would it be over here?"

"Wait, really?" Tobias asks in surprise while Marco glances his way. "Yea, but, I don't see the piloting console..." He says as the young Devil moves to stand before the console, he glances around and finds what he needs to the far right wall. No piloting console in sight, but it doesn't matter, they weren't here for a joy ride in a Bug Fighter.

Conjuring the tools he needs, Terry begins working on installing the transmitter within the data bank slash engineering console. Sure enough, it takes him a good ten minutes and less then a minute to make it look like nothing happened with the console. "Ok, done." He says as he moves to stand.

"You know I... nope, not going to say it, nada. Let's just get going." Marco says as Terry moves to stand next to the teen, sharing a look with Tobias as the blond moves to stand as well, having moved to sit down on the floor of the Bug Fighter.

"Alright then, let's go." Terry says and begins to craft the glyphs to Teleport them out of here. Tobias bites his lower lip but doesn't say a word. It seems that the blond has an idea about what Marco was about to say and wasn't going to mention it right now. I just want a shower and maybe a whole roasted Minotaur. Terry muses as he activates the Teleportation circle, within seconds, they arrive at his place, he unlocks the door before he pulls out his phone, texting done to Gafinilan's cell as Marco conjures a glowing ball of light for the two teen to use.

As they walk through his magical section of his house, he gets a reply that confirms that transmitter was active. Terry feels accomplishment at a job well done and once they were at the main floor, they said quick good byes as the two teen leave while he makes sure to lock the door before heading for the kitchen, the shower can wait, he's starving.

The strange beast finally takes the bait and Aristh Aximili-Esgarrouth-Isthill commands the doors to close, it has taken days to come up with this plan and to implement it. The beast slams against the doors

while Aximili works up the courage to simply approach the odd teal scaled beast, it's larger then he expected and the way the doors bang under the weight of the thing, it's clearly strong. His tail twitches while he does his best to grip his weapon, readying himself to fire at the beast, to stun it.

Suddenly, the banging stops and all four of his eyes glance at the minor pool of salt water. *Maybe this wasn't the best plan...* the Aristh admits privately to himself and before he's even aware of it, he's moving, leaping to the side and his tail moving, his blade connecting but not piecing the scales. Every fiber of his being is telling him to flee while his training is screaming at him to point and fire.

The teal scaled beast hisses in annoyance while he is torn between the twin desires, it turns its head and the fins seem to dig into the metal. It roars before it surges at him, Aximili follows through with his training and fires at the beast, it takes a good ten shoots to stun the serpentine beast and he trembles before the fallen beast, he feels overwhelming emotions at what he's done with satisfaction at a job well done to cursing himself for thinking this was a good idea to begin with, that he should have pick something smaller, something that looks more harmless.

He kind of worries that it'll drown, not being in water, only it takes Aximili a few minutes to realize, he can hear it breathing, meaning, it has lungs. *k, Aristh, time to Acquire it.:* He tells himself, but he also didn't want to approach the beast, it's clearly a carnivore given the sharp looking teeth and he's seen it eat smaller creatures through the dome.

Looking at it, he estimates that it's at least ten Earth feet long and sports teeth four Earth inches long. Its eyes, closed now, had been crimson. In the end, the Andalite Aristh finally approaches the beast and using his tail blade, he Acquires the beast. Once done, he commands the doors to open and retreats out of the former ship bay, heading for the security of the dome.

It takes him a good four Earth hours to finally set go of the weapon in his hand, doing his best to ignore the baleful gaze of the beast when it swims pass the dome, circling once before swimming off out of sight. *:Worth it, if only to see the Yeerk's reaction when they see me in that Morph.:* Aximili tells himself.

Well, what do I do now? It's not like I have much left. Ray Leon Martin, Scared Gear possessor thinks to himself. He's sixteen, going on to seventeen in a week, and he's on the run from the Magician Council.

He lingers near the bus station, not sure why he even ran in the first place. Well, maybe he was lying to himself, he knew why he ran, Ray just can't help but keep wishing that this was all just some kind of nightmare induced dream viva his lack of exhaustion in regards to his current pursue of Divination self study. He's had some pretty funky dreams once he's crashed viva said exhaustion, he recalled the one that caused him to give Chasity blushing looks, the dream that was the source of said look had her, well, yea, not touching that, then again, he had been fourteen at the time so, hormones could be at fault.

A bill board catches his eye and he checks out the advertisements. **"Hmm, a Devil is holding this city. Could to seek him out for protection. Might even have you join their Peerage."** The spirit within his Scared Gear muses in the back of his mind, it takes him a few scans to find the subtle advertisement that did declare there's a Land Holder present.

Ray makes a face, he didn't want to become a Devil, he knows what kind of prejudice Reincarnated Devils face. He's read between the lines of the various books that discuss Devil Society, if you weren't born a Devil, you won't be rising too high up the social hierarchy. You were little more then a serf at best, slave at worst, oh sure, some Houses treated their Peerage as family but those were rare and it's doubtful he would be lucky that this Land Holder was like that.

"Just means we need to get cash to move on quickly. Not going to stick around some fucking Devil that's full of themselves and will sell me to the highest bidder." Ray murmurs under his breath, he hasn't quite gotten use to shaping his thoughts in a way to have a mental conversation with the entity within the Gear, he doesn't even know the name of the Sacred Gear nor what resides.

His eyes fall upon, once more, some poster about this organization called The Sharing. Ray reads it once more, it sounds too good to be true but he didn't want to stay at a homeless shelter, the looks he gets, the fact he doesn't look too down on his luck, well, given the cloths on his back are conjured, it likely shouldn't be unexpected to get those kind of looks. Yet, he doesn't want to give up his fashion style, it's one of the few things, as of right now, that's *him* .

Sighing, Ray decides to ask around, get an idea of this Sharing. It's only seven am and it's not like he's got anything better to do beyond keep his head down and keep out of what Supernatural circles in this minor city. He'll find some shady jobs for the money, hopefully, the Land Holder isn't trying to portray themselves as a mobster or criminal master mind.

"How did Cassie talk me into this?" Terry asks the group of teenage boys in the dressing rooms, each of them in their own stall. They were here to get some high class cloths for the Animorphs, not for him to go shopping for cloths for himself as well.

"Might have something to do with, you know, allowing Rachel, you know, Xena the Warrior Princess, aka our Cleric of Destruction," "Shouldn't have introduced you to D&D." Murmurs Jake and he didn't know if he agreed with that sentiment as it had motivated Marco a great deal when it comes to ideas of enchanted items. "To spend your money on cloths, semi formal and full formal, plus shoes and other items to go with said previous purchase."

"Cassie's way of taking you down with us." Tobias pipes in and Marco very much agrees. "Seriously though, why do we need at

least three good sets? It's not like we're going to be attending any balls or dinner parties."

"Actually? I have an open invitation to... well, it's better to be prepared for when I'm gently encouraged to bring you by the estate. A meet and greet with, well, my *mom* ?" Terry flushes, he doesn't like talking about his family. He doesn't... he has issues with **Mother** with how she raised and educated him. "It's coming and I would rather we do it on a long weekend then during Summer vacation. So, I was thinking, once I put this before Mr Tenant and the others, we could do a quick visit and hope that it'll be enough to satisfy my... family ." He caught himself before he said House.

There's silence, not even the rustling of cloths as the teens try to wrap their head around that thought. Sure, they have all heard of what happened that Sunday nearly four weeks ago, particularly about how two of the Satans acted along with the aerial tour of a small suburb situated in the Beelzebub's territory. They've met with Satan Beelzebub and had under gone a scan of each of them Morphing small and large Morphs in his lab, while wearing tight fitting clothing that naturally vanishes when one Morphs instead of cloths sporting a short lived enchantment upon them, not that they saw much of the Underworld beyond that lab.

"And they don't know about...?" Jake seems compelled to ask, at least to Terry's ears. "No, nobody does. It's not just the Biblical group that exists, remember? And so far, nobody else has come forward about this either. Oh, I know it can't stay quiet but they want to steer the release or the aftermath of the reveal. It's just politics is... you think US government is headache inducing? Yea, just no, no, it's not the fuck cluster that ours is." Terry wanted a few bottles around if they really want a lesson of how Devil government works, if only so he could get buzzed enough for their various reactions, because they would and likely use such mild terms as barbaric, inhumane, and uncultured, although he doesn't know how creative any of the Animorphs were when it comes to swearing as it never really came up before.

"So... bringing us home to meet you mom then, huh? Do we at least get some rings on these fingers?" Marco asks in a teasing tone and he can't help but laugh, and keeps laughing cause, that reminds him that he's getting to the age of where there's going to be an arrangement made on his behalf. Sure, it might get canceled but it might not, not with the fact his **Mother** never married and seems dead set on remaining single, well, as single as a Noble Devil can be with a few lovers on the side.

"Your laughter has taken a sharp turn into Joker territory." Marco pipes up in a slightly worried tone and it takes him a few seconds to reign in his emotions along with his laughter. "Sorry, it's just, you brought up the fact that I could be looking at a marriage contract."

"Dear God, don't let Cassie hear that! She'll get started on how that's not different then a slave contract!" Marco complains, though Terry thinks he hears some unease. "Your dad married for love or was it duty?" Tobias asks and he tries not to wince, it's not like any of the three knew...

"Ah, I don't... know my sire. She never mentioned him, hence why I sport her family's name, not his. I don't think anyone in the family does." Terry admits slowly as he adjusts his tie.

"So, yea, this shopping trip isn't a waste as you'll be exposed sooner rather then later to my... family." He states, doing his best to get a handle on his emotions. Terry takes a few seconds to study his appearance in the mirror. Taking keep breaths, he does his best to at least erase his various emotions upon his face. Once secure in the hold he has, he turns for the door and opens it. "Done!" Terry shouts a great deal louder then the way they were talking, wanting to alert Rachel and Cassie if they were out of the woman's side.

There's some fussing from Rachel while a few strangers seem to find the scene on the cute side if the slight cooing followed by giggling is any sign. Terry wonders what the scene looks like from an outside perspective, did they think he was related to one of the Animorphs? As a cousin or younger, half brother? Then the others

come out wearing their current semi formal casual wear. A few minutes later, the guy group retreat to the stalls to try another set of cloths on, with him following at a slower pace with bemuse look upon his face.

The conversation didn't stray into his private life, it circles around them feeling rather put upon about all this modelling before the girls and minor discussion, aka Marco, complaining how unfair it was that Rachel seemed so thrilled by using them as her dress up dolls. Concerning Cassie, Jake received more then a few elbow jabs from Marco to get him to stop gazing lost in thought at her while Rachel discretely pokes Cassie in the arm or shoulder when she was doing the same. Terry felt it his duty to do the same for Tobias, which was maybe six times throughout the near three hours they were there, while Cassie only seemed to slap Rachel once in regards to the look the blond teenage girl gave to Tobias while he was wearing something a size smaller, causing to the cloths to be a bit tight.

By the end, they were all carrying their bags, with only a single bag for Terry as he has plenty of cloths like this at home, the two sets were at least two size larger then him, meaning he won't be wearing them any time soon. Everyone else though, they have six bags and those capable did cast minor enchantments to help with the weight before helping those that weren't very good with such a utility spell. They parted ways once they left the store a block away, he mostly just found an alley cast an illusion before using a Teleporting spell to return home.

"Micheal, Serafall Leviathan has a packet en-scrolled for your eyes only." Gabriel enters into his office just as he was about to send for Iris. The archangel's eyebrow rises as she moves to place the rather thick, novel worthy, packet upon his desk.

"And we checked, it's legitimate." She adds before he could. And isn't that cause for concern? Micheal thinks as he picks it up, the moment he does a note seems to appear while the security about

the packet vanishes. He first skims the note then reads it with a blank look and re-reads the note as he feels a headache begin.

Handing the note over to Gabriel, he opens the packet and pulls out a small section of it. It's a bio of high ranking Yeerk officers, along with the names of their hosts, human or otherwise. "It's... not is it?" Gabriel asks him as he flips to a random page, the woman it shows, the name.

"Well, we now have our answers, it's now a question of, how we proceed from here." He states in a calming tone, not that it likely fools Gabriel as she's known him for far too long to not realize his actual mood. He's furious at the fact that it was the Devils to come across this situation, that it only took a single Devil child to stumble upon something like this. Although, thank Father, the child managed to hide this from their House and seems to be still keeping it from their House.

Gabriel picks up the packet and pulls another section up out of the rather large and durable envelop. He does his best to focus on the task at hand, to read about these Yeerks and this war they have have brought to Earth. "Should I call Rapheal and Uriel?" She asks after a few minutes of only sheets moving.

"I will go fetch them personally. Please, stay here." Micheal tells her, feeling the need to go do something and for now, personally leaving the office to do just that will help. Once more, Gabriel understands his mood and giving her a smile, he pushes his chair back to stand. He leaves his office, leaving behind the enemy profiles, praying for the poor souls who were suffering this new set of chains upon them, even if, the idea of space aliens coming to Earth and invading the humans had been so very unrealistic, so very much unbelievable just an hour ago. The cause being something that never crossed any of their minds, never once, after all, there's never been any real reason to think aliens existed, more reason to think any and all talk of aliens being pranks of the Fae on gullible humans.

To be continued . . .

Union of a Team: Animorphs

I don't own Animorphs and High School DxD!

"Get to the Yeerk Pool, a Magician has been caught." The line goes dead as Terry is trying to wake from his noon nap. "Wait, what? But, ah fucking damn to Satan's damnation and back!"

The eleven year old Devil is already pushing the covers off and heading for his office in the basement to check the map for the nearest entrance. He can't help but snarl at the fact that this happened today, the day they were to leave for the Underworld with the Animorphs for the weekend at his **Mother** 's place. *Damn fucking hell, what a time for a trespasser. Why the hell wasn't I informed whoever this was in the city? This is why we post those ownership posters! Damn fucking strays! It has to be one, why else wouldn't they report the Satan fucking damn in with me, the Territory Holder!*

Cassie, she's been fairly distracted and Marco can already see that Jake's concerned. Then again, what a time to come down with something, huh? The weekend where they were going to meet Terry's family and do their best at pretending they were... well, to be fair, they were budding magicians, so in a way, they weren't pretending anything. They were studying magic, they were capable of casting magic spells.

It's just a half an hour to lunch, so, hopefully, whatever is wrong with Cassie could, you know, wait? Marco's attention turns from the clock on the wall to Jake before once more on the teacher. His pencil's eraser tapping upon the note book that's got some notes written upon the page. His head resting on his left hand with hopefully, a clear bored expression, without a trace of worry upon his face.

Then Cassie faints with Tobias groaning in pain, he turns to pick out the fallen blond while Jake and Rachel cry out, "Cassie!" "Tobias!" The two were already moving from their seats, ignoring the various whispers that spring up as the pair approach their respective crushes slash romantic interests. Marco does his best to keep from biting his lower lip in worry, he had noticed Cassie's condition, but then, as he looks between the two, Tobias isn't the one that's clearly blacked out.

As the four leave the room, he forces himself to remain, to gather up the left behind books and book bags. A glance causes Marco to sigh, only ten minutes had pass since he last glanced at the clock. The various whispers have died as the teacher takes control of the class once more, reminding them they still have five minutes to go before the bell rings. Marco does his best to keep his arms on the desk and sitting straighter then before, pretending to pay attention but the tip of his right runner is wagging about under his desk, a sign he really wants to be with his friends and fellow soldiers.

The bell rings and he quickly, haphazardly, puts his stuff into his bag before doing the same to Jake's then moving to do Tobias' then on his way to the door, he does Cassie's. The teacher thanks him for his considerate actions for his fellow classmates. He just remarks that he's already going to be visiting Jake, his best bud, so he might as well grab the others' pack too. Marco fast walks to the nurse's office while carrying various book bags, though he wishes he could cast a spell to lighten the weight of the various bags as he goes.

Elfangor groans as he wakes, first it was that call about a Magician getting caught, now it's his little brother's call for help. Guilt flairs within him along with belittlement focus in on him at forgetting Aximili's being alive and stuck in the dome ship. His head is still pounding and it takes him a few seconds to realize that he's late for hooking up with Terry.

As he recovers his wits, he realizes that he fell from the air into some bushes, he's on his back and as he tries to move his wings, they hurt. Not good, not good at all and as he flips himself onto his feet,

his wings don't move right, meaning, meaning he needs to de-morph to heal the damage. Could this get any worst?

A hiss followed with a feline growl causes him to lose control over his Crow's instincts, cawing in alarm, he tries to take to the air. Elfangor does his best to regain control, to think of how best to deal with what's happening as he doesn't want to die like this! Not without seeing Loren again!

"No answer?" Jake asks and he nods his head, they have been trying for the past two hours to get a hold of either Elfangor at work or Terry. Marco has done his best to keep their mood up, after all, for all they know, the pair were already doing something about this underwater rescue.

"Let's just teleport over to his place." Tobias states for the first time in this particular hour. "He's bound to show up there, right?"

Then, suddenly, the pay phone rings and they glance at each other before Marco picks up the phone, "Hello?"

"I noticed you have been phoning young Terry. I have located him but, well, perhaps I can offer my aid this matter?" The voice is that of Ajuka Beelzebub.

"What's he busy doing?" He asks after mouthing Beelzebub to the group, which causes them to straighten and become alert. After all, what else could be worst then a message for help being broadcast viva mind speak?

"His job, a stray magician has been caught by some Controllers. From what I can gather, Prince Elfangor will be joining him." Oh, well, silly them for tempting fate.

"We received a mental cry for help from a young Andalite." He explains and he hears Ajuka sigh. "Yes, I see. Well, you best answer it. I would wonder how well your Alteration spells are but, there's no

need too. I will meet you at the zoo. Acquire some ocean Morphs and then I'll teleport us closer to the source of the broad cast. Yes, the Yeerks know of it but are, well, I've done my best to distract them from my location."

"Sure, see you then." Marco hangs up the phone once there's a click that signals the Satan hung up. Turning, Marco says, "Good news! Elfangor and Terry are dealing with the Yeerks, leaving us to deal with this rescue! We are asked to go to the zoo, Acquire some ocean diving Morphs, where we will then get teleported out into the ocean by the Beelzebub." Then asks with a clearly fake, cheery smile and tone, "Doesn't that just sound grand?"

"On our own?" Jake asks with a tone colored in disbelief. As he replies to his best friend, he takes in the fact that Rachel clearly looks excited by this while Cassie and Tobias look worried, for pair at the Yeerk Pool, "It seems that a Magician has been caught, so they are dealing with that." This just causes the other four to get this look of disbelief, that someone capable of spawning universe cheat codes could be captured by some Controllers, which does beg the question of how that happened.

They'll get the story out of the pair later, for now, Marco's more interested in, you know, finding a spot to morph their respective flight Morphs. "So, we got our marching orders." He says, clapping his hands and stepping away from the pay phone. He begins to walk off, towards an alley. It takes the others sometime to follow, in the end, whatever indecision they were suffering from, it goes away.

Making sure to enchant his back pack and checking to see if his cloths plus runners need to be renewed, he crouches as he mentally focuses on his White-Tailed Kite, he almost picked the osprey that Cassie had Acquired before deciding he wanted his own unique flight Morph. Slowly, he shrunk and watches as his nose moves forward and seems to grow downwards while turning hard. His vision slowly alters while things continue to get bigger. The instincts of the kite also begin to take root and once he feels the changes stop, glances around at the others, while he may have been the first to start, he

wasn't the first to finish, then again, Cassie's talented when it comes to Morphing, according to Elfangor, it's called Estreen.

The kite isn't comfortable, being around the others in their current flight morphs, then again, they had all chosen Birds of Prey while Terry and Elfangor picked the common, garden variety crow. Not that it was much better, given, well, kite and crows form mobs. In some ways, it makes sense that the two unique associates of the Animorphs picked the same kind of bird. Which causes his thoughts to stray to this new Andalite and what they'll pick for a flight Morph.

As Jake plans how they'll make it to the zoo and Cassie suggests the group meet up, his mind is on what they'll pick for an ocean Morph as they each take their turns flying up from or straight out of the alley. *Shark? I wonder what's it like to be a shark.*

Axamili watches the underwater life swim about, it had been a risk but, well, he is tired of waiting. He worries, could he be the last of the Andalite fleet? If he is, then, it's up to him to do his best to fight the Yeerk invasion.

A shadow passes over him and his stalk eyes snap upwards, half expecting, well, let's just say that he's finding things to be off, without that scale beast visiting him. It's been a few weeks since he Acquired that one and he has yet to test that Morph, he's not sure why he's reluctant, he just is. Axamili hasn't felt the same since the encounter, it kind of feels like something predatory is lurking in his step. His dreams...

All four of his eyes close as he feels something... press at him. It bothers him, oh yes, it bothers him and his races prey instincts want to run, run until that feeling is gone. The aristh knows he couldn't escape, this dome, there's only so much **Room** ! He couldn't run, there's no where to **Run** !

His tail twitches and it sails over his head, hitting nothing and opening his eyes, there's nothing. There's just him, him and the

plants from his home planet. There's nothing hunting him in here, there's no predator, just a lonely and growing paranoid aristh.

:Hey, open the door, open the god damn door!: An unknown voice yells and Axamili looks around, then notices some odd looking beasts, five of them, looking very much out of place. Oh, well, it seems that its not Yeerks who answered first, but he doesn't know who the owner of the voice is. It's unknown but he does order the doors to open, he shouts out directions at the five and they swim off.

Axamili moves to run, run towards five unknown but hopefully friendly beings. He's tired of being alone, of feeling hunted. He just hopes that they will know something about what happened to the Andalite fleet. Soon enough, he enters into a swift trot instead of the flat out run.

He watches as five humans pull themselves out of the water, three males and two females. "Well, that was fun, we really much do that again." One of the males states, to his confusion. "Don't mind Marco, he thinks he's funny." The one female with yellow hair states by leaning forward and bringing up a hand to their mouth, the one named Marco's face does something while looking at the blond female before Marco upturns his face.

:Greetings.: He sends, not sure what to make of this, although their ability to Morph, someone broke the Law. "You want to know why we can Morph, right? I'm Jake." This human male sports dark hair but lighter skin then Marco.

:Yes, yes I do.: He states, there is another way for them to get the tech but Axamili doesn't like that idea, for it means that it's in enemy hands. "We encounter War Prince Elfangor little over six month ago. He was injured and he was preparing for a final encounter with Visser Three. He is the one who gave us the ability." Jake explains and Axamili feels any number of emotions at the mention of not just his superior, but of his brother. *:I see.:*

"He's alive, though, and we've also encountered two more survivors, too, so you're not the last. We got your message and, well, Elfangor is busy with business at the Yeerk Pool, so we came to get you." The final unnamed male human tells him and he feels relief upon hearing that, and yet, his brother, concern over his brother's fate at the hands of their People due to such a breaking of the Seerow's Kindness. *:Who else survived?:*

"Ah, Gaf... I mean, Warrior Gafinilan and Warrior Mertil. They are, were, experiencing medical problems in relations with Morphing so Prince Elfangor decided they would better serve as Ambassadors to the four Satans in Underworld." Jake answers and Axamili can't help but repeat, *:Medical problems? With Morphing...:* At this point, he's feeling kind of overwhelmed by, well, all of this information.

"An allergy and a genetic disorder." The final female recalls and Axamili blinks his main eyes at the description but it also makes sense why neither moved to relieve his brother of command. Axamili is only an Aristh! He didn't know the first thing about being a Warrior! :Who are the Satans? Why would War Prince Elfangor feel the need to reveal himself to them?:

"Ah, well, you see, we were six people when we encountered Eflangor. Terry, well, he's a Devil and he's the Devil in charge of the land where the Yeerks are using as a launching point plus where Eflangor landed. He kind of just did his job, plus, its because of him the Yeerks didn't find the ship that night." The male with yellow hair tells him. "Terry even allowed Elfangor to Acquire him, though that, well, Terry was ten and Elfangor, well, he kind of looks to be in his twenties plus blue hair instead of Terry's dark green."

:Wait, wait, wait, he Acquired this Terry once and Prince Elfangor automatically had a Morph that usually comes about from the Frolis Maneuver?: He finds that hard to believe. "The forst maneuver?" Marco states, something about that tone causes him to look, the look upon Marco's face looks close to Andalite amusement expression.

:May I demonstrate it?: Axamili finally asks after studying the five and they share a glance before Jake says, "Sure."

:I will need to Acquire each of you.: He tells them and they all nod their heads, it takes him a few seconds to recall that it means they agree. So, he approaches Rachel first, then the still unnamed female, then the unnamed male, Marco, and finally, Jake. "So that's what it feels like." He hears the unnamed male say.

Taking a deep breath, Axamili focuses on the samples and slowly, but surely, begins to Morph.

They all watched as the young Andalite before them Morph into a human form. Tobias watches in fascination as certain, familiar features slowly emerge. It's clear the Andalite decided on being a guy, he would have conjured something to cover the guy but, well, they didn't want to cause any more alarm then needed. It was something they decided as they dived down here, plus, they will likely need to etch a simple teleportation circled here, if only so that Elfangor and the other two Andalites can decide what to do with this ship.

What little they saw of through the dome, it looks like a garden, alien one but still a garden. It reminds them that they still don't know much of Andalite culture. After all, there's a green house in the basement of their house in the Underworld, so greenery must be very important to the semi-telepathic race, right? Then again, they didn't really have more then the one potted plant in the kitchen...

It seems that the Andalite has finished, this Morph did seem to take a slightly longer time but then, the resulting Morph wasn't based on a single DNA blue print but on five. Strangely, he compares the features to the few Devils he's seen and has to admit, the Andalite isn't as femininely male as some of the Devils. Tan skin, black hair, gray blue eyes, and looks kind of scrawny but stands an inch taller then Tobias himself. "So... what's you name? I'm Tobias and this is Cassie."

"Ax... Axa..." The newly dubbed Ax then begins to play with his new found ability to make sounds viva his mouth and throat. While Elfangor had done this to a degree when he first Morphed into his human form, Tobias can't recall him doing this beyond that one time. "So, Ax, huh? And here I thought it would be something unpronounceable." Marco cuts in after the other conjures a jersey, a rather large one, it features a stylized A with a blue cube. It's not the first time of clothing Marco created with that particular logo.

"Axamili-Esgarrouth-Isthill, an aristh of the Andalite Fleet." Yea, Ax it is, says, although he does repeat himself a few times, playing with the vowels of the English language while taking the conjured jersey with a look of puzzlement. It's kind of weird how much this toying with a language reminds him of a kid with a new toy.

"Here, let me help get that on you." He says, stepping forward to help with showing how to put the sport's shirt on. "I didn't see this on... with, with you." Ax pipes in once the conjured item is hanging from his shoulders, a very confused look gracing Ax's face.

"Well, Terry's been teaching us the ways of energy manipulation, given his race and others are made out of the same energy, it also help explain why we hang out with him given the whole alien invasion is still a... huh, what do Devils call their governmental body's secrets? Well, they just haven't clued in the rest of the Devils into the invasion going on." Marco explains as they all didn't really know how to explain magic to... well, an alien. Did Andalites ever go through a phase about believing in magic?

"That is interesting. What else can this energy manipulation do?" Ax asks, you can tell he is trying not to elongate a vowel or a snappish sound.

"We kind of plan to set up a simple teleportation circle here and, well, teleport out, likely straight to Terry's teleportation circle." Jake states and Ax's face takes on a stun expression along with, well, maybe hope? Or was it disbelief? He's not the best at reading people's emotions, not like Cassie or Marco.

"Do you need to make this circle to teleport or does it have another function?" Ax ask before stumbling, he reacts to keep Ax from falling while the young Andalite looks a bit confused before staring down at his legs. "Yea, walking on two legs will take some getting use too." He tells Ax while the others are already walking towards what could only be the door.

Ax's cheeks go slightly red, embarrassment or anger? "This is a very unbalance way of moving." Ax states and Tobias snorts as he lets go as Ax regains his balance. As Ax focuses on walking, he walks next to the alien, to be sure to catch him if he loses his balance once more. The others wait by the door as none of them know how to operate Andalite technology.

To be continued . . .

Epic World Cover Ups! Yay?: Animorphs

I don't own Animorphs and High School DxD!

Ray can't help but reflect at his actions these past weeks. Namely, his curiosity kept him from leaving, after all, why did members of the Sharing sport two living auras? Well, it looks like he's got his answer as he's herded towards one of the lines that approach the pool. He can't help but notice the looks of defeat and hopelessness on a number of their faces, guards seem to be assigned to a select number, likely known flight risks or maybe to prevent suicides?

He debates about his next course of action as he gets his first glimpse of, well, it looks like a maggot crossed with centipede and lobster plus crimson jello eyes about a toothy maul. "What the fuck is that?" He exclaims in shock and a little too loudly. He has never heard of anything like that before.

"Taxxon, they'll eat anything and I do mean anything." The thirty something woman standing before him tells him. "Bleed a little and you can get rushed, their land sharks that way. Always hungry, too."

"New, huh? Run away I think." The man before the woman turns to study him and Ray flushes. "So, how'd they get yea? A promise of a better life? Promise to take care of you? Always have someone there for you?" The man snorts softly while Ray sighs.

"I already have someone with me, I don't need, I don't need one of those to keep me company." Ray mutters, he doubts that anyone would believe him about that, after all, they don't believe that Angels exist any more at this point. That God exists or any Gods for that matter.

"Got off your meds, huh? Well, that's good I guess. I always wondered how a Yeerk would react to meeting someone with that

condition." The man pipes in and Leon mentally groans, he doesn't have an alternate personality, he just happens to sport a Holy Artifact made by God themselves that acts as a prison to a Spirit.

Of course, if I said that, nobody here will buy it. Fuck, I got to get out of here and that means, shit, do they even have wards? Leon wonders to himself and then realizes he might as well mine for more information, given the man seems to be happy chatting about all of this. Although, Yeerk is an odd name for a Devil to name a species, then again, so is Taxxon.

"So... who's in charge?" Ray asks curiously. "Visser Three, he's the only one in the Andalite. Andalites are blue furred centaurs, no mouths, extra set of eyes, and let's not forget a fucking long tail tipped with a blade."

And Ray blinks, that's, well... "So, there's other Pools like this in the world?" He asks and the man snorts, "Nope, just this Pool, for now, I guess. Then again, it's no secret that the Visser would love a more open invasion then this one person at a time thing."

"Who's above these Vissers?" Ray asks and the man answers, "The Council of Thirteen, I think? It's their politics, you know? What does a mere Host need to know about their politics, it's not like we matter more then being a meat puppet."

This was, he doesn't know, so fucking unfamiliar. "How about security? What do they use to hide this place?" He asks.

"Just alien tech plus, you know, having Controllers in key places to keep this Pool undetected." The man says and Leon pauses at the mention of technology.

Ray sighs and risks it, it takes a lot of energy to do this all internally but as his vision alters, he finds, pretty much no magic. Hell, the things in the Pool, how the fucking hell could they be natural? And yet, they were and not a hint of magic. He glances around and finds no Wards or defensive spells waiting to spring into action. "Aliens?

Really? Mother fucking aliens? Like a fucking, shitty B-Rated movie? Geez, since when did my life shift from Fantasy to Science Fiction?" He wonders out loud, a tad too loudly given a number of people stare at him.

"When you got off the Bus, obviously." The Spirit whispers with a touch of amusement. "That didn't require an answer." Leon murmurs while he is forced to shuffle forward as someone pushes him from behind.

Suddenly, magic flares in the air, the alteration to his eyes still being in effect, he notices the Devil, flying over the Pool but nobody else is paying the guy any mind. It takes Leon a few second to realize, "He's just a kid." Then he realizes, the Devil kid is hiding behind illusions and suddenly, he realizes, he should have done the same, when he decided to start spying on the Sharing.

Then the Devil's gaze focuses in on him and Ray can't help but stiffen, it's clear, kid or not, the Devil isn't happy. Not one bit, although he's kind of curious, why was the Devil here? After all, there's no magic here...

As he watches, the Devil pulls something out, it kind of looks like a cell phone while the Devil keeps an eye on him. "Lost his mind already, pity, he's so young." He hears someone behind say, then again, they can't see the Hell fucking Devil kid hovering over the pool, using illusion magic to hide his presence from those not trained in magic. *So, is this a Devil plot or not?*

It had taken the War Prince forty minutes to arrive at the location. It seems that a message for help had knocked him for a loop and found himself having trouble concerning a cat plus finding a place to de-morph. Unsurprisingly, it had been easy to get into one of the screen rooms. While the War Prince begins to hack into the Yeerk network, Terry studies the lay out of the Yeerk Pool, to get an idea of what to feel for.

After a few minutes, Terry moves to meditate, to do a minor divination of the location while he's mentally preparing the illusionary spell to cover his teleportation. It takes him time, but he can see the area clearly in his mind. He mentally calculates the 'blind' teleport and keeps it in mind as he opens his eyes, he's not sure what the War Prince is doing and though he's tempted to check on his phone, he keeps from doing so. Leaving the phone on mute.

:You are good to go, I have complete control now.: The War Prince informs him and Terry stands, squaring his shoulders, bringing his wings out as his shirt makes slots for them. Giving the Andalite a nod, the Devil engages the glyphs that have been hovering about his form, casting the illusion above the Yeerk Pool before blindly teleporting there.

Once there, Terry glances down below as he hovers in the air. He can't help but gaze in pity at the humans currently in the various cages. It's so loud and at this time in the day, there's no alien Controllers in sight nor any caged alien hosts. Which could have seen through his illusion, then again, as he takes out his cell and phones the number where the War Prince is holding up. By the third ring, the now human War Prince picks up the phone.

"I found our Stray Magician." Terry then proceeds to give the Andalite a description in order to find and erase any kind of evidence they have of the run away. Once done, he waits, after all, the War Prince will need to give him a rough estimate of when to go for the guy.

The Stray Magician looks to be in his late teens, maybe twenty would be pushing it, given the fact the human still possesses that unfinished look. The Stray Magician's current hair color could easily be dyed to be that bright blond. The eyes seem to be orange hazel, then again, that could be the light or maybe the result of Alternation spell to their eyes, could even be a Tell of a spell. Terry likely won't know until he's gotten rather close to the human.

"According to this, his name is Ray Leon Martin, age sixteen. Born in New York, New York. Although, it says he had been living with a

great uncle in small community of Redden in Texas since he was eight years old." Prince Elfangor reports. "Great uncle's name is Peter Albert Carpenter, mother's side of the family, one Fran Leona Martin, wife of one Henry Ford Martin. Both died on the same plane heading to Italy to visit a second cousin while Ray was eight."

Terry hums, although he really could do without the background on the teen. He had just wanted a name and previous living address, but does his best to keep his annoyance on his face, glaring down at the human who not just interrupted his daily noon nap, but got *caught* by a bunch of *Controllers* , human Controllers most likely. Did or did not the teen think to use his magic? At all? It's pathetic, really.

And now to get him out of here, hand him over to Satan Leviathan and/or Satan Beelzebub. Then it won't be my problem! Nope, not once the Stray has been teleported to the Underworld. Terry muses. Although the young Devil knew that he could always just kill the trespasser. Nobody would blame him... Then an image of Cassie and the other Animorphs flash through his mind, yea, he... he just couldn't do that. His relation with the group, he rather likes it and wants to... he doesn't want to disappoint them, to overly upset them. He cares about their opinion of him, that they have expectations of him being a decent being, of, you know, being a mature kid.

He's changed, there's no doubt about that. Terry sighs and asks, "Any problem come up yet?"

"The announcement should be happening..." Then the alarms go off and the power of the Yeerk Pool goes out along with the alarms. "I didn't do that." The War Prince whispers in shock.

"Don't matter, I'm going for him. See you back at my place." Terry says, ending the call and as he puts the phone away, he's flying towards his target. As he gets within three feet, he already mentally prepares the teleportation spell with the location being his house. With a secure grip of the throat and one of the arms that came up to fend him off, he engages the mentally prepared spell.

"What the fuck?!" His target cries and stumbles onto his back while Terry is quick to let go and turn quickly around, his eyes widening at the sight of someone he only expected to see later in the evening, not right then and there.

"Well, well, well, what do we have here?" His **Mother** inquires, her golden eyes lingering upon the Stray Magician. "Fucking, fan-tas-tic! From the..." He is quick to cover Ray's mouth, having flown quickly behind the Stray Magician.

"Just capturing a trespasser. This Stray Magician didn't report to me upon arrival and a source of mine told me he got picked up by a group of terrorists for being sloppy." Terry explains as calmly as he can, keeping to close to the factual truth. "He was in danger of a very through interrogation by said group. They have an unusual way of getting any information out of people, Satan Beelzebub is researching them." Hoping that will keep her from pressing matters further.

Ray can't help but stiffen at the mention of one of the four Satans. Then again, the story this Devil kid just fed to the very attractive, golden eyed vixen of a Devil, well, in a way, kind of explains why his mouth is covered. It seems that he really stepped into something shitty, something that stinks to high heaven and it's clear that the kid was doing his best to keep silent about the fact that there's some kind of happenings going on in this territory.

"Oh ho, so that's why you've got a direct line to one of them, I take it?" The She-Devil inquires and didn't that just send a chill down his spine. How is it he still has an intact throat at this point? He's pretty sure that killing him is more then in the Land Owner's right. After all, the kid Devil wasn't wrong, was he? Whatever a Yeerk is, they did infest people viva their brain, which means they integrate themselves into said brain.

"Does this little," He flushes at being called little, "trespasser have a name?" She asks and Terry replies in a flat tone, "Ray Leon Martin,

age sixteen. Previously living with one Peter Albert Carpenter, listed as his great uncle. Born in the city of New York, orphaned at age eight, and had been living in Redden, Texas."

He can't help it, his eyes widen at just how much information the brat has on little old him! Then, suddenly, it makes sense, doesn't it? *He knows, he has to, about the Sacred Gear.* Ray thinks to himself. He finds himself paling as the beautiful, sex, and oh so lust worthy Devil look very pleased about all of this.

"He'll make a fine addition to you growing Coven." She tells the brat... then, as if they were in sync, "What?" The kid says out loud while he think that word. *Shouldn't she have said Peerage?*

"Your Coven, you know that young Mr Martin here is in possession of a Sacred Gear, no?" The She-Devil asks and the, well, maybe son, says, letting go of him and moving back a step, causing him to try and catch himself, murmuring ever so softly, "Well, isn't that fucking fantastic, really, you just had to have one of those? Why didn't you *use* **it** ?"

He can feel the heated glare from the kid Devil, he has to remind himself that the brat can't be older then maybe twelve, maybe thirteen. "I would have thought someone with such an advantage would have gotten himself out of the situation I had to rescue him from." The brat states, already moving to stand to his right, clearly addressing the adult Devil.

"Nobody got a good glimpse of it before he killed his... teacher." The golden eyed Devil explains and he looks off to the left, ashamed of how reacted. It's clear to him, now, that if he had just stuck around, he could have explained what had happened, of defending himself. *I could have demanded to be questioned in a Ward that detected lies but no, I panicked and now, now I'm just a commodity to these two Devils, in the middle of some game between them.*

"Up and ran? Guess he didn't think anyone would stand up to defend him." The brat muses and he winces, but, yea, it kind of looks like

that, doesn't it? "But why should I add such an unknown to my young Coven? Wouldn't you prefer him to under your guidance?" And the brat doesn't want him, then again, why are they talking about Covens? *Why not just, use an Evil Piece on him at this point?* He glances to his right, getting a better look at the kid and, well, unlike Sexy, there's molten silver eyes seemingly glowing. The brat sports dark green hair and is clearly not even in his pre-teens, so maybe eleven or even ten?

"Interesting, I don't think either of them have a King Piece bound to themselves. How unusual, don't you agree, partner?" The Spirit of the Sacred Gear whispers and his eyes widen, because, well, why the hell wouldn't they have a Peerage? *Why do I even care about this? It's not like it matters, it just means that I won't have to worry about being converted to another species viva this pair.* Ray mentally admits.

"Can't a mother simply want to see her only son grow into a fine, young Devil?" And there we have it, they were indeed mother and son. Well, fuck, but, why didn't the brat didn't want to just accept this, after all, what better way to keep him from blabbing about what's going on in his Territory? Particularly if she doesn't know? What's he so defensive about? He's not even old enough to be having a teenage rebelling phase!

And yet, it's clear that this was happening before him. The mother wanting him to stay with the brat while the brat kept defending his position of him being better off with either herself or with a relative. He finally gets a name for the brat, Terrance and their House, Oriax. To be frank, he just grew tired of their argument and says, "Enough!" Standing up, he turns to the brat, saying, "I don't want to be in the Underworld, that means I am staying here! As for your oh so precious Coven, you can't teach them everything they need to know and unlike them, I've had years of training."

Well, fuck. He can't help but think as two sets of eyes regard him. Then, suddenly, they weren't alone and wasn't that a surprise? He turns to regard the teens, likely no older then maybe fourteen. "They

can teleport so soon?" Mother Oriax coos, yes, she fucking coos and the teens glance from him to her then to Terrance. To be honest, he's jealous, at sixteen, he hasn't even been taught the basics of teleportation magic and here, it seems, were fucking amateurs, already getting lessons on it.

"Ah, hi? So... your Terry's mom then?" The darker skinned teen pipes in curiously while one of them just looks confused and a bit unbalanced. Terry... they were calling him Terry and he allowed them too? What kind of Devil is this brat? **"Seems like you're in luck, no Peerage for you, just a Coven."** The Spirit remarks as Mama Oriax introduces herself as Helen Oriax of House Oriax, although it seems he wasn't alone with being a new face as Jake introduces Andrew 'Ax' Waves, the latest recruit that the group had just retrieved.

Ray studies the group, noticing how they keep their bodies between Ax and Helen, then, he thought he caught someone casting a spell, but when Helen finally parts the Animorphs, yes, that's the name of the Coven, everyone seems to tense as Ax remarks about how nice her eyes look, there's something about how he said that, but, well, there's just something off about Ax, not that it seems to matter to Helen. Soon enough, a ward goes off and Terrance pipes in that it is likely Allen, come to discuss business with him.

Soon enough, they all begin to move out of the room, he finds himself face to face with Cassie and Jake. "So... you got caught by Controllers, huh?" Jake asks once the others were clear of the door and he blinks.

"You know." Ray states and Cassie gives him a pitying look. "Oh, we know, in fact, that's why we're Animorphs in the first place." Jake tells him. "So... actual Aliens or just Devil plot?" He finally asks and the two blink in surprise before glancing at one another.

They then break down laughing and when they finally recover, it's clear that whatever tension seems to have lessen. "It's really aliens. It's funny, Terry had that same reaction, he couldn't believe it was

aliens either. He even demanded... Allen's military rank." Jake states with a grin and, well, wasn't that swell.

"The Satans..." "Know. We've met with them, some of them more then once." Jake admits and he just sighs, it looks like he's going to be sinking or swimming in a much wider conspiracy then he ever thought possible. "They are still thinking of how to break it to the Supernatural World or mostly how to leak it then confirm it." Cassie admits. "So... how did you get caught? I mean, you have illusion spells, right?"

He groans, saying, "Don't remind me. To be fair, I didn't resort to magic due to thinking they could detect it. Then I was in a crowd and by the time I thought to check for such..."

"You got rescued." Jake states and he can't help but note, how much older these two act. "I take it Terry didn't get around to talking with you before his mom showed?" Cassie asks and he nods.

"That friend of your's..." Ray begins and Cassie sighs, explaining, "He sent a message out and, well, we just rescued him from his sunken ship."

"So, alien then?" He asks and Jake nods. "Alteration or maybe Transfiguration technology is how he looks human. He, did a particular trick with it to get his current human... shape. He'll need to return to his natural shape in a while."

Ray blinks, that's, well, that kind of answers some questions and yet, so many more just crop up. "How long until they notice we're not there?"

"We got plenty of time, Terry'll do his best to send Allen down, likely with a cell phone. So, we'll do our best to field any questions you have in the mean time." Jake offers and he nods. After all, what else can he do but accept that aliens exist, that he's going to be interacting with Devils, and that, he's involved with a cover up of epic world shattering portions.

To be continued . . .

Background Character Union, Stated!: Ani

I don't own Animorphs and High School DxD!

It is a strange life he leads right now. The battle above the planet the natives call Earth seemed to have occurred years ago when it has only been little over half a year at best. Then again, the battle had been lost, both Gafinilan and himself still lived pass that defeat. What wounds his fellow Warrior had suffered, they healed with a simple Morph, a de-Morph later and the one who he holds dear was once more unmarred by the battle.

Not so for him, no, he had to be allergic and seriously wounded from said battle. Gone was his tail blade, broken hind legs, strained back, and feverish from infected cuts. The end of his service to their People and burden upon the one he wishes to life the rest of his life with. If not for Gafinilan, he would be dead, be it by Yeerk or infection, with his body disposed of or found by an unaware human. *Or perhaps a Devil would have found me? Or something else?*

Mertil slows to a canter as he spies Serafall, Satan Leviathan, a Devil, and the one in charge of Diplomatic Relations on behalf of the Pillars. Trotting towards her, curious as to what brought her to visit him, for Gafinilan is currently working at Ajuka's Lab, likely reviewing the dimensional pockets that Ajuka has been working on.

He is unsure of what to make of these... additional species that share this particular planet. It defies convention, there has only ever been a single intelligent species per planet, mostly due to the simple fact that the two species would be at odds over resources of said planet. The nearest of co-habitation of a planet, well, the more intelligent of the races proved to be physically handy capped and the other, still in the process of gaining higher brain function.

"Mertil, how's it going?" Serafall inquires politely, it still fascinations him that all the species seem to share the same body blue print. Even the species that comes the closest to that of an Andalite own body plan still have mouths.

:I am as well our previous encounter.: Mertil states in a rather calm manner. *:What do I owe the pleasure of your company?:* He is whole after all, there's no sign at all of his weakness, of his defect to his being. For that, for that he knows that he's indebted to Ajuka and the other Satans, for not only in elevating his allergy, but for Gafinilan as well. After all, his Shorm's disorder would have only gotten worse, being forced to Morph constantly day in, day out.

"Well... how would you like to stretch your sights, as it were?" Serafall asks after a few seconds of silence. *:In what way?:* He asks, focusing his main eyes upon her while his stalk eyes move about, lazily glancing about the green house that is the basement.

"We have recently released information concerning the Yeerk Invasion to both Heaven and their Fallen siblings." Serafall says, slowly moving for the door and he walks with her. "No word yet from Azazel concerning this but we have received word from Michel about speaking with one of our sources directly."

:You wish to ask if I would be interested in meeting with these... Angels?: He asks, after all, he would have thought they would have Gafinilan to do so. "Yip, you see, we've noticed you seem to be, well, unoccupied compared to Elfangor as well as Gafinilan. Plus, when Azazel gets in contact with us, we're pretty sure Gafinilan will be the right guy to met with him, what with them both sharing the same fields of interest." Ah, so scientist as well as leader of the Fallen Angels.

Mertil thinks this over and, to be fair, he finds himself very reluctant to step outside of this house. Change, isn't something he's sure he likes, given then number of changes he's gone through in such a short amount of time. Then again, Mertil can see if from the Satans' point of view, as out of the three Andalite Warriors, he really is the

only one who's been, well, directionless. :Will I be expected to leave the Underworld?:

"Nope, they'll be coming here, if you agree, we'll remodel one of the rooms here for your meets." Serafall states. "Heaven tends to be a just Angels area. The only other place may be topside, but, again, just because we can engage your Morphing abilities enough to heal you, it doesn't mean we fixed it enough for you to Morph into, well, a human. Then again..." Mertil feels her eyes studying him.

:I never Acquired a Human or anything beyond the native bird of my planet.: He admits, yes, he can't Morph but his allergy doesn't mean he couldn't Acquire DNA. "Ah yes, that many winged bird."

"Well then, I am more then happy to offer myself up to be Acquired, kind of curious what it feels like, to be honest." Serafall says and he is a bit startled, although he heard that Elfangor had Acquired his own human Morph viva the young Devil, Terry, he hadn't though he would need to Acquire a human Morph for himself, given his allergy, then again.

:Something that Ajuka wants to test out?: He asks and Serafall hums, it's an odd sound, one that has many means for the various species of this world, in this case, she's fairly sure that's a positive agreement noise. *:Shall we go to the lab then? I am sure Ajuka and Gafinilan would like to monitor the process. After all, why is it that Eflangor ended up a human instead of a Devil given he Acquired a Devil?:*

The mouth curves slightly and he's fairly certain Serafall's eyes seem to shine with an emotion, amusement, perhaps? He wonders if he'll get a better idea of how to read the faces and bodies of Devils upon Morphing into a similar body shape. After all, with Morphing comes that species's instincts, right? Which means a base line understanding of how the Morph understands others of its species, which, likely explains how easily War Prince Elfangor can interact with not just humans but also these Devils.

As Ajuka Beelzebub watches, the various monitors and other electronics capture the process of Mertil Acquiring his fellow Satan's DNA. Sure enough, the process goes off without any trouble that he can see and the read outs do seem to suggest that Serafall's magic has done something, nothing harmful, just did something. The monitors do show that Serafall is in a fairly relax state and so is her magic, a second later and her level of passive activity rises, both physically and magically.

"That was fairly relaxing." Serafall comments thoughtfully. "Well, then, let's see if this bore fruit, shall we?"

f course.: Is the Andalite's reply and the various instruments record the process of the DNA pattern seemingly crystallizing within Mertil's being. Yet, compared to the other recordings done previously from the Animorphs and young Terry, there's a bit of separation but that's to be expected given they the magic involved in keeping the allergy inactive. The enchantment keeps Mertil's condition from triggering as the process begins to manifest physically. Soft pops of air pockets within the bone release slightly as the bones alter themselves, taking on the body plan of an alien species.

It utterly fascinates him how this technology works on pure science and energy manipulated in a way not unlike magic, yet it is an energy that creates an anchor for a kind of gate or dimensional space that exists within the body. Compared to the previous people he's seen Morph, it's clear that Mertil's taking a bit longer, whether its due to it being the first time for him or due to the minor interference of the enchantment keeping his allergy from reacting. Ajuka notices the lighter shade of blue with teal highlights in the bangs, which is fairly different then Elfangor's own blue hair in human Morph along with Mertil's features going more feminine, perhaps due to Serafall being female? Mertil's eye color alters slightly, moving from the amber yellow to a amber hazel.

As Serafall conjures some cloths upon Mertil's human frame, it's clear that there's little similarity in features between them, Mertil even stands three inches taller then Serafall herself. The muscle

build is more in line with Elfangor's own, only a tad less bulky, kind of on the scrawny side to be honest, then again, that just makes Mertil appear more feminine. Skin tone is a little darker then Elfangor's own, making Serafall appear rather pale as the two stand together as Serafall allows Mertil to lean on her as he is pretty much looking around the room. It's very noticeable compared to the time both Elfangor and Gafinilan typically do these days when they are passing themselves off as human, but they do remain rather alert compared to the norm.

One might think they were paranoid if they didn't know the truth, that their natural body sports a second set of eyes that can move independently, not unlike ears tend to do on those life forms that have them upon the top of their head. It's not that surprising that Elfangor seems to be putting effort into not always scan around for danger, given that the alien spends hours on end in human Morph and a Controller might pick up on the habit as something to look into. *Going from such a wide field of vision to...* Ajuka muses to himself.

Earlier, Elfangor sent a text concerning him being invited along with the Animorphs plus two, one of which had been the Stray Magician slash Sacred Gear user and the younger brother to Elfangor who now sports the nickname of Ax, to visit one of the estates belonging to House Oriax, to get to know Terry's relatives. Falbium is monitoring the situation and will handle things when needed. If he were honest, he is rather surprised at how easily the boy fell in line with keeping his House in the dark, not even trying to try and use the situation as leverage to get some political clot. While a welcome relief in this case, a blessing really, it paints an odd picture concerning the boy given his... non-Devil behavior, oh it's clear that there's growing bonds of friendship and companionship between the young Devil and the Morph capable humans, but at this age and likely training, he should be angling for something from this.

It's likely one of the reasons they were all waiting for, as a human saying goes, for the other shoe to drop. He's touched on the matter of the sire but, well, there's no record of Helen Oriax seeing anyone

during the time when Terry would have been conceived. Oh, Ajuka now knows a great deal more about the mother, there's nothing concerning the father. Even the use of an out of date ritual didn't result in the name of the father, although the date of Terry's birth on the other hand...

Sighing, watches as Serafall aiding Mertil in getting use to being human and a slight smile as the Andalite plays around with producing sound. He's confident that even Gafinilan had gone through that phase. So far, Ajuka hasn't caught his fellow seeker of knowledge giving taste a try but it'll come in time. He is rather curious to what Gafinilan's experiences will be, after all, it's rather hard to imagine eating without tasting what one ate, then again, that's just how life evolved upon this world.

At least this will help get Mertil's mind from what ifs and what could have beens.

:How did this happen?: Visser Three once more shouts out in an enraged way that nobody could ignore. *But then, that's thought speech for you, it just gets insider your head.* Erek King, a Chee, muses.

Oh, he knew the answer to that question but wasn't going to answer it, after all, the Yeerks are the enemy. Yet, in pulling off the stunt that they did, people were alive, oh, the Yeerks likely didn't see it that way, but there's no telling what a Magician trained Sacred Gear user could do when backed up into a corner? *Lots of death, destruction, and secrets getting out. Global conflict that would cause the death of billions.* Erek muses.

It's why Erek's here, after all, behind enemy lines. Doing what he can to throw harmless monkey wrenches into their plans while doing his best to save lives of not just the Hosts but also Yeerks. In some ways, Erek finds the very presence of races from beyond Earth to be rather refreshing and rather simple compared to the complex politics of the supernatural species that make up Earth's hidden societies.

The technology of the Yeerks wasn't as well protected as Ajuka's or even Azazel's computers, which makes hacking it so very simple as it's just technology, no hybridizing with magic or cross platforming as quick magic rituals that some Magician Covens are beginning to look into.

Everyone just tries to look busy, doing their best to focus on their tasks. Fear, so much fear. Yet, it also, unknowingly, works more against the Visser then for.

It's something the Chee have a great deal of experience with, watching tyrants threaten and harass their underlings, thinking it will cause miracles to happen. Erek has known better tyrants then this Yeerk in Andalite body, then again, unlike the others in the room, he knows that lopping off his head won't kill him, not even exposing him for what he really is either.

There's nothing for the Yeerks to uncover with this investigation, Elfangor wasn't that bad when it comes to hacking, just not as good as Ajuka or even Azazel, but then, those two are old and always improving the technology. Which means that the Chee needed to be better in order to remain off the supernatural radar. Then there's the fact that they had done their best to clean up some of Elfangor's digital prints, they would have erased all except that Ajuka will likely check the systems out himself, so since Ajuka knew Elfangor had done some hacking, they had to leave it for the Beelzebub to find. Once more, his mind wanders off while he does the usual routine of checking the systems for the third time this last hour.

The Chee have been forced to evolve, to make improvements upon themselves if they wanted to remain hidden from the species that call Earth home. Magic's ultimate source is the soul and it turns out that yes, Chee have souls or had slowly developed them as they lived upon Earth. Each Chee's magical reserves varied and they were each, to use a popular term, special little snowflakes. They might have all been made equal once upon a time, but it seems, their individual experiences truly did define them, causing them to grow and develop in their own, unique ways.

Yet, still, they had their same old programing, not because they couldn't change it, it's because they don't want to. Every Chee made that choice and they keep making that choice every day. They don't do so to just honor their creators, but, because they have all had experience helping others deal with the taking of a life. It often doesn't matter what the cultural norm was, individuals will always be individuals, each looking for comfort once it hits home that the person or people they killed, were just like them, they had a family that cared for them, friends who stood by them, and things they thought were right.

Sure, some of those had been human, but a surprising number tended to come from the more... magical side of things. Then again, magic is about connects and want. It's sad to say but, humans weren't the most sensitive race on Earth. There's likely various reasons but Erek is firmly believing it has to do with the fact they evolved from herd creatures, that they like to turn off their brains a little too much, to have others do the thinking for them. Laziness, sloth, seems to be far too human a trait when civilization reaches a certain point and is even encourage by those that benefit from it, be they supernatural in nature or from human stock.

Soon enough the Visser Three is out of the room, what threats hung in the air, well, they weren't something Erek bothered to keep in his memory banks once his filters got through sorting out whether it was important to remember or not. Sub-Visser Hundred Twenty One sighs in relief after a few minutes of the commander of the invasion forces hasn't returned. A number of others all seem to do the same, the tension of having a commanding officer hovering over their shoulders had been distracting for most, never mind the fact that the Hosts likely had been happy to act up.

Pressure from two fronts, Erek couldn't keep a slight smirk from his face. He moves to get up, asking, "Bathroom break?" Sure enough, most of the others follow suit, standing up and they head for the door. It's been a good five hours of going over the patch work system that the Yeerks call their computers, it's no uniform as Yeerks just

jury rig it enough to access it and they move on. If it would work, he's fairly sure they would resort to using paperclips and chewing gum in their repairs.

Yeerks, the raiders of junk heaps, scourge of streamline programmers. Erek muses, knowing that it's not that they can't come up with tech on their own, it's just that, well, none of the higher ups were invested in improving what's not broken. It's a very... political mind set that even Gods, Devils, and Angels seem to share.

He wonders if the Visser Three will have something else to vent about, after all, there had been that Andalite distress call that happened around noon. *Oh well, not my concern, after all, that group did skip afternoon classes. It's likely sorted itself out.*

To be continued . . .

Unburden Skies: Katekyo Hitman Reborn!

I don't own Katekyo Hitman Reborn!

Memories were tricky things, well, that could just be Shi's humble option on the subject but then, that's likely few have his experiences when it comes to the subject. Oh, he knew the essentials up to a point, then again, as he looks into the mirror, the sight of his name hovering above his head, even that seems to have been effected by whatever caused his memory loss in the first place. Shi, well, he's pretty much learned, continues to learn, will always likely, learn to deal with this problem and pray that it'll never happen again as he doesn't want to lose what progress he's made in this pass three months.

Standing before the mirror, a full length one, Shi's eyes move about his body, there's very light scars that tell of rough childhood. Moving his head to the left and moving his left shoulder over, he can see the bite given to him by a criminal werebear, even now, two months, the bite shows no sign of fading away, although it's long since healed. Then again, that's to be expected. The bite mark will remain with him for the rest of his life, telling the world that he's no longer human.

Standing straight once more, the ten year old closes his eyes and calls up his stats. Everything outside of himself seems to fade out and time out, at least from his point of view. His name is there, at the top, his level, something he has learnt is very private and personal information, is there, sporting the number thirteen. Given when he woke from the accident that is the source of his amnesia, he have been level eight and fairly low level for someone of his previous species and age, it turns out. Five levels in three months, that's, well, yea. There's a bar there, measuring how much experience he needs before he can level up once more.

The next bit of information is his age along with the date of his birthday, October 14. Shi finds it ironic that its that same day that the

accident occurred, that it seems that for his tenth birthday, the universe's gift had been a fresh start in the form of, you know, forgetting your whole life that led up to that accident. *For fuck sake, Shi might not even be my original name, it could just be nickname or the last name I thought of.*

Next is his species, which, do to the bite of that werebear, is now that of a human werebeast, the human part pretty much means when it's day time, he's pretty much like a member of the human race, pretty much the same everything with a few exceptions. The sub-type isn't a bear though, which had been a fifty percent chance of happening, nope, his animal sub-type is a coyote. Unlike born werebeasts, he can only transform into his hybrid and animal forms at night, the time where magic is easier to preform and mana regenerates far faster then it does during the day. Then again, the Moon God or Goddess, it really depends on which aspects you worship, is the deity of magic along with the night.

It's not all that odd to alter one's species, there's plenty of rituals that allow one to become half something or to fully convert into another sapient race. The only thing is, werebeasts, they are kind of the results of a failed ritual of that type, which means that most are stuck with racial change, it's why those who convert viva bite will always have the tale-tell mark. Then again, most born werebeasts only use said rituals to alter their animal sub-type, not to change the fact they were werebeasts.

Thankfully or not, the time of day doesn't effect his racial passive which is atypical of most Bitten werebeasts, a ten percent heal rate over time. His racial active increases the rate of healing by eighty percent for a duration of an hour, a very not atypical active racial feature, particularly given that most active abilities only last for a few seconds. *Then again...* Humans don't get racial passives or actives, nope, humans just have an easier time gaining experience to level up quicker, but then, given most humans have a life expectancy of maybe a hundred years compared to, well, humans just had the shortest life span as even an Orc or Minotaur can expect to life to be

over a hundred, just not pass two hundred, if they ever succeed in living that long to reach old age.

His class, well, that's empty, which means that he doesn't have a class passive and active. It's this that is the most cause of concern for him, everyone has a class, it defines your progression in the world, which of your stats are easier to bring up, and, ultimately, how you view the world. A Tailor will have a different experience then a Dancer, even if they were the same level. That's not even bringing up the more sword, magic, and shield classes, like Warrior, Cleric, or even Thief.

Your class, yea, you can't alter that, your species, sure, your age, kind of takes a lot of magical mojo but doable, but your class, that's set in stone. A human Tailor could become an Orc but would still be a Tailor. A Dancer could pick up a rapier and learn to use it, to kill with it, it just means that they would be spending far more time working on a non-class skill, taking years to learn what actual Warrior or Thief could learn to do in a few weeks or two months of casual practice. Then again, that same Warrior or Thief wouldn't be able to successfully learn to keep to in step with the rhythm of a song or beat as easily as a Dancer could. If that self taught rapier Dancer turn fighter learn to make creative use of that natural ability in a battle? Well, it's all about approach, of using what tools and abilities you have.

Once upon a time, your class was hanging over your head, the same as your name. Telling everyone what you were and that was that. It caused people to treat others more by their class then by who they were. There's an epic saga of a Blacksmith using a magical medallion to hide his class from other's view, causing it to read Knight and how he got into a Hero Academy, even becoming the leader of his own Guild. Over the course of his adventures, even when he was revealed for his deception, his Guild did continue to follow him, more because of who he was then what he was. Oh sure, it likely took a long time for that deception to mend and for him to regain the trust of not just those closest to him but those around him.

The Hero Blacksmith is a very true history given that the end result was that said Hero managed to sway the Gods or Goddesses of the world that by having ones class for all to see may be the truth, it ultimately causes division, keeping people from learning more about their fellow beings, that it had become an excuse to create the Castes system and that it keeps people from trying to better themselves.

After all, the Blacksmith's level advanced further then any of his class had back then, even gaining class actives that allow the creation magical weapons and armor using rare metals and gems, looted from enemy monstrosities or exploring Dungeons. His creations, they wouldn't have come about if he hadn't succeeded in getting into the Hero Academy of his Kingdom and completing that first Quest. One of his friends, it is said, had been a very unique class, one that could only succeed in combat using a single weapon, one that was very unusual and that its unlikely they would have gotten far if not for him creating a far more durable version of said weapon. In the end, the Gods and/or Goddesses did look upon society and found that the Hero Blacksmith had a point, that the hovering class above a person did keep people more divided then united, so, they erased it from view.

That story, well, it's become his favorite, which isn't that unusual for his age. Although Hero Academies are a thing of the past, that doesn't mean that schools don't have Hero Courses, both during normal school hours or for summer school sign up course. After all, Fighter, Magical, and Rogue type Classes were still being born and it's not fair for their natural skills and talents to get ignored just because technology and magic have altered the way people fight. People still have certain expectations for those former classes that once made up the Hero Caste, like a Warrior becoming a officer of the Law or sports team coach. Plus most of it is just that their tools have altered, like an Archer now a days using a gun instead of a bow or crossbow or a Theif hacking a bank account viva a computer.

Yet... he lacks a class and thus, direction. And it shows, particularly how the next part that's listed showed him merely average in all of his stats, although his resistance is fairly high. *Nothing to brag about, that's for sure.* Shi muses as he looks at the 'bottom', there's a number listed there, one he didn't know what to make of. As far as he knows from what little he's been able to read up on, nobody else seems to have this little collection of numbers nor the plus symbol next to his stats.

Well, that's that, I just, well... Shi considers, once more, if he should see what would happen if he pressed one of those plus symbols. Namely the ones for Intelligence and Wisdom, given he sure could use the boosts those two are known to give. Intelligence helps one learn while Wisdom helps one remember, both were something he needs more of. Each morning since he reached level thirteen, he would do this, bring up his status and then spend time just staring at the bottom of the page and at the numbers that determine how things like how strong he was or how quick on the uptake he is.

Well, nothing for it, I mean, nothing ventured nothing gained. He tells himself and he 'presses' the plus symbol for the two stats five times each, bringing his Intelligence to seventeen and his Wisdom to twenty. The number at the bottom, it goes down by ten. Then, as he drifts away from the status page, it asks him if he wants to confirm the changes, which is rather... confusing and yet, comforting in its own way. He is oh so tempted to press cancel but, well, he picked his course, might as well stick with it. Willing yes to be pushed, a slight chiming sounds as he finds himself staring at his reflection in the mirror.

A slight smile reflects back upon him as he finds he doesn't feel any different, then again, he might once he finishes his morning routine before school. With a snort, he turns his back on the mirror and begins his shower. He's got an hour, a glance at his scroll gives him the time, before he's leaving his apartment to get to the bus stop. His shower shouldn't take more then fifteen minute, leaving him plenty of time to make himself both breakfast and a packed lunch.

"Hey Shi!" Mei von Falcon, a natural half goblin, half gnome, calls out with a big, fang filled grin and laughing yellow eyes. "Hey." He says as he walks over to join her on the bench with his lunch. "How's my favorite Thief, today?" He asks and Mei gently punches his arm with a unconvincing scowl upon her face.

"I'm the only Thief you know, so I can't count as being your favorite given you don't have a larger sample size to compare me too!" Mei lectures him, causing him to give her a smile. "Ah, but Mei, no other Thief could have stolen my heart quite like you clearly have!" Shi remarks in a teasing tone, which causes the young Thief to blush black while looking away and down at the ground as she slaps him in the same spot, saying, "Don't say things like that! People might get the wrong idea!"

Shi just chuckles at the three foot tall Mei before looking about for their other two friends. Russel Hooftread, Russ being his nickname, is zigzagging about, greeting various groups of people in a cheerful manner while Frost is talking with the drama club president. "S'up, looking good there, on the charlie horse, Mei!" The chatty dwarf comments. "That's got to be your best performance this month, yea?"

"Second best for the month." Mei tells their friend as he settles on the grass before the bench. "You weren't bad yourself shimmering up that rope."

"What kind of Warrior would I be if I couldn't shimmy up a stationary rope? Breaching the walls, vaulting from the edge to slam my axe into the nearest helmet covered dummy's brain?" Russ then answers his own question, "A poor one, that's what!" Both Mei and Russ were in the same Hero Course, then again, they were both older then Frost and him, what with both of them being fourteen. The two chat about the performances of their fellow classmates.

"Shi. Mei. Russel." "How many times have I told you to call me Russ? It's Russ!" Frost joins them, ignoring the glaring look that

Russ is giving him. "Hey." Both Mei and himself say at the same time as the orc weretiger moves to sit on Mei's other side with his bento. Frost and him share the same night class for young werebeasts learning to control/channel their animal instincts. They were both bitten nearly same time at the same store by the same werebear. Then again, that guy choice that location for maximum victims to convert into werebeasts.

"How's the casting going?" Shi asks once they've all taken a bit out of their lunches. "They still want me to play the villain." Frost states in a calm manner. "Trying to bribe me with a nice, shiny suit of armor made of bronze."

Given that Frost's class is Dancer, it's an offer meant to appeal to Frost's Orc pride more then to who Frost is as a person. Then again it's unlikely anyone knows what Frost's class is given that up until a month ago, Frost had been home schooled, which isn't that unusual given his species. Yes, Frost is deadly with a rapier, even giving Russ a challenge on more then one occasion when the two spar off, but then, Frost's been taught since he could walk to weld a weapon he, as a toddler, placed his hands on the hilt of. Yes, Russ usually wins most of their matches, but, according to Russ, Frost makes him work for those wins, which is a compliment given Russ's class.

Shi's had the honor of watching Frost practice with his mother, Urd, who is a dual welder of a short sword and a hand axe. He knows that Urd wishes for Frost to think about using a dagger in his off hand, which Frost doesn't want, given that Frost uses his off hand to do other things then just punch viva gauntlet covered arm, after all, Frost fights dirty and begin able to grab and pull an opponent off balance, catching an incoming attack, or even back handing is more Frost's style then chipping at an opponent's defenses like his mother's preferences.

"And they couldn't get Violet to cast an illusion on either Fox or Hans... why?" Mei asks, after all, Fox and Hans, both humans, have preformed villainous roles for the drama club before and besides, Violet's done illusion work for the Drama club for extra credit, given

she's the only Mage at the school. Then again, it's not like she gets to practice much magic given there's nobody around she can have magical duels with.

"Wants to make the production more... authentic." Frost states in a chilly tone. "I believe Grace even tried to use her Charisma stat on me." Shi snorts on hearing that while both Mei and Russ get rather huffy on hearing that, after all, Grace von Kimba, a gnome, her class is pretty well known among the students, which is that of a Storyteller. A class known for having high Charisma, then again, as a Dancer, Frost's own is fairly decent, then again, neither Mei or Russ knows what Frost's class is, which is for Frost to share with them then for him to do so.

"You should report her!" Mei exclaims while Russ nods in total agreement. "She should know better then to throw that kind of weight around! That's so... so NPC like of her!" Russ snaps, it's one of those old arguments, really.

In the past, back when there was the Labor Caste, Hero Caste, and Noble Caste, the Labor Caste was often nicknamed NPC, which is short for, Needs Protection Caste, given that what the Hero and Noble Caste considered the Labor Caste unable to protect themselves and only good for manual labor. Then again, it's not like the Labor Caste didn't have their own share of faults, given that the price gorging that went on when it came to Hero Caste or even Noble Caste selling or buying things from them. The Barter skill, a skill that the Labor Caste perfected and used to bleed coin from the Hero Caste, given that it's from the Labor Caste that took the raw stuff and then made useful items out of it with ease given their respective classes.

Those members of the Hero Caste with low Charisma always felt the blunt of the Barter Skill, which Warriors like Russ typically had then and somewhat still now. "It didn't work, did it?" Mei asks, glancing toward Frost.

"I walked away." Frost states simply, Shi can't tell if Frost was touched by this show of offense from the pair or not, after all, while Mei and Russ were friendly to Frost, they were more Shi's friends then his. He's pretty sure that, given time, Frost will come to consider them friends and not just friends of my friend.

"Well, good... No headache? Or double vision?" Mei asks, there's usually some kind of effect when someone tries to use their stats rawness on someone with a lower rawness of the same stat, typically a headache or some kind of sensor effect, like seeing double or a ringing in the ear.

"Nothing of that sort happened, but thank you for your concern." Frost tells her and after studying him for a few seconds, Mei let's out a soft sigh while Russ just beams. "So, is it because you're higher level then her or because you have descent Charisma of your own?" Russ wonders out loud before taking a bite of his lunch while Frost pretends not to have heard that statement.

Ah racial history at play. Shi muses as he focuses on finishing off his lunch. As they all managed to finish, the warning bell goes off, meaning they have ten minutes to get to their lockers to exchange their stuff before getting to their afternoon class. "Welp, good talking with you guys, but it looks like I have driving lessons to endure. Good luck in your computer programming class, Mei!"

"See ya" "Bye Russ and good luck with your math test later." "Gods damn it, I forgot about that!" "Fare well."

Sniffing around, Shi hears the tiger behind him snarl at the boar that's trying to come from his left, then again, Catherine's a bully and always did prefer to go for those smaller then her, which is why Frost is warning her away. Once Catherine's snorted and moved off to the left, walking stiffly away, he bounds backwards to where Frost is, giving the tiger's muzzle a quick lick to show his thanks before trotting along the scent trail he's been assigned to track down while Frost is to play bodyguard.

Really though, Catherine should have her own scent trail to go for along with her own bodyguard, which means she really shouldn't have time to come bother them, but then, Catherine's hated Shi when Frost seemed to prefer his company then Catherine's own. Some of the other students found it odd that a feline and a canine could get along so well, particularly a human canine and an orc feline. It's funny, Shi doesn't really know what he did to even get the other to regard him as a friend beyond respecting Frost's personal space and paying close attention to not just what he says but how he says it.

Urd also had been rather surprised, if he recalls, that her prickly son, had gotten along so well with anyone after just knowing them for a few hours. After all, he was invited over to their Yurt by the end of the second class. He accepted, of course, and, well, simple companionship grew into a fairly close friendship, after all, why else would Frost express an interest in going to school of all things? Most of those living at Trample Hill tend to be considered monstrous humanoids, thus they tend to pool their kids together and home school the lot of them at Trample Hill, with adults taking turns teaching them.

None of the others living there make much of a fuss, they all knew he was a werebeast, bitten by the same criminal that bit one of their own without his consent, so any human discrimination that might have been aimed at him never reared its head. After all, there's at least five other human werebeasts living on the Hill, he's not sure how many other werebeasts live at the Hill, then again, he didn't see the point in asking as it wasn't his business and he had his hands full with his own situation.

They get to the area the scent is the strongest and Shi does an air scent scan about the area before putting his nose to the ground. His nose bumps into the trunk of a large tree and he sniffs the trunk, placing his forepaws onto the trunk, his nose pointing straight up. They found the source and his tail wags back and forth as he whines in excitement.

Frost gives a rumbling huff and circles the trunk, head pointing up at the branches. Shi wanted to assume the hybrid form but, well, they were suppose to do this strictly in animal form, which means Frost will be climbing up for the source. Frost must have spotted what they were after as he crouches into a spring position. Soon enough, Frost is using his claws to dig into the tree bark and climbing up.

As Shi plants his fore-paws onto the ground, something slams into his side. He lets out a pain filled sound and before he could recover, he's ribs are bursting with pain. It becomes harder to think rationally, he feels his control over his instincts go.

There's a rush of scents and sounds, the roar of a tiger and the righteous bellows of a boar turning into frightful, painful squeals. The smell of blood, his, the boar's, and lynx's. A warm tongue can be felt while warning snarls, his whines of pain. Slowly, his injuries heal, in his panic, he must have activated his racial.

Once able to, he curls up, whimpering softly as the damage done by Catherine mend fast. The smell and sounds of others rush in to see what's what. Frost keeps growling but, in the end, allows Mr Xan'thus, half elf wereleopard in hybrid form to check him over. He falls asleep as he's getting picked up.

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Got to get away! Mamma! Please, oh please make them leave me be! Other such thoughts circle within Tsunayoshi's mind as he tries to escape his pursuers, tears welling up in his eyes, causing his vision to swim. All too soon, his lungs are burning.

Not really seeing where he's going, he just keeps running, not wanting the beating his pursuers plan to give him for all this effort. As his foot catches something, Tsuna falls forward and there's a flash. Once more able to see, the soon to be ten year old glances around in confusion, he had been in a park just seconds ago... It looks like he's on someone's lawn.

Sniffling, Tsuna moves to stand, glancing around in confusion. Looking back, he doesn't see anything out of the ordinary and he wipes his tears from his cheeks and eyes with the back of his hands. Sniffling some more, he feels something running from his nose, down to his lips. Using the hem of his t-shirt, he wipes his own nose. Confusion and uncertainty reign within the young brunette, he does see a path leading to a gate between some hedges.

As his lungs no longer burn and feeling his eyes dry out from his tears, he doesn't know where he is. Biting his lower lip, he turns his back at the gate and follows the path away from the hedges. Hopefully, he'll find his way home before nightfall.

Might be continued . . .

Readers: Check out Forged Destiny by Coeur Al'Aran for the inspiration for this short

Artic Team, Drek Mission, Frag Relics: N

I don't own Naruto and Shadowrun.

Blue with orange trim hoody vest enforced armor weave? Check! Goggles? Check! Armor weave cargo pants? Check! Combat knife? Check! Lucky necklace? Ah, nope.

Naruto pats his various pockets on his pants before checking the top of the dresser. "Frag damn slag!" The blond ork curses as he doesn't spy the necklace he won from his distant cousin during a sparring match when he was ten. Spending a good three minutes frantically moving about the room until he spies it on his bed. Letting out a sigh, he picks it up and after admiring the pendant, how it sparkles in the light of his room, he unties it and then moves it about his neck, retying it. He gives it a slight tug to check if the knot will hold, which it does.

Lucky necklace? Check! Next, he knows he has his throwing shuriken in two of his pant's pocket, his throw away comm in a different pocket, and various needful items ranging from a few standard credsticks and three Fake SINs of varying quality to some spare earbuds and two pairs of AR gloves. With that done, he walks over to his pack and checks the contains for the sixth time that hour, going through each pocket to be sure nothing is out of its place before snapping the snaps close and slinging the pack onto his back.

"Ok, good to go." Naruto breaths out with a nod, a glance at the alarm shows he's got about forty minutes to spare to get to the meeting point. Walking out of the room, he notices Gaara, his room-mate, meditating on the floor of the living room. "I'm off! Don't wait up!"

A grunt is the only acknowledgement he gets from the Troll and Naruto can't help but grin at the Shaman. Even now, he's not sure

what Gaara does for a living, he's bugged the other metahuman for the information and has even done stake outs, trying to figure it out. Nothing ever came from it, even when he managed to contain himself enough to do a stake out for a month. To be honest, he knows what he's like, he's chased plenty of roomies away with his nosiness, the mess he sometimes leaves upon returning from a hard mission, and, of course, there's his shear overbearing passion for life that often has him badgering his roomies into doing things with him, from watching sports to going to clubs.

Gaara, though, he's been his roomie for half a year and, it's mind blowing that he's still here. Then again, Gaara's not shy about expressing himself with a slap on the back of his head to get him to shut up or just covering his face with his hand to get him to stand still. Before Gaara, the longest roomie had been Weiss, not her real name, who only really used the apartment for one night stands. That was until he hit it off with one of those one nighters, about four months into their sharing of the apartment, an elf named Shikamaru, not his real name, who turned out was a brilliant Decker and had recently been fired from his latest Corp job for his slothful attitude.

Needless to say, Weiss decided a new location was needed for said one night stands, so he was without a roomie for a good month, then again, Shikamaru spent a good month sticking around his apartment for, well, good reasons due to vengeful, drek filled dicks being, well, slag screwing dicks. He did get some new shit out of that, but, well, he still misses that couch, it served him well since he moved in. It really didn't deserve to go out like that, but, that's life for ya.

He brings down his goggles from his forehead as he gets to his motorbike, Gaz-Niki Titan, he's had it for three years now. The paint job is silver and navy blue trim, he's got a wicked, crimson nine-tailed fox painted on the gas tank with a full, white moon behind it. With a snort, he climbs onto the seat and within seconds, he's on his way to the meeting point.

"Naruto." Sai greets him as he enters the room. "Sai." He greets the human, who looks like he's aggravated Leaf, short for Leaf+T=Cup. She glances at him before snorting and looking away, brushing a few strands of pink hair behind her ear, she's a Magician and he's known her for five months but only started working with her concerning this particular job. Not sure what caused her to dive into the shadows, what little Shikamaru was able to gather about her past, it might have to do with her cursing, quite literally, a overly handsy, very drek for brains manager who got what was coming to him.

Meanwhile, Sai is an Adept also a human. He's known of him for two years and worked on and off with him during that time. Naruto's fairly sure that whatever Sai did before becoming a Shadowrunner, it's likely being a Shadowrunner was a step up, not that he's ever asked Sai about his past, more because he's fairly sure Sai will tell him, in a very blunt, matter of fact, and emotionless manner. Yea, he... gets the feeling that its best not to know.

Spying Shikamaru, it's unsurprising that the Decker is on his back, seemingly napping. Next to Shikamaru is Spindle, an old friend of Shikamaru's, a former Corp security guard. He's a dwarf, decent driver and sword welder. He wonders about the spiral tattoos on the cheeks, then again, he's kind of curious as to what happened to Spindle's eye, cause it's a Bioware eye instead of a Chrome eye. There's no scar, just, just a new eye that is clearly not the one he's born with. Known them both for ten months now and worked with them concerning the issue of Shikamaru's 'firing'.

Spindle is leaning on the wall near Shikamaru, he nods a greeting and he sends Spindle a grin, returning the nod. He looks around for the final member, their Rigger. "Where's Iron?" Naruto inquires, not seeing an obvious drone that shows she's here, full Shadowrun name is IrOnMiNuSoReEqUaLsOrK, yea, a mouthful so he shortens it mostly to Iron or, in heat of battle, Ree. Which is her usual MoP, mode of operation, out of all of them, Sai is the one who knows her best. He wonders if the two were dating or something, he knows they've met in person, given the kind of conversations they have.

"Stuck in traffic." Sai answers while going through his comm with his typical bored expression. "What, really? Seriously? Isn't there anything she can jack into around us?" Naruto asks, glancing around the room.

"Rigger, not a decker." Spindle points out and he snorts, yea, he's heard that so frag line for to the nth time in his life. "So how long til she gets to her secure spot?" He asks after pacing for a bit and running a hand through his, surprisingly enough, naturally bright yellow hair. His other hand gently rolling his pendant between index and thumb as he comes to a stop, looking at Sai.

"We could proceed with the first steps, we only need the drones for checking our progress into the site." Leaf says confidently, then again, she's the rookie member of the group so, well, her suggestion gets ignored the moment she said we could. Plus, she's a wizard, likely thinking magic's all they need, never mind that the location is swarming with Devil Rats along with other magical critter inhabiting the drek filled sewer. He would rather the drones take point then a metahuman. He doesn't want to take unnecessary risks, chrome's cheaper to replace then lives, in his mind at any rate.

An odd way to think these days, but hey, he might have grown up in the barrens, that doesn't mean his parents didn't do their very best to install a sense of morality into him and his siblings. Yea, the world is a chappy drek covered place to live, and yea, metahumans are dicks to each other, screwing each other over because they were screwed over and on and on. According to his dad, for change to happen, it has to start with your attitude and the way you treat others, sure, you might not have good things happen to you, in the end, but maybe that good you inject into the world will get passed around.

And that's why mom loves him, even if she thinks he's a naive pretty boy. Naruto muses as he rubs his chin in a way that he hopes the others, almost mostly Leaf, believes that he's considering what she said, even though that's not the case. He wonders what his parents, siblings, and his mom's 'tribe' are doing right now... *What's today's date again? Huh, let's see, it should be November and the last stake*

out of the entrance was on the eleventh, which was two days ago... so, it's November fourteenth? Or is it the thirteenth? So... ah, yea, it would be uncle Sid and aunt Lan's wedding anniversary. Ok, so... What should I send as a late gift?

Naruto mentally muses over just sending them a full credstick and a nice, hemp paper card or maybe a few clips of pistol ammo instead of the cred? At the soft grunt and movement from Shikamaru, he comes out of his thoughts and regard the Decker of the group. "Good news, no drones were guarding the entrance. Bad news, GrassSlash's group merged with Kiba's Gang. Great news, they're thinning the population of Devil Rats and are taking injuries. Hellish news, Kiba's got his favorite hound with him, yea the hellhound, and GrassSlash's brought three Riggers." Shikamaru reports from his position on the ground, likely drained from his dip in the Matrix.

"Kiba's gang could call in about forty at worst, fifty on a good day. GrassSlash's group... huh, let's see, twelve before these three riggers, so, frag knows how many drones between those three... Fucking, fragged flung drek." Naruto curses. Then he pauses and digs through his pockets for a pair of AR gloves before lowering his goggles. It takes him a few seconds to get to the file filled with information concerning previous teams who've been hired.

"Naruto?" Leaf asks before Sai shushes her, he could only guess the looks Shikamaru and Spindle sent her way. He re-read the various reports, this mission is rather odd in how it remained unfulfilled, you'd think after a year, some team would have been able to complete this run and yet, this has been an on going mission for nearly five years now. Corps have used their own teams, arc-ers have tried to evac the area, and, if his memory serves him, a wizworm had been on site to lead an attempt. There's been plenty of reasons why, slag fragging drek, magic and tech problems came up just as much as unknown critters and wards.

He skims through the latest report, the one that mentioned one of the Shadowrunners, a woman by the name of R&WeN, not just surviving getting knocked out but her team getting her out fairly unharmed.

'There was no way to describe it. I was me but, then, I wasn't at the same time? That woman though... human, which is how I knew I wasn't me, I mean, I'm a fucking Elf! Not some... some drek spawning Breeder! Takaya is so not my fucking name! I'm no fragging waitress either!'

"I know that drek eating grin. What's the plan, dickless wonder?" Sai asks as he moves out of his data store. Moving his goggles back to his forehead and slowly pulling off his AR gloves, he says, "We do as carrion eaters, we circle on the edges of their efforts, we wait for them to end up flat on their asses and then dart in for the prize. There's something about... anomaly that will create our opening for us. Hopefully, what defenses there are won't recharge fast enough to do anything concerning us."

"What? Why? What makes you so confident that they'll fail to begin with?" Leaf demands in both anger and in disbelief. "Because if a wizworm couldn't beat this puzzle after sticking with it for eight months with better cred to bring to bare, what are the odds that this merger between a gang and team?" He states in a calm manner, although he rather she not be shaking her fists about like that, making it seem as though she' just an inch away from assaulting him in her anger.

"Wait, what?" Leaf pales as her arms fall limply to her sides. "Yip, Shikamaru's dug up as much intel about this place, all five years worth of it, no matter how hard the Corps tried to hide it. Yes, this has been an area of interest for nearly five years with plenty of other teams having tried their skills and luck. Problems range from tech and magic to Awaken critters and alien wards."

"So, let others set off the traps and come in behind them, hoping those traps haven't reset." Sai muses and he nods. "Sounds about right. Right now, we aren't in a rush, as the sooner we get there, the more refreshed they'll be and will do their best to chases us off."

"The later we get there, the less incline they'll be to actively drive us off." Spindle finishes that thought. "Although... how can this possibly

work? You said yourself that in *eight* **months** , not even a *fucking* **Dragon** could *not* crack this place." Leaf retorts, clearly trying not to chew on her lower lip.

"Don't rightly know, but, well, nothing ventured, nothing gained. Even if we don't, at least we should walk away from this in better condition then either Kiba's gang or GrassSlash's team." Naruto replies in an honest tone and it seems that she couldn't fault that logic.

"Where are you?" Gaara asks him, which is kind of odd, given he hadn't expected his roomie to sound so... worried? Naruto is fairly certain that there is a hint of concern in the troll's tone of voice.

"Ah, kind of on a stack out. Pretty much sticking to the shadows." He answers from his location on a run down building's roof. "What's up with you?"

"What's the job?" Gaara asks and he hums thoughtfully for a few seconds before answering, "Just a sneak in, grab it, and speed out kind of job."

"You are near a dimensional weak spot, you are near a very unstable, very weak, and very alien dimensional weak spot." Gaara states in a fairly chilly tone. "Whatever it is, just cut your losses and leave."

He blinks at the order, for it really does sound like an order, which, well, it's kind of touching and yet... "Ah, you really do care, don't you, roomie? Why else would you have spirits keep tabs on me?"

Gaara doesn't speak for a few seconds, Naruto could imagine the look on the shaman's face and he goes on, kind of curious what the Spirits have said of the place. "So... alien dimension... like, what, little grey men?" He kind of recalls old records concerning alien abductions.

"More as in operating under different universal laws." Gaara states after a minute of silence, clearly debating on answering his question. "That... that kind of explains why nobody's managed to get to the so called heart." He murmurs thoughtfully, running a hand through his hair, looking towards the circle of vans. There's a number of trained hounds plus drones patrolling the fringe. "Could explain what she experienced too..."

"But, well, I kind of promised the crew we'd give it a try. At this point, we're just doing a waiting game, so chill, roomie. If there's no break, I'll be home by noon. No point in sneaking anywhere during the daytime, you know?" He promises his roomie in a cheerful tone.

"You'll end your job by noon? You swear?" Gaara asks and Naruto rubs his neck, this worrying from Gaara is rather, out of character. "Yea, I promise." He says with a soft sigh after a minute of silence on his part.

The comm ends and the blond ork isn't sure what to make of the new intel. "Hey, Leaf, I need to talk with you." He says once he switches to the group linkage.

"What about?" She asks, clearly irritated by something, most likely source of said irritation being Sai. "What can you See? I mean, with your voodoo eyes?"

"Same old, same old." She says but he frowns. "Check, now. My roomie called, he sounded worried." "Gaara called you? Really?" Spindle asks in surprise and he just hums in a positive way.

"Fine, but everything should be arctic." Leaf states, clearly thinking that this was a worthless waste of time. "So, horny is check up on you? Must miss you're smooth backside." Sai comments while Iron snorts in clear amusement at the statement. "I hear red hairs are dynamite in the sack." Iron adds in a light tone and he rolls his eyes at the comment. Really, the two of them can come across as such perverts on the job, always happy to rile people up just for the hell of it by such innuendos.

He doesn't rise to the bait, although Spindle wonders how much booze it would take for that to ever happen, for the both of them, which he is kind of thankful for. Minutes tick by and the conversation moves onto what positions would be the most comfortable for trog and tusker to get it on. As he's listening, he's gently rolling his pendant about between two fingers, his face rather impassive. Tension seems to spike and the hounds suddenly whimper and cringe or toss back their heads to howl. The drones are not effected and the casual conversation that had been going on stops.

"How's Leaf?" He asks and Sai reports, "she's, ah, sweating and her face is... Oh drek!" A few seconds later, its Spindle that pipes in, "Things are fine, it looks like some force blast sent Sai flying through two walls. Luckily, he's an adept. And... Leaf's skin is now glowing green."

"Lovely spring green or hideous toxic green? Her dye job fade yet?" Iron asks and he rubs the bridge of his nose. "Great, well, Shikamaru, no diving for you. Be sure to grab a few of Spindle's spare weapons along with kits. Ree, no private driving a drone, just, you two, just keep out of the Matrix." Naruto states as he's moving to stand on the roof, already moving to the stairs. "Fine." "Ah, and I was so looking forward to taking personal control of my latest war hound."

"Leaf's skin isn't green any more, I think she's asleep." Spindle reports. He's heading for the room, there's chaos going on at among the merged groups. "Sai's mouth is moving but, well, nothings coming out of his mouth. So, good news?"

Soon enough, everyone save for Iron is in the room where Leaf is, there's two drones hovering behind Sai and over Leaf's chest. With a snarl and a slowly increasing hollow feeling, he moves to pick her up, as he stands, he states, "We're leaving. Now!"

None of the others seem interested in arguing with his decision. By the time they are exiting the building, Leaf's eyes open and suddenly, her skin seems to crackle with lightning and as her mouth opens,

Naruto finds himself paralyzed. His vision swims as Leaf screams and Kiba's hounds howl. Then, his hearing goes and it feels like something is... probing him. He growls, his fright giving way to anger with a hint of despair.

Pain, a pain he couldn't even begin to describe arcs through his system for a bit and he struggles to remain awake. Then pain happens again but he tries to ignore it, fighting to get to his feet, when did he fall over? When did everything start gaining rainbow sparkles? Why does his back hurt so much? What's whimpering? The smell, oh dreking god, it's... greed with a hint of disease death and after flavor of toxins cocktail.

Sai, he notices Sai is hovering in the air, with glowing, silvery blue spikes seemingly poking from his bones or was it through them? It's almost like, those spikes were the only things keeping Sai alive. He thinks he shouts Sai's name, trying to move towards but his balance is off. He shakes his head, trying collect himself.

Then, he spies a bright gold and brown stag engulfing Shikamaru's body. Before his eyes, he watches the scars, or were they injuries? It matters not as the stag seems to be intent on fixing Shikamaru's body? Or was that his soul? Maybe it doesn't matter as it is all Shikamaru.

The next person he spies and gazes at is, unsurprisingly, Leaf+T=Cup. Her skin is once more green and yet, veins of crimson red pulse under or over, the skin? *Huh, I wouldn't have thought her pink hair was natural, who knew?* He couldn't help but note. His emotions seem to have dimmed and he is growing tired, oh so tired, but once more, pushes on, his reward is pain, icy and yet burning pain.

No, I won't give in. As he tries to look around for Spindle, it feels like he's moving slow compared to the rest of the world. *Where did that Troll come from? Wait... is that, really? That's Spindle? What's the deal with his horns? Was his skin always purple like that? Oh look,*

he's got four arms, all fleshly. That blue does go with the purple doesn't it?

"No, need to focus." A very gravely voice, his voice, states. He moves his hand, only, only it's not his hand. Even as he goes into shock at the sight of the limb, growls rumble from somewhere. He flares his wings and lashes his tail back and forth. Wait, since when does he have a tail? Or wings?

He looks at his back and finds that, yip, he's got wings, wings that look like scaly bat wings only, they have two thumbs along with only two wing fingers for the webbing to stretch between then, as he flexes, he notices the third wing finger by the elbow. The color seems to be white as the base with bright yellow as the trim. So yea, he's now snow white with bright yellow trim. Is... is this fur? That kind of looks like fur... And he tries to touch his wing, as his new talon finger moves lightly over the wing, that texture moves like fur does. Which means, he's a fuzzy dragon or is he a fuzzy drake?

His thoughts scatter and he let's out a painful bellow as something slams into his left side, he had been looking to the right. Rage eclipses his pain and he reacts without thought, taking a deep breath and spits out a ball of frost. The sphere moves fast and slams into the van sporting a gun turret. Ice encases the whole van and he lets out a bewildering bellow before leaping into the air, wings flaring. Within seconds, he's starting to land again on the ground but he refuses to stay on the ground, not with the incoming company.

Then, from his right, rather alarming metal beasts are charging towards the incoming hostiles. Then hot balls of energy zig-zag the air before transforming into metal pillars. Naruto glances about the area and then recalls his team, he circles back and taking a deep breath, he lets loose another sphere of frost at the nearest moving gun turret van. Upon getting encased in ice, it continues moving, only, not straight forward.

He does his best to defend his still knocked out team, the adrenaline keeping him awake and the pain just means he's alive. His vision

becomes tunnel like, his only goal, is protecting them. Then a large honk echos, startling him and waking him from his mental rut. He's about to attack the truck only, something stops him and he starts falling to the ground as, well, he's unable to hover. The troll driver, he's familiar and as the truck begins to slow, it swings around, the back of the trunk opens and a furry blond barks orders at him.

He doesn't really hear what she said, only what she wants. Naruto finds it hard to pick the others up, in the end, he's pretty much dragging them up to the ramp. One at a time, the first being Shikamaru, Sai is the second, with Leaf as the third, and finally, Spindle. Trusting they were safe, Naruto couldn't find the energy to stay awake.

"Well, at least he shifted back before falling asleep." Ree murmurs as she picks up the ork and leader of the team. Although, she's more then grateful for the new drake pushing himself so far on behalf of the team. They were Shadowrunners, Naruto could have easily just left once in the air.

Yea, she would have, in time, hunt him down and stuffed him full of lead, but she would have understood the reason, you know? Oh, sure, both Sai and her knew that Naruto prefers to put his team's health ahead of the mission but that could easily be more in not wanting to make enemies out of former team members. Now though, well, it looks like Naruto's just wired that way and she couldn't be more relieved for a very selfish reason, after all, Sai, Sai is her everything after everything she's gone through.

She punches the button and the ramp and door pull up and closes. Ree then gently puts down the, surprisingly natural blond ork and still sporting his cloths plus goggles, and the engine roars to life once more. It's been a good three hours since everything went weird and it's Gaara, Naruto's roomie, who's currently driving her truck. He showed up as she was still freaking out at the changes she's undergone. He pretty much got her to calm down and to demand she helps him get Naruto and the others out of there.

Not trusting that her technomancer powers at this point, she helped modify the seats and find the keys of the truck, something she, well, never needed to use before. She moves to sit by Sai's still body, the only signs of life being his chest moving up and done. She gently runs her fingers through his ebony locks while studying the silvery blue lines that seem to gently glow upon his skin, the design not unlike wires or old computer chip mental impressions.

For right now, she won't worry about what's to come, only wanting to hold onto what's right before her. They'll deal with the changes, she knows they will, she highly doubts that they could be reversed, and the fact that, something touched them. Something altered them, that it wanted to change them. She's gone through the same data the elf had and what happened this night, it was very out of character of the mystical whatever of the location.

Which means, GrassSlash's group triggered something as she doubts that Kiba or his gang could be the cause. "Thank you for staying, Naruto. Thank you for protecting them... him." She whispers, glancing towards the ork before glancing at the others, it's a shock that Spindle went from being a dwarf to a troll, oh, sure, her own changes or even Naruto's were fairly startling but something that's been documented to happen in any stage of life, but not an adult metahuman not just randomly transforming into another metahuman type, then again, into such a uniquely designed troll subtype? Purple skin with blue plates and horns? That the horns were more like crooked antler like spines with none of them growing pass a foot long? There's like, four pairs of antlers type spines.

Taking a deep breath, she slowly releases it as she closes her eyes, doing her best to relax. She focus back on Sai and prays that they can get through this. That Sai... well, that Sai is Sai.

Ending it here

Striding for Success: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter.

Welcome to the Capital Region!

Welcome to Ark'Tic!

The words, they couldn't be English yet, he understood them anyway. The sign is to the right while there's an emblem to the left, one that's very stylized cloud with a purple, four sided gem at the heart of the cloud. Between the two, a wide open gate complete with a pair of booths on either side of the road.

Guards are stationed at the booths, their uniforms seem to be gray leather with white metal plates. The helmets though, look to be one solid, white piece of metal, there is a snarling boar on the helmets. On their belts are not just pouches but actual, ancient weapons, like short swords and single handed battle axes. It's kind of intimating, not seeing their faces, the only differences between the six guards are their heights and what weapons they have hanging on their respective belts.

As walks pass the gate into the city, one of the guards gestures to the right booth and he walks over, trying to keep his eyes on where he's going but, well, it's hard! Once pass the walls, he gets his first sight of the buildings off in the distance, all skylines along with oval vehicles without wheels of any kind. They seem to fly about two feet from the paved road, going about the speed of cars usually go back home. He manages to see three of these, two leaving and one arriving.

He comes to a stop by the booth and finds an opening not unlike a cashier's counter. A man is standing behind the counter, trying to

look alert and interested while blinking rapidly. "Name?" The man asks, ending with a yawn.

"Evans, Evans Note." Yea, not the best fake name but, well, his mind kind of went blank at the fact that, never mind. "Evans Note? Sign here please." The man writes something down on a paper before reaching under the counter to grab something. What is handed over is a document, the man taps the bottom of the first page where there's two lines waiting for signatures plus a space for date of submission, once more he can tell that the language isn't English and yet, he understands it. "Ah, what's this?"

"Just registering for citizenship of Ark'Tic, you are moving here, aren't you? If you are visiting family, then please present your visitation paperwork." The man explains and he can't help it, "It can't be that easy."

The man smiles in bemusement, the wrinkles become more noticeable. "The process has been updated just last week. It took them three months to create that registry paperwork. Don't worry, it'll only take twenty or so minutes for your tuned into the system." The man explains and not knowing what else to do, he focuses on reading the seven page document.

His brows furrowed and he steps to the side, leaning on the wall as he skims over what's written. A frown slowly grows as his eyes narrow. Humming, he glances around before rereading in a much slower manner. It takes him some time, in which the people arrive at the other booth, no sound seems to travel from that side and when he pauses in filling out the document personally, he notes the angry gestures from those trying to leave.

Letting out a sigh, he shakes his head at that. There's a crowd and the man behind the counter just sighs, "Not again..."

"Yea, it's like they haven't read something that they signed." He says in an oozing tone, yea, he didn't like most of what he's been reading but, well, personal touch an all that. The man coughs slightly, but

otherwise, doesn't say anything more. Soon enough, the gate guards break up the almost riot and the crowd seemingly sulks back down the road, towards the city proper.

He gets back to his filling out the document, being sure to he reviews his answers and the boxes he's ticked. Flipping back to the first page, he signs the document with his birth name and then the name he's registering under, Evans Pendragon Note. "The date is?" He asks and the man tells him, he jots it down and then moves to stand before the counter.

"Here." He says, handing the registry document over to the, maybe, thirty something year old. The man blinks, clearly not expecting that he'd still register for citizenship after reading what he's agreeing too, but, well, he figures it'll be harder for various parties to reclaim him this way then trying for the rural parts of Capital.

The man recovers and he watches as the man begins the process of adding the filled out document, which is fairly interesting for him to watch. A crystal of some sort is taken from a collection in a cabinet. This white crystal the size of an index finger is then placed upon the document and the whiteness of the crystal seemingly shatters and the flakes fuse with the pages before they glow pink. The papers start folding upwards and shrinking until it's once more a crystal, only sporting a red glow.

"Just hold this for a few seconds. Then go on and step in the stone ring, it'll begin attuning you to the system." The man tells him after picking up the crystal, handing it to him. That red glow soon turns a pink within seconds of it resting upon his palm of his right hand. The man plucks the now solid, rosy pink crystal from his palm.

He then moves on beyond the booth to find the stone rings, there's about half a dozen of them and it's clear they get used given the trail upon the floor. Evans steps into one of the rings and the ring rises up from the floor with a glow of red. It stops three or five centimeters above his head, the glow turns pink and it then gets this, well, shimmering purple skin within the ring itself. As he looks up, the

purple color changes to a blue as it comes into contact with his hair. It's a slow process, the ring very slowly moving to the ground. The energy's touch is chilly, not ice cold but, well, it's noticeable.

He tries not to move much, letting himself just stare in awe at the skyline that's off in the distance. It's fairly easy, after all, it looks so futuristic and clean. He does catch sight of a oval vehicle begin flashing lights along its surface in warning. Then, it turns completely purple and shoots into the sky, moving faster up and forward. Why purple? Then again, why pink? Do the colors mean something different here?

There's a chirping sound and it grows louder, it's then that he realizes that he's done. The chirping ends once he's stepped out of the circle. "There's a stop for the taxi that you can get a map of the city. Welcome to Ark'Tic." The nearest guard informs him, only, the guard is, like eight feet away.

"Ah, thanks." He says and he can't tell if the guard heard him or not. Looking down the road, he begins walking down it. The beginning of a new life.

"Evans, hey, Evans! You got your rent yet?" Dart asks as he's entering the building. "Here." He drops eight Gus coins onto the palm of his building manger.

Dart checks each, pulsing a bit of magic into the brass coin, causing the emerald to glow which confirms that it's hasn't been tampered with or fake. Neat little trick, but then, magic isn't rare on the continent of Ki'Tus. "Later." Evans says as he continues on into the building and Dart just grunts before heading off to his office.

Once he's in the stairwell, he apparition to the door of his apartment. Touching his left bracelet to the door knob, the door unlock and he enters, the light coming on. He walks towards his dresser to grab his mokeskin pouch from the drawer. Evans pulls out the trunk that's nearly as tiny as a matchbox and then his wand.

Placing the mokeskin pouch upon the top of the dresser, the seventeen year old taps the trunk and it is restored to it's original size. Opening the trunk, he digs around for his current idea plotting note book. Putting his wand into the trunk, he walks over to the desk and chair as he flips to a random page, rereading an entry while collapsing in the chair.

With a sigh, he goes through the note book for a bit, reviewing various ideas, chuckling at the reason for failure of that plan until he gets to the last page. Transportation? With a grin, moving his index finger around it, a bit of mental focus and a green circle gets drawn. Reaching for his wand and with barely a flicker, the note book levitates and a pencil is conjured.

"Ok, spoke with Fortune Glorious about various thoughts concerning cheaper public transportation. Monopoly on golem pulled carriages is a big fat nope. Between the money needed to 'feed' the golems magic, there's also the issue of breaking into them to get the coins for the single rides, auto pilots and the whole replacing them. Can't forget the licenses and the need for the special posts for the golems to ride between." He trails off.

"On the other hand... there's no licensees needed for creating geas enforced payment contracts between a driver and client, same goes enforced for employment contracts. The question is, how can I pay for both a driver and what they drive? Also, securing the money from being stolen or the drivers from being robbed..." He continues as he looks up at the ceiling, his former emerald eyes not really seeing the ceiling.

"I also don't want to do a weekly payment plan either, never know if they'd find a way out of said contracts." Evans runs a hand through his now amber yellow colored hair, he's let it grow out or should he say, it just grew out on its own? "I'd use mokeskin pouches for the money but, yea, don't see how that's viable given there's no similar creatures with the same properties on this continent. Security wards slash charms can be broken by simply raw magic getting channeled by a Chan..."

"But what if there wasn't a pouch to grab?" He muses after a few seconds. "Something can't be snatch, even when the driver is on their way to a location... Or held up to be forked over? How though? Can't use a two way box, that can get hacked..."

"Then there's the question of how to carry the passengers around the city? I also need to be sure that the drivers and myself make a profit, I won't settle for just breaking even." Evans eyes flash a blue before returning to their alexandrite like purple coloring. "So, decent equipment from the start, people who know their way about the city, need Hedgers decent in divination for the practical spells it offers, and, of course, how to deliver passengers to said destination."

"Hmm, can't conjure animals nor transfigured items into animals... Animating items pretty much equal golems and I can't afford the licenses or insurance for old, out of fashion flying carpets or floating platforms. Teleportation platforms are illegal and so is side along apparition, still the grosses pictures I've seen of magic gone wrong." Closing his eyes to ward off the images of those accidents.

He's silent for a bit, the conjured pencil not moving as there's nothing to record. "Still, transfiguration... That... there's something..." He sighs and with a flick of his wand, the pencil fades out and the note book closes before gently falling onto the desk top. Leaning back, Evans moves his wand up and down, he's kind of bore but at least, well, he could also talk with Fortune Glorious about the subject of transfiguration concerning laws.

Finally, he gets up from his chair and picks up the note book. Walking over, he drops the note book into the trunk along with his wand. He stretches a bit and then starts taking stuff out of his pockets and taking off his belt. Once done, he heads for the bathroom and then, once he cleans up, he'll go to bed. He's got money to buy something for breakfast from a bakery near Fortune Glorious' store.

As he looks at the tube, Evans watches as the water fills. The wood of the tube had been treated with a potion to make it take on the

properties of porcelain, namely the lack of worry concerning slivers along with the rough text wood typically have. "Still, I'm sure it'll come to me and I'll feel like an idiot for not seeing it from the beginning."

"So, are you hiring?" Evans blinks and glances at the trio, they all look kind of nervous with a hint of despair. "Hiring?" He parrots back in a bewildered tone.

"You know, looking for more people to be... ah mounts?" The early twenty year old explains. The other two just nod while clearly being nervous, not that he really blames them, after all, there's plenty of horror stories concerning vengeful spell casters poly-morphing their targets into something harmless or useful animals, into the opposite gender, ah, oh yea, of combining the two like, turning men into mares, for example or shades of that one like switching sexual genitalia for the opposite or for an animals...

He's a teenager, so curiosity into creating defenses against such instances... That's his defense into researching more into the topic, yip, that's his *only* reason for his continual reading of said stories... *I'm such a pervert.*

"Are you sure? I mean, this is, kind of... It's turning into a gender-less horse, the size of which is to comfortably carry the client." Evans says, adjusting the necklace, it's got wooden beads with a carved horse tooth acting as the main feature.

Some of the tension seems to evaporate and the one to the left asks, "Really? So, it's just getting them to sign that bill, turn into a horse, and just... carry them to their destination? No... alleyway pit-stops?"

"Well, yea... At the moment, I'm just keeping to Track Current. Testing it out, this is my fifth day." He admits. "Business has been picking up, got a few repeats these last two days."

"Do we pay for the uniform out of our own pocket? What kind of percentage are you wanting from..." The first speaker asks. "Not sure what to call the runners, Striders? Drafts? It's clearly a work in progress when it comes to the title of those willing to poly-morph to carry the clients."

"So you are hiring more then just carriers?" The final member of the trio asks and he nods, "Yea, looking for those decent with Divination, though that's for when I get around to advertising."

"And when you have more people working the circuit." Once more, he nods. "Look, my break is almost over, you know Copper Crystal?" They nod, "I'm renting the currently ruined storage closet as an office, I'll be there by five pm, swing by and we can talk more, ok?"

"Oh, yea, name's Evans, Evans Note." The trio nod and they seem hopeful for said meeting along with relief that they were going to continue in a private space.

"Ah, Note? Someone's trying to... Oh, never mind, the city's wards barred the attempt." Cur'Tor shakes their head and they return to the illusionary map of Ark'Tic, their current assignment being keeping track of their Striders on their circuit within Twice Leaf Dancing district. Far Hearing, Far Sight, and Far Speak are very helpful keeping their active Striders updated to any changes concerning surprise road blocks or alerting them to any local client wanting a Strider.

"Any idea of the origin of this, what, eighth attempt, to divine my location?" He asks Cur'Tor but they just look up at him, their green and orange eyes sporting a thoughtful look. "I'd say... based off of my starting where Talia's trace left off, it's not from any region of Ki'Tus. Couldn't get pass the continent's ancient wards to trace beyond them."

With a sigh, he nods, saying, "Thanks for checking for me." Cur'Tor's attention returns to the map and Evans walks to the next table, the

map monitor is chatting with one of the Striders, it sounds like the pair are trying to keep a family entertained while waiting for more Striders to show to carry more of the family members as one of his rules has one client riding a single Strider, it's to keep the Strider from getting stiffed when it comes to getting paid.

Huh, three years, so... is it Harry reaching out or... He then shakes his head, thinking, *Doesn't matter, I got a life here, a business to manage, and a girlfriend to propose too. I left the name Caspian Lupine Potter at the gates of Ark'Tic.*

A glance at the clock shows he's lunch is approaching. He'll be trading up with Zane, with one of his first employees that he hired, knowing he'll be fine managing the office while he's doing a circuit in Twelve Reaching Pines, a park district that's having a minor festival. Turning back, he leans against the door frame, taking in the sight of twenty-one tables, each one sporting an illusion district map of one of the sixty-three districts of Ark'Tic city.

He never thought he'd end up employing so many people, then again, his clientele are made up of the lower to mid earning workers. It's cheaper to pay a pair of Striders to get them from one district to another then to take the 'public' Rafts, let alone hiring a private Raft. Yea, they'd need to switch Striders at the edge of the districts but due to lack of needing to spend major coin on repairing or even maintenance when it comes to the Hooves of the Swift, yea, his benefactor and former employer, one Fortune Glorious, named the necklaces that, he would have went with Beads of Equus but, well, one of her conditions for helping him design the uniforms and working on the proto-type necklaces was naming the resulting magical item and her name getting added to being co-creator, which he would have done anyway, the naming her co-creator not the naming of the necklaces.

Either way, it looks like who ever is trying for me, can't get pass the city's wards. So, my gamble paid off then. With that thought, he continues on to his office to read up on the legal laws concerning what qualifies as a Charity by Ki'Tus standards, he's looking to start

up a charity concerning homeless and jobless Mutts, he's been speaking with Nu'Kina, a caring woman from one of the Founding Bloodlines, about funding efforts to deal with their health problems.

Ending it here

Games We Play: Naruto

I don't own anything!

Feeling the current trying to sweep him from his path towards the sunken lost quest item. As an Ryou'ng, he's capable of breathing underwater along with having a natural, pretty much magical sense to find treasure, which the quest item is. In fighting the current, a notice pops up about his Swim Skill gaining a level as it goes from four to five, Naruto's pretty sure that he'll be gaining more levels by the time he's done for the day.

The former human gamer ignores the announcement to press on, trusting this sixth sense that he's getting closer to it. Naruto continues to fight the current, it presses him back time after time, yet, he continues. Once his swim skill reaches level ten, the dull orange scaled Ryou'ng swims up to and claims the bracelet. It vanishes into his inventory and Naruto checks his map before following his treasure sense to the next closest item, keeping to the bottom of the water ways, looking for any underground paths connecting the local water bodies together.

Soon enough, he encounters enemies and Naruto defends himself viva unarmed attacks along with using the fact the fight is underwater to dodge under or over the lunging attacks coming from the Young Vicious Mutant Pikes, he loots them getting Pike meat of varying quality, fish bones, and fish scales. His Observe Skill says their level being 6, if he had a kunai to stab or slice to cause Bleeding, they wouldn't be so focus on him but, well, none of ones he can buy were durable enough to be of any use in more then three fights before breaking. His Unarmed Skill goes up from its previous five level to twelve as he finds an underground water tunnel viva Observation the currents of the lake's bottom, then just flowing the current into it.

Before exiting, Naruto goes through his collection of pop ups. Most of them circle around Skills leveling up along with the creation of a sub-type skill for Observation called Reading the Current plus its leveling up. A check on his experience bar shows he's close to going up a level, his current level being 10. *Hard to believe I've gone up four levels in only a week.*

Then again, he did sacrifice half his starting levels to change his Race from Human to Ryou'ng. He had been about to start the Academy at level 12, not the highest level among his classmates, Shikamaru, Clan Heir of the Nara Clan, had been at level 14, then again, most of those belonging to ninja Clans started level 10 while those sporting the title Clan Heir starting at level 13. Those civilian raised started at level 10 from what he gathered.

Shaking his head, he refocuses on checking on his health bar, the one below it has yet to be unlocked as he hasn't had a class concerning using Chakra, which unlocks that bar. His health is regenerating at its usual rate and with that, he runs a scaly hand over his head, he touches the golden horns and tiny spines that now grow on his head instead of hair. Naruto checks his body, checking on the cuts and bites he received from the Mutant Pikes he's encountered so far.

The cloth armor he's wearing are starting to look like he'll need to switch out this set for one that's in his inventory. The cloths being the only type of armor available for those of the Shinobi profession, which the Academy trains its students to become around ages twelve and thirteen years of age. He's seven at the moment, once October tenth arrives, he'll be eight and he's not the only seven year old among the student body either.

Invoking his Observe skill on his cloths, he sighs and makes the switch. Naruto bought the lot in bulk yesterday from money earned viva completing Academy quests and clearing out the basement of his building of a newly discovered colony of Mutant Rats. The cloths were of common quality and didn't offer any bonus effects like he's seen being offered, then again, they were better quality then the

orange jumpsuit that this one store owner tried to press in on him, it carried negatives in Stealth, restrictive to his movements, a negative to preforming certain attacks, and the price of it, yea, for that much, he rather get something that just provides armor then a bunch of negatives. Sure, the color is his favorite but, then, he doesn't need to look for cloths with orange as a color any more, it's his natural coloring for his scales.

Simple white shirt plus gray vest offer a pitiful armor of two, the black shorts offer a single point in armor, finger-less gloves offer one point together, and a pair of blue shinobi sandals a single point. So, total, he's got five for armor, he's pretty sure that once his chakra has been unlocked, he'll be able to learn skills or jutsus that will offer armor for as long as he's got chakra to feed into it. With a flick of his tail tip, he swims forward, into the next water area and he can see color now that sunlight is kind of filtering down through the surface of the water, then again, it's not vision that's important to him while he's underwater, it's that treasure sense that he gets from his race.

As he follows that sixth sense, Naruto soon encounters a swarm of Young Vemon Eels who, all together, are level 9. There's at least twelve individuals in the swarm, each having health points from twenty to a max of forty for the better fed ones. He gets subjected to being poisoned thrice, thankfully his regeneration seems to be decent when it comes to fighting the condition. His Unarmed Skill goes up once and his Endurance sees a rise in level as well, going from two to three. He loots Eel meat of varying quality and two Eel skins of fair quality, which are crafting materials, something he encountered from the rats concerning their pelts. The better quality the pelt, the easier it is to work into general leather, which he could sell for more then just the raw pelts themselves, if any of the human merchants would *buy* anything he brings to them.

He Observes that the skins aren't the typical leather crafting material he's use to working with, which means there's a particular recipe that uses Eel skins as is in making something. So, I should be able to sell them for a net profit, right? Naruto muses, he's still learning the

ropes of this game system that's over taken the world, not that anyone else besides him seems to be aware of that fact. Plus, he's pretty sure that the other races didn't exist before it happened, he clearly remembers Hidden Leaf's design being very different then it is now along with there having been fewer training grounds and local rivers. There might have been a waterfall with a tiny lake once, but, well, he wasn't able to read or write as well back then as he can now.

He swims using the current as it takes him in the direction of the sixth sense and then against it to get to the quest item, which turns out to be a pair of silver rings on a gold chain. It's sent to his inventory once more and he gets attacked by an Adult Vicious Mutant Pike, level 12 and two feet longer then the Young Vicious Mutant Pike. Naruto does his best to redirect the snapping snout along with beating it to death with his fist, its got spines along the side mixed among its side scales they were causing the durability of his finger-less gloves to go down faster by the edges being fairly sharp.

Among his many pop ups is a notification that he's now level 11 but he doesn't go to his menu as time might slow when he's accessing it, which means he could get ambushed by another one, by a starving Giant Lungfish or by a Mutant Craw-Fish. He loots the body before heading for the surface and then for shore, fighting off another swarm of Young Venom Eels numbering a only half a dozen and looting them once they were dead.

He keeps his snout underwater as he swims towards the shore and then, once he's got his feet under him, he pushes his head above the water and begins to breath air. He grabs a kunai pouch from his inventory and equips it. Naruto glances around as he walks up to a tree, checking around for anything looking threatening. After a few minutes, he turns and leans his back onto the trunk of a large tree. He glances around once more before bringing up his menu and going straight for his character overview.

With ease, he notices which of his stats increased through shear use and notices that yip, his strength and constitution going up the most

while his charisma didn't improve this time around. His wisdom went up by three, which is kind of confusing but then, wisdom is connected with intuition. *And my Sense Treasure Perk is pretty much intuition based, isn't it?* Naruto muses and he gets an increase to his intelligence for making the connection.

Still, his wisdom is currently the lowest of his stats as he's been investing in intelligence to speed up leveling up his skills along with increasing the speed of learning new ones. It's due to his observation of seeing Shikamaru Nara increasing his level with ease in two days that got him wondering if there's something to having a high intelligence that speeds up experience gaining that he got a pop up telling him that both his intelligence and wisdom increased by a point for that observation. Which meant that yes, yes there is and he then put five points into it the next time he leveled up, then worked on his throwing skills. Yea, he found it easier to see what he was doing wrong, received a pop up saying it went up a level, and then continued on with the practicing, which, saw that skill going up to another two times before the Academy's practice field closed for the day.

That happened when he had been level 8 and since, he's made sure to put at least one point into intelligence whenever he leveled up. Naruto increases his intelligence and puts two into dexterity to help with his chance at dodging incoming attacks. With two points, he takes the time think over what to do with his last two points, he could put them both into his charisma and hope it'll be enough for him to talk to the local merchants into buying from him, or he could divide the two points between them. "Well... if my Sense Treasure uses wisdom, then, if I increase it now, wouldn't that also increase my range?" A chime rings out, telling him he increased his intelligence and wisdom.

Dismissing the pop up, he puts the last two points into wisdom and sure enough, there's a faint pull on his mind. Saving the changes of his character stats, he time returns to flowing normally around him and Naruto switches out his current set of gloves for a fresh set

before jogging towards the direction of the pull. He's fairly sure he'll encounter more monstrosities and that causes him to slow. A glance around, he focuses on using stealth to cut down on those kind of encounters, no matter how much he'd love to fight them for the experience, he just doesn't know what the local levels were in this area, so, there's no point in endless waves of weak monstrosities wearing on him until something stronger shows up, drawn by the noise and promise of an easy fight.

The first monstrosity he notices and manages to sneak pass is a Berserk Husher which sports a level of 17. Given it looks to be a herbivore, what with it looking most is a stag, only there's hints of boar in the warts plus the tusks that's jetting out of the lower jaw. It's the size of a single cow, although it's got the slender build of a deer. Knowing he can't trust looks alone to tell him if something is dangerous, Naruto does his best to keep downwind of the Husher.

The next two monstrosities were also Boxing Hushers sporting a level of 14, plus they seem to be female as they lack the antlers of the other Husher example. They also have, well, a wicked dew spike, it only looks, maybe five or seven centimeters long, at a spot behind their fore-hooves that looks barbed. Thankfully, neither notice him even when the wind had shifted, they seem more intent on sizing each other up.

The fourth monstrosity he encounters is an Adult Foaming Fox, level 10 and the size of an adult wolf. It notices him and he's already throwing a pair of kunai at its head. One digs into its skull while the other bounces off the muzzle doing no damage, also breaking given the sound of something shattering. *Stupid, fucking trash knives!* He's already reaching into the pouch for a pair while doing his best to dodge the body tackle. *Maybe I should try stealing better if they won't sell me better! I shouldn't have to rely on getting honest deals from wandering merchants!*

While he doesn't take the full tackle, he gets tripped up viva the back leg and he's gripping a kunai in both hands, rolling onto his belly to get his legs under him to get up. He manages to get into a crouch

while the monster fox does its best to whip its fluffy tail at him, which he brings the pair of kunai to bare, countering the tail. He slices a few strands off and he's soon dealing with the snapping jaws along with one of its fore-paws trying to knock him onto his back.

With his left, he tries for an eye while his right tries to stab the paw, neither find their mark but they do slice into the pelt, causing the condition Bleed on the fox. He doubts it'll last for long and does try to put some distance between himself and the monster while it licks its muzzle and then the paw. He throws the two kunai, one after the other at the fox, making sure to reach into his pouch for more kunai. Both bounce and shatter upon hitting the fox and the fox snarls at him. *This is a god fucking Shinobi village! They shouldn't be allowed to sell this kind of crap to Academy students of any sort!*

Once more, it tries to ram him and he does his best to dodge. This time, he dodges the total of the charge and he throws the kunai in his right hand at the exposed back, thankfully, it gets lodged into the monster and he charges forward to stab with his left hand, which grazes the hip area. There's no evidence of it inflicting Bleed, so he's already doing his best to put some distance between the monstrosity and himself once more.

And so it goes, a deadly dance that only one of them will walk away from. Naruto doing his best to dodge and attack using kunai as the monstrous fox tries to brawl him over with a tackle or trip him up with a paw. Between them, only one of them has the ultimate advantage as the dance goes on and it isn't the mockery of a fox. Regeneration of health on Naruto's side means that as long as he can dodge incoming attacks, his previous injuries heal, meaning that as he manages to slash the neck of the fox, which cause Critical Bleed, he's pretty much as healthy as when the fight begun.

Naruto manages to keep out of the death frenzy of the Foaming Fox, glancing around to see if they attracted another monster's attention, which they did as there's a pair of Young Infested Crows, both level 8, circling. He does his best to aim, trying for wing shots, forcing them to the ground. He manages to only get the one, the other flees

with a hissing caw. It takes him a minute to finish off the Crippled Crow. He loots two dozen poor quality feathers, a Larvae of a Copper Beetle, and Giant Crow Skull of good quality. The feathers and skull seem to be crafting items, he's not sure what to do with the Copper Beetle Larvae and upon him using Observe, he gets a Quest that involves a classmate of his, one Shino Aburame.

With a shrug, the dull orange Ryou'ng turns to the dead Adult Foamy Fox and loots it, receiving common quality, large fox pelt, poor quality meat pieces numbering half a dozen, unknown organ that he suspects to be another quest invoking item, and eight shards of shattered kunai. Then he deals with the various pop up alerts, a quick skim before dismissing them, pleased a bit at the increase of various skills but knowing he really should leave the site of battle.

Once more, he does his best to be stealthy as he takes a few seconds to feel the pull of his treasure sense. With an idea of where to go, he slowly heads in that direction, as he does so, he goes through his inventory to grab more kunai for his pouch, to replace the ones used up in battle, and something to snack on as he's getting kind of hungry after everything he's done so far this morning. Naruto manages to avoid detection of more Hushers of varying types and no aerial monstrosities show up to attack him either.

At the site, he glances around, there's nothing about the meadow. Taking a few minutes to notice the time, Naruto then closes his eyes and does his best to ignore everything save the pull. He walks a few steps forward and just gets this send of down, of being over it, of it still being out of reach.

With his nose pointing down, Naruto opens his eyes and hums thoughtfully as he considers what to do next. He checks around for a bit before bringing up his inventory. It takes him a few seconds to find the shovel that he bought some days ago. Equipping it, his kunai pouch entering into the inventory, he begins to dig into the spot. He creates the skill Digging and levels it up to three by the time the shovel hits something, he's dug about five feet into the ground.

Stabbing the ground near the edge of the hole with the shovel, he crouches down, wiping away the dirt to see what he found, his treasure sense humming in pleasure. Using Observe, he notices the weight plus condition, it's been in the ground for a good decade. He grabs the shovel, now knowing how big the chest is, he digs around it until he has the top of it uncovered. Picking up the chest, he heaves it out of the hole and then climbs out himself.

He switches the shovel out for a set of beginner lock pick tools. Naruto crouches down and begins testing the lock, he's only leveled up his lock picking three times using practice locks. Thankfully, the tools give him a bonus until the skill is level twenty, then he'll need to buy the next step up for lock pick tools to continue getting a bonus boost to lock picking. For this lock, he shouldn't have too much trouble picking it given that it's slightly rusty after being in the ground for a decade. The first thing he's doing is getting the dirt out of the lock, can't open what's jammed pack with grim and dried mud. Sure, he could bring the shovel out again and just slam it onto the lock to break it, but, well, he really wants to level up his lock picking, if he somehow manages to jam it up with broken picks, then he'll just go for the shovel to get into the chest, for now, he'll try to level up a skill he thinks every ninja knows, after all, why wouldn't a ninja know how to a pick lock?

So what if that profession guide didn't list it as a skill the Academy taught? They likely learn from their Jonin instructor out in the field right? Right! Not everyone who attends the Academy goes on to be Shinobi, so the essential skills a true Shinobi needs gets taught once one is a Genin.

After all, the Academy is there just to create a foundation, not the total structure, right? It's there to check their qualification for becoming a potential Shinobi, to test their dedication, and give them a taste of the profession.

His lock picking goes up a level from him cleaning the lock and then he pays close attention to the sounds the lock makes as he teases the mechanize. Being sure to Observe it every few seconds, when it

looks like his tools were getting too stressed with the task, he pauses and withdraws them for a few seconds, the lock goes into a cool down and once it reaches zero, he begins again. His skill levels up to five before he unlocks the lock.

Opening the chest, he get the option of looting it, which he does. He receives an Uzumaki crafted Throwing Dagger of Returning and he couldn't keep from grinning at the description he gets from Observing it. "Worth it, so fucking worth it!" He crows happily at finally having a decent weapon to use. The next is a book that details his clan's private ways of how to practice chakra, he sighs at the title, it's something useful once he unlocks his chakra. The last of it is different inks plus sealed scrolls that he can't activate as he lacks chakra needed to open them, and the final item within is a starter kit for Seal crafting, which automatically causes him to learn the skill Seal Crafting. There's nothing else and the chest vanishes in a green light.

He wants to read the detail of Seal Crafting, but decides against it for now, he rather do that in a safe location, for now, he stands up. As he is about to reequip his kunai pouch, he wonders, "If I fill that hole, would my Digging Skill go up?" A pop up pretty much answers that as his wisdom goes up by a point. With a sigh, Naruto brings out his shovel and begins filling the hole he created, it's not long after that he gets a pop up informing him that this little side event awards him increases with his strength.

He then considers what to do next before he gets an idea, maybe it's a bit evil but, well, it's worth a try right? The pop up pretty much means that's a yip, go for it.

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Naruto rubs his left wrist, he's been working on leveling up his Ambidextrous Skill, by working on his Writing Skill using his off hand. By working on his Writing Skill, it'll benefit his Seal Crafting in a round about way, then again, he's noticed how some skills seem to passively offer benefits to a relative skill that kind of shares the same

properties. His attack skills seem to build slightly upon each other, very slightly but, well, given he gained points for his two mental stats just by meditating on wondering if those Skills that make use of the same stat could cause a slight buff to one another, yea, he got awarded for that kind of thinking and the more he thought about it and tried to think of how, well, more points which meant he was onto something, something that he could only use to his advantage if he's right.

The reason for doing his best to improve his skills with a brush has to do with Seal Crafting, he's already managed to make poor quality Flash Seals who's trigger is getting pierced, although they do need to sit around for two hours to draw in whatever free flowing chakra is in the environment in order to power itself. It took him some sneaking into the local library to read up on Seal Theory, which created a sub-skill within Seal Craft, that helps him pursue the creation of Seals. His Reading Skill's leveled up from all that late night reading, then again, reading in a library does offer a minor, passive buff in understanding what you are reading, then again, access to various dictionaries and glossaries within the same roof...

Which brought him to the fact that he has yet to be caught sneaking into and out of the library that late at night. Sure, it use to be a Quest worthy challenge, supplying him with money plus increases to his Observation, Detect Trap, Disarm Trap, Set Trap, Stealth, and Lock Picking but after he's done those Quests for three weeks straight, they don't help improve his Skills, now it's mostly Quests concerning reading a certain topic along with seeing if he could break into the mission archives in the basement of the library. He's pretty sure that one of these nights there won't be any kind of task worthy of a Quest concerning the security of the library.

Might try for the Academy's Library or its Student Records to test my Skills when that happens. Naruto muses as he glances out of the window, towards the row of heads sculpted upon the mountainside. All the Hokages had been human and his goal of becoming Hokage hasn't really changed with the exception of adding to that goal by to

be the first Ryou'ng to become a Shinobi of Hidden Leaf before going onto becoming the first non-human Hokage.

From what he's gathered, there's at least eight non-humans among Hidden Leaf's Shinobi and with the exception of one, they were all of a certain race of humanoid possessing feline traits that this new world system calls Shimii'Meo. The solo exception among those eight being a V'Rana, a race of five foot tall raven/crow or magpie that possess the barest hint of human traits, the main one being having hands instead of wings. They sport beaks, not as big as the birds they look like, instead of mouths and their arms plus fingers lack feather, instead being scaly like their legs with their three fingers and thumb sporting tiny black claws.

From what he's been able to gather from ease-dropping, the V'Rana specializes in Genjutsu and traps, plus still possesses the rank of Genin. The Shimii'Meo are all joined the Hunter Division upon reaching Chunin. No names that anyone has given out as of yet, which is a bummer as he wanted to ask them for suggestions on dealing with being non-human in an environment meant to strictly teach humans how to be a Shinobi and tips they might be willing to share concerning how to deal with discrimination directed at him viva the teachers. After all, a simple Observation on his and the rest of his class' textbooks show that his was modified to be the most useless, worthless piece of trash they could get away with.

He's pick pockets with various classmates and read certain chapters of their books before returning them before they were missed so, yea, his were trash and the information missing the mark by a kilometer. Thankfully, he doesn't need any of the information concerning Chakra Control, once his Chakra was unlocked a month into his attending the Academy, he learnt the Uzumaki Chakra Control Skill, which likely should have been a sub-skill to Chakra Control but, well, none of the books he's read about normal Chakra Control practices ever worked for him. All of the methods detailed seems to be all about starting with very little Chakra and growing a Shinobi's reserves through practice and conditioning.

Then again, from his Observation Skill, nobody in the whole Academy, including the Chunin, has his reserves when it comes to Chakra. For everyone in his class, they were dealing with either an eyedropper worth of Chakra or a small watering can. With his reserves? A Geyser that sprays water a good mile up into the air on its worst days.

And it's not like I'm the only one that starts off with a larger reserve of Chakra, after all, it seems to be something of an Uzumaki trait to have more then the average beginner. Naruto muses, his eyes drifting towards the First Hokage's head. *He married an Uzumaki and had some kids, so, the kids might have had a larger pool but their mom, being an Uzumaki, taught them personally. Did those kids have kids? And so on an so forth?*

If that's true then... But... they could all be dead, too. Dead and since its something taught directly from one generation to the next, they could all be dead, so... That could be a dead end, but still, shouldn't Old Man Third be aware of Uzumaki having such large Chakra reserves? There was a whole village of Uzumaki and it should have been noticeable with how differently they were trained? His stomach growls, reminding him that he worked through lunch and his mouth is rather dry, meaning he's thirsty as well. He notices the pop ups and skim them before dismissing them, all they mean is that he's onto something and he'll consider his train of thought after he has eaten and rested, it's late afternoon and if he wants to go to the library again, he should try to nap for a few hours as he will likely lose track of time while reading up on whatever topic he wants to research about tonight.

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"So... what do I want to do for the next three months?" Naruto wonders once the others have left the Academy grounds once they got their test scores from the board along with an envelop with a complete break down of what they were tested on just this last semester. Even despite the Chunin grading him far harsher then they had his fellow students, he still came out in the top ten, if not for him

tipping the Old Man about unfair marking of tests, of favoritism being practiced, he likely would have received the same scored from previous semester and the first, he would have been rewarded with incomplete on all of his tests.

Yes, he made use of Sasuke's name along with Hinata's own, but, well, it kind of feels like a hollow victory, seeing his name where it belonged, near the top of the class instead of the bottom. Then again, he is level 32 now, a total of 26 levels he's gone through from the beginning of his attending of the Academy. For some reason, his fellow students of his 'grade' seemed to have stopped leveling at level 20, but then, he's noticed their Profession had changed once they reached that level while his... his remained blank for some reason. Their Profession is Shinobi Academy Student and from what he's been observing, something is going on with them, even those with the title Clan Heir, it's like... And then there's the fact that none of them seem overly concerned with their names hovering over their heads or that they could see each other's Health and Chakra Bars.

Then again, the same goes for the rest of the village, unless he uses Observation on a stranger, he wouldn't see their name just a symbol that looks like a question mark and their Health plus Chakra bar just looking full, unless it's obvious that they were hurt, then their health bar would have parts missing, same goes for if they used up a lot of Chakra and it visibly showed. Oh, there's been times where someone introduced themselves by one name but his Observation Skill lets him see their actual name plus level.

His Observation Skill's getting pretty high, then again, he's used it on everything within sight just to level it up from shear use and it works as he's starting to get a paragraph or two of information about people around him, if only about what they've recently done plus favorite foods, medical conditions, perks, flaws, and current emotional state or a mini bio of their life so far. If he concentrates, he's been able to actually look at people's Skills and what level they are, well, as long as they share the same Skill with him at least, otherwise it would just be a question mark level question mark.

And his list of Skills, well, they now include Blacksmithing, Tailoring, Weaving, Smelting, Leather Working, Herbalist, and Alchemy. He's rather bitter that he can't sell anything to the village merchants, which means that he's waiting once a month for one of the four wandering merchants to arrived to sell anything and given he's been slowly piling up raw materials for previous said crafts, it was just easier to learn to use the stuff himself given that his apartment isn't secure enough for him to store anything within it nor can he leave anything at the bank as his vault is always getting robbed, which lead him to just canceling his subscription to that particular bank itself.

Then there's the fact that he's been unable to complete the retrieval Quests as they refused to accept giving him the rewards. Which is why he even tried to store stuff in his apartment and renting a bank vault in the first place. *Well, given I can't turn them in and couldn't sell them without finding a Fence, is it any wonder I scraped the whole lot for crafting materials?* Yea, it's fairly hard to do but once his Smelting was high enough, he could melt down the metal Quest items, thus causing those Quests to become invalid and vanishing from his list of Active Quests, but they also don't show up under the failed Quest list either.

On his end, he hadn't failed to find and retrieve the item. Nope, the failure rests upon the fuckers not accepting the item from him. So, in vengeful fashion, he keeps scouring for those Quest items throughout Hidden Leaf and its various training feels and surrounding areas. He'll try turning them in but once rejected, into the smelter they go, well those made of metal! As for those Quest items that are not made of metal, well, he's pretty much storing them in a Giant Storage Scroll to save room in his inventory. He'll figure something out concerning them, whether its finding a Fence to sell it to or just using the lot as campfire fuel remains to be seen.

Still, I've found most of the hidden treasures out in the fields along with Quest items for the retrieval missions... I don't want to deal with the headache of trying to find Quest items in Hidden Leaf proper.

Just walking around just pings my treasure sense all over the place. Naruto muses as he remains standing before the board.

So, maybe a change of scenery would do him some good? Maybe look for other Ryou'ng to talk with? Or just visit the coast to see what it's like to swim in the ocean...

A Quest pops up entitled Big Wide World. *Well, that's... that's a lot of experience plus, what's a Create ID and Escape ID? What does ID stand for?* Not that tapping on the reward explains anything at all. There's bonus rewards in the form of question marks along with a question mark next to money, which means the amount of money he'll get could be a lot or none at all.

Not accepting doesn't nothing. Naruto snorts and tabs the accept, sure, he'll be venturing into the unknown, in a general sense but, well, the people outside of Hidden Leaf can't be more hostile then those living within it, well, hostile directed at him at any rate. He's got twelve hours to prepare for the Quest to begin, which it will at five am in the morning.

With a sense of purpose and a goal to aim for, Naruto heads for his apartment to begin planning for this trip outside of the village.

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Going from asleep to wide awake, Naruto rolls onto his side and yawns as he rubs one of his eyes with the back of his left hand. Sitting up, it takes him a second to realize the time and moves to plant his feet upon the floor. Standing, Naruto looks out the window, noting that there's no moon lighting up the night, which is perfect for him as he'll be sneaking out of Hidden Leaf.

As he switches cloths, putting on his best set of stealth cloth armor. Just as he leaves, he pauses and going through the hand seals, he preforms a Transformation Jutsu. Thankfully, the smoke clears and he looks like his human self from before the world changed, complete with whisker marks on each cheek. Naruto runs a hand

through his hair, checking for any spines or tiny horns but there's none this time. His eyes don't have the tell tale slits and the eyes were in a more of a sapphire blue then his now familiar sky blue, reptilian like eyes.

As he looks around, Naruto notices that his usual low light vision isn't working. With a frown, he brings up his character overview and as he is reading down, his eye skim pass something that catches his attention. Temporary Race: **[Human]** . It's below his race listing, which still reads Race: **[Ryou'ng]** .

Tapping the Temporary Race, a chime rings out congratulating him on learning the Alterself Jutsu. "At low level you can disguise yourself as another playable, sapient race, the closer in height the less Chakra needed to reshape yourself on a temporary bases into a member of said race. At higher levels you'll be able to retain your racial advantages while transformed into another race." He reads out loud.

"Huh, well, alright then, doesn't cost Chakra to maintain, or it doesn't now due to my control being high enough." Naruto mutters before shaking his head, his voice once more sounding like it once had as well. He continues out the door.

As he nears the gates leading out, worry tries to gnaw at his resolve only for his perk of Gamer Mind, to keep it from overwhelming him. The worrying thoughts circled about being identified as himself and getting hauled off to Old Man Third for a dressing down concerning his unauthorized attempt of sneaking out of the village. He reminds himself that nobody save for him remembers a time he was ever not a Ryou'ng plus, he's wearing cloths sporting very decent Stealth, Deceit, and Evade bonuses to his already impressive levels in Stealth and Evade, he hasn't had much chance to really be deceitful given everyone he's tried to talk with already regard him with hatred or smug superiority.

As he approaches, Naruto couldn't help but preform a Quick Scan, a sub-skill of Observe, that causes him to be rather puzzled by the pair

of Chunin. Their respective levels... they seem to be... well, low? The Chunin Instructors at the Academy range from level 45 to 60. These guards though, their levels are 38 and 41. Using Observe, he gets a message saying that due to incoming Update Patch, he will not be able to read their information. The Patch details upon him tapping is for updating Professions, creating different leveling and value systems for certain Professions based upon combative or not, which means there's going to be a world update revamping the Shinobi Profession if he's understanding is right.

Dismissing the details, time returns to normal and he walks right through the gates without either of them stopping him. Then, once he's at the edge of the lands Hidden Leaf claims, he gets a pop up informing him that he's not allowed to visit any Hidden Villages for about three months and that encounters he'd have with any Hunter Nin, Bandits, Rogue Nin, and any similar types have been disabled do to the Patch that is about to be put to the test, then as bugs show up, fixed and repeat a few time before being installed, again, this is Patch Update is centered around Combat Professions.

He finds that for the time being, he is settled with a Temporary Profession, that of a Wandering Craftsman. Naruto notes that while there's nothing in the details concerning random encounters with Monstrosities, he can only conclude that he may find himself getting attacked by those but then, he recalls that Monstrosities spawn about Hidden Villages due to Shinobi experimenting with Chakra, trying to discover better ways to use it. The Monstrosities likely result in attempts to breed Nin animals but they proved too feral or something to be of much use and were either released thinking they'd get themselves killed or they escaped. *Or maybe they are still created to give Genin something to practice fighting on?*

He continues on his way once he reads what that Profession entails, more then a little pleased which the bonuses to all of his Crafting Skills from his current Profession plus minor buffs to his Mapping and Navigation Skills.

As the sun begins to rise, Naruto gets within sight of a settlement. It's a rather small place and upon entering it proper learns that it's called Petal Blossom and is primarily owned by the Akimichi Clan, that the surrounding area is are for farming orchards and vegetables. There's nobody really about at this hour and seeing as he has yet to eat breakfast, he approaches a small eatery to purchase said breakfast.

"What can I get for ya, cutie?" The young man dressed in woman's cloths asks him with a slight smile, clearly happy to see him. It brings Naruto to a halt for a few seconds as he tries to reconcile this reaction with the usual reactions, running a hand through his hair... wait, hair. *Oh? Oh!*

"I will have a traditional breakfast and a milk tea, please." He says with a slight smile of his own as he moves to sit down at the booth. "Right away, cutie!" Renji 'Nana' Senji chimes in and proceeds to make his order.

"So, what's a kid your age traveling about all on your lonesome?" Naruto blinks a moment before answering without really thinking about it, "Just wanted to wander around a bit, I got plenty of money saved up and not really needed back at the village. Orphan, you know?"

"Oh, honey, I'm so sorry, how recent?" Nana asks and Naruto just looks down at the counter, replying honestly, "I don't want to talk about it."

A pop up appears and it seems his Deceit Skill got a level, rising it from level one to two. The message pretty much congratulating him on using the truth in such a way that allows people to draw their own conclusion, causing misdirection without a hint of a lie. It takes him a few seconds before he dismissing it, mentally going over what statement. In the end, he concludes that given his appearance, his charisma, and cloths, it shouldn't surprise him that his Deceit went up and, if he decides to wander around, pretending to be human, it'll keep going up.

But, he doesn't really want to wander around pretty much lying to not just other people but, well, to himself as well. His current looks had only been to get pass the gate so... After all, wasn't that the point of why he switch races to begin with? To be someone special, to be special, to stand out from the crowd of kids by not looking like everyone else. He's kind of fuzzy about how he was treated from before the world changed, for all he knows he could be repressing or maybe the fundamental change to his person made it so that any personal memories from before about himself and his time as a human were muted?

He dismissed the pop up and listens as Nana chats away with another customer. He glances around to find that there's at least three more people ordering from this eatery. Naruto turns to look over his shoulder to find some of the business opening their doors along with people greeting one another. It's a small community so its not that surprising that everybody knew each other.

His breakfast is served along with his milk tea, he pretty much lets the chatter around him just go over his head, enjoying the friendly tones more then paying the words any mind. Naruto eats his breakfast, resolving that once he's made it further from Hidden Leaf that he'll release his Alterself Jutsu and only use it when he's returning to Hidden Leaf. After all, he's not ashamed of his choice to change his race and he won't hide it unless he feels he has no alternative.

Once done, he leaves money to pay for his order plus a generous tip before leaving. He's got a lot of distance to cover if he wants to release his Jutsu without alerting the Hidden Village of his unauthorized journey beyond its boundaries. Plus, a lot of places to visit, recipes to buy, things to kill, plants to pick, stuff to make, and to sell. He's got three months to go anywhere in the world and he might as well make the most of it.

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"So... interested in renting a Bank Vault?" Naruto blinks and turns to look at the Lu'Pine woman and says, doing a Quick Scan, "Tried that once, it kept getting robbed."

Emi Saostone, Profession: **[Banker]** , level 28, and Race: **[Lu'Pine]** frowns upon hearing him say that. "Do you still have the Rental Contract?" He nods and with a click of her tongue, she stalks into the bank's front door and he falls in line behind her, walking at a slower pace.

Once she's behind one of the counters, he approaches having pulled the contract out of his inventory. Naruto hands the contract over and watches as her eyes narrow within seconds, she growls in a very canine like fashion. Emi isn't overly quick to control her growling and the look in her eyes pretty much says that she's imagining something gory happening to someone somewhere.

"Yea, they screwed you in classic fashion as in, the teller didn't sign the god damn contract, just stamped it. Always get a contract *signed* , kiddo, **Signed** ." Emi explains and he sighs, he thought the contract had been iron clad but it seems that such a minor detail was what allowed them to rob him in the first place. *Ok, so, the old fucker is going to be losing his life savings along with possessions then.*

Emi brings out a new Contract only the subject is for a fairly large trunk plus, "Owner ship?" He is fairly puzzled and she explains, "Vault are well and good... for humans. Racial discrimination is a thing, Naruto, as you should know by now. This trunk also comes with a Summoning Seal. Given you're a Student of Hidden Leaf's Shinobi Academy, a bit of blood and you can suddenly have more kunai or potions plus you can put stuff you find you don't need into it before dismissing it."

He nods, knowing that she's right, after all, that's why he loves his inventory. "The flat price?" Naruto asks and Emi tells him, he pulls out the amount. She gives him a questioning look while pulling the money towards her to begin counting it. "Kind of hard to get a good deal on stuff when they're dead set on selling crap at a premium

price so I learnt to make do while waiting for a Wandering Merchant to visit Hidden Leaf."

Emi nods in understanding and he focuses on reading the contract before signing. Once Emi is done counting, he passes the contract back and watches as she signs, then a pop up congratulates him on his purchase of a Bank Trunk. *The lack of pop up could have been a clue I hadn't actually rented that vault.* Naruto reflects as he dismisses the pop up.

"Met me over there, please." Emi says upon handing the contract back to him, which he slips into his inventory as he pretended to pocket it. He walks over to the spot and she leads him down a hallway to a lock door. "We'll need you to cut yourself and place the palm of either your right or left hand within a circle on top of the trunk. The Summoning Seal will form on either arm or back of your hand." She explains as she opens the door.

Nodding, Naruto pulls out his Dagger of Returning once they are within the room and Emi pulls a lever, causing a trunk from one of the shelves to glow. Emi then presses a button and the trunk has been summoned in a box looking Seal. He Observes everything within the room and is very please with what he reads.

He walks up to the trunk and uses his left hand, he slices a shallow cut on the palm of his right hand. He quickly places his hand on the spot and there's a pair of pop ups. His character overview also opens and it takes him to an image of what he looks like right now. Naruto finds himself getting asked which arm he wants the Summoning Seal on along with location on said arm. He picks his right wrist and taps confirm, which causes the character overview to close and he just dismisses the previous pop ups.

He cleans the dagger with a cloth before sheathing it and then looking at his right wrist to find a simple box made with two lines. "Just dab some blood on the Seal to summon it?" He asks as he gently traces the outer black line of the box with the tip of his nail.

"Yip." He hears Emi push something and his trunk gets sent elsewhere. "Give it a try." She encourages, causing a Quest to be created, which he accepts despite it offering very little experience.

He hums as he thinks of how to cause himself to bleed. There's no blood on the palm of his right hand so, he'll need to injure himself. With a soft sigh, he focuses and channels his Chakra to empower the nails on his left hand. He cuts his right palm near his thumb, his Chakra sharpens his nails to do so and he lets the Chakra disperse as he use his left thumb to collect some blood. With his thumb now bloody and the cut already healing, he brushes the bloody thumb over the Seal, his Chakra pulses, and his trunk is Summoned.

Completing the Quest, he now has a Quest to dismiss it. Before he does so, he opens the trunk and finds the trunk has the same amount of space as his Inventory, which causes him to hum in appreciation. Ryou'ng can't whistle, then again, he's got more of a snout then a simple mouth. He transfers a number of personal books, eight stacks of blank rice papers, three stacks blank scrolls, twenty-three stacks of kunai, forty stacks of shuriken, and nine stacks of various dry foods into it. Closing the lid, he hand forms a single hand seal and focuses on dismissing the trunk, his Chakra pulses, and his trunk vanishes.

He completes the Quest for some minor amount of Experience and turns to Emi, "Thank you for your help. Can you recommend an restaurant? I just arrived in the village." Emi looks thoughtful before turning to walk out of the door, he follows.

"Well, I think you'd find the Sunken Sarawak to be of particular interest, the owner is Jolt Sunshi. If you're looking for work though, I suggest the Blazing Will, they're looking for a temporary cook, owner is Zane Mochi." Emi tells him once they were back in the main room of the bank. He blinks at the mention of the job, but, well, a Quest pops up and he accepts it.

"Nice meeting you Miss." He says, which she returns, before pausing to introduce herself as Emi Saostone. "Naruto Uzumaki." He says in

return before leaving the building.

As he heads for Blazing Will, he is still amazed that Gargar Valley is an area of Fire Country that's been set aside for non-humans races to live about two centuries ago, their attempt to 'cleanse' Fire Country of the other races by giving them their own 'land'. The Daimyo Kyoya and his next two predecessors first offered the land for free to any willing to migrate there, which really just suckered immigrants from other Countries as they thought it was a good deal only to find that the 'Valley' being an dominate volcano island that had been located near two active underwater volcanoes. They tried to leave but there was a navy surrounding the island, keeping ships from leaving, leaving it to Ryou'ng to sneak pass the ring of ships.

About a decade before they would assume the Daimyo ship, Takeru who would become well known as the Bending Reed Samurai, took charge of the 'cleansing' of Fire Country and began a campaign of finding ways to arrest V'rana and Ryou'ng, namely due to how less human the two races looked. The V'rana being much more social then the Ryou'ng at that time, got the word out far and wide, causing them to emigrate to Wind Country, en-mass. Of course, being shipped to a land surrounded by water... yea, they just kept slipping out and carried word back about Gargar Valley's condition.

It would be a Lu'Pine named Kikyo of Moon's Slade who realized that given time and public opinion, the heir of the Daimyo of Fire Country, would be able to 'arrest' any non-human and ship them to Gargar Valley. So, the Moon's Slade gathered all those among the various races, looking for those trained in using Chakra to shape the island, tame those volcanoes, and make it into a place as a sanctuary for their respective races. After all, they were going to get shipped there anyway, so why not take it and make it into what they want it to be instead of just another prison?

It's funny, there's a minor list of both Citizen and Shinobi clans that got hired or donated to the cause but its the Uzuamki clan, his clan, that are the most well known and well thought of, particularly given their history with one of the V'rana Clans, the Crystal Shrine. They

had aided the Crystal Shrines moving to the area of what would become known as Tea Country. They also approached the Mountain Singers instead of the group approaching them for help. The Ryou'ng's main role in the cause of the Mountain Singers had been in searching for shrunken treasure from the Ocean floor, which was used to fund the cause. The Uzumaki did receive payment for their aid, even if they didn't request much in the way of money. Another reason why Uzumaki clan is well remembered for has to do with their helping of setting up security seals, helping to shroud the massive island from view of the Daimyo's fleet of ships and, later, updating them to keep out non-approved humans from finding the island.

There's a minor branch of his clan that call Gargar Valley home, they live at the northern east point of the island. He wonders if they're descendants of orphans adopted into the clan or... well, he's not sure where babies come from and according to the game that is now the world, he's not allowed to know until he's at least eleven years old. It's kind of the same with most animals, even so, oh, he knows that birds, reptiles, and creepy crawls come from eggs, he just don't know where the eggs come from or why some eggs were fertile and others weren't. It's like he's got all the pieces before him only, something is blocking him from snapping them together.

Grunting, Naruto focuses on moving around the crowds, this settlement is named after Moon's Slade herself, called Moon's Grave. There's a monument to the Mountain Singers with a statue of Moon's Slade herself posing in a victorious stance. After a few minutes, he finds himself standing before the Blazing Will, he couldn't help but be rather bemused at the image of a flame making a fist.

Entering, he finds the restaurant fairly sparsely populated, there's a group of five at a corner table near a painting of a classic stylize dragon fighting a white tiger and scattered about three other tables are groups of four people. Near the bar though, there's a group of three and if he were to haze a guess without the use of Quick Scan, he'd bet they were workers of the restaurant, the big clue being that

one of them is behind the liquor bar. He approaches the trio and the waitress, a Shimii'Meo woman greets him, "Hello, welcome to the Blazing Will, what can I do for you? I'm Sen by the way!"

"I spoke with Emi from the bank and she mentioned there's a temporary opening for a cook? I'm Naruto by the way, pleased to meet you!" Naruto tells them and the two men, one a Lu'Pine and the other a Shimii'Meo, look dubious about his inquiring for a job. He's about to be given a quick Quest to test his cooking Skills and as the green striped Shimii'Meo straighten, Naruto feels the pink eyes of the other go over his appearance with a considering look.

The 'field' coat color of the Shimii'Meo is a steel gray and he addresses Naruto, "Name's Daisuke Mochi, my cousin's the owner. This here's Ren Soatome and Jun Mochi." Then Daisuke gets to the part of giving him his Quest. "You look like of young to have the skills needed to work at a restaurant, but being the generous guy that I am, how about you cook the three of us something? A sample of you're kitchen skills?" The Quest pops up and unlike previous times, there's no listening of what Food Items he needs to make to complete the Quest.

Accepting, Naruto nods his heads in agreement, asking, "What kind of foods do you guys like?" And Daisuke just grins, his reply is, "Surprise us."

"I'll lead you on back." Ren says and the Lu'Pine heads for a door, he follows after. He'll see what they have stocked, he doubts he'd be able to read any of their Recipes unless he gets the temp job as a cook. Ah, the perks of being a Wandering Craftsman.

Once within the kitchen, he takes in the sight, using every Observation Skill he has on the kitchen once he thanks Ren for showing him back here. The other leaves and he brings up his Character Overview, going to his Learn Recipes tab to take a look at what he can cook viva the ingredients. He rubs his scaly lower jaw as he notices how certain spices weren't in the kitchen, which could be a problem.

After a few seconds, he decides to improvise by seeing if he couldn't substituent spices and maybe how the dishes are prepared to get them to taste just right? After all, there was a time when the world wasn't one big game and thus Recipes were subject to changes viva alterations, maybe that's what he needs to do to create his own Recipes and Designs? To not let the auto system for Crafting take control of his actions? No pop ups but that hardly matters and he favorites the dishes he wants to attempt to do.

And so, he gives it his best shot, making use of Observation throughout the cooking process along with sampling. His Cooking Skill does go up as he manually goes through the steps instead of just entering into the auto system that the world now allows him to enter into. He started on eight and only ruined five of them as they either got burnt or he handled the inclusion of the spices wrong. He altered the Meat and the amount of Spices used on the Curry he tried to make.

To his tastes, it wasn't that bad but then, he used Eel Meat instead of the more traditional types he knows most use like Beef and Pork. He didn't know what to make concerning the Shrimp as he's never come across the ingredient before now. *It kind of reminds me of a Craw Fish...* Naruto muses as he places the plates onto a tray before using both hands to carry it out.

"Ginger Eel Curry!" He chirps cheerfully as he brings it up to the bar and the three adults look in his direction. "Enjoy!"

The three share a look as he moves to set a plate before each of them. He hears Jun mutter softly, "You first, Dai, you first." While Ren reaches under the bar to bring out chop sticks for them to use.

He's not insulted, after all, he knows its not the best dish given the quality of the Ginger Eel Curry being simply Good compared to what he's been able to make viva the auto system while following a favorite Recipe. It's been a while since he's gotten anything below Great Quality using the auto system but, well, he couldn't do the auto

system for this Quest and, well, he's got something to experiment with now.

After about a minute, Daisuke finally tries some rice covered in the sauce. Naruto merely waits calmly as the man savors the bite. "It's not terrible." Which is true but he can tell that Daisuke liked what he tasted as he's already picking out some of the cooked meat to try.

It seems that's enough for both Jun and Ren to give it a try. Jun hums in pleasure while Ren's moving the plate closer to his face to begin shoveling it into his mouth. Naruto didn't bother to keep the wide grin from his face, very pleased that the three liked the dishes he made. The Quest is completed and once it's dismissed, Daisuke turns to him, his plate pretty much cleaned of the Curry. "Well, I'll give you points for making something passable. You got the job, kitchen's yours until we close, which is at eight tonight. Be here by nine, although we do open at eleven, you'll need to go buy inventory for the kitchen. I'm sure you'll notice we're missing some key ingredients. Plus, you should check out our Restaurant's Recipes for the menus."

He nods, having expected that. "Mind if I ask how long I'll be working for?" Jun is the one to answer his question, "Just for the next four days, Mimi's due back from her vacation by then. She's been gone for ten days already and we've never been able to cook as well as her, so, most of our usual crowds been eating else where until she gets back." With a nod, he begins to head for the kitchen once more, but Jun adds in a teasing tone plus in a fake stage whisper, "Also, don't mind Dai, he's always been a picky eater! The Curry was very good! Never had Eel taste that good before, but that's just me!"

Ren chuckles while Daisuke growls in a mock angry way. Before he enters the door, he moves to collect the dishes and the tray he brought them out on. Once within the kitchen, a number of pop ups spring up, which kind of confuses him as they've never waited before to make an appearance, so, why now? Pushing that thought aside for now, he skims through them and yea, his intelligence and wisdom do go up from how well thought out his manual tries for cooking had

gone. Plus, he did create a Recipe and it's under a new listening under his Recipe Tab, it's called Naruto's Personal Recipes.

Once he's dismissed the pop ups, he checks around for the Restaurant's Recipe Book. He not only learns more dishes and desserts but also learns a few Tea Recipes, creating a new section under his Cooking Recipes called Teas. The Recipes for Liquor Drinks is unavailable for him to learn until he reaches either fifteen years of age or is Legally an Adult, which means whatever age he graduates from the Shinobi Academy as a Genin. Given his personal Goal, he has no plans of either dropping out of or failing to graduate from the Academy, he'll use every underhanded skill to do so but at the same time, he really wants to do so because he's considered capable of being a Shinobi. It's a paradox in that he wants to graduate because they graded him fairly yet, will use every tactic to make them grade him fairly?

It's a minor headache that he dismisses from his mind and begins to clean up the kitchen area. After all, he's got those ruined dishes to toss out along with washing the various plates and other cooking equipment. Then he does the counters, humming a simple tune.

Once done, he decides to give his new Recipe a try but doesn't want to do it manually so he uses the auto system. It's of Good Quality again but there's nothing wrong with that, he is hungry after all.

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It's the last day of his working at the Blazing Will and it's about two hours until they close when in walks a woman sporting bright pink hair with three braids sporting star shaped beads into the kitchen viva the employee's entrance. The next thing Naruto notices is her eyes being a light brown and she looks to be in her thirties, maybe standing nearly five foot five inches. The woman seems to come to a stop and seems to be studying him in turn.

"Naruto Uzumaki, Temporary Cook of the Blazing Will." He introduces himself. "Mimi Mikoyan, the returning Cook of the Blazing

Will." Mimi introduces herself, cocking her head slightly to the side, as if, not really knowing what to make of something.

"I was hired about four days ago, Daisuke had me make Ren, Jun, and himself something to eat. They seemed to like it so I got the job. Today my last day." He thinks to explain and Mimi just smiles softly, humming gently in acknowledgement.

"Well, the kitchen does look cleaner then it usually does when I get back from my two week vacation." Mimi muses as she begins to stroll around the kitchen, checking the various fridges, freezers, and storage rooms. "Well stocked, although the brands you bought aren't the ones I usually buy..." She muses as she studies the label on a spice packet. "I hope you didn't over spend the kitchen budget for any of this."

"I haggled where I could to get better prices for buying in bulk." Naruto defends, it had been very refreshing to be able to talk to merchants for a change instead of them just shutting him down to simply buy it or get out. He's not sure if he'll be able to put this Haggle Skill to good use back in Hidden Leaf given pretty much everyone there just plain hates him and won't give him more then a snobby sneer in the mind set that he's nothing but trash they won't want to step on.

He's used his Charisma a lot this past month and it's refreshing having people not being automatically hostile to him for either his race or hearing his name. "Huh, Uzumaki... Any relation with those living in the north?" Mimi asks, it's a question he's been asked at lot since he arrived four days ago.

"I think so? I was born in Hidden Leaf, although I was made an orphan at a young age so, nobody around to share the Clan's history or Shinobi teachings." He explains, yet again. "Hidden Leaf, eh? Huh, I thought they turned away all of the Uzumaki refugees that showed up at their gates back when Hidden Whirlpool was destroyed."

And that's new information, something that shocks him, to be honest. From his reading of the public Library's older section, Hidden Whirlpool had been in an alliance with Hidden Leaf. They never mentioned any refugees settling in Hidden Leaf. He just assumed that... well, it was just history for him to learn for any future tests. It just... hadn't seem to be real to him... just something that happened before he was born, that didn't really affect him now beyond that it could be tested on.

"I wouldn't know, they... they don't mention Hidden Whirlpool in our first year at the Shinobi Academy." He feels his emotions rising and something moving to even them out, which he's kind of thankful for. Mimi's gaze softens before frowning.

"You plan on being a Shinobi?" Naruto nods, remarking, "I want to be Hokage, I want to show them what I'm capable of, for them to acknowledge that a Ryou'ng is just as capable of leading the Shinobi as any human."

Mimi sighs as she places the spice pack down, moving so he has a side view of her. "Well, your young yet. Now then, mind helping me make something special for Daisuke?" There's an impish grin on her face and he doesn't do more then glance at the Quest that pops up as he accepts it, replying with a cheerful, "Sure!"

Mimi leaves to go purchase a few items, leaving him to face the suspicion that seems to creep into the other workers as they began to check in on him in the kitchen every ten minutes its either Jun, Ren, another waiter named Shibuya, or Daisuke. The same searching look on each of their faces as they seem to know that something is going on yet, there's no evidence. Yea, there's orders that come in from Jun and Shibuya from customers, there's an increase in business this late in the day, which may mean that it's not usual for Mimi to show up to work upon returning from her vacation before she returns to her position.

It's like everyone is waiting for something to happen and the timer counts down to Mimi's return. She returns thirty minutes before they

close for the day and she takes over the preparation that's he's made progress on even with the others popping in to check on the kitchen. Mimi hides whenever the others pop in, now every five minutes instead of every ten. They succeed in finishing their surprise and he's the one to carry the surprise out while Mimi sneaks out of the kitchen.

The other employees seem to have an air of disappointment. "Special order is up!" He cheerfully says as he places the tray with plates piled high and arranged as Mimi wanted. Quest completed!

"Huh, what?" "Who..." "Who else..." "So where..."

"Hey grumpy cat! I'm back!" Mimi declares, having managed to come up behind Daisuke and placing the dessert upon the counter. "Mimi!" They all chime in and soon they are all chatting as one while each getting up to give her a hug while he places the plates about the various seats.

Mimi moves to sit next to Daisuke, answering the flurry of questions along with asking her own. It's clear that they were good friends along with co-workers. Personally, he just enjoys the atmosphere and chimes in when they recall to include him. As they close up the restaurant, Daisuke takes him aside and gives him his pay for the work he's done, completing the arc of Quests for the Blazing Will.

"Well, if you find yourself in Moon's Grave around this time next year, well, I think we may be looking to hire you again." The cousin of the owner says before they part ways. "I'll remember that, not sure if I'll be able to leave next year but, well, it's something to think about."

He'll be coming back to Moon's Grave before leaving Gargar Valley for the main land but for now, he's heading north, to visit the Uzumaki Clan in hopes of connecting... reconnecting, maybe, with people who share his Clan. He's set out first thing tomorrow, for now, he'll enjoy what the night life of Moon's Grave has to offer and when he comes back this way, he'll be sure to check out the Sunken Sarawak along with other attractions.

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Staring up at the wooden gate's door frame, spirals have been carved upon it. Raging Winds is the name of this port and it was founded by members of his clan, though, he's a bit confused as to how, given that he assumed that the Uzumaki Clan had been strictly human, yet, what little's he's learned taking his time coming north this pass week suggests that either this branch is strictly Uzumaki by blood Uzumaki adopting orphans, giving them the Clan's name or that it's a Clan who abandoned their previous name when they married a number of Uzumaki in the past.

After all, Gargar Valley is a island where it's humans who are in the minority. Mimi had been the first human he's seen since he arrived at Moon's Grave so, well, it's hard to imagine that the Uzumaki's living here in Raging Winds were human. Then again, how did the world explain his most likely human parents giving birth to a Ryou'ng? With a slight shake of his head, he walks through the gate, entering Raging Wind's proper.

A Quest pops up entitled Ties that Bind and the Quest is pretty much to learn more about the history of his Clan along with learning in what way he's related to this branch of the Clan. It's kind of looks like the beginnings of a series of Quests or an overarching one as there's bonus stuff for him to achieve from this visit.

There's a V'rana musician next to the Post Office and he approaches them, it's hard to tell with the V'rana, not only are they known for their short stature but also for their skills at mimicry when it comes to voices and sound, so just because they sound like a certain gender doesn't mean they are actually that gender. "Excuse me, mind answering a few questions?"

"Fire away, although, it doesn't mean I have to answer." The musician answers and he nods in acknowledgement, then after a moment of gathering his courage and, you know, resisting a Quick Scan. "I'm looking for the Uzumaki Clan Head of the Gargar Valley, do you know where I can find them? Can you tell me their name?"

The V'rana studies him for a seconds, then their eyes go towards his Uzumaki Throwing Dagger of Returning. Lowering the guitar, the V'rana nods towards the dagger, asking, "Mind letting me see that?"

After a moment, he doesn't see the harm and pulls the dagger from its sheathe and hands it over, handle first, although the musician doesn't take it, mostly staring intently at the handle then at him. They sit a bit straighter and then click their beak, gesturing to the dagger, saying, "Ok, you've shown to be of the Blood, ya can put it away, cuz."

"You're an Uzumaki too?" He asks, rather startled and the V'rana chuckles like an old man, while the replying in a voice that sounds quite egotistical while putting his guitar into its case, "Oh yes, I am Rou Uzumaki, Merchant of Sound, Master of the Wooing, and the Most Smooth Operator of Raging Winds."

"Ah, ok?" Naruto doesn't know what else to say to that while he sheathes his dagger, not really sure what to make of his newly introduced cousin. "You're what, eight? Of course you wouldn't know what I'm talking able." He feels Rou take a moment to study him and he nods, saying, "Yea, I'll be nine this October."

Rou finishes closing the case and stands, slinging the case onto his back. "Well, come along then, cuz, Old Man Gorou will want to meet with ya. A bit of blood and we'll known if any of our branch can take ya in, file the papers to take over guardianship with the mainland. Which country you from?" Rou asks, already leading him away from the gate.

"Fire Country, Hidden Leaf." Naruto admits which seems to cause Rou to spin around to regard him with a shocked expression, which also means a slightly open beak. It's then that he realizes that he's been rather rude, "Ah, yea, I haven't introduced myself, I'm Naruto, Naruto Uzumaki."

"What, hold up, Hidden Leaf? Are you super sure of that?" Rou asks and comes to stop walking, which causes him to stop walking.

Puzzled, he lets it show in not just his face but by rubbing the scales on the side of his right head. "Ah, yea? I mean, I am attending their Shinobi Academy... It's out for this semester so, I, ah..." With a slight rattle from his teeth, he closes his mouth with a bit of a snap. Not really wanting to admit that this whole vacation is unauthorized.

"Well, aren't you the most poor bastard this side of the ocean. You have my sympathy and I think you'll have all our sympathy, though, well, that's really for Old Man Gorou to decide... Then again, well, let's just get to Storm's Eye as quickly as possible, alright? Never know if those Shinobi bastards realized that yer gone or where ya are." Rou says and then, his cousin begins to form hand seals, invoking a Jutsu.

With a puff of smoke and a feeling of being slammed up to the sky before slammed onto the ground, only quick reflexes kept him from falling face first into the ground. The smoke clears and they're near an edge of a clearing with a simple stone path leading to what appears to be a giant mansion. "Welcome to Storm's Eye Compound, one of the last bastions for the Uzumaki in the world!" Rou chimes in, far too cheerfully in his opinion given what they just went through to get here.

"Well, come on, best hurry this up!" Rou says and then flat out runs towards the mansion and it takes him a few seconds to realize he best do the same, he makes sure to activate his Chakra Sprint, he manages to keep within two feet of Rou, yet the other manages to keep that much ahead of him, which causes him to wonder if something more is at work then just the both of them using Chakra.

A Quick Scan shows that Rou Uzumaki is level 72 and, of course, his Race being V'rana. He's tempted to do an Observation on Rou only, as the building gets closer, he decides to use it on Storm's Eye. The mansion is called Storm's Eye Compound, it's the main house to the Uzumaki Clan living on Gargar Valley, built twenty years after Gargar Valley finished being terraformed by the Mountain Singers by eighteen Uzumaki Clan members looking to settle down, and the

current population of inhabiting the Compound is thirty-seven thousand, two hundred and fifteen.

"How many people live here?" He asks Rou. "A lot, these days, more Uzumaki showing up in recent years, all looking for a safe place. Of course, some of the Shinobi try to plant their spies among the returning Uzumaki, but, well, they just don't have the Blood nor were they Adopted." Then Rou adds, "I think you maybe the fourteenth to show this month, likely only the eighth to be of the Blood though."

"The Compound's undergone a lot of renovations since Hidden Whirlpool was destroyed. Plus, well, let's just say that Seals are pretty much an Uzumaki's Family Technique and we've pioneered into realms concerning Seals that most Chakra users would either sell their bodies for or wish that our Clan died with Hidden Whirlpool, never mind what the Hidden Villages wouldn't give or do to get even a hint of some examples of what we can do with Seals." Rou explains.

Rou touches the door before opening it, gesturing him forward. He enters and he gets his first peek of the interior. "As Gargar Valley was terraformed by Chakra Users, we've never forced those who learn into a single career like those on the on the mainland do, which lead to the Shinobi way of like and then to the Hidden Village system for the Shinobi that the Senji and Uchiha ended up creating by just trying to settle down and have a place to call their own." His cousin explains, leading him down a hallway, he can feel something affecting him. What he finds from a check on himself is that the Security Seals were keeping Rou and him isolated, he didn't know enough of Seals to know by what means just that they were.

"Huh, when you put it like that, it explains a great deal of what I've read from the Library. I never got why the Shinobi Clans began to settle in one spot or why they started to group together with Clans they haven't married with, it does sound risky given that by doing so, their enemies will know where they are and attack accordingly." He reflects. All the books made it sound like the two Clans just saw an advantage of bettering their lot in life by creating a settlement where

people could visit to hire Shinobi, by making themselves more assailable, they could under cut the roaming Shinobi Clans.

"History is written by people and people do tend to have an agenda, it works in the Hidden Leaf's agenda to make it sound like the Senji and Uchiha became the best of buds, that their Blood Feud came to an end upon the founding of the village." Rou snorts. "Yea, right, like people will forgive and forget that easy, particularly given that on both sides, they still recall how so and so was killed by so and so's relative."

"A minority of Senji left with the Uzumaki to create Hidden Whirlpool, not feeling comfortable or safe living in the same area as the Uchiha or the other Shinobi Clans who joined in. The minority of Uzumaki who remained got huffy when they couldn't do anything concerning the Hyuuga Clan's Branch Seal, so they left for either Hidden Whirlpool, the area where the Crystal Shrines settled, or here, Raging Winds." He pretty much just accepted the Quest that popped up concerning him investigating the Hyuuga Clan's Branch Seal as Rou continues on, "Storm's Eye Compound isn't meant to teach Uzumaki how to fight, its more into research and up keeping the various Seals that protect Gargar Valley. Pursue of Chakra usage is more for improving the way of life then ending it."

"So, any who wanted to learn to fight went to Hidden Whirlpool while those seeking general knowledge of Chakra's application came here." He summarizes and Rou makes an approving sound. "How about those who went to Tea Country?"

"The pursue of religion." Rou replies and he doesn't know what to make of that, then again, nobody really saw fit to teach him much of anything when it came to useful skills like Cooking or Laundry, it had been trial and error, so, yea, there's likely a ton of stuff he's fairly ignorant about. What people take as commonly known, wasn't with him.

"You know, your the first Ryou'ng Uzumaki I've ever met and you know, it's kind of hard to think of why that is, given that Raging

Winds is a port city." Rou muses as they come before a large door that seems to be one that is pushed up to open and pulled down to close. Rou's hand glows before he touches the door. "You'd think you won't be the first, then again, most Ryou'ng are kind of, stand offish. Then again, they do have their own towns and villages, if you want to call them that, bellow the water's surface. Few ever try to live their lives outside of the water."

Yea, he knows that, he read the information about each of the other four playable races when the world changed. He had read each, which, given his lack of reading skills back then, is rather surprising. Or maybe not, given that it might not have mattered if he were literate or not, after all, he could read the names hovering over people's heads just fine or when he used Observation for the first time. Even reading the numbers, so, maybe there's more going on concerning the mental effects then he expected or that he never thought to question before?

The door rises as Rou moves his hand from the door. "This here is an elevator. It'll take use straight to the business offices of the Clan. It's faster then stairs, plus, we won't do so much walking." His cousin cheerfully explains. "You first."

He enters and taking in the elevator, it kind of seems like a room only there's buttons with numbers. Rou enters and pulls down the door before pressing one of the higher number buttons. There's a bit of a whine before he feels himself rising up into the air or the room he's in rising up and taking him with it.

"So... why a Shinobi?" Rou asks after a few seconds. "Well, to be honest? I want the respect and admiration that being Hokage would get me. That's been my Goal since I was six or five?" Yea, it sounds rather selfish and childish, yet, well, he's a kid, right? Not that he feels like he's a kid, not like this classmates clearly were, they just don't seem to have the same worries as him, after all, even if he's recently orphaned, he doubts that Sasuke Uchiha has to worry about people invading his apartment, taking or destroying anything that is

of value, wonder why it seems that everyone in the village glares at them or whispers about them being demon spawn...

"The Third, it's still the Third, right?" He nods and Rou continues, "So the Third, he's never mentioned anything about duties or arranged for any special training?"

"No, then again, he's kind of busy. When I use to visit, well, there's always papers on his desk." Naruto mentions as he rubs his throat. "I think he may have given me a lesson or three on how to read and write, mentioned that he'd find someone to teach me. Never happened and I never brought it up as I wanted lessons on how to cause explosions? Nobody really cared if I could read when I went to that citizen school, then again, I didn't like sitting around when I could be *doing* things , like climbing monkey bars or playing Shinobi."

If not for the world changing, Naruto's fairly sure he'd still feel that way and getting lectured about stuff just wasn't the learning experience he likes. The game system pretty much labels him a tactile learner, which he looked up in the Library to learn that he pretty much learns by doing it physically then by listen or by people demonstrating. Something about the world just seems to have a calming effect on him, giving him a chance to stop and think instead of this need to go and do, that he's going to burst at the seams if he just sits still for more then two minutes.

"Yea, we are born with a lot of Chakra and we're not handled right, we can find it hard to sit still for minutes at a time. As a result, we have trouble keeping our thoughts on any one subject." Rou states the elevator comes to a stop. "You might have had it worst then any of us, though. It's kind of surprising that you are as calm as you are, given it sounds like nobody gave you any special attention."

Rou opens the door and he tries to think of how to answer that. "Something just, helped me calm down the day the Academy begun. I can't explain it, its like my whole view of the world changed and then, I *chose* to change along with it." Naruto states as truthfully as

he could, after all, he doubted Rou would believe him if he told the older, more experience person that the world has been re-written and he's not sure if Gargar Valley even existed before that re-write.

"Well, there's no way to know for sure, but, well, chances are, it could have been an Uzumaki Seal some clansman set to check to see if an Uzumaki is lacking the usual training. Could have set of a Seal that activated some kind of time alteration Genjutsu meant to teach the luckless kid ways to channel themselves." Rou muses sighing, adding, "Of course, we'll never know for sure, but it's fun to guess the cause or how one would set something like that up!"

Then Rou gestures with his free arm, "Well, go on, take a look. What do you think? Pretty awesome, right?"

He looks out of the door and realizes that yea, it's not just an amazing sight, but something that he can smell, now that he's been made aware of it. He grew up in Hidden Leaf, so, forests weren't that anything special yet, from scent alone, he knows there's more to it.

As he steps forward, Rou explains, "The First Hokage gifted Hidden Whirlpool some customized plants ranging from tea plants and spice herbs to fruit trees and modified sakura trees whom petals aren't just pink but a wide range of colors, depending on the season or what kind of elemental Chakra the tree was infused with for a year."

"Of course, when Hidden Whirlpool fell, clippings and seeds of the various plants arrived here. We created this green house floor about ten years ago." He hears the door close behind him.

"The office is this way." Rou finally says after letting him take in the sights and smells for a few minutes. Looking in his cousin's direction, he follows behind the V'rana, curious to see how they created this office in this particular setting.

"So, what Gorou Uzumaki like?" He asks as they approach a hedge wall, the leaves seem black in color and there's a fairly nice smell that's getting stronger the closer they get. "It is Gorou, right?"

"Yea, it is and, well, you'll see for yourself!" Rou says before adding, "I'm named after him, then again, so was my dad. It was a bet between my Great Granddad and Great Granduncle. The bet finished after Gramps was born, so, unlike dad and myself, he wasn't named after the Old Man."

They moved around the hedge and he notices that the leaves are more navy blue once you get a better look at them. There's an opening and Rou motions for him to stay here. He watches as Rou slings his case off his back and then takes the guitar out.

The look in Rou's eyes, its positively impish and Rou's beak parts just so. His cousin winks at him before he beings to play in a manner that he just knows is more then likely off key and as Rou rounds the corner into the opening, there's a loud, girlish voice ringing out, again, he's no expert on music and likely never will as long as he's a Ryou'ng as, well, there's something about the fact they have inner ears that make it hard for them to pick up the finer notes when it comes to singing or playing an instruments.

As he does his best to listen in but other then Rou's voice and playing, nothing really can be heard. He does notice something gets thrown as the hedge shakes then after a few seconds, there's an end to the guitar playing and to the girlish voice. Naruto bends down and picks up the case, closing it before slinging the strap upon his left shoulder, waiting.

Rou pokes his head out, it's kind of surprising how the hedge manages to muffle the sound coming from within the inner area of the hedge. "He's ready for ya!" Then Rou's head is gone.

He approaches the opening and finds a Shimii'Meo sitting behind the desk. Deep dark red leopard markings plus spots upon a tawny brown coat sporting hints of white and gray in the same red colored mane. Gray blue eyes met his for a second before the elder's eyes take in his face, spines and horns, and his dress, eyes likely lingering on his dagger.

The name above their head is Gorou Uzumaki and he walks closer to the desk, Rou introduces him, "Naruto Uzumaki of Hidden Leaf, Naruto this is our Head Gorou Uzumaki, his earned the title is The Great Leopard."

"Hidden Leaf, huh? Hmm, could have gone a full decade without hearing that name again." Gorou muses. "So, Kushina's boy then? How odd, then again, Mito's own kids almost... Well, no matter. Heh, it'll be good news to spread that there's still a member of the main line among the living and who may take the Lordship of the Clan."

Gorou gets up and goes to a filing cabinet, pulling out a scroll, Gorou returns to the desk. He offers the case to Rou while Gorou does this and his cousin takes it, all the while, he couldn't help but wonder how it is that the two were related. After all, Rou's a V'rana and Gorou's a Shimii'Meo.

"Puzzled how we're related, huh?" He couldn't help but nod. "Clan secret, it's been around far longer then Gargar Valley, but needless to say, you'll learn it once your skills in Seals along with Biology are high enough." That sounds like a promise so he nods in acceptance while Gorou sits back down.

The scroll gets unrolled and Gorou stretches out his hand with the palm up, he moves his right hand, Gorou humps at the sight of his Summoning Seal but gently holds his hand. Pushing the scroll right under, Gorou channels Chakra into his index claw of his other hand and slices into his palm of his right hand.

The slice is already healing but Gorou's one claw seems to be covered in blood. He with draws his hand once Gorou's grip is gone. He watches as the blood ripples off and then, once the claw is at the center of a plain circle, the blood, all of it, touches the paper. Within half a second, there's too much light and it takes him a few minutes for his vision to clear.

"Ah yes, I forgot how light sensitive Ryou'ng eyes can be." While true, it's not the whole story there, after all, Ryou'ng tend to feel the

current when underwater or trusting their other senses to guide them when they are below the surface of the water. Shimii'Meo's eyes are the best when it comes to night vision, it's more of a difference that even in low light, a Ryou'ng never loses their ability to see in color that makes their eyes unique out of the three that have a slight advantage with vision at night with the V'rana seeing as good as human when it comes to low light vision.

Really, it's more of the fact that their was a number of bright colors that flashed before his eyes then the flash itself. Blue had been the easiest to pick out with red and green being equal in frequency with the final color being a plain, cloud white.

Once he's regained his vision, he can see a pair of names connected to his and then from one it then names another set of names and so on. His father's name is Minato Namikaze, which means his father had been the Fourth Hokage, the infamous Yellow Flash. His mother's name is confirmed to being Kushina Uzumaki.

"So... that confirms that,." Rou says although it takes his cousin a few seconds to read the mood. "Ah, something wrong?"

"My father..." He didn't know how to react as it seems that his mind is blanking as he tries to wrap his mind around the fact that, everything just went sideways so sudden that he's fairly sure he's trying to get back onto his feet. Everything he's gone through and all the little comments that people have made about him, his very treatment...

"Rou... go get Rin please. Our Young Lord needs something strong right now." Gorou says, somehow, already standing next to him, resting a comforting hands on his shoulders.

Something breaks and, well, what happens next for the rest of the day is all in a haze.

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Naruto stares at the gates of Hidden Leaf, he's currently using the Alterself Jutsu, which turns out to be a Yang Chakra Jutsu. He feels so emotionally drained, he's gone through a lot. He broke in a way he hadn't thought he could and he's still on the mend, it's a slow process.

Yea, he spent the rest of his vacation struggling with his revelation concerning his father's position, his mother's having been the previous container for a certain Chakra Entity, about Mito's own position containing the same Entity, that he's in possession of only the Yang half of said Chakra Being, and, of course, learning strictly Chakra Theory and Clan History.

Over his heart is a special Seal that allows him to visit Storm's Eye Compound. He has a Seal to hide in a secure location, its tempting to set the Seal up at the bottom of a lake. There's no rush in planting the Seal, he's got at least three coming semesters to deal with before he's got a few months off from attending the Academy.

Trailing behind a group of people walking through the Gates of Hidden Leaf, he gets a Quest Completion, time slows as if he's accessing his Character Overview. His level increases from the 32 to 40, all the experience he's earned from various Quests didn't go to his experience bar but to this Quest and any rewards got added to this one as well.

There's a few pop ups about his two new skills, Create ID and Escape ID along with him getting updates to his Combat Skills and some of his Chakra Skills. They also change, the levels altering along with descriptions. A number of Shinobi Skills now sport stars next to them along with a gold coloring to them while the other Combat Skills that aren't in line with the Shinobi Profession are simply copper while the rest of his Skills continue to be a white.

His temporary Profession is gone and his new Profession is Student. Tapping it, it just says that he'll learn skills faster while in the presence of an Instructor or Mentor while getting double bonus on buffs while attending school or using school facilities.

For titles now, there's Hidden Leaf Academy Student, Yang Jinchuriki, Heir of Uzumaki Clan, and various Expert Craftsman titles for various Craft Skills. He also finds he can now equip up to three titles of his choice, the only one he can't switch out is Yang Jinchuriki as it's permanently active. He taps the Student title and it mostly gives him a free pass to various practice fields and the use of the Academy's facilities.

His level is now split it seems, he's now got a Combat Level and then General Level, his General Level is 40 while his Combat Level is now at 15. He taps to learn that due to his diversifying of skills, he's got two Level traces to keep an eye on. There's a huge amount of information for him to read about the new changes concerning Adventuring Skills versus Labour Skills, about Professions in general.

He makes a mental book mark to read that later tonight or tomorrow night, for now, he skims through the various pop ups, dismissing them until he gets back to the Quest page and reads what bonus side Quests he managed to complete. He got a good seventy percent of them, which is a fairly decent amount regardless. There's new options open to him, he's able to travel to and from Storm's Eye Compound without anyone the wiser once he sets up that Seal, which will enable him to take down former Hidden Whirlpool Shinobi for training.

Once he dismisses this, Naruto takes his time going through his new Character Overview sheet. He equips his Hidden Leaf Academy Student and then his Expert Herbalist with the third one being Expert Skinner. He's got something new to work on and then he takes his time with his stats, in the end, he invest them all into his Intelligence and Wisdom evenly.

He then goes to review the description of Creat ID means and finds that it allows him to Create Instant Dungeons. As he reads it, he wonders why the world would make such a broken skill. The Escape Instant Dungeon mostly gets him out of an Instant Dungeon, whether his own or someone else created in the World. Although, he does re-

read the previous skill and yea, according to it, it allows him to create an area for others to venture into at higher levels, otherwise all the Dungeons he creates are temporary. Plus any minions created in said Instant Dungeon are considered Chakra Constructs, which means any drops they leave are not permanent either, that once he Escapes from the ID, any Loot vanishes as well.

Ah, well, it'll be good practice regardless. His dreams of infinite resources dashed before he could formalize them. Plus, it looks like the ID he creates is one only he and those he invites into a Party could access so he doesn't have to worry about people crash his attempts at clearing out said ID.

He looks for the Party tab and finds it unavailable due to lack of Local Friends. "So, this is your way of telling me to make nice with others my age? Really, Game God? Have you not seen my attempts from before?! How the Hell am I going to manage that? When their parents are capable of influencing their opinions of me?!" He whispers angrily, just because time has slowed doesn't mean that others couldn't, maybe, pick up him talking to himself.

In the end, he does his best to calm down and just, dismiss the page. Time resumes its normal speed and he takes a moment to do a Quick Scan on the Chunin Gate Guards. Names and then Shinobi Level in gold being 49 and 52 respectively, there's a second Level shown in white and again their respective Levels are 16 and 11.

Time well spent. He muses but it does give him an idea of how much time one spent taking their Shinobi Skill seriously. Turning his gaze, he heads for his apartment, confident in the fact that according to his Quest Completion, nobody noticed that he was gone, then again,...

A new Quest pops up entitled Gossiping Geese, it pretty much has him investigating what happened in Hidden Leaf during his time outside of the village. He has until midnight tonight to complete it.

Humming thoughtfully, he changes direction to the market district to begin said investigation along with grabbing something for lunch, the

clock is ticking and his curiosity has been aroused.

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Shikamaru is suddenly wide awake. {Congratulations! You have been chosen to bear the title Gamer Shinobi! You are number 4 out of 8 Genin Chosen for this title!} As if sensing he's done reading it, it fades for another to pop up.

{Shikamaru Nara, Heir of the Nara Clan, Genin of Hidden Leaf, and Gamer Shinobi is now beginning the Gamer Tutorial Quest Line Begins! Quest: Character Overview Part 1!} "Character Overview?" He couldn't help but whisper that out loud in disbelief and something pops up along with another message. {Quest Completion! Quest: Character Overview Part 2 begins!}

Shikamaru just knows that this is going to be oh *so* troublesome .

To be continued?

To Readers: This little story outline had been saved in my DeviantART drafts for some months now. On August 28th, 2017, I came back to the idea as I had a new take on the Gamer story line. Plus, well, one could argue that the Naruto shown here is more a Proto-type Gamer, what with the massive amount of Yang Chakra within Naruto causing a minor glitch that allowed him to be aware of the re-write, like it's just how unbalance in terms of between Naruto's Yin and Kuruma's Yang that allowed the pair to slip the leash.

I gave up on trying to show the Gamer side of the story and decided to focus on the changes that could occur when a world is rewritten along with What If new Races had to be rewritten into that history? Yea, the various races introduced aren't new to the fantasy world, you got your feline people with both words Shimii and Meo meaning cat, canine people named in honour of a certain Werewolf, a re-skin of D&D Kenku with Vrana being a word for Raven or Crow, and then the Ryou'ng being hybrid of Skyrim's lizard people with hints of Dragon's natural attraction to Treasure woven in.

Then I had to explain how a pair of humans could give birth to a non-human and that lead to the Uzumaki Clan being able to use Seals to switch a person's Race. It's a one time use item for anyone save, of course, for those that are Gamers. We all know that Gamers are special snowflakes after all, and normal rules just don't apply.

If I do continue this, it'll be from Shikamaru's PoV, for at least a chapter.

Yea, this ended up being 32 pages long according to Micro Word, yea, this ended up so massive that DeviantART's submission could handle the amount I was writing. It kept cutting off at the part where Mimi and Naruto completed their surprise. So, this isn't going to be submitted to DeviantART, just to my account here on FanFiction.

Lives We Experience: Naruto

I don't own anything!

The journey to the Academy... it proved to be rather troublesome, the Tutorial Quests keep popping up, new Skills being created like Observation and Quick Scan, the latter being a sub-type of the first that got created once Observation reached level fifteen. Shikamaru does his best to keep a flat, bored look upon his face as his annoyance continues while doing his best to not do the Quests.

Which, are fairly difficult as it feels as though something is causing time to either reset or move very slowly. Upon waking, he had tried to dispel the pop ups, thinking them being caused by Genjutsu. All that did was add experience to his Dispel Genjutsu Skill.

So troublesome, it can't be right... Being lazy couldn't be that much work... Shikamaru pauses before a window of a shop that's a block from the Shinobi Academy to ponder the idea.

Yes, it's a drag getting pestered by his mom about his chores... Of thinking up ways to avoid her or just trying to tune her out or just doing them in the slowest manner he could think of in hopes she'll stop giving him said chores, which, never happens... And then there's the thinking up believable excuses... Shikamaru blinks as he calculates the amount of time he puts into avoiding or dragging his actions before getting around to his chores that, yea, being lazy was a lot of work. More work then just completing the chores as it would also get his mom to stop pestering him, giving him more time to nap up in his room.

{Do to your action, your Intelligence and Wisdom increased by one!} Then, he's congratulated for completing a Tutorial Quest entitled {Mental Review Part 3}. It's all about learning how to increase both of his Mental stats at the same time without spending stat points.

It seems that is the end of that Quest line as there's no new Quest generated. Then there's the timer that starts beeping and a glance shows he's got five minutes before he's late for the Genin Team Assignments. The failure of completing is... a lecture from Iruka during lunch with Choji eating his lunch.

"How troublesome." But he Channels Chakra into his legs and gets into a flat run. As he gets near the door, he finds a Ryou'ng standing near the door. Dull orange scales along with golden horns and spines.

His name is Naruto Uzumaki, full Health, and Chakra bar. The Ryou'ng's eyes flash in... well, his Empathy Skill is too low level to pick up the emotion, after all, Naruto's non-human so, how the other races express emotion is different then how humans do. He didn't have the time to invoke his Quick Scan or Observation.

His gaze goes to the door and he increases his Chakra, boosting his reactions to get him through the door before the timer gets to zero. He's three steps into the class room before he is congratulated for his success. Glancing behind him, his former Chunin Instructor, Iruka, is giving him a look before barking out orders for Sakura and Ino to stop their shouting, to sit down.

As he watches this exchange, there's a number pop ups concerning his breathless state along with Chakra usage. Once recovered from his run, he glances at the desks to find his best friend then walks up the stairs to take his seat next to Choji. As he's about to sit, it seems that Naruto's already at the back of the class room, not sitting at a desk, just leaning against one of the cabinets. Shikamaru invokes a Quick Scan. {Naruto Uzumaki, Shinobi Rank: **[Genin]** , Combat Level 74, General Level 112} Sitting down, he moves his back towards Naruto. He then looks towards Iruka-sensei, he invokes Quick Scan. {Iruka Umino, Shinobi Rank: **[Chunin]** , Combat Level 68, General Level 14}

{Quest: Hot Scales of Power! Investigate the mystery that is Genin Naruto Uzumaki to learn how it is his respective Levels are so high

while sporting the rank of Genin. Rewards are ?} The window disappears and Shikamaru turns to the front of the room, having realized that he was starting at the...

{Do to your actions , your Wisdom increased by one} Yea, he remembers Naruto now, rumours were that he dropped or flunked out during their second year of the Academy. It seems that he graduated early, before turning ten. Which doesn't explain why he's only a Genin though...

And now I have a Quest puzzling over that... How troublesome. Shikamaru thinks to himself, Iruka-sensei begins their Team Assignment by congratulating them for passing their finals. There's nothing new being spoken of, and so, he uses his Quick Scan on his classmates.

Annoyingly, it seems that he's the only one with a Combat Level 14, everyone else sports a 15 or 16. Sasuke Uchiha's Combat Level is 18, but then, his General Level is 9, which is the lowest as he himself sports a General Level of 11. The girls sport an average General Level of 13 or 14, Hinata Hyuuga's General Level is the highest at 16, then again, her Combat Level is 15.

The rest of the boys' own General Level seem to be 13. Kiba's another odd one, with his being 14, then again... A Quick Scan upon Akamaru only gives him Akamaru's name, no levels. {Akamaru. Level Locked! Observation of Chakra Animals will Unlock once Assigned a Jonin Instructor and in a Genin Practice Field}

Glancing out the window, he couldn't help but think of what a drag. It seems that there's still stuff that needs to be unlocked even though he's a Genin. Soon enough, Teams are being called. He can't help but note that Naruto Uzumaki is on Team Seven along with Sasuke Uchiha and Sakura Haruno, their Jonin Instructor is Kakashi Hatake.

It's clear that Sakura is confuse concerning their third team mate as she is looking around with a frown. "Who's their third?" Choji asks him in a whisper.

"The Ryou'ng behind us." He answers with a sigh after giving it a thought over whether he should answer it or not as he only pays the Team listing with half an ear. "There's a what behind us?"

He hears Choji turn his head, a soft oh before Choji returns to munching on his chips. "He seems..." His friend begins and he sighs.

"Early graduate." He states and Choji hums. "Wake me up for lunch." With that, he does his best to fall asleep with his head upon his arms. He heard his team assignment, now it's a matter of a short lecture followed by lunch.

After lunch, they'll be meeting their Jonin Instructor and likely the beginning of Team Bonding.

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Shikamaru is doing something he normally would put off, something that would likely be the source of so much future pestering but, well, after some Observations to compare his stats during lunch, it seems that his physical conditioning is... well, the four Academy Students he decided to Observe prove that they not only have larger Chakra reserves but Dexterity, Strength, and Stamina. The only stat that he's tops in is Intelligence.

The rest of his stats, well, his Charisma is his second highest and it's only at sixteen. Just three points higher then his next highest stat, which is his Wisdom. His lowest stat? Stamina at ten points.

He... he finds himself very unsatisfied with the fact that through his laziness, he's that physically weak. That he's the weakest link of his new Team as even Ino's stamina is over fifteen point never mind her Dexterity or Strength. Her highest is Charisma followed by her Wisdom.

So... he's got a number of Daily Quests line up for the rest of the night that promise to increase his physical stats. Which, it turns out, come to him viva his chores, so yea, his mom's going to be very

confused at his new attitude and likely assume that he's sick, yet, it's the easiest way to increase said stats along with getting money and experience, it's also likely that some of his Skills will be leveling up.

So, he's off to groom a number of his clan's Deer and then clean out the birthing stalls, something that hasn't been done since January of last year. There's bonus rewards for both Quests, Deer Fur as a Crafting Item and finding lost items that his fellow Nara left behind in the stable and thought it too troublesome to look for them.

"What are you doing here?" Riko Nara asks. "Didn't you get your Team Assignment today?"

"Ate supper with my Team. Didn't want to go home just yet so came out here." He states with a shrug and Riko's look of puzzlement then turns to understanding as she draws her own conclusions.

{Do to your actions, your Deceit leveled up!} It fades away as Riko waves him off, saying, "Just be sure to head home before midnight. Wouldn't want your mom worrying about you getting kidnapped."

He hums and Riko continues on her way to the storage house to return a shovel. He watches her for a few seconds before heading for the stables looking for a wire brush to use on the deer. He needs to groom at least five but he'll get more experience for every two above that number.

Suddenly, his completes a Tutorial Quest as his grabbing one of the wire brushes goes into his Inventory. Another Quest pops up concerning him learning to access his Inventory and taking out said brush. "So troublesome." He sighs and it takes him a second to bring up his Inventory.

He taps the brush and then exits out of the Inventory only to see that, nope, he hadn't taken the brush out. With a sigh, he opens his Inventory and tapping it twice, he Equips the brush. Thus completing the Quest and he heads out to the meadow to begin looking for some deer to groom.

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Shikamaru couldn't help it, his left eyebrow is twitching. He's been at this for an hour and he's yet to get close to one of the Nara Deer. Yes, that is what they are called and yes, they count as Chakra Animals. So they have a Level but he can't see what it is, which would make this so much easier as he'd know what he's dealing with.

Although, his Dexterity and Stamina have gone up as he's used Chakra to improve his speed plus he only waited a minute before continuing with the pursue, which is how his Stamina increased. For his Skills, his Chakra Control, Running, and Sprinting have leveled up five times and from what he can see, they're about to level up for a sixth time this pass hour, although he may need to stop to recover his Chakra as his reserves are not regenerating as quickly as he would like.

"You know, you could just use your Clan's Shadow Bind Jutsu on them." Startled, he glances around until he spies a blond his age leaning against a fence post. "I mean, I've been here for the past fifteen minutes and, well, this is just sad."

"And you are?" He asks in annoyance, straightening his pose. There's no name floating above the blond's head. Health bar is full and he didn't see a Chakra bar, so, he may not have ever attended the Shinobi Academy.

The blond merely gives him a bemused look, which drew attention to the whisker marks upon the cheeks. "Been called plenty of names growing up. Some earned, some not."

"But, here." The blond takes out his passport and flings it at him, he catches it and opens it. The name in the passport is Akeno, no last name. He uses Observation to learn that yip, it's an official Passport that Hidden Leaf issued two years ago. Looking up at the blond, Akeno is now hovering above the blond's head but no name.

He uses Quick Scan. {Akeno, General Level 112} No Combat Level listed, which isn't that surprising as it seems that only Shinobi have those. "And why are you here?" He asks, walking over, which causes his aches to act up and blisters to remind him that they exist.

Akeno takes back his Passport, a strange little smirk on his face as he pockets it. "I'm here for my order of Deer Fur. Here's the ticket." The blond offers a slip of paper that he uses Observation on and yip, it's genuine. "Nara Deer shed some of the best quality Deer Fur, which I make use of for fur linings for sleeping bags and fur lined hooded vests."

After a few seconds, Shikamaru sighs and runs a hand over his face. He's tired and irritated, that's likely why he's feeling so paranoid right now. Then again...

"So, Tailor?" He asks and Akeno adds, "Blacksmith, Jeweller, Herbalist, Leather Worker, Skinner, Tanner, Alchemist, Weaver, Licensed Seal Crafter, Professional Chief... Well, the Title **[Artisan Craftsman]** pretty much works at this point to describe what I can do, like if someone wants to know if it can be made, I'm the guy they ask, for a minor fee of course."

That's... insane, to be honest and yet, a pop up saying his Detect Truth went up two levels which means that, Akeno's a very accomplished Craftsman and that he's not all bark. His General Level pretty much backs that up. From what he's seen just going through Hidden Leaf's Market along with browsing a few Shinobi Supply Stores, most Craftsmen's General Level is, on average, 30 with some of the older Craftsmen sporting a higher number, 50.

Then again, they all focused on a single Crafting Skill while Akeno here, it sounds like he hasn't stopped at learning a single Craft Skill. *Wait a minute...* "Licensed Seal Crafter?"

"Yea, it's been a few years since Hidden Leaf had one in residence. The last one was an Uzumaki, a Renji Uzumaki. Moved out of Hidden Leaf back when the Hidden Whirlpool refugees were driven

off by Citizens of Hidden Leaf." This time, his Detect Truth increased by three levels, not that it's a comforting feeling, finding out there was a Hidden Whirlpool let alone that their refugees were driven off upon arrival to Hidden Leaf.

Or that there is an official Clan of Uzumaki. Wait a minute, wasn't the First's Wife of the Uzumaki clan? His Intelligence and Wisdom increase upon remembering that. "What do you do that an Official Supplier Seal Maker couldn't?"

"Anything I am want to create while charging what I please, able to legally own any books on Seal Theory, and am legally allowed to own whatever Seal Supplies I want." Akeno explains. "Want a tent that keeps the heat in while in Land of Snow? Sure, can do, what that same tent to be a touch cooler while traveling in Wind Country, can do, just adds a bit more to the amount, you know? Air Cleansing Seal on top of that, again, you have the money to match what I charge, I can do it."

"You don't seem to have your Chakra Unlocked." He points out and Akeno rolls his eyes. "Some of the first Seals I made charged themselves viva the free Chakra that's part of any environment." True, as, yet again, his Detect Truth goes up another level.

Just talking with this guy, how high is his Charisma? He wonders to himself, after all, why would his Detect Truth keep going up if Akeno's Deceit Skill wasn't stupidly high? His Wisdom increases by three points, which he does his best to keep his eyes from widening, after all, that's something he hasn't seen before, typically, he only increases one of his stats by one.

Akeno turns to look towards the stables, saying, "Well, I best get on to my business and leave you to yours. Perhaps you'll be looking to employ my services in the coming months, right? After all, you never know what the future has in store, eh?"

He watches Akeno head for the stables and it's only when his father steps into view does he realize that Akeno seemed to have noticed

his father's approach. Yet again, his Wisdom increases and he finds himself wishing the night would just end, he's tired and it seems that his physical stats are so bad that he couldn't complete simple Daily Quests.

As he walks home, as he mentally chews on the conversation, he realizes that Akeno's right, the very first thing he said to him, it was so simple that, he's ashamed it didn't dawn on him in the first place. "Why didn't I think to use that on the deer?" Thinking back, yea, it would have saved him not just time but also Chakra to just use Shadow Bind Jutsu on the Nara Deer.

It's at this moment that he realizes that the title Wise Fool could very well apply to him. Calling up his Character Overview, he taps his Wisdom to get a description of what it does. It can be summarized as intuition, which governs the whole this feels wrong or I'm onto something feeling. Tapping Intelligence, it pretty much reads as learning skills quickly, as in able to learn new Skills quickly or learn from the past at a faster rate.

It seems that he'll be investing heavily in Wisdom along with Stamina. After all, Wisdom sounds like instinctively making use of known Skills in an unknowing fashion while Intelligence is all about picking up new Skills along with seeing the errors of the past to learn from it. Another pop up shows that he increased his two mental yet again.

Well, it looks like he's going to be leveling up his Meditate Skill a great deal in the future. Although, as he looks down at his flaws, he is rather surprise to note that there seems to be a count of a kind. It seems that if he can not give into this flaw for twenty-nine days, it'll downgrade from always to occasionally. Given it's marked as a character trait, it'll take a whole year to get rid of it in total, as in, it's one of his core traits and thus, it's as much a part of who he is as his love of strategy games.

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He rubs his face, Tora's claws are rather sharp and the demon feline being a fierce foe when backed into a wall. While he managed to keep his hold, it had been Ino, who tried to calm the demon in the shape of a cat that ended up allowing Tora to resume the chase. While she did apologize, she did point out if he had been quick enough, he could have used Shadow Bind Jutsu on the fleeing cat as they were in an alley, filled with shadows.

His irritation is pretty much aimed at himself at the fact that, upon reflection, she's right. Yet again, he's reminded that just because he has the higher IQ doesn't mean he's without blind spots in his thinking. Once more, he's lazy nature being rubbed into his face and it's going to take time to overcome his flaw.

If he's got nothing to do, he finds himself either laying down to stare up at the clouds floating pass or falling asleep wherever he's sitting. It's such an engrained habit that his new awareness of the world doesn't alert him when he's been affected by said flaw. He's got a Quest concerning how he plans to counter his laziness.

Shikamaru pauses as he notices Team Seven painting someone's fence with white paint. The Uchiha Heir is pretty much glaring at his Ryou'ng team mate. Naruto seems to be rather bored while ignoring Sasuke's glare while Sakura seems to be doing her best to keep her attention on the fence and upon using her brush.

It takes him a few seconds to spy their Jonin Instructor, one Kakashi Hatake. Using Quick Scan, he learns that his Combat Level is 140 with a General Level of 14. He does a Quick Scan on Naruto to find that, his Combat Level and General have increased in level, 75 and 113.

Given it's only been a week, it means that Naruto was either very close to leaving up or something happened that gave him a ton of experience. His mind else where, he feels someone's eyes on him and blinks to find Kakashi and Naruto gazing at him. Given how covered the Jonin's face is, he finds himself very unsure of the look upon the older man's face.

Switching to Naruto's face, there's a sense of familiar yet something's just not lining up. There's emotion shining in the eyes and there's a slight something, it's subtle but there all the same. Still, he's fairly sure that, no matter how guarded, he'd feel more comfortable trying to read the Jonin's face for emotion then Naruto's simply due to the fact that, everyone he's knows, had known, or seeing throughout his life had been human.

It's what he's familiar with, comfortable with even. It's what makes the other races stand out to him whenever he's seen them in the market or in a crowd. They shine like unique points of abnormity among what's normal. *Maybe if I grew up seeing more of them, I'd be more accustom to them? That they'd just be more like people?*

He's rewarded with an increase to his Intelligence and Wisdom. Then he senses hostile intent and glances at the source, finding the Uchiha Heir scowling in his direction, it's easy for him to detect the other's negative intent. It seems his offense is managing to draw Naruto's attention while Sasuke couldn't draw said attention to himself.

How troublesome. "Hey, Shikamaru! Where's Ino-pig?" Sakura asks, addressing him while glancing around with a scowl. It clear the pink haired Genin suspects that Ino's here to visit the Uchiha Heir.

"What a drag, any of you seen a cat like this?" He holds up the photo of Tora and for the first time, Naruto speaks, his tone is clearly bemused, "Oh, you got the Demon Cat so soon? Well, want some advice?"

He blinks as he looks back at the Ryou'ng, trying to sense if he's being serious. "How troublesome. Well, if its free..." His Sense Motive goes up three levels, which is stupidly fast and yet, perhaps it might have something to do with Naruto's much higher level?

As Sasuke huffs in annoyance, he gets a pop up informing him that yet again, his Wisdom increased. "Its none of our concern, it's not

our Quest to find that damn cat." Sasuke states in a flat tone and, it takes Shikamaru a second to realize the wording.

He uses Observation on Sasuke and this time, brings up his own Character Overview, which finally causes him to complete one of his three remaining Tutorial Quests. There, in the Titles is Shinobi Gamer and he one of his two last Tutorial Quests gets an update now that he's found one of the other eight Shinobi Gamers.

With a sigh, he moves down to Sasuke's Skills and yea, the same Shinobi marked Skills are there. It doesn't surprise him that Sasuke's Shinobi Skills are higher leveled then his own. There's a few other Combat Skills that, again, he shares with Sasuke and there are a few that are merely question marks. Then, General Skills, well, that's where things got interesting as it seems that Sasuke's list of General Skills is far shorter then his own but those that he has are decent enough.

Moving back to the stats, he compares their stats. Surprise, surprise, Sasuke's Charisma is his lowest stat with the second lowest being Intelligence, which is kind of odd. Then again, he checks to see what flaws the Uchiha has and it seems that the Uchiha is suffering from tunnel vision, survivor's guilt, and superiority complex.

He feels a bit of pity for his fellow Genin but mostly irritation at the fact that Sasuke must be aware of his failing yet, isn't putting any effort into overcoming them. It's then that he notices, looking around, that time seems to have slowed around him, it hasn't stopped. Which means that...

Dismissing the two, he notices time resuming. "Troublesome." He states as Sasuke turns his back towards him, focusing on the Quest that's also their mission.

"So, my advice? Learn a Medical Jutsu to heal those claw marks. Use it often enough and you'll be able to use it when you need it the most. Practice makes perfect after all." Naruto's advice. "Cause that

mission? Variations of it have been around since the Second Hokage reigned, so it's not going away any time soon."

His Quest to find Tora received an update. "Fine, whatever. Thanks, I guess." With that, he continues on looking, not really acknowledging Sakura's farewell.

A while later, he swings by the Hospital and manages to find a Jutsu for healing cuts. There's an opinion of Learning the Jutsu vs Reading the Scroll to Learn the Jutsu. After a few seconds, he taps to learn that yes, with his high Intelligence he could learn the Jutsu viva reading it from the scroll.

He then taps the other option to learn that it destroys the scroll but he does learn the Jutsu. Seeing as he's just looking to learn the Jutsu without anyone being aware, he clicks the option of Reading the Scroll. He begins reading the Scroll, there's a lot to go through but, well, by the third read through, a pop up informing him that he has learnt the Jutsu shows up and it's at level five already.

It takes him a few seconds to realize that by choosing to read the scrolls instructions, he is consciously learning the Jutsu instead of it becoming intuitive. Which means that if he's got the Intelligence to read and understand what he's reading, he'll get the Skill or Jutsu and his time rewarded with it being at a higher level.

This awards him a pop up that vanishes after he light skim, he rolls up the scroll and puts it back where he found it. Only one person questions why he's in the hallway and accepts his lie of looking for Tora, it seems that the demon in cat shape is infamous for hiding in infrequently used places.

With this lead, he heads to grab Choji to check out the warehouse area once he made use of his new Jutsu, healing the claw scratches on his face plus hands and arms. Choji trusts his thought, pretty much trusting him. It takes him a moment to realize he relaxed a bit in the presence of his best friend.

He smiles a bit, despite himself. While it's a bit of a drag having Ino on the same team, it's nice that Choji and himself weren't split up when it came to Team Assignments. Though, reflecting, it's pretty clear that due to his dad's team, the Third Hokage thought they could function as well as their respective fathers' team. Maybe trying to catch the 'magic' of said older team, which, is kind of shallow reason, upon reflection.

After all, they were very different people compared to their fathers along with, you know, Ino being a young woman. Women think differently and have different body conditioning. He does read the pop ups as they appear once they arrive at the warehouse.

"So... what makes you think that Tora would be here?" Choji asks as they both scan different parts of the warehouse district. "I was at the Hospital and as I was leaving, someone mentioned that Tora prefers infrequently used areas. First thought to pop into my mind was the warehouse district."

As they are walking pass a warehouse, his final Tutorial Quest gets tripped. {Congratulations completing Quest: Team Work Part 1. Now that you have found a Natural Dungeon, Quest: Team Work Part 2 is now available! Do you wish to form a Party? Y/N}

Shikamaru's eyes widen and he turns to look at Choji only to find Choji still in color along with... his own pop up? Using Observation and comparing his friend's own with his, he once more activates that one Quest concerning finding another Gamer Shinobi. His best friend looks his way and there's a slight widening of the eyes, showing that Choji's surprised.

"Gamer, too, huh?" Choji asks and he sighs, thinking about this. "I wanted to tell you but, well, you've been distracted lately and, well, so have I, I guess." Choji mutters after a minute of silence between them.

"Sasuke Uchiha is also a Gamer. I encountered Team Seven and he used the term Quest instead of Mission. Did you know you can

compare another's Character Overview with your own? It's how I discovered him being one." He informs his friend.

"Huh, well, did you check Sakura? Maybe we should check Ino too, after all, we did graduate at the same time." Choji muses and once more, he feels foolish. He could have also checked Naruto's own earlier but got side tracked with Sasuke and about the sound advice concerning learning a Medic Jutsu.

"Team Eight as well." He muses with a sigh. "What a drag this is..."

"Should we form a Party then?" Choji asks after a few seconds. Looking pass the window, which goes transparent, he uses Observation on the warehouse. It's suggested Combat Level is 20 and recommends at least three member Party.

He brings up his Quest List and checks to see if there's any changes to their Tora Quest. "We'll come back with Ino. I'll also work on leveling up my Mending Jutsu, its currently at level 5. I learnt it from reading a Jutsu Scroll at the Hospital."

A pop up appears as a thought comes to him concerning his Clan's medical knowledge. Yea, he's got Nara Herbal Knowledge and it got him to wonder if his Clan has any particular Medical Jutsu he could learn. He taps the N on the Quest and time returns to its usual pace.

"Let's continue on." Then says, "Also, tonight, take your time to prepare as we'll do the Dungeon tomorrow. We'll speak with Ino, if she's like us then she shouldn't be that hard to convince to join us."

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"Maybe we should have tried harder to talk Sasuke into coming with us..." Ino mutters as they took a break from the wave of cat sized rodents that are called Teenage Black Snarling Rats, their respective Level 12 seems to be the average level with a few Runts being a slightly higher Level although smaller, these seems to have a silver

tint to their respective black coats. Their pelts are all Uncommon Quality, which means they are worth more then the rest.

It also means that they've all learnt Butchering and Skinning Skills from looting the dead Chakra Mutant Rodents. The quality of meat they've been getting had been poor or diseased. They've tossed the various meat around, distracting some of the waves from attacking them. The pelts they've been getting have been poor, then again, the two skills are still low level which means that they may get better meat and pelts from them being leveling up the skills.

Sakura sighs, piping in, "Unless it involves Naruto, count him out." She adds, "Can't say I blame him, I mean, have you seen Naruto's Levels? How is he a Shinobi with a General Level over a hundred!"

"Wait, what? Isn't he twelve years old, too?" Ino asks and Sakura sighs, answering, "He graduated early, when he was nine. Don't you recall an orange scaled Ryou'ng back in first year? And second?"

"Wait, that's this Naruto? But... how? I mean, wouldn't he be bragging about graduating that early?" Ino wonders.

"Would anyone believe him if he had?" Choji wonders and the two girls glance towards Choji. "I mean, weren't the Instructors overly harsh with him? I kind of recall him getting chewed out once for using his tail in a spar once..."

The news of Sasuke's fixation upon Naruto wasn't that surprising, given the Uchiha Heir's flaws. There's no question, Ryou'ng or not, the Uzumaki is the powerhouse of their generation. Then again, with the racism he's facing from the village as a whole, perhaps it shouldn't be that surprising that Naruto had to be? That he had to be more then just good but shine so brightly that they couldn't dismiss him or his skills?

"There's an V'rana Genin, did you know that? I didn't. I didn't even know we had Shimii'Meo among our Hunter Division." Shikamaru

muses. "The V'rana's been a Genin for decades, you know? None of the current Shimii'Meo will likely ever advance into Jonin."

"Naruto... he's the first Ryou'ng to become a Shinobi... at all. Not even Hidden Mist has ever had any among their ranks and they are said to specialize in Water Jutsu." He continues. "Hidden Cloud has maybe a dozen Lu'Pine among their Hunter Division while Hidden Stone pretty much has a Ban on non-humans from even using Chakra within their village, even in self-defence."

He spent the night asking his dad about non-humans as Shinobi simply to know if he'd be facing any in the future. Turns out, they are very much a minority, which kind of made him realize just how strange Naruto was. "What about Hidden Sand?" Sakura asks.

"A few V'rana puppet masters while, again, Shimii'Meo and Lu'Pine tend towards Hunters. If there's any Ryou'ng living in Wind Country, it'll be along the coat." Is his reply. Where the water is, well, that's obvious, given that Ryou'ng are known for their fondness of water, it likely has to due with their ability to hold their breaths for long periods of time, maybe even learning a Jutsu that allows for them to breath underwater.

"Well, looks like we've got incoming." Ino says with a sigh, they are getting to their feet. They ran out of Kunai and Shuriken in the first three waves, looted metal shards from said weapons. Now, now they simply have to grind their teeth and fight bare knuckled, their cloths weren't going to last much longer either.

They brought food and drinks but, again, they consumed all that within the first few waves. Sakura and himself, having the least Stamina and Chakra Reserves, well, they have leveled up their Chakra Control by at least seven levels and for all he knows, they might yet level it up an other seven by the time they are done.

Wave six, he uses a Quick Scan and it seems that their enemies were no longer Teenagers but Adult Black Snarling Rats, their Level is 17. They look like they have more meat on their respective bones

although, it looks like they have quills on their heads, giving them a Mohawk look. He's not the only one tossing rat meat into the incoming swarm, which is fewer in number.

Thankfully, they've all leveled up at least once since they started, with him leveling his Combat Level faster simply due to having been the lowest level. He's spent most on his Stamina with one out of the usual five going to his Wisdom, given he's in a fight for his life, he's confident there will be time in the future to spent points on his Wisdom in a safer location and when his life isn't on the line.

"Only two dozen." Choji muses while back handing a leaping enemy. "We all have leveled up, it's natural that we'd fight more powerful opponents." Sakura points out.

"Agreed, we much be close to fighting the colony leader." Ino muses while he does his best to snap the neck of an incoming Adult Black Snarling Rat while kicking one as it goes for his left leg. "Next time we do this, we need to go shopping for better armour and either better weapons or a shit ton of Kunai in our inventory."

"Might want a few extras for the cloth armour, it's not the most durable around." Choji points out. "Doesn't your Clan use samurai type armour in the past?" Ino asks while a meaty slap can be heard from that direction.

"I'm not well verse in my Clan's fighting style to unlock that option just yet. Just cloth or padded cloth armour, same as any other Shinobi." Choji admits while a chop of his left hand manages to break the back of a leaping enemy and then stomping on its back once it's on the ground, being sure to avoid the Mohawk Quill.

As his sixth dies it's not long before the others finish theirs off. He's quick to go through the various pop ups, most are just Skills leveling up plus he leveled his Combat Level once more. They loot their kills and they all got a new item, Rat Quills, which is a Crafting Item, plus they did get more meat from the Adults then from the Teenagers but again, it was poor, then again, their pelts remain poor as well.

They all rest, waiting for their Chakra to go up. Being the Medic for the Party means that it's his job to heal the others before they see what the seventh wave has in store. More time to waste, just waiting for it to go up, only this time, he accesses his Inventory and pulls out a Biology text book that he borrowed from the Library.

As he's beginning to read it, a stomach growl from Choji causes not just him to look at his friend but the two girls with them. "Sorry but I'm starving! Plus, well, I regenerate Chakra faster when I've eaten something." His friend's lost a few pounds of weight and it has effected Choji's Chakra reserves as the max number has gone done.

"Well, break a box and make a campfire to cook that rat meat." He suggest once a pop up comes and then vanishes. They all stare at him, disgust on the girls' faces while Choji just looks betrayed. "Look, we know it's clean and you need to eat something to regain your Chakra reserves. It's all we have right now and we all need to be in as good a shape as we can to complete this."

Choji sighs and looks at his own Chakra bar. "Your right, I mean, the max number... I've lost so much weight! Look at how thin I am?!" The girls do study Choji, their respective eyes upon how slow Choji's Chakra bar is not just filling up but how the max number is slowly, decreasing.

In the end, Ino and Sakura are giving Choji looks of sympathy and pity. Yes, Choji's Clan is very much related to his body's weight. What once had just need dismissed as excuses is now being proven as fact, that the fat of an Akimichi does have a direct relation to their Chakra reserves. It's more of a Clan Trait then a Bloodline Limit.

In the end, Ino helps Choji gather up broken crates while Sakura clears an area to use as a fire pit. Once the fire has started, he gets up and does a very basic Elemental Chakra Control Technique to light the wood. It takes two minutes for it to light properly, all the while Ino and Sakura have given Choji all of the Meat they Butchered from looting the rats. He does the same before returning to his spot to pick up where he left off within his book.

After a few minutes, the sounds of Choji eating Roasted Meat with the fire crackling. "Huh, my General Level went up... but my Combat Level didn't?" Choji muses and it's enough for him to lower his book to look to see that Choji's right. His General Level did increase, which begs reminds him...

"So... when we level Skills not connected to Combat, it increased our General Level." Which means that Naruto's General Level... he's spent a lot of time learning and using Skills that are not core for their Profession. *And yet, his Combat Level...*

He sighs as he reads the latest pop up. *So, Naruto's been denied serves so often that, he's taken to making his own equipment?* He recalls seeing someone with the same General Level, hadn't he? Looking for an order, actually.

There's a pop up that congratulates him on his deduction. Calling up his Character Overview, he taps Gamer Shinobi and reads the description. Then he checks his Skills and sighs, it seems that this feature... is very narrowly channel. Meaning, they have a limit of non-combative Skills they can ever learn.

It seems that, whatever happened with Naruto, something has taken it upon themselves to keep a repeat of what Uzumaki had done. Meaning, they weren't the first to experience this Gamer feature.

Once more there are pop ups and the Quest updates itself. He dismisses his Overview and leans back a bit, not really following the flow of conversation going on between Ino and Sakura. "I suggest you check the Gamer Shinobi title before enacting any of your money profit ideas. It doesn't look like we'll be pulling any Uzumaki style Skill grinding. We're limited to the number of Skills we can learn that doesn't involve an Adventuring Professions."

They were very outraged a minute later, after reviewing their own Character Overviews along with the Title. Certain skills didn't count towards that limit but any Crafting Skills? They were fine with Knowledge Skills, as knowing subjects for pretending to be another

Profession is covered. It's the Resource Gathering and Crafting Skills that are the hardest hit, only allowing four for both categories. Skinning and Butchering, well, all it does is increase the natural drop rate of pelts and meat, his Biology Skill adds a passive to that as well, surprisingly enough but then, it also grants him a passive when it comes to landing critical hits.

Two Gathering Skills slots to fill. *Then there's the four Crafting slots...* Which causes him to think over what Crafting Skills he should look into learning. He shakes his head, saying, "We'll worry about this once we've cleared the Dungeon."

Closing the book, he places it back into his Inventory and checks his Chakra bar. He takes a moment to notice who needs the most healing before starting with them. In minutes, he notices that due to his Chakra Control Skill having gone up, his Mending Jutsu takes one less point while increasing the healing rate by a point.

Shikamaru gets a few minutes to rest before they engage the seventh wave, once more, it's two dozen Adult Black Snarling Rats with a single Enraged Mother Snarling Rat at Level 19 leading the way. The special Rat goes straight for Choji, he does his best to aid Choji, but it seems that the female rat just won't have it and an Observation shows that since Choji ate the most Roasted Meat made from rat meat that she's got tunnel vision and is totally focus on Choji.

He also finds himself under attack by four at once, having drawn the attention of the swarm viva his efforts to help Choji fight mama rat. Once her health is half way down, he isn't happy but he does do his best to defend himself, again being careful of the Mohawk Quills, going for crushing their throats and going for breaking their backs before stomping on them with his foot.

As they finish this wave, he's sandals are gone as is his vest with only his fishnet covering his upper body. His Kunai and Shuriken pouches vanish from his shorts. "My dress!" Cries Ino while Sakura whimpers, he moves to have his back towards the two. He does a

quick look at Choji to notice that yea, Choji's lost some of his cloths as well, namely his upper body cloths and sandals.

"Ok, I think we should just loot them now and leave. Yes, it will restart the dungeon but we need armour and weapons against the Boss." He reasons out loud. "What a drag, getting this far only to turn back..."

None of them argue and before they leave, Sakura uses a Genjutsu to cover herself in Illusion Cloths. Ino does the same and they leave the Dungeon, thankfully, their money and loot are pretty much with the Inventory so they don't lose anything with the destruction of this various pockets.

They spend the next two hours buying duplicate sets of cloths and a lot of Kunai along with Shuriken. They also take a look around to see what Jutsus people have on sale, namely looking ones that help with Chakra Control. There's none that weren't just a slightly advance version of what they learnt at the Academy and for the prices they wanted, they just decided to leave it, after all, most of them could easily ask their respective relatives for tips. They, in stead, spend what money they had in buy a few stacks of pre-made sandwiches and drinks.

Ready to face the Dungeon once more, they head back only to find that it's been cleared. They make use of their Investigate Skills to find evidence and clues to the identity of who cleared it. A puppy print and strands of white fur...

"Team Eight." Sakura says with a sigh. "At least they had to go through the whole Dungeon, so it's not like we did all the hard work."

Shikamaru sighs, "How troublesome." The others are quick to agree, although, they do Complete the Gamer Quest of locating all seven other Gamer Shinobi along with a bonus concerning their discovery of Naruto having experience with the Gamer System.

Speaking of Naruto... He turns and heads for the market, he's going to ask around to see if he can find 'Akeno' or his shop. After all, he might as well confront the Ryou'ng about this Gamer System and have someone actually answer his questions instead of him thinking up random ideas to see what pop ups when he hits on the correct idea.

"Back to the market, why?" Sakura asks and he says, "I want to find someone and get some answers."

"So we're looking for Naruto then?" Ino asks and he replies with a slight smirk, "Kind of."

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"Hello 'Akeno'." He greets the blond teen and the owner of the store flicker his eyes towards him before taking a moment to study the others. "Perhaps you will answer some questions your underclassmen have concerning something?"

"Oh, underclassmen? Well, you can ask, can't say I'd answer any." "Akeno' replies with a bemuse look upon his face.

Before he continues, he uses Observation and then brings up his own Character Sheet. His eyes widen as he compares the stats along with, another stat that's all question mark with another question mark. Next he checks the name, and yea, Naruto Uzumaki is revealed along with Combat Level and General Level being the same as it was yesterday. Although under his name is Alias: Akeno.

Profession is Shinobi, Rank is Genin, but the Race portion that causes him to rise an eyebrow as while Ryou'ng is listed as his Race, there's a Temporary Race listed with Human next to it. Tapping the Temporary Race, he only gets that Naruto seems to know a Jutsu to alter his race in a temporary manner.

He compares titles and yea, there's a Title that is very different compared to any title he's seen so far. Yang Jinchuriki, that... causes

a sense of dread in his stomach and a window pops up informing him that his Wisdom increased. The next three titles are Hidden Leaf Shinobi, Artisan Craftsmen, and Clan Head.

He glances at his list of titles and they haven't changed, they remain Heir of the Nara Clan, Genin of Hidden Leaf, and Gamer Shinobi. *So what's the difference between Hidden Leaf Shinobi and Genin of Hidden Leaf?* He couldn't help but wonder.

He taps Hidden Leaf Shinobi, the description mostly means he's allowed to access facilities tagged for Hidden Leaf Shinobi along with a slight bonus to increase whatever a Shinobi Reputation is, while wearing a Hidden Leaf Headband and on missions for Hidden Leaf. So, he has access to Training Fields beyond Genin Rank and maybe a Bingo Book entry?

Tapping his own Genin of Hidden Leaf, the description does restrict his access to certain Training Fields but he also gets bonus while training in Hidden Leaf Training Fields along with passive increase to Team base Skills. He rubs his neck, wondering if the reason for the difference has to do with time they spent as Shinobi of Hidden Leaf. And it also seems that while he is wearing his Hidden Leaf Headband, his Team Reputation increase by a slight bonus, it increased the Team Reputation when doing missions beyond Hidden Leaf proper.

Artisan Craftsmen, yea, Naruto pretty much explained that one already, so there's no point in reading it. Again, so does Clan Head, although, he's unsure if Naruto could be considered Clan Head when he's the only member of his Clan, but, what ever, this Gamer System is still new to him. Which leaves...

Shikamaru taps Yang Jinchuriki and gets a warning message informing him that this information is considered a S Rank Secret by the Third Hokage and then asks him if he wishes to proceed. He's at a loss, did he really want to know what a Yang Jinchuriki this badly?

Tapping No, it vanishes and he sighs, "How troublesome." He continues on down the page and is rather surprise that most of Naruto's Flaws... are on the most part Socially base and most are solely active within Hidden Leaf. Feared, Scapegoat, Heritage Denied, Clan Isolation Imposed, Clan Exiled, Clan Accomplishments Denied, Guardianship Deprived, Social Isolation Enforced, Alienation of Peers, Wanted Dead, and Rank Advancement Denied.

"What the fuck? How the hell... is he still sane? Or dead? Or even a Missing Nin?" He wonders as it seems that it's not just Naruto himself who's hated, but his Clan, too.

He taps Clan Exiled and gets a summary of the events of Hidden Leaf turning away refugees from their previously allied village Hidden Whirlpool. Tapping Clan Accomplishments Denied gives him how history books and events featuring the Uzumaki Clan have been edited out, including they founded a Shinobi village called Hidden Whirlpool.

It seems that Racism is the only Social flaw that is more or less universal, it's also one that comes across as the least harmful of the lot. Given Naruto's high Charisma, odds are that strangers from beyond the village will generally develop a more positive view of Naruto then people who live in the same village as him. That's just wrong, there's something seriously wrong with the Village, then again, the Uchiha Clan all getting killed in a single night?

Oh, sure, it looks like Naruto's got some perks and Waterbreathing is one of them along with... Sense Treasure? Tapping the Sense Treasure, he learns that as a Ryou'ng, Naruto can sense Items tagged with Treasured, Priceless, Quest, and Valued within a certain range determined by his Wisdom. *He got this just by **being** a **Ryou'ng** ?*

Yea, that's kind of hard to believe. He taps Waterbreathing and it seems that it's another perk of being a Ryou'ng. Which means that every Ryou'ng can breath underwater, which means that it's some Jutsu that they learn once they get old enough but an racial perk.

Naruto also has the Uzumaki Traits, it seems there's more then one Clan Trait, and Main House Heritage, which means something **Important** , with a capital I.

He tries tapping but is denied due to Clan Security Seals. That... given that Naruto's experience with this Gamer System, it's very possible that Naruto did figure out ways to secure that information from a Gamer's Observation. With a sigh, he moves on to a new section that gives a list of Seals upon Naruto's body.

A Trunk Summoning Seal, a Self Targeting Summoning Seal, and Clan Security Seals, it doesn't list a number nor does he get an idea of what kind of Security Seals as they are protected by said Security Seal. Well, he did say he can create whatever damn Seal he wants...

He did tap the Trunk Summon Seal and learns that it Summons a Bank Trunk. Now there's an interesting question, why would Naruto need a Bank Trunk when he could just Rent a Bank Vault... Then a few seconds later, he realizes the reason why and sighs, yea, it sucks to be Naruto Uzumaki while in within Hidden Leaf proper.

Then comes his Shinobi Skills and it really doesn't surprise him at their ranking. There's plenty of Skills that are simply question marks with another question mark after the word level. Uzumaki Chakra Control... well, that confirms that at least one of the Uzumaki Clan Traits relate to Chakra if they have special need to learn to control their Chakra and the basics just weren't cutting it.

Then comes more Combat Skills and there were many of them, again, most he couldn't read but he did notice the expansive list for Melee Weapons along with Missile Weapons and Unarmed Attacks. And then there's the Throwing Weapon Skill and that's just maxed out, the summary? "You know what? If it can be thrown, you can throw it and hit whatever it is you aim at."

Needless to say, he's not looking forward to ever fighting Naruto Uzumaki. After all, the current blond has Tooth Pick as a weapon, his skill level with a simple, wooden Tooth Pick is three but the fact that

it's even listed is mind blowing. But it also gives Shikamaru a better understanding of what is considered Shinobi Skills and what aren't. Even in the Weapon lists, there's a Star along with the Weapon name being Silver.

Then comes the General Skills plus Craft Skills. He's pretty sure that the poorest quality of Items Naruto could ever make now, was Uncommon. With all the right ingredients or materials being of uncommon quality, Naruto could easily turn out a Master Work Quality.

Now I wish I hadn't spent all that money at he other stores... He thinks to himself. He knows who to buy from in the future concerning Shinobi supplies. It's not a question of whether Naruto would be willing to sell to them.

It's clear that Naruto knows the Gamer System well and yet, doesn't have it listed as a title. Going back, he finds Gamer Mind and Gamer Body, but that's the only references he could find. He notices tabs at the top, the Quest one looks like he can check out but it's the other one that he taps and it seems it's a list of Recipes that Naruto knows for all his Crafting Skills.

He only gets a name of the Recipe and given they have descriptive names, it's not like he needs a summary. There's even a list of Original Recipes, which shouldn't be surprising given there has to be a difference between being a Master of a Craft and being an Artisan in that same Craft.

Finally, he dismisses the two and time resumes, he finds Naruto still waiting rather patiently with a secretive grin on his face. "What the hell?! You mea.." "Secret, remember? Wouldn't want you to break the Third's Law, huh Sakura?"

He glances to find both girls staring wide eye and rather pale at the current blond human. "This is about that... Yang subject I take it? How troublesome." He mutters.

"You didn't?" Ino asks and he gives her a flat look, saying, "I'm a Genin and it's S-Rank, I didn't see the point in poking my nose into more then I had to."

"Above your pay grade even." Naruto muses and he nods. "As I expected from you, Shikamaru Nara."

He tsks but, that's it, it's too troublesome to do more then that. What seems a few seconds later, Choji rejoins them and is chewing slightly on his lower lip, but doesn't exclaims anything although it's clear that curiosity clearly overcame his best friend, so out of the four of them, he's the only one who doesn't know the S-Ranked Secret concerning the Yang Jinchuriki.

"What's a Jinchuriki?" He asks and Naruto says, "The library's got books on the subject, I will say this though, there's officially eight of them, the ninth's typically a secret. Also, don't both asking the Librarians, you're better off looking up the subject viva the Quest System."

"You make it seems like we can control Quests." Choji remarks after a few seconds of silence. He notices that the two girls seem to recover from whatever shock the secret gave them.

"You can, as long as you put forth the thought, have an end goal that's achievable, and a will to work towards it, it becomes a Quest. You plan to break into, say, the Academy Student Records tonight? To review, say, your Jonin Instructor's own Student Record? Yea, that's do able, heck, you'd likely find a reward that increases your Dexterity if you succeed in, oh, disarming or avoid triggering the various traps in the record room." The current blond explains and yea, he could see himself how someone could generate that kind of Quest.

"I generated my Quest concerning you, didn't I?" He realizes and Naruto hums in approval. "Did it back on the day of Team Assignments. Cute name, by the way. Hot Scales of Power!" The current blond chuckles.

"What do you know of Natural Dungeons?" Ino asks and Naruto hums thoughtfully, remarking, "Encountered one already? You'll be dealing with some lower level Dungeons from the mission office, given your fresh Genin, likely sticking with Levels five to ten. You'll find Rodents feature strongly in Urban Natural Dungeons, rats are mean and tend to be straight forward foes, you'll find squirrels are... tricky, as in using underhanded tactics like faking injury or just looking cute and harmless when they are anything but, and mice ones are geared towards traps plus using debuffs before closing in."

Well, from their experience, the rats they faced, did fit that to a T, didn't they? They tried to win by shear numbers and very ill tempered. "Are there any other kinds of Dungeon to be wary of?" Sakura asks.

"There's Prepared Dungeons, there's plenty of reasons why you'd find them out in the Training Grounds. Likely some bored Chunin or Jonin make them to relieve their boredom, there's usually triggers that alert them to someone in there and there may be some kind of betting pool going on. Your Quest will give you the details to help you get the maximum Reward. Don't expect to know the Level of those either, you won't die in one either, if you Chakra falls below an eighth of what you had, you'll be teleported back to the entrance." Naruto explains.

"Then there's Instant Dungeons, those are random, system generated ones." Naruto admits. "Time's different in those and you can only Escape without completing them with a Escape ID Skill once you are in one. Unlike a Natural or Prepared Dungeon, they have an unlimited reach, it's like it creates a world honestly. They'll always have a few Quests to complete before you can exit it, usually a Chain of Quests that are all links to facing an Dungeon Boss. Also, you'll only walk away with just experience from those, everything within is a Chakra Construct which means any food or loot will vanish once you have either had your encounter with said Dungeon Boss. Death isn't permanent in an ID though, which means that if

you die facing a Dungeon Boss, you don't die, just fail the final Quest."

"What, are you saying that none of the food will be real? We'd starve?" Choji asks and Naruto shakes his head. "The food and loot is very real, inside of the ID and only that ID. The money isn't real either, only reason you'd get it is if there are vending machines, I know, it sounds odd but once you've seen one and used it, you'll get how a machine could be a vendor."

"If we die before the boss?" Ino asks and Naruto replies, "There's a player spawn point, typically a graveyard or a morgue, although you do suffer from Resurrection Sickness for an hour, so I suggest just resting after waking as if you die again, you get hit by Resurrection Sickness twice as hard and the duration increase to two hours."

"I take it that it increases with each death while suffering from Resurrection Sickness." He muses and Naruto hums in agreement. "Our equipment's durability goes down?"

"Ever twenty-four hours, it'll return to its durability when you arrived in but if destroyed, will re-spawn in your Inventory once you leave the ID. Shattered weapons re-spawn in your Inventory when you leave, same durability as when you enter. Food or drink consume doesn't though."

"So, Natural Dungeons are the only ones we need to worry about dying?" Sakura asks and Naruto rubs his chin, before replying, "Kind of? The PDs, they only monitor your Chakra reserves, not your Health. It's how those who don't have their Chakra Unlock have died as they can't use Chakra so there's nothing to be monitored. Same goes for typical animals."

"ID are just for experience grinding then?" He muses thoughtful and the current blond just grins. "What's the most common enemy type that ID uses?"

"Undead. Most of the time, it's skeletons and ghosts but some odd ones called Zombies show up. There's a lot of sub-types of Zombies, some slow and others normal speed, rarely any fast moving kind, thankfully. Also some of them cause Infection viva bite or scratch and others don't, then again, Viral verse Chakra Puppetry." Naruto rambles on.

"Liches are hard and are usually the Animating Force for the hordes of Undead." Naruto growls, "I mean, they are so fucked up! How was I suppose to know they somehow managed to have their soul in some kind of container? How the fuck can they use Chakra to Animate the dead without their Yin Chakra?! I don't care if the System says it works, it shouldn't!"

"I mean, why wouldn't I think that Priceless Artefact was the Soul Container? Who the fuck would use something as a sock to contain their Soul? I used Observation on every god damn thing in the room! I destroyed the various Seals protecting the Chamber! It shouldn't be able to protect that information! That's just fucked up and I swear, it only chooses after you are in the presence of the Lich!"

He takes a step back and share a look with the others. It seems this is a very sore point and yet... Something to learn from regardless.

"Why do I have to clear out valuable stuff just to make room for a bunch of Junk in my Inventory? Why won't the god damn stuff just get Sealed in a Storage Scroll?! How is that fair? It's why it's called a Storage Scroll in the first place! Why can't I put sacks filled with the Junk into my Inventory? It's a reasonable application to save room!"

Naruto finishes, "And I should be able to Deconstruct the Junk into Raw Material, I disabled those Security Seals far and square, that shit shouldn't be considered immortal objects, it's all a bunch of Junk in the end! Damn fucking Game God, just getting snippy with my out of box thinking and just wanting to fuck me over."

It sounds like facing Liches are made to be faced by Parties. Shikamaru privately observes as they wait for the blond to regain

control over his emotions. "So..." Ino trails off and attracting Naruto's attention.

"Oh, ah, huh, well, fuck it. You'll understand my anger when it happens to you." The blond runs a hand through his hair.

"What else do you want?" Naruto asks and he asks, "Will you buy from us?

"Ah, so you did the smart thing, ran out of the Dungeon when you ran out of weapons and returned some hours later to find someone else completed it? So now that you don't need what you bought, you want to re-sell it and buy from me?"

"Yes." It's all he could ultimately say. "I'll exchange every two Kunai for one of mine. Although, here, this is what my Store has in Inventory."

Suddenly, a large window shimmers into existence and its price is in common Kunai. Upon clicking, he did see why Naruto would only accept two Kunai for a single one he made as Naruto's Kunai are of a better quality then what they have on them. His lowest tier Kunai are normally worth three common Kunai but Naruto's giving them a bit of a discount.

Bringing up his Inventory, he finds everything within now priced in common Kunai to be sold to Naruto. He sell what he bought in the two hours and then bought two stacks of Naruto's Kunai, three stacks of Naruto's Shuriken, and a Loot Dagger, which has passive buffs when it comes to looting Butchering, Skinning, and Harvesting foes. The Loot Dagger is a Naruto Special, which costs twelve common Kunai, it's a Great Quality and normally twenty-four common Kunai, again, they were getting it at a discount at half its usual price.

He leaves the weapons to check on the armour, yea, Naruto offers Leather armour but he can't use the kind so he goes for the padded cloth. A quick look through shows that Naruto creates Armour Sets,

which means when wearing more then one piece of the Amour Set, the Armour Set buff or buffs activate. The most common buff is increasing the amount of armour points offered but also passives to Skills or Stats.

Each Armour Set have names concerning color, dominate material used, and passives buffs offered. Expensive, even with the discount Naruto's offering them. A lot of the Armour Sets were out of his price range right now but those that were in it now, were ones that offer wilderness survival, training, and stealth. He purchases Blue Cotton Cloths of Shinobi Training and then a set of Gray Silk Cloths of Shinobi Stealth, the Silk set offering better muffled sound passives then the Cotton.

With the remainder, he purchases more of Naruto's Kunai. With that, he closes his Inventory and waits for the others to finish their shopping. Once Ino finally sighs in defeat and closes her Inventory, the Store Inventory fades.

It's then he notices something... "No pop ups." He murmurs in surprise.

"Yea, that happens sometimes, it's like they don't want to spoil our interaction so they'll wait until you have likely leave the shop. I wouldn't be surprised if you guys leveled up a few times form this." Given the amount of things that increased just during that first night, he can believe it.

"So... see you guys in a few days? I know I'll be seeing Naruto tomorrow." Sakura pipes in after a few seconds of silence.

"Actually, how come nobody figured out your alias?" He asks and Naruto snorts, saying, "Shadow Clone Jutsu, you should be able to find info in your Clan's Library." The current blond says, looking at him.

"Wait, can you teach me how to Cook?" Choji asks and cocking his head to the side, Naruto asks, "Why not get a relative to teach you?

You've got plenty of successful Chiefs in your Clan, plus, they won't be charging you a Fee."

"I am willing to Sell Recipes, when you have the Skills to make them." Naruto continues after a moment. "I wouldn't be surprised if they already have a Cooking Set waiting on a shelf for you too, so you wouldn't have to worry about buying a common one."

That seems to perk Choji up, "You think so? I know we like to eat, I just... Well, yea, we kind of do own a Chain of Restaurants in Fire Country, don't we?" Choji then nods to himself, saying, "Yea, you are right, I'll just have to talk with dad about it."

"If I want to learn Weaving and Tailoring... You'll Sell Recipes?" Ino asks and Naruto hums in agreement. "Any advice about a gathering skill for the two?"

"Herbalist gives bonuses when it comes to Harvesting plants and there are a number of Dyes that use what can be Harvested from plants. Alchemy allows you to make those Dyes but it also allows for making Potions and Poisons." Naruto muses. "Not too many Gathering Skills get you more Cloth, but once your Tailoring and Weaving are high enough, you'll learn a sub-type skill that will allow you to Deconstruct anything tagged Cloth for Raw Material, it won't create much but its a way to made use of spare Cloths if you are not around a Merchant or Fence to sell it too."

Alchemy... yea, his Clan are known for their Medicines, it's why they even have a herd of deer in the first place. For their Antlers, which means he can find someone to teach him and it shouldn't be hard to pick up Herbalist if Ino doesn't go for it. Making his own Potions and other Medicines would save them money as the Raw Ingredients tend to be cheaper then the end product. Plus, chances are, he wouldn't have to play for a beginner set for Alchemy either.

After a minute of silence, they pretty much ended their Party and they exit the store. Upon exiting, yip, there's a series of pop ups swarm him along with him getting his Rewards for his Quest. He

starts for home while skimming the pop ups, once they all say bye to each other.

It has been an interesting day, overly troublesome and yet, worth it given the number of Levels he increased for both Combat and General.

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"It's a disgrace, I tell you. Why the hell should I be so heavily penalized for wanting to switch my Race?!" Kiba growls as the other Team stomp over towards their end of the Training Field.

It seems that Asuma invited Team Eight for joint training, again. It's been a bit over a month since the eight of them got Awarded with Gamer Shinobi title and he's laziness has down graded some days ago after a number of re-starts with the Quest concerning him fighting his back slide into old habits. Carrying books to alleviate boredom helped, particularly as reading books can help level up skills.

"He just figured out that if he clicks Race: Human twice, he can switch his Race at the cost of losing half of all his current levels." Hinata explains as he lowers his book to give Kiba a flat look. "Which, he doesn't want to do."

'There's got to be a better way! Why else would there be a question mark on the details?" Akamaru seems to sigh a very human sigh.

How troublesome, then again, Kiba's got his mind set on switching his Race to that of a Lu'Pine once he's read up the description of the natural perks they have despite the flaws like his range of shades of colors decreasing and hand dexterity getting a penalty given the way the hands are shaped. Then there's the natural feed back of having sharper hearing and a more sensitive nose, although natural low light vision explains some color vision loss.

A tip from Naruto and they learn how to use the System Guide that gives them a better idea of how aspects of the Gamer allows them to be aware of but it also gives them info on Races, a bit of History, and giving them details about Professions. They've all have read the Races articles to learn more about the non-humans which dispelled a lot of hear say and myths they were told as fact. Then again, there's likely a reason why none of the other races tried to set facts straight, after all, misinformation about their capabilities were to their benefit if they ever come into conflict with humans.

Of course, since reading the Lu'Pine entry... Kiba's private Goal had been switching his Race, creating a personal Quest even. Now it sounds like they could do so with ease, as long as they are willing to pay levels to do so.

He simply hums in acknowledgement while Kiba is pacing back and forth, sulking. As he's about to return to his book, Choji pipes in, "You know, Naruto's able to temporarily change his race viva a Jutsu. Maybe you can learn that Jutsu from him?"

"Or perhaps he knows a way to switch Races without the cost." Shino muses from his left, it seems that the Heir of the Aburame Clan has settled a few feet away from his spot. Sending both his best friend and Shino a minor glare, he puts his book away, knowing that he's not going to be allowed to continue reading it any time soon.

For some strange reason, Naruto seems to consider him a Friend, out of all the eight Gamer Shinobi, the Ryou'ng seems to be more fond of him then the others. Which makes is why he's bringing up his Character Overview and going to his Friend tab. Tapping on Naruto's name, he picks Create Map Marker before dismissing the page.

As he gets to his feet, he murmurs, "What a drag..." Brushing off his cloths, he glances towards where their respective Jonin Instructors were hanging about.

He can tell that they seem very interested in whatever they were discussing. "How troublesome." He sighs out as he uses his Tracking Skill to hunt down the Map Marker, it's an interesting how he can envision a map of Hidden Leaf and he doesn't automatically 'see' the Map Marker.

A Quest pop ups and it's mostly an investigation one concerning where Team Seven has gone, which means that... Accepting, he turns towards their respective Instructors. With a frown, he recalls seeing something earlier...

Bringing up his Character Overview and then his Friends, he taps Naruto's name to get the options, and there's that oddity that he's ignored. Yes, he gets rid of the Remove Map Marker and then taps his name once more, this time, tapping Send Message.

It brings up a new pop up and it sports a blinking line. Tapping the blinking line, it brings up a number of Kanji in boxes. Giving one a tap, he notices that it appears near the blinking line. It takes him a few experiments to figure out what the non-Kanji do before clearing the line and begin tapping the respective Kanji.

(Shikamaru): Your Team is outside of Hidden Leaf?

(Naruto): Oh, wow, so this is what Send Message does, huh... Ah yea, the brat throw a fit about doing more D rank missions and Old Man Third gave us a C rank mission yesterday. Left this morning, heading to Land of Waves, don't expect us to be back any time soon.

(Shikamaru): How troublesome... Kiba wants to know if you know a better way to switch Race that doesn't have him losing half of his respective levels.

(Naruto): If he wants it so badly, why not just pay the levels? With being a Gamer Shinobi, he'll earn them back quickly.

(Shikamaru): It's Kiba.

(Naruto): Well there should be a Wander Merchant named Thunderous showing up in Petal Blossom, they might have one in stock. It'll be expensive though and not just to your bank account. It's an Epic Item, if I recall correctly.

(Shikamaru): When should we expect Thunderous to visit?

(Naruto): Likely show up tomorrow around noon and will likely leave after four days. If not tomorrow then the next day.

(Shikamaru): Might?

(Naruto): It's a one time use Epic Seal Item, what do you expect? Particularly given what does. Just don't expect Kiba to be anything other then bed ridden for a few hours, maybe a few days...

(Shikamaru): Couldn't you make it?

(Naruto): I'm going to pretend I didn't read that, but... good instincts there. Got to go.

He waits a few more seconds before dismissing this window. Then dismissing that pop up concerning his completing the Quest along with the next one concerning his increase to his two mental stats. Naruto pretty much confirming that he knows how to create this Seal but doesn't want to advertise it.

"Team seven is outside the village, doing a C ranked mission due to Uchiha getting fed up with D rank ones." He tells others, "As for the Race switching, he mentioned a Wandering Merchant named Thunderous who's due to showing up in Petal Blossom either tomorrow or the next day."

"From the sounds of things, it's an Epic Item and it's use will cause the user to be bed ridden for either some hours or a few days." Kiba just grins in victory, likely just ignoring the effect of using this Epic Seal Item or the cost to his band vault. "I'm hearing Dungeon Raid, how about you guys?" Ino comments with a grin.

Within minutes, they have formed a Party and they were heading for a previously found PD that none of them have visited yet, although Hinata had used her Byakugan to study the PD once they found it, so they have a general list of what's in there for Chakra Mutants and rewards to be found within secret stashes.

Making very good use of their Gamer Shinobi titles, they were all much more advance then they likely should be. Then again, Gamer Body means that as long as they rest in their own beds or in a safe, secure location, they'll be back at full Health and Chakra well others, well, it could take them days to recover from what they can sleep off in a single night.

Quests generate money that goes straight to their Inventory, so that's of little concern in the long run with addition that what they have on their bodies isn't everything they have access to given, again, their Inventory being something only they could access, ensuring that they could never be disarmed or without useful supplies.

Out of the eight of them, the Heir of the Uchiha Clan refuses to Party up with them or even acknowledge that he could learn anything of use from them. There's a new flaw to Sasuke's list, Lone Wolf, and it's on its way of becoming a major one from the looks of things. It clearly frustrates the so called Rookie of the Year that he's now the one with the lowest Combat Level among the eight of them, there's no point in counting Naruto among their group as he doesn't have the title and has been doing this for years, since the very first day of the Academy in fact.

There's no point in comparing themselves to someone who's a pioneer of sorts when it comes to taking advantage to this Game System that the World operates under. All of their restrictions were clearly the result of Naruto managing to find something to exploit and that the so call Game God patching the exploit, even figuring out ways to polish it so that the exploit's effects weren't broken. And yet, Naruto likely also experienced glitches or logic flaws as well, according to Naruto, he remembers a time where there wasn't such a thing as Combat Level or General Level, it was all just Level.

It's hard to imagine seeing Citizens with high levels and expecting them to fight at that Level as well when they didn't even have the right Profession to back it up. Single Level feature are for Chakra Mutants and Traps, one having a life style that is pretty straight forward while the other is just an Item. *Still, the experience from either fighting or stealing from such high Level foes...*

His mind returns to the here and now, skimming the various pop ups to see if he missed anything before going to his Inventory to equip his Silk Cloth Armour Set while making sure he has his Loot Dagger on his belt, it's a fairly decent weapon outside of its buffs to looting the dead. Not that it keeps him from affixing his two Kunai pouches and Skuriken pouch upon his Armour Set so the dagger remains on his belt.

With that, he dismisses his Inventory as they stand before the entrance. It's not long before they are all ready and Choji, who's currently the Leader, approaches the Entrance to accept them entering it on the Party's behalf. It's eerie, how they suddenly find themselves in the room and they are quick to arm themselves with Kunai while Choji elects to also light a torch that he picks up.

Now it's a question of the lay out, what mobs they'll encounter in which order, and how quick they can Disarm Trap Skill is against the Trap's Triggering Timer. All for the entertainment of which ever Shinobi investigated time and money in creating this Dungeon. How troublesome.

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Wandering Merchant Thunderous turned out to be a V'rana, which may have been why Naruto used a gender neutral term instead of assigning a gender noun. Yes, he could just use Observation to get the gender but, was there any real point? Thunderous didn't seem to mind being called a they, from what they've observed with their interactions with 'Nana', who's a man yet clearly uses female terms in regards to himself, herself?

Although, this is the first time I've been outside of Hidden Leaf. Huh, I didn't expect Choji's Clan to own land beyond Hidden Leaf itself. He reflects as they glance around at the buildings that line the road that leads into and out of Petal Blossom.

His Mental Mapping Skill has gone up from their trip beyond the Gates of Hidden Leaf and they all received experience for exploring Petal Blossom. It wasn't that large of a town but then, it's pretty much a few hours from Hidden Leaf, which is a major city even if they call it a village.

It's also clear where most of the Akimichi Clan get their fresh produce typically from as Petal Blossom is a farming and orchard community. There's greenhouses a little off in the distance, which suggests more foreign climate crops being grown here as well, saving on importing costs from such far distances. It's one of those places where everyone knows their neighbours well enough that it would be hard to infiltrate the town pretending to be a fellow local just because they'd note any odd behaviour.

Kiba's clearly impatient to speak with Thunderous while Hinata just seems to be curious about poking around the town in a proper manner. Shino seems to find something interesting concerning a poster that Ino's leaning her back against, seemingly staring off into space, he'd bet his Loot Dagger that she's using the Send Message discovery to chat with Sakura.

As for Choji, he's enjoying a sample platter from the restaurant that 'Nana' works at. It's clear that the residence recognized their Clan Heir as a few have come up to him just to chat and offer to show him around. His best friend is clearly unaccustomed to so much attention being paid directly to him, then again, they were Clan Members and they were just being helpful, more then happy to answer Choji's few question while also fishing for gossip about the happenings of their relatives living in Hidden Leaf. More then a few have asked that Choji pass along greetings or packages to various members back home.

It seems that Choji's stumbled upon a Clan Quest which may or may not be a series of Quests. Which is why he made a mental note to inquire if there are any Nara living beyond Hidden Leaf, not wanting to stumble upon a relative or more, living about Fire Country's many towns and cities or owning property beyond Hidden Leaf. After all, it shocked them all to some degree to learn of Choji's Clan's involvement with Petal Blossom.

Naruto knew but clearly didn't see the need to warn him, them, about it. Then again, they might not have received much experience if they were warned before hand. *But, we could have asked around about Petal Blossom before coming...*

How troublesome, he's arguing with himself over such a simple detail. He is tempted to pull out his latest Library book to read but reframes encase he's addressed again about any Clan business or shipment updates. Which have happened thrice so far.

There's a few who approach Ino as well, concerning shipments of fertilizer or seeds. Which has only happened twice, then again, since she's busy Messaging with Sakura, it could be that the System is waiting for her to finish before springing more on her. It's been made pretty clear now, that the relations between their three Clans run deeper then just their dads' being on the same Team.

"Finally!" Kiba exclaims and he turns to watch the Inuzuka stalk forward. Thunderous turns to regard Kiba, it's hard for him to pin point the emotions being shone from those fairly inhuman eyes, he's gotten better at reading Ryou'ng expressions and eyes along with picking up subtle gestures that have a certain meaning from spending time with Naruto in his true racial form.

It's likely that, given more exposure, he's able to pick up the ability to read V'rana own body language and how they express their emotions. Given that there's a V'rana among the Shinobi of Hidden Leaf, he may get the chance. Although, he already figures that V'rana smiling is a very different expression then those sporting lips of a certain kind.

"I see your in a hurry to speak with little old me, Genin! What can this old, spry bird assist you with?" Thunderous' voice is now that of an old man, which is off kilting, given that Thunderous had been using a woman's voice while trading gossip with 'Nana'. A clear example of their natural mimicry of sound and likely a reason why the safest term to use with a V'rana is gender neutral if you want to be polite.

This seems to throw Kiba off a bit, causing the feral Genin to likely sport a confused expression. "Eh?" Then Kiba recovers, by saying, "I'm looking for an Epic Item and I've been told you might be carrying it."

Thunderous does a very human gesture of stroking the bottom of his beak, like an old man would stroke their chin or beard. "An Epic classified Item you say? Well, that's an interesting accusation. Then again, I do end up with so many interesting Items in my travels, why, I was just in Gargar Valley's Moon's Grave just two weeks ago!"

"Ah yes, what a wonderful island, did you know how it was founded?" Thunderous asks and Kiba gives a negative and so, Thunderous launches into the History of the Founding of an island that had once been the dumping ground that three Fire Daimyo tried to force all the other races to live at.

There's plenty of people who gather just to listen in, after all, he didn't know there was such a large population of Chakra Users near Fire Country, let alone that people have tried to pin in the four other races. All this happening before the founding of the Shinobi Village era too. He could only wonder what parts Thunderous is keeping out or down playing in the history being told, as this does sound like something told to wet a child's interest in History.

Which might be one of the reasons why Thunderous is even telling it. In hopes of getting people to research the topic or, at least, give reasons why the Fire Daimyo's no longer have the program in place. "You mean some Shinobi Clans got paid to help with that?" Kiba asks, clearly enraptured by the history.

"Ryou'ng are very good at scavenging ship wrecks. Very large lungs, you know, plus a Jutsu taught to help extend their time under the surface." And right there, is a lie, a myth, and yet, a quick look around, it's one that the crowd bought. Misinformation being given while mixed with the truth.

There's no doubt that those Ryou'ng scavenged ship wrecks, after all, with their treasure sense, they wouldn't need to research what ships capsized on what routes. Once within a certain range, it would ping and then it was a matter of swimming in the direction. Easy money, honestly, which says something about the Race on the whole, it sounds like they could easily become nobles with that kind of wealth without ever working for it and yet, seemed to be the least populated of the four.

"You going to share names?" Choji asks curiously and Thunderous chuckles in a good natured way. "Oh, none of them were overly famous or infamous. Most were paid for their smuggling and information gathering then anything overly interesting like assassinations among Daimyo's courts or military forces at the time."

"Still, any of them being a Senji? Or an Inuzuka?" Kiba asks while he couldn't help but privately wonder, *Or Uzumaki?*

"There had been a few Senji, yes... You must keep in mind, I'm not a text book! I can't remember all the names of the Shinobi who got hired." Thunderous remarks, the last part sounding very pity worthy, to be honest, making him feels a bit sad even though it's clear that Thunderous is an expert at working the crowd, knowing how to get the reactions they want.

"Why become a Wandering Merchant? Why not just set up a shop in one of the towns or cities of Gargar Valley? Surely it's safer then wondering around where Bandits might rob and kill you?" Hinata asks.

"Ah, young Lady Hyuuga, what a question! There are many reason why one would take up a Wandering Profession, but for all, it's

seeing new and interesting sights! It's meeting new people each and everyday! Of being able to pick up everything and just head off in a random direction!" Thunderous exclaims and without much encouragement, shares a tale of one of his earlier adventures when he first began.

A few among the crowd seem to sigh while they leave, it's clear they wanted to stick around to hear more, yet they had work to do or jobs to get back too. Thunderous continues to show how to keep a crowd. It makes him wonder if Naruto possesses the same ability, given that the Ryou'ng is also a Merchant and, thus, has a need for high Charisma.

Here before him, is one of the reasons why Charisma could be a subtle and deadly art. After all, Kiba's totally forgotten what business he has with Thunderous, becoming ensnared with the previous story and the current one. It's more then likely that Kiba will be rather furious when it's pointed out to him.

He calls up his Character Overview and goes to his Friends tab. Tapping Naruto's name, brings back up his... Message Exchange with the Ryou'ng. As it appears, there's a date of their first exchange.

Well, whatever. He thinks and begins tapping out a new message.

(Shikamaru): Any advice about approaching Thunderous about buying the Epic Seal Item? He's kind of distracted Kiba with first the History of Gargar Valley's Founding and seems intent on sharing early stories of his career as a Wandering Merchant.

(Naruto): He asked in the middle of a populated area, didn't he? Give it a few hours, Thunderous is trying to get people to you know, forget the mentioning of them able to get their hands on an Epic Item.

(Shikamaru): You make a good point, now that you pointed it out. He sure knows how to play the crowd.

(Naruto): Of course, he's a Wandering Merchant, Thunderous will likely see a lot of people suddenly wanting to browse his wares along with asking questions about where he's been recently. Attention is something all Wandering Merchants need, it's how they drum up business.

(Shikamaru): So, find a private spot and then ask about it.

(Naruto): Yip.

(Shikamaru): How's the mission?

(Naruto): Haven't spoken to Ino yet, have ya? We encountered Missing Nin and some greedy Merchant named Gato wants the client dead. Left them tied to a tree, not sure if they both swallowed their tongue.

(Shikamaru): And you didn't turn back when it upgraded to a B rank?

(Naruto): It happens... a lot... concerning me and, really, do you think someone would let it end there? Though Sakura seems confident that between Hatake and myself, we'll pull through.

(Shikamaru): Not really the point, if they manage to... how often is a lot?

(Naruto): Honestly? Every third mission that's beyond Hidden Leaf, every single one beyond Fire Country. You've read my flaws, is that really that surprising?

(Shikamaru): How? Just HOW is it you are still... Wouldn't being a Missing Nin be easier at this point?

(Naruto): That means they win and I won't stand for that. I love this village... it's just too bad about the people living there, you know? They want to feel superior in a moral fashion to justify every crappy thing they did, saying they were right for treating me like that while

ignoring the fact that they were the driving force for such behaviour. It's human logic at its stupidest.

(Shikamaru): You've put a lot of time and effort into that plus, using it to justify your own stubbornness.

(Naruto): Doesn't make my observation any less valid though. We are flawed people living in a flawed world, nothings perfect nor will it ever be. Life is perfect chaos and death is perfect order.

(Shikamaru): So, did this turn into a Quest for you?

(Naruto): Not really, too high level in either for it I assume. Haven't bothered to check either of theirs but it's likely Quests for them. Uchiha's going to be a pain for Sakura, they'll need to work together to complete it or fail, not what kind of penalties there will for failing it though, given I'm here to make sure the bridge gets built along with keeping the builder and family alive.

(Shikamaru): You make it sound like Hatake is down for the count.

(Naruto): He will be, he's not in top form and he's got a pair of green Genin to watch over. He's going to be down for a few days if not for the whole time the Quest takes place.

(Shikamaru): You make it sound like your observing a story going on before you.

(Naruto): It kind of is, in its own way. I've been told that all stories have some truth to them, which is why they are told and retold. Plus, Game System and the Gamer is usually the Hero of the Game, so, yea, there's a story going on, an Epic Saga if you will. Which brings out the usual Story Tropes.

(Shikamaru): It's depressing that I can't help but agree with that after thinking about it for a bit. What a drag my life is turning out to be.

(Naruto): Live and learn, Shika, live and learn. Think of it this way, at least knowing allows you a greater degree of influence then being ignore ever would. Yea, your view of the world's been shaken and turn on its head, but can you honestly say, looking back, that you are the same person with the same view of the world as you had been at six? Or Ten? Or even a week ago? Maybe even the day before?

(Shikamaru): How have you not driven yourself insane by now?

(Naruto): You say that as if I were ever sane to begin with. Besides, there's no universal sanity stat, just a common thought process that is taught to kids who grow up to teach it to their own kids. It's cultural teaching more then anything.

(Shikamaru): How troublesome.

(Naruto): Likely, anything else you want to discuss or are you good?

(Shikamaru): I better start paying attention again. Farewell.

(Naruto): Type at you later.

He stares at the conversation, still not sure what to make of Naruto once more. Anyone else would have either committed mass murder or suicide with that much understanding of how the mind works, and yet, Naruto just... It's mind boggling then again, even he admits that in some way, the Ryou'ng has a point, that just by being himself, he's pretty much rubbing salt into an open wound that the whole village seems to share concerning Naruto's existence, that he doesn't play the monster they expect him to be...

It makes Hidden Leaf come off as the bullies, as the bad guys, while Naruto could come across as a Saint, the good guy, and far more moral a person then anyone in Hidden Leaf. In the story of Naruto Uzumaki, he's a hero despite his treatment, someone to admire due to his not giving in to the darker side of his inner nature. Naruto shines so brightly because of every crappy thing that happens to him.

And if this was a story, he's the one who's dreams will become a reality. He would be the one people would strive to follow the foot steps of. He reflects. Shaking his head slightly, he dismissing the Message and time returns to its normal flow.

There's a few pop ups they fade once he skims them. Just informing him of certain knowledge skills increasing, which makes sense given the conversation he had with Naruto. He takes a moment to glance around, it seems Ino has joined near the fringes of the crowd, also listening in to Thunderous with Shino a few feet from where she's standing.

He waits and resumes listening to what's being told. After all, it's something to fill the time with as they wait for Thunderous to feel secure enough to end the tale-spinning session.

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"Would it help if I say we got this tip from Naruto Uzumaki about this Seal Item?" He asks after following Thunderous to one of the restrooms. The V'rana pauses before one of the stalls.

"Ah, that... explains things a great deal more. Although, why not just ask to learn his Alterself Jutsu instead of this particular Seal?" Thunderous asks curiously.

"Inuzuka." He states simply and Thunderous snorts. "Ah yes, it's usually all or nothing with that Clan. Plus, learning you are still learning the in and outs of Chakra as it. Doubt your Academy even mentioned Yin Chakra or Yang Chakra Releases."

He, makes a note to research the two releases as he does recall Naruto's that one title with Yang before it. "He mentioned it'll cause the user to be bedridden for a time." Hoping that Thunderous will explain why.

"You think it's just a matter of a change in body, huh? Oh, Yang is used to cause the changes the body undertakes but we also need to

alter the mind too, otherwise, the user won't be able to use the body to its fullest. So, Yin is used to alter the thoughts, to put the user in a stat where they can retrain their reactions and instincts." Thunderous explains.

"So, rebuilding how one things is part of the job of the Seal then? Not just giving them the instincts but familiarizing them with these new instincts?" He muses.

"Along with how their new body works, after all, having feathers or fur is very different then having scales or skin. Different ways to take care of each along with senses feed back and changes to one's own plus new limbs that alter how one sits down." Thunderous points out.

"So, you have one in stock or do we need to need to wait?" He asks and Thunderous hums for a bit before replying, "I have a few in stock. We can discus this at my room, tonight. There's a waver I need him to sign before I can sell it."

With a nod, Thunderous waves him off and he leaves, kind of embarrassed at walking into the woman's washroom but, well, it's private enough for that kind of conversation. He heads for where the others were outside, lounging about, discussing the various stories they listen to.

"I spoke with Thunderous, they said you need to sign a waver before they can sell it to you." He says to Kiba, who is slightly startled then puzzled and then embarrassed. "How troublesome is it that its not even my Quest to keep track of and yet, I helped you finish it. I expect a favour for this."

"Yea, sure, I owe you a favour." And a pop up confirms that he now as a Favour to use concerning Kiba. Kiba also looks surprise, it seems he's not the only one to get a pop up concerning this Favour feature.

It fades and Akamaru scratches at his leg for a scratch behind the ears, which he kneels down to provide. "So... shall we take a look

around while we're here? I mean, we have more time to waste unless..."

"Tonight, their hotel room." He states and soon enough, they talk about where to begin with the sight seeing. He doesn't care, really, as he trails behind the others, just enjoying the change in scenery.

He knew things would be difference once he graduated from the Academy and joined the Shinobi ranks as a Genin. Its just, who ever thought it would end up being something of a game changer in a literal sense? *Naruto's right though, something is going to happen, likely something big.* He reflects.

But, it's too troublesome to worry about What Ifs right now. It's best to trust that, when the time comes, they'll have the Skills and Experience needed to survive, maybe even thrive, the coming 'plot' of this Game. That's just life, right?

To be continued?

To Readers: And here's the Game System Universe continued for Naruto. A longer chapter with 35 pages, 3 pages longer then Games We Play, then again, I did have a minor rant concerning Naruto's ID experiences with Liches, not sure where that came from only just wanted to show Naruto having a bit of pent up anger and a need to vent.

Yea, Naruto's keeping secrets and, as you can see, Shikamaru earned Friend points with Naruto viva not being nosy about a certain title. Then we also get a glimpse of Cannon treatment translating to flaws and adding to existing flaws with Sasuke's Lone Wolf attitude development coming from the three listed. To Quote Star Wars for one of Naruto's flaws: "Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering."

Not sure I'll continue this, it's pretty obvious that they'll be over powered characters and more then capable of surviving the Cannon plot. Both chapters have more to do with coming to grips with the

fact that some things can't be easily changed no matter how much power one gains.

We see here that for however powerful Naruto became since we last saw him, he couldn't change the way the villagers saw him over the years, in fact, they might have gotten worst as he's still being pushed out to the fringes along with held down from achieving a higher rank then Genin, and he's grasping at reasons why not to leave the village or commit mass murder.

Yea, Naruto's got people that are semi aware of how the world works and it'll be more of a matter of him trying to decide if he can trust them and then with how much. He's got trust issues, very justifiable trust issues from the previous chapter and from his time as a Genin of Hidden Leaf.

Then in this, Shikamaru has learned far earlier that his laziness could get not just himself killed but his Team. He can see his failings clearly and can't really escape it or turn a blind eye to it. That being smart does mean he won't over look something critical. It doesn't matter how easily he learns something, it might not be enough to over come what he's facing. His choices he made went it came to his body's conditioning during his time at the Academy were mattering now, that the future he kept putting off, was happening now.

So, hope you enjoyed this and I wonder what crazy plot idea will germinate this coming weekend. Thanks for reading and hope I have something interesting to read by the 16th of September. Bye!

Another Set of Sacrifices: KHR!

I don't own Katekyo Hitman Reborn or flavors of Gamer!

Crimson flames flicker to life in his left hand while he keeps his grip to the cliff viva his right. He's fueling his muscles with his secondary flame, increasing his stamina. With his **[Will]** , his Storm flames cover his left hand and he holds his left hand where he wants the next hold to be created. Within seconds, the crimson flames consume the rock and dirt before he recalls them back within him and once gone, places his left hand there, beginning the process of pulling himself up the cliff once more.

He's got four feet to go to get to the nest. It's slow going, particular as he's three foot five inches **[Goblin]** , a common **[Forest Goblin]** actually. His skin is a evergreen color with crimson and purple body paint that typically is decorating his forearms, chest, legs, and forehead. His finger and toe nails are black and slightly more thicker then his normal nails, giving a percentage bonus to unarmed attacks, one percent plus his strength score. His hair is a navy blue, side cut on his left side with a slight pony tail at the back, by his neck, it stops by his shoulder blades. His eyes are the usual black, it was either black or navy blue, the same went for his hair, it was either navy blue or black.

Once he's able to pull himself up, he does so and quickly moves to put his back against the cliff wall. The nest is about four feet away, there's egg shells from the previous brood raised within its concrete like nest that sports not just branches poking out but huge bones and the odd rotten, giant feather. He's hoping that the pair have yet to return to the nest, he rather not see if he can fend off two, likely, prime pair of **[Adult Crested Green Feathered Wyverns]** . He's only Level 30, the **[Name]** hovering above his head is **Ruby_Fire** , named after his primary which is **[Storm Flame]** , his secondary flame is **[Cloud Flame]** , he either developed it or discovered that he had a secondary when he reached Level 10.

Feeling his **[Will]** replenish fully, he gets to his feet as he scans the skies as he slowly approaches the edge of the nest. The side of which is about five feet tall and he needs to climb up it. He uses the few bones and ex-gaps that likely had been filled by something that's long since rotten away. He makes sure to fuel his pointed ears with some Cloud flame to increase his range of hearing, making every small sound sound so much louder. Creative use of Storm flame to filter out the sound that wasn't the wing beats or cries of beasts.

It takes a lot of **[Concentration]** to keep both flames active as he drops down into the nest proper. It's filled with rotting leaves, pelts from mammals, and feathery down. Of course there's more then just that within the nest and he considers trying to use his Storm flames to filter the smell but decides that he can live with it, it's not like he's got a very sensitive sense of smell, plus, he already has a scarf about his neck and covering his nose already. It's cold at this height plus the wind isn't helping any, as he searches around, he's kind of distracted as he's regretting not stuffing the tips of his ears under his woolen cap as they are freezing.

He adjusts the goggles covering his eyes and moves his pack around to grab some mittens to put onto his hands. Shouldering his **[Backpack]** , he begins to collect the **[Shell Bits]** , putting them into a **[Sack]** he as hanging from his belt. He finds **[Ancient Coins]** along with slightly damaged **[Green Backs]** . There's savaged **[Backpacks]** and **[Belt Pouches]** , destroyed to get whatever was within them. It surprises him that there's no metal weapons or armor within the nest, then again, the hatch-lings could end up injured from such so the parents likely never brought it or dropped it from the nest when discovered.

He pockets the currency, both old and new, into his **[Belt Pouch]** as he slowly searches through every inch of the nest's bowl. There's a few **[Rune Sticks]** near the remains of some bodies that he collects, putting them into the **[Sack]** as well. He knows someone wanting to buy those even if they are useless to any **[Sky Flame User]** but save those with **[Sun Flame]** or **[Mist Flame]** . He's not too sure if

any **[Earth Flame User]** could as he's never really had any reason to learn more about their flames beyond what they exist and what their flames are called.

He fills up the **[Sack]** and he's temped to pull out a **[Mist Item]** , considers using it to teleport to whatever its **[Set Location]** is. He's told it will take him to the nearest **[Teleportation Gate]** which should be **[Joyful Springs Village]** given this area is called **[Province: Ginger Ridge Mountains]** its condition is **[Gaia Reclamation]** . Meaning this area is what is considered **[Frontier Land]** thus there's not secure locations, not really, beyond that very small settlement. Putting the small clay tablet back into his **[Belt Pouch]** .

Heading for the edge of the nest, he begins to climb up the rim once more, there's the call of a **[Adult Deer Eagle]** and distant wing beats. It calms him down as it means that there isn't any wyverns about as there is still a breading pair of eagles near this nest. Tension eases from his shoulders and he proceeds to use Cloud flames to leap upwards and over the edge. He moves back to the wall and checks his **[Messages]** to see if there's an update concerning the province while he pulls his **[Backpack]** from his pack to grab something to eat.

His **[Will]** is regenerating as he finds no new updates for this province and then goes to his **[Flame Skill Tree]** to see if there's been an update to either his **[Storm Flame]** or **[Cloud Flame]** . There's no new skills offered and a glance to his **[Will]** shows that it's nearly full. Checking his **[Stats]** , they have improved from him climbing up the cliff and his **[Flame Control]** and **[Concentration]** went up as well. There's no experience to be gained from the climb but in the end, this trip is more for the money from selling the **[Shell Bits]** , finding those **[Rune Sticks]** and the currency were just bonus.

It fades and he finishes his second **[Fried Mutton Filled Bun]** then pulls off his mittens, there's no point in ruining them, however cheap a pair of them are. They don't even have any stats of any sort, just simple attire. Taking a deep breath, he moves his **[Backpack]** onto

his back and stands up. He walks over to the edge and begins the task of climbing down, once more using Cloud flames to help his muscles from tiring out.

A good four hours, he makes it to the base of the mountain and as he moves to relax, to regain his **[Will]** , a **[Juvenile Rock Geko]** ambushes him and his Storm flames flare up about his fists while he uses his Cloud flames to boost the **[Armor Rating]** of his current **[Mountain Leather Armor]** , making it thrice to its current rating for the next three minutes. More then enough for him to kill the Level 20 lizard without a weapon, just bare fist and his Storm flames allowing him to not be affected by its spines along its back and head as he **[Disintegrate]** s the scales and spines with ease. It does try to use its minor trait of **[Activation]** to try to heal the damage, even trying to flee but he downs it.

Groaning, he allows both flames to fade and pulls out the **[Skinner Knife]** and begins the process of not just **[Skinning]** but **[Butchering]** the body. He manages to get the **[Juvenile Sun Gland]** without damaging it, it's looks kind of like the actual heart but, well, it's not. It's still got some Sun flames, he checks by fueling a bit of Cloud flames into it, causing it to glow yellow. He puts it on the scaly skin, he moves his **[Backpack]** and brings out the **[Meat Cooler]** to store the gland. He also adds the other valuable organs and tender meat. The skin is damaged from his Storm flame fueled punches do it's not overly valuable but, then again, it could be used to patch or repair armors made from **[Rock Gekos]** .

Using Storm flames to get rid of the fleshy muscle from the scaly skin, creating a **[Poor Scaly Pelt]** . He puts the pelt into his **[Backpack]** and then the **[Meat Cooler]** . Then slings it onto his back and uses Storm flames to clean his [Skinning Knife] of blood and gore. Pulling his **[Reinforced Leather Water Skin]** from his belt, he drinks from it, gulping mouthfuls before stopping and putting the cap back on before putting back on his belt. It's getting late, four hours of climbing, at least twenty minutes break, maybe an hour

searching through the nest, another break for maybe forty minutes, and then four hours climbing down...

It's late afternoon, early evening and now he's kind of thinking of using that teleporting to the village instead of setting up **[Camp]** again. With a snort, he walks towards the nearest river, he'll set up **[Camp]** near it. It takes him almost two hours. Along the way, he encounters **[Adult Mountain Speckled Owl]** that, well, yea, it saw him as a quick meal, what with being under four feet in height. Same likely explains why that young geko thought it stood a chance of making a meal out of him. It being Level 40, he pretty much did everything he could to hide and not make a lot of noise, finding an old den had been lucky and, sadly, since he didn't kill it or fight it, no experience was generated from the encounter.

The owl didn't follow him into the den, not that it didn't try to lure him out, it tried to use its own flame, which may or may not be its primary flame, **[Sky Flame]** to draw him out. He managed to succeed in shaking it, it seems that it used a **[Flame Tree Skill]** that is called **[Sky Flame: Siren's Call]** , as he learns it is called viva looking at his **[Flame Resistance]** . After over fifteen minutes and spending a lot of **[Will]** , it finally departed, although he waited an extra some minutes, about ten, before continuing through the forest. Making sure to use **[Cloud Flame: Sound Reduction]** to move quietly towards the river.

Once he's found a decent spot, he brought out his **[Camp Kit]** from his **[Backpack]** . Thankfully, he's got plenty of prepared meals so he just needs to get his **[Small TC&C Tent]** , it's a tent that has two functions, namely keep the temperature within at a set temperature and camouflaged to blend in with its surroundings. It's size, small, is standard size for the three beginning races, of which he is of. So the cost was more for the **[Mist Enchantments]** then for the tent itself. He'll likely need to get it charged once he treks back to **[Joyful Springs Village]** , which a **[Rune Stick]** should cover the cost of.

He crawls into the tent, it's meant to fit two small people so there's enough room. Sitting in the middle of it with his [Backpack] near him,

he is eating a **[Grilled Boar Ribs Rack]** , **[Tempest's House Salad]** , and for dessert is four individual **[S&DT Ice Cream Mochi]** . Given there's no domesticated cattle, he's not sure what species the milk came from, might as well have come from something like a goat or, even exotic mammal like, say, a seal. Not that it matters, it's good and he's more then happy not knowing the source of the milk used.

Digging around in his **[Backpack]** , he brings out an In World novel and reads it from where his bookmark was located, once he's prepared for bed, changing out of his current armor for simple linen pants and shirt. It's a weekend back on Earth so, there's no need for him to **[Exit Strid]** plus, while he, as **Ruby_Flame** , is eating, drinking, and going to the bathroom, such actions also keep his human body back on Earth from needing to do so. Any training he does concerning his respective flames also translates back to Earth as his Pledge of Sacrifice, is an ancient, family heirloom in the form of a bracelet, helps him weld them on Earth but also hides the fact that he's Flame Active. Yes, there's more to this Pledge of Sacrifice, there's pros and cons, but the main thing is does is allows him to Enter Strid as **Ruby_Flame** and keep him from being discovered as Flame Active by those who weren't fellow Sacrifices .

His family, they can trace their Linage back five thousand years, although it's only been in the last thousand years that it's only been Storm Flame Users were given the Pledge of Sacrifice . It might have something to do with the hot temper that Storm Users tend to have to a certain degree. Out of the eight kids his dad was encouraged to have with eight different women, he's the only one who possessed the crimson flames, all of his half siblings seem to be Latant Rains or Mists. The moment he, as a two year old, they had him touch the Pledge of Sacrifice , it flared red, meaning he had the same Flame as his recently dead father. There had been two distant cousins who displayed the hot temper of a Storm, so, if he hadn't possessed Storm flames, they would have check them with it and one of them would have stepped up to take up the Pledge of Sacrifice .

With a blink, he dismisses that kind of thoughts and focus on the novel, a rather large book given his size. After a few more tries, he realizes his thoughts just seem to be circling back to his tenth birthday, which happened four months ago. Realizing the signs, he puts the book mark back in it and then puts it back in his **[Backpack]** then pulls out his **[Weiss Fur Lined Bed Roll]** and **[Linen Bird Down Filled Pillow]** , laying it out, he gets between the flaps and pulls the pillow close, laying on his back, closing his eyes and evening out his breathing.

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Morning saw him quickly heading out of the tent, it takes him seconds to find a nice spot to relieve himself. Once that business was done, he quickly heads for the river to wash his hands. It's chilly and mist rolling about, his ears twitch, he calls up his Cloud flames, channeling it all in his muscles and nerves, more then prepared to fight or run from any local beasts that think him a quick snack or easy meal.

[Elder Spotted Dhole] lunges at him from the mists and he manages to dodge the snapping jaws. It's slow, its age showing by the peppering of gray on the muzzle and one of its ears looking rather shredded. His current foe is Level 33, seeing this, he feels confident in his ability to kill it, although he doesn't like the fact that he might come away with injuries due to the lack of armor. Keeping his Cloud flames going, he calls up his Storm flames and does his best to attack the beast.

It takes a good number of blows and then finally going for the throat, using his Storm flames to eat away at the throat, which is hard given that it clearly lived to get to this age and thus lived through a lot of Flame based attacks, meaning it had a very decent **[Flame Resistance]** . His weight, light as it was, on the dhole's back all the while he's trying to either strangle or **[Disintegrate]** layers of the throat to get to either the wind pip or a major vein. He's using Cloud flames to make his grip stronger.

Something finally gives and it's not him, the dhole collapses and he yelps as kind of falls off. Breathing heavily, he feels his experience bar fill, he feels a great deal stronger for winning. As he waits for his **[Will]** to regenerate, he glances around the mist, not sure if this is the only one around. He's encountered dhole, the type had been **[Desert Dhole]** , before and they are pack animals, plus, there's a dead body and an exhausted **[Goblin]** , a free meal either way.

With a grunt, he checks his health bar and then uses **[Propagation]** to speed up his healing. It works and he stops once he's ninety percent full, he stops and begins to regain **[Will]** while he stays alert for a few minutes. Once he's over sixty percent filled up on **[Will]** , he begins consider what he wants more, try moving the dhole back to his camp or leave it here, continuing to the river to wash up so he can reapply his body paint. He cleaned it off yesterday as there wasn't a point of having it on given he was covering up most of his body. Plus, its not like he won't run into more on the trek back, it's clearly old, surprisingly healthy but still, old.

With that, he continues on for the river, making note to come back viva a different route as to not encounter whatever carrion eaters will be descending upon the body once he's gone. He cautiously approaches the river, taking a few minutes to scan the area, waiting for more light to shine down and drive away the mist. He's crouched down near some bushes for cover, his natural green skin helping to hide him. There's splashes from the river along with buzzes of insects. Bird song slowly begin to fill the morning and he relaxes a tad, it means that nothing overly dangerous could be in the area as one of those tend to cause the wild life around it to go silent.

Feeling better and far more awake, he moves as quietly from the cover and towards the river, keeping low to the ground as he does so. Once at the edge of the river, he picks up a stone and tosses it a few times up into the air, looking out at the river's surface. Then, with a flick of his wrist, he sends the stone flying, skipping thrice on the water's surface before something snaps at the stone. A minute later, an **[Adult Red Belly Mahseer]** leaps from the water, it's crimson

scales on its belling flashing, it's Level 29 he notes as he watches as it slams its body back into the water, causing minor waves rippling about the surface, it's quite the big specimen as it is over two feet long and likely a predator from the look of its head and teeth.

After a few seconds of nothing else happening, he begins to clean himself, cupping his hands, he dumps the water onto his face and then begins on his hair. Given the size of that mahseer, he won't be going for a swim in the river. So, it takes him longer to wash up, doing his best to keep his ears perked for sounds of something sneaking around. With a deep breath, he stands up and stretches a bit, gingerly working his muscles to get the odd feeling out of them. Walking a bit along the bank, he hears soft splashing out on the river and with a grunt, he begins to walk away from the river, making sure to not back track on the same path as he recalls the dhole body he left.

A warning hiss causes crimson flames to erupt on his fists as he turns to fact the source, which is already lunging forward, the name of the species is **[Elder Jet River Viper]** and it's Level is 35. The serpent is seven feet long and given the color of the words, it's an **[Special Spawn]** . If he could kill it, the body will vanish but leave behind a Rare or Epic Item. He does his best to hit the incoming head, which succeeds if only because it's biting him on his right shoulder, it's top fangs piecing him in the back and he curses the fact that he didn't think to stop by his tent for his armor or think to grab a branch to use as a make shift club.

His Storm flames don't do any damage and he turns his Storm flames inward to **[Disintegrate]** the venom that's being pumped into his body. As the viper coils around him, he does his best to push the jaws apart, he's barely able to keep his Storm flames going, it's unlikely he'll be able to call upon his Cloud flames to enhance his strength. Grinding his pointed teeth, he continues his efforts to *get* it to let go. Of. HIM!

His **[Will]** surges and he feels himself burning up as both of his flames flare up in answer to his will to survive. The viper's eyes flare

indigo and suddenly, he's dropped to the ground, not that it matters, he's not done yet. He is not done with it and ignoring everything, he begins flinging balls of Storm flame with hints of Cloud flame about the area. Blood drips down his skin and onto the grassy ground, causing slight hisses as his blood is infused with Storm flames, causing its nature of **[Disintegrate]** to eat into the ground.

A flash of black catches his attention and he leaping in that directly, soaring high into the sky and he's once more flinging balls of Storm flames at the newly revealed viper. Indigo flares up along its scales but he ignores the new threats as he comes to land on the serpent's head with a primal cry. He's scratching at the scales and slowly, his efforts begin to eat away the scales, it only enrages him to see the scales trying to regenerate.

At some point, he's falling to the ground while the scales take a white glaze. His eyes blink rapidly and his hearing a pounding. He's vision swims and his strength wanes. As he falls to the ground, something...

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"Damn, what a way to discover **[Hyper Will Mode]** ." **Too_Rage** murmurs while her **[Sun Flame: Body Mending]** works on savaging **Ruby_Flame** 's life. The **[Snow Ork]** is examining the Epic Rapier, it's called **[Tap the Ether]** , clearly meant for someone with **[Mist Flame]** or **[Desert Flame]** given the two share come the closest to magic users here in Strid. The minimum Level to use it is 35, mimicking the Level of the **[Special Spawn]** .

"He's lucky to be alive, after all, he's a **[Storm User]** , he could have **[Disintegrate]** more then his skin and the odd muscle." **Nix'sPond** points out and given how often she's had to reactivate her **[Sun Flame: Body Mending]** , she should know as this is the fourth time she's activated it. Although, it seems that **Ruby_Flame** is finally stabilizing as the health bar is finally going back to being a healthy spring green instead of black of death while the **[Will]** finally stops

seemingly on fire, going to its ruby red color that pretty much tells everyone what flame he is.

They had been tracking the **[Elder Jet River Viper]** for two days already, so, the **[Forest Goblin]** is lucky they were in the area. Given the lack of armor and weapon, it's clear that **Ruby_Flame** 's camp is near by, likely taking a bath in the river. It's also pretty clear that he's alone given that nobody else has shown up.

As her active times out, she doesn't reactivate it as **Ruby_Flame** is going to live. "He's stable, any sign of his camp?" She asks the **[Naga Blooded Human]** and **Nix'sPond** nods her head, nodding off in the likely direction.

She gently as she can, picks up the now Level 32 Sacrifice , it's surprisingly easy, given she's seven plus foot tall to the **[Goblin]** 's three foot something. She's a **[Plains Minotaur]** and proud of it, *Evolving* from a **[Hill Gnome]** at Level 65, making sure that her favorite stats were higher then if she had *Evolved* at Level 50, given that she'd lose all her hard won Levels, starting all over at Level 1.

As **Nix'sPond** comes to a stop, it takes her a few seconds to see through the **[Mist Enchantment]** on the small tent, rather impressed that **Ruby_Flame** managed to purchase something at his current Level but it did explains the confidence as to why he's out here Soloing. They look at each other, after all, neither **Too_Rage** or herself could hope to crawl into the tent, **Nix'sPond** sighs and her friend crouches down and then crawls into the tent. She comes out with his belongings, **Nix'sPond** snorts, shaking her head a bit. "He spent a lot of **[Green Backs]** on the tent, it's got two enchantments instead of just the one."

"What, really? Where'd he get the currency?" **Too_Rage** wonders and she muses out loud, "Likely savaging requests from fellow Sacrifices ."

"So... what was he savaging around here?" **Nix'sPond** wonders and she shrugs, it doesn't matter, they finished their hunt, it's now a

question of should they be polite and let **Ruby_Flame** have the Epic Rapier or claim it for themselves, saying it's for coming to his rescue. *It'll be how he reacts, I guess.* She muses, although, there might be the predicable response that is stereotypical behavior of **[Storm Flame]** users are known for, which will see them taking it for themselves.

The **[Goblin]** groans and she's a bit surprise that he's waking already. She's quick to put **Ruby_Flame** onto the bed roll and they wait for him to fully wake. They each share a look, it seems someone has a secondary Flame, which means that he's response will be more unpredictable then the those sporting a single Flame like herself or **Too_Rage** .

Soft, rough groan and the **[Goblin]** sits up, eyes unfocused and then blinks a few time. "What? Huh?" Then the cursing began, not sure the focus of it though, it's pretty generic, honestly, "Oh fucking crap! Shit, damn fucking damn!"

Then as the **[Goblin]** and his expression goes to guarded confused to puzzle suspicions. "So... it's dead?" She stiffens at how young he sounds. "Yip, finished it with a single javelin to the head as it was trying to escape ya. Ya forced it to shed its skin, so it wasn't as armored as it would have been if it hadn't."

Ruby_Flame closes his eyes and covers his black eyes with a hand. "I... I did? I was in its mouth..." Again, she's struck by how young he sounds. "How long have you been Pledged ?"

"A bit over four months... It's a family heirloom." **Ruby_Flame** admits as he takes a few minutes to study them each in turn. Oh, well, yea, he's green, oh so very green and yet, very skilled if he's managed to Level to 30 before that fight with the viper. "How old?" **Too_Rage** asks in a icy tone and the **[Goblin]** stiffens, suddenly becoming defensive as he sends a glare at **Too_Rage** , eyes flashing purple.

So, Cloud flames too? Twice the stubborn streak and twice the temper, oh boy, what a mixture. She mentally muses, butting in,

"Impressive, not many get as far in level grinding in four months. Most stick to the beginning province and research everything they can get their hands on. It's usually take fresh Pledges over half a year to become comfortable enough to venture beyond the safety of it as well."

She knows why **Too_Rage** is pissed, it had taken knowing each other for three years before he'd reveal his personal hatred towards the Sacrifice system. **Ruby_Flame** focuses on her, with bashful pride and **Nix'sPond** is quick to place a hand on **Too_Rage** 's shoulder, whispering something to him. **Too_Rage** grunts and shrugs off **Nix'sPond** 's hand off.

"Yea, well, I've been lucky. Been working on picking up Flame Skills that either down grade or reduce duration of status effects. Been recently investing in passive healing too." She nods, she knows a lot of older Storm Sacrifices wished they had the foresight to start investing a hell of a lot sooner then just being able to use **[Disintegrate]** to allow to them to actively become untouchable in regards to enemy effects, be they flame in nature or just natural toxin. Most were more eager to inflict maximum damage as quickly as possible when they begin, getting power trips from how seemingly quickly they can kill their foes.

"Ah, well, I'm **Ruby_Flame** , as you can see. Level 30 **[Forest Goblin]** ." She couldn't stop the slight mannerisms of bemusement from the fairly green Sacrifice . "Level 32, now." She corrects him and his head turns up to look at the Level floating above his head.

"Pleasure, name I use is **Do_Right-Sun_Light** , Level 43 **[Plains Minotaur]** . I will answer to Sunlight though." She says as way of introduction.

" **Nix'sPond** is the name, Level 39 **[Naga Blooded Human]** . I'll answer to Nix though." **Nix'sPond** says.

"Level 50 **[Snow Orc]** , **Too_Rage** ." And **Ruby_Flame** nods, still not overly friendly towards **Too_Rage** . Then again, **Too_Rage** 's

anger concerning **Ruby_Flame** 's age isn't making him overly talkative. She can see that he's none too please, likely seeing parallels concerning what happened a few years ago concerning what his family tried to do with their Pledge of Sacrifice heirloom.

"So... ah, mind if I... ah... grab my stuff and get dress?" **Ruby_Flame** asks, his face turning a lighter green and this causes **Nix'sPond** to laugh while she snorts in amusement.

"Sure, we only brought it out as we were going to break camp for you, heading back to **[Fort B-Ringer]** . It's hovering over by **[Frisky Tanuki Pass]** right now." She explains and **Ruby_Flame** frowns, asking, "Who named ether of those?"

Giving him a shrug, the **[Goblin]** gets up and grabbing his **[Backpack]** , he enters the tent. "Can we keep him? Huh, can we? It's been too long since I've laughed like take." **Nix'sPond** asks and she points out, "He's not some stray animal that can be turn into a pet, Nix."

Nix'sPond huffs but they wait, so far, she's kind of liking the young Storm. Then again, it's likely due to the simple fact he's clearly a pre-teen instead of being a teenager, teenage Storms were fairly hard to deal with and tend to come across as jerks at minimum. They settle down once they're adults, after all, her second cousin is still apologetic about his behavior while using that Minor Sacrifice Token to visit Strid for a year.

Ending it here

Fuzzy Spanner in the Works: KHR!

I don't own World of Darkness or Katekyo Hitman Reborn!

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Runs-Laughing couldn't shake his pursuers no matter the number of secret pathways he used or the use of various tricks he uses to try and lose them. He tried at least three major Umbra Realms and even passed through the Gauntlet into the physical world for a few hours before crossing back into the spiritual reflection of Gaia. He's mostly been traveling in the Near Umbra and the minor, safe enough Realms, even five of them that he knows Mages have claimed, yet, he is still hunted and he's trying, he's reaching his fucking limits and it's not a fun sensation, not at all.

He knew the time of the Apocalypse is happening now, that he's *living* it but he wasn't *ready* for it. None of the Fera were, he doubts that even the Garou, Gaia's oh so *vaulted* **warriors** were, despite all their harping and preaching on the Phoenix Prophecy. *Oh, if only I had a large enough pie tin... And tar, plus tons of cream. Oh a tar pie would be so great right now. Maybe a bag of feathers ready to drop? Hmm, where would I find a large enough scale to use?*

Runs-Laughing lets out a wistful sigh at the idea of said prank. His pace is a lope, trying to save energy as he's moving, he can hear the clicking mandibles of the tracker, there's the hunting cries of Banes, and, finally, the cheerful discussion of how best to torture him before taking the biggest bit of his dead body to the Battleground, to the Plain of the Apocalypse, riding on three likely special breed Bane, looking like rusty copper and tarnished brass beetles the size of elephants.

Rabbit Run, it's really the only way he's been able to stay ahead of them. As long as he's moving faster then a fast walk, his speed it doubled, yet, he's finding it hard to keep going. He prays to Ptah for

energy to keep moving, although not a follower of said Totem Spirit, his personal Totem is Raven, Ptah is still one of Faces of Coyote and he is a child of Coyote, thus, nothing is wrong with beseeching help from a parent. As a Nuwisha, he has four other forms to take beyond the body of his birth, for this long ass chase, he assumed the one they call the Sendeh form. The extra reach and power, and thus giving him greater speed then in his Breed form.

"To the left, go left." His ears perk up for a few seconds and he moves his ears about. With a snort, he decides to listen.

He swings left and keep in that direction. He's got nothing to lose, his surviving kin scattered throughout the Umbra after what happened what may seem like days ago, likely a day, maybe two. They are likely dealing with their own pursuers or dead, like those who followed Loki, who did what they could to give them all time to escape once it became clear that the numbers were not going down and more and more were arriving.

More instructions followed and Runs-Laughing follows them without haste, trusting that voice. For the voice sounds oh so familiar, calling forth the memory of his father, from his voice and smell to the comfort and security he had offered. That the pack had offered back then, after all, he was born in Yellowstone National Park. Without wolves about, they could form packs instead of just living in pair bonds when wolves were present.

His reserves don't feel like they were dropping, but he also wasn't recovering from this flight. No new strength is flowing into him but its not like he's losing strength either. He passes through to another Realm, one filled with simple blackness and tiny lights. *"Find the rainbow, follow the rainbow."* The voice says to him. *"Don't look back, no matter what. Stay the course, remember, you are my Child. Always..."*

That's... bewildering and yet, heartening all the same. *Well, at least he didn't add taste the rainbow.* He feels something run through his fur and something seems to tie something to his fur. There's weight

on his back now but there's no point in looking, after all, how many stories talk about how you shouldn't look back when exiting out of the Underworld? He's being entrusted with something, a gift of some kind, one to take with him to the end of a rainbow. With the slight weight, bellows of rage and cries of dying canine suddenly begin to echo behind him.

And now he has a sudden urge to look behind him. Great. He closes his eyes for a few seconds before focusing on looking before him for color.

The sounds behind him, it sounds so close, that whatever it is, it's close to the tip of his tail. Which makes him move his tail, yet it continues to feel as though something could just reach forward and grab it. Again, there's this urge to turn, to see what's there, to snap at it before it grabs his tail. He feels the fur along his back and neck rise up, yet, he fights the urge with a snarl on display and a growl ringing from his throat, it doesn't drown out the sounds or the feeling of something about to grab and pull on his tail but, well, he makes him feel a bit better for a few seconds at least.

The catches himself before he does follow through with his canine instincts and spin and bite at whatever it is behind him. Which is why he stops with both the snarling and the growling. Then, he catches a glimpse of... indigo? It's to his right and so he adjusts his body to head in a rightish way. Soon, there's more indigo bleeding the area around him. Then, blue and purple begin to bleed in with the indigo coloring the surroundings and as he touches a splotch of indigo, his paws seem to alight in indigo flame for a second.

Touching the purple causes minor spark to flare while blue just seems to splash up like water. Tail wagging, he moves between the three colors, soon enough, his surrounding are beginning to add green. Touching the green causes his fur to puff and he barks in amusement as he gives it a quick lick to his left fore-paw. The taste of electricity as his tongue touches the puffy fur is noticable. His paws seem to be permanently alight now, taking the colors as he touches them, mostly indigo though.

Red and yellow begin to join the colors around him. Touching red causes a sound of a crackling lightning and rolling thunder to sound out while the yellow just seems to cause him to feel as though there's a sun at his back. Seeing a mix mash of three colors coming up, he lowers his head and once he judges himself near enough, leaps, touching each color. The purple sparks and as it touches the splash of the blue while the red rings out, seemingly setting the other two off again.

That's what it sounds like, any way, as he keeps moving forward. He's sure to follow the direction where the most color can be found. Soon enough, it's only indigo that's the color he's traveling upon while the others just seem to light his way. He's not sure when orange gets added, yet, he notices it now, it's often between two colors, like buffering them. Then, orange dominates his surroundings and the colors seem to be... nestled in it.

Then, suddenly, there's this room . . .

A throne . . .

And humans . . .

**/ - - - T - - - **

Grunting, Ike rolls onto his left side, only to find his younger brother being there. "Tsuna..." He groans softly.

"Onii-chan..." His younger brother whimpers, pulling himself closer to his body. He sighs as he studies his half-brother, a light blanket covering him. Ruffling the brown spikes of his little brother, he moves his comforter so it covers the younger boy.

Shivering slightly, he rolls out of bed viva to his right. Fighting a yawn, the soon to be nine year old heads for the bathroom, stretching some as he walks. The dream, it's one he's had since December, just before Christmas actually. Turning on the light, he pulls over the stool to stand before the mirror.

The face looking back...

He stares and the semi-familiar face winks an eye, gives a wave with a cheeky grin before the mirror ripples like water's surface before it's calm once more and showing his familiar face. Glancing around with him biting his lower lip, he pulls himself up a bit and tabs the mirror, it ripples and then, a fuzzy hand reaches through and...

Ike looks around, not sure if he's awake or asleep. The place though, it's a meadow and early morning. "Ah..."

"Impressive, given that there wasn't a uniform spiritual reflection when we arrived." A voice states and he finds an elderly man with a strange staff. The staff is blue and yellow while the elder seems...

"...we?" He parrots, he kind of recalls that there was something on his back... On Runs-Laughing's back, actually.

"I gambled on you, Runs-Laughing, or should I call you Ike for now?" The elder muses. "You weren't even a follower of myself in this disguise." The elderly man gestures at himself. A blue bald cap covering his hair, strange woven bread that seems almost glued on the chin, and what he's wearing. "You were Raven's to care for and to guide, yet, at the end there, it wasn't Raven you beseech, was it? Oh no, it was myself as Ptah."

"Asking for the energy to keep running." Ptah states. "Just that, no begging or bargaining for out right saving or aid. Just a humble request, a prayer, really, that you could continue running from your pursuers."

"There was little I could spare, stretched in so many directions... All of my followers seeking my personal intervention on their behalf..." There's great sorrow in those eyes and Ptah suddenly seems oh so very old, so very filled with grief. "So very little I could do."

Ike rubs his left upper arm, unsure he could do anything, should do anything. "But... you helped..." He states, feeling awkward. That, that

seems to break the elder... God... Entity, out of his... their... mopping.

"Yes... I did, didn't I?" There's a grandfatherly, maybe it's actually a... fatherly, smile aimed at him. "And look at the result... A whole new world... Yet, it's one that is nearing its own Apocalypse if certain events happen."

Yet Ptah smiles, there's a hint of mischief in those eyes. "A bargained reached between certain parties and you, Runs-Laughing, were reborn. Positioned in such a way as to influence the Heir." There's a slight tingle that moves down his spine.

"Ah, why approach me now?" He asks.

"Because you are of the agreed upon age for contact." Ptah states. "You were nearly nine years old when you traveled here and so, it's time for you regain what you brought with you." From somewhere, Ptah now has a coyote pelt. "It's yours to do with as you please. Although, sadly, given this new world doesn't support Gifts like the ones you earned but, well, you are one of Mine."

The pelt is being offered and Ike is slow to approach, but, well, his eyes haven't really left the coyote pelt once he spotted it. His hands itch to stroke the fur, he wonders at its texture. As he touches the pelt, indigo with hints of blue leap from the pelt. It's surprisingly comforting, watching the flame seems to cover his whole body as he fully taking the pelt, he doesn't really feel the weight of it...

**/ - - - T - - - **

"Onii-chan... Breakfast." Tsuna is shaking him awake.

Ike grunts and sighs, opening his eyes. Turning to look left, he finds Tsuna standing there. "'m awake, go ge' ready for schoooooohl." He tells the younger boy, yawning by the time he gets around to saying school.

"Oh, yea... right..." His little brother murmurs and not thrilled to be reminded that its a school day. He breaths in through his nose and lets out a sigh, watching his younger brother shuffle off out of the room.

With a grunt, he gets out of his bed and glances towards his pillow to find a stuff coyote resting upon it. One that hadn't been there last night. He reaches for the stuff toy and studies it, it's warmth is like the flames from his dream. *Runs-Laughing... Ptah...* "Dream within a dream..." He murmurs as he recalls bits of the two dreams, familiar scene of racing within a rainbow consisting of indigo, blue, purple, green, red, yellow, and orange. On all fours, viewing the world in a very different way, keen hearing and nose, the feel of paw pads upon 'ground', and the feeling of something gently moving through a fur coat...

Smelling his mom's cooking snaps him out of his musings over the twin dreams he kind of recalls. Placing the stuff coyote back on the bed, he heads for the bathroom before coming back to get ready for school. He puts the issue of the stuff toy and the dreams out of his mind.

Once dressed in his school uniform, Ike checks around his desk for any homework or school text books, stuffing what's found into his school bag and heading down the stairs. Tsuna is sitting at the table, already eating while his own breakfast is waiting for him. "Morning Kaasan. Otouto!"

As he walks pass, he ruffles his little brother's spiky hair, putting his school bag by the front door. His little brother just huffs at him as he takes his seat, he finds it hard to believe his little brother is seven years old as he's on the short side. Yea, Tsunayoshi, for some reason seems to be some kind of bully magnet. He's not sure why but, it's gotten to the point he could tell which bully he encountered viva what how the brunet walks and what parts of the body he's trying to protect.

Oh, he's done his best to beat up the punks... it's just that, between a certain Skylark and his club activities, he's had trouble catching the little snots in red handed. He doesn't like to think he's powerless when it comes to making his little brother safe, yet Ike feels just like that. Taking a calming breath, he focus on eating his breakfast.

"So... your Birthday is coming up, Ike-kun. Have you decided on what you want?" Their mom asks him as she returns from placing their lunches by the front door.

As he sets the clop sticks down, he moves his bangs from his forehead. Glancing towards Tsuna before turning to speak with their mom. "Oh, you know, faster connection time to the internet and an unlimited credit card to buy any game that catches my fancy, Kaasan."

She giggles and ruffles his darker brown locks before shooing them from the table, she's already beginning to collect their dishes. His gaze lingers on her for a few seconds, a very slight downward turning of his lips. Familiar disappointment bubbling within, wishing that their mom would just file for divorce so she can find someone better or just get out of the house, taking an hour or two to just pamper herself. There's just something wrong with her behavior . . .

"Oni-chan? You coming?" Turning, he gives Tsuna a slight smile. "Yea. Bye Kaasan! Thank you for our Bentos!"

"Oh, yea, thanks!" His little brother sends him a confused look and he's a bit surprised himself. "Your my sons, why wouldn't I make you Bentos?" Is her reply after a few minutes of awkward silence in which he was tying his runners.

"Just letting you know... you know, that we appreciate it? Not everyone's partners make their lunch Bentos for them, you know?" He calls out and Tsuna nods, adding, "Yea!"

Soon enough, they both have their jackets on and they are sure to grab their respective school bags. As they open the door, their mom

resumes her chores within the kitchen. Once they are out, he closes the door behind them and Tsuna asks in confusion, "What was that about?"

"I... had that dream again only... I had another one right after it." He admits as they walk towards the street. "It... it was weird and... I... I just felt like thanking her, for the effort she puts into them." He adds, "We... we kind of take it for granted. Everything she does for us, you know? I just thought that, well, would it hurt to thank her for her efforts every now and then?"

Tsuna's face screws up as his half brother mentally chews on that. "I guess... I mean, it's not like Tou... Tousan is around to let her know how good of a wife she is..." He admits and he nods, feeling that the awkwardness has departed.

"You know, you can wait for me at the club room once school is over. Just, bring a manga to read while waiting for us to end or, you know, join?" He says and his little brother hunches in on himself, speeding up a bit, gripping the straps of his school bag.

He breaths in through his nose and lets out a sigh a few seconds after. They continue on in silence.

**/ - - - T - - - **

He scowls at the plushy that's on his bed, he's got a split lip and a few bruises on his knuckles. It could have been worst... It should have been worst, expect... expect indigo with hints of blue flames somehow, created a buckle shield strapped to his left forearm when that pipe was coming down.

It vanished and he felt drained, so much so that the younger of the pair managed to land the blow that split his lip before he got knocked on his ass from the off hand of the teen pushing him in the chest. If not for a certain battle maniac's arrival, he would have been hit by that pipe that the teen was using. And so, he managed to come away with just simple bruises and the slip lip, not that it was from his

personal effort, particularly as he had been lured away concerning the mentioning of his younger brother.

The glares, of course, do not have any kind of effect on the simple stuff canine nor was it making him feel any better. He moves to the edge of the bed after a few more seconds with a soft groan and staring at his fore left arm. Ike's thoughts circling around the incident once more, this time, it's trying to recall how he felt when that flame came out. Which, it rather hard given that some very strong feelings were involved and, he's not sure he wants to try and re-experience those emotions as strongly as he had earlier.

Yet, he wants to see if he can't call up that flame. In his mind, he can see the indigo with a touch of blue threading in it. Envisioning the way it moved while the little tingle of his arm's fine hair as the flame flowed into the form of a buckle shield. It's hard to keep that experience in mind, yet...

It's like it's happening all over again and there's that draining feeling. There's a weight on his left arm and opening his left eye, he finds that buckle shield there, glowing indigo with blue. Then, it winks out as he opens both eyes and moving his right index finger to touch the shield.

While he feels tired, it's not the same kind of exhaustion from before. Then, he looks in the direction of the plushy and there's something about its eyes... He picks it up and finally notices what's different, what's odd.

The eyes of the stuff coyote, they had been a simple off yellow, feral yellow, actually. Now though, the color of the eye beads are blue. Before his eyes, seconds tick by and the blue gives way to the feral yellow. "I didn't imagine that, right?"

Nothing answers him and Ike turns the stuff animal over, checking for any hidden compartment or zipper. Nothing to find, though he can't help but notice the feel of the fur. It's not fake, it wasn't created

in a factory, no, this was fur, actual fur that came from some kind of animal, maybe a canine.

Feeling a bit self concuss, he sniffs it and... there's a hint of weather to it. There's faint scent that reminds him of rain falling but also, the smell of early morning fog, chilly mist, late winter kind at that. He feels rather foolish about his action, his face flushing, yet, instead of dropping the stuff toy, he moves it and tries to stare into its eyes while the tip of his nose is almost touching the stitched black nose, well, to be fair, as he focuses on the nose, it looks too real to be stitched or a plastic one.

Leaving the issue of the nose aside for now, he stares into the eyes. He doesn't blink, trying to... he honestly doesn't know what he's looking for, the eyes clearly had to be plastic and the feral yellow seems to be painted on. As he loses focus, his vision starting to go double, he just wanting something to happen, suddenly, it's like he's looking into hazel eyes with whites and loses himself in the reflection of feral yellow eyes looking into hazel eyes, again and again. He's not sure when but he finally gets around to blinking, only when he returns to himself, he's not on the bed any more.

He's on the floor and he can clearly hear the sounds of his mother working on supper in the kitchen. Flickering an ear in the direction of his little brother's room, he can hear Tsuna chewing on something crunchy. Getting to his feet, he finds everything so much... smaller then it should and then catches sight of himself in the mirror.

The reflection staring back, it could only be described as a hybrid of man and a coyote. Ears flicker backwards and he feels something flatten against his skull. Seeing a tail, he wills it to flicker to the right and not only does he see it move to the right, but feels something moving behind him. Ears perk up from their previous position and he takes a step towards the mirror and then again, reaching out with his right hand, he sees his right arm and the strange mixture of hand and paw touching the mirrors surface, half expecting the mirror to give way.

It doesn't and he can kind of feel the mirror's surface, it seems his current form's hand isn't as sensitive as a human's own. He releases the breath he had been holding and then, dips his head, his gaze moving towards the floor, cocking his head to the side as he studies the legs and feet slash paws. "Crazy..." The voice that comes out is rough and a touch deeper then it should be.

Breathing deeply through his nose, Ike closes his eyes as he turns his head towards the door. He slowly moves towards the door, the smells grow stronger. Standing by the door, he tries to make sense of what it is he's smelling, it's slow going and some guess work, the smells belonging to chemicals were easy, the fake scent of flowers his mom uses for her shampoo and body wash. There's a sharp hint of tears clinging to her natural scent and... car exhaust fog, which almost causes him to snarl at, the scent just seems to stir up something within him for it's the smell of wrongness. Toxic, really, man made, really.

Nothing a Rite of Cleansing couldn't fix. He pauses and wonders where that came from. Rite of Cleansing, he should know what that was, yet, the information isn't there.

With a snort and shake of his head, he stares at the door for a few seconds before closing and doing his best to filter out the other smells, doing his best to memorize Tsuna's scent, which takes a number of minutes and then, wonders how he could miss that Scent. Sadly, the smell of blood and fear clings to his younger brother's scent, yet, like their mother, there's a scent that's he can't help but find to be artificial in nature, yet seems to be seamlessly mixed with the baseline human gender smell, only this one was worst, so much so that he swears his stomach wants to empty out. The smell, it's so foul and wrong, after all, it's the smell of stale water sitting in a toxic tainted metal barrel that seems to be slowly dripping with acid.

He wrinkles his nose and fights to keep from gagging. He begins to breath through his mouth and out through his nose, every so often, he swallows forcefully. Tsuna, his little brother smells like he's been poisoned... like he's suffering from a diseased he contracted from

outside of himself. Without thinking, he's opening the door and heads for his brother's room, pausing at the door as his rather large pawish hand reaches to the door knob. Ike becomes uncertain, just what was he thinking? Wondering the house while looking like a monster from a classic folklore, maybe even from a horror film.

Then, the door opens and there's a ooze wall, then it flows out of the room, a foul, toxic orange bubbles even as it pours out of the room, engulfing him as it eats away at his fur and skin.

**/ - - - T - - - **

Ike wakes, bolting right up in bed and his stomach turns. He tries to rush out of the room but, well, he doesn't make it and out comes his stomach's contents. It's not long before his mom arrives, trying to comfort him as he's on his knees as he's trying to keep from dry heaving.

As he comes to control his reaction, Ike takes a look up and pales in horror at the sight before him. Ike tries to move away only he finds himself on his butt and begins to shiver, after all, the being that he thought was his mom, it's seems to be a human only mummified with pale indigo bandages and pit black eyes staring at him. "What's wrong honey?" His mom's voice comes from the mummy as it takes a step towards him.

"Are you feverish?" This time, the voice kind of becomes static mid way in the word feverish. "Mommy will make it better." The voice is a pale imitation of his mom's voice, there's a hollow quality to it and the pit black eyes turn toxic green and the bandages slowly unwrap, moving towards him. He's quick to back away some more, not wanting the horror to come closer.

Finding his voice, he screams, "No! Help! Somebody! Anybody! Help!" Bringing up his hands to fend off the mummy.

With a crack of a whip, the bandages dart at him, his right gets entangled and the indigo color of the cloth glows. "Help! Get off of

me!" He tries to tear the bandage from his right arm, a numbness is trying to seep into his being.

"Mommy will make it better." Static seems to be the underlining tone of the pale, female voice. As he closes his eyes and tries to pull away, he's suddenly falling and there's suddenly nothing on his right arm.

Opening his eyes, stares up at the sky and suddenly, he's wet as he splashes through the surface of water. Ike tries to swim up only to find something blocking him, glass, perhaps? All he knows is he can't break through and as he pounds, he keeps trying to hold his breath yet, when his body rebels, he can breath.

He's bewildered and as stares around, his quick movements cause the usual sounds that he knows as his body moves through the water. Iki looks up at the sky and finds a raven circling the orange sky and purple clouds. Yellow remains the color of the sun.

Somehow, he hears the craw of the raven and the raven breaks from flying in a circle. Unthinkingly, Ike swims after, following the raven's shadow that's cast by the sun on the raven. His legs kick up and down as his pushes through the water with his arms. The block keeps gently pushing him down but it doesn't slow him down.

As he swims, he spies a shark swimming lazily after a fat tuna that's already got a few bite marks. There's some blood coloring the water but the raven leads him around the encounter and the tiger shark doesn't seem to spar him a glance. He glances over his left shoulder, watching as the shark rushes forward and bites down on injured fish, tearing more from the tail while the tuna wiggles about in pain, more blood is added to the water.

Looking away, he tries to speed up, putting some distance between himself and the site of slow pace feeding, it's clear that the tuna fish is in pain yet the shark just doesn't grant it the mercy of a quick death, just a slow and pain-filled one. Thankfully, after some time, he

begins to hear the song of whales and then the clicks of dolphins. As it grows louder, he can hear the sound of splashing.

Suddenly he's being pushed up, up into the sky and it's a Killer Whale. Ike is launched out of the water with the whale. He's quick to grab the large fin on the back and though he tries, he finds himself unable to breath. Then, arcing back into the water, the whale pulls him along through the water. He glances around to find that more Killer Whales were around him, some are leaping out of the water while others were just breaking the surface to breath.

He travels with the pod for unknown amount of time, even managing to grab a fish from the school that the pod seems to be herding through the water. Day turned to night and then night to day. Red seems to be the color of the storm clouds and it seems that green lightning dancing through the clouds with blue rain falling down, thunder can be heard heart beats after the dance of green lightning. Some of the clouds do remain purple and the sky's orange is rather dark shade of orange. There had been may such storms that he experienced with the pod.

At some point, he spies a familiar shadow and pushing himself off the Killer Whale, he swims after the raven's shadow once more. No backwards glance nor was there any song of sorrow from the pod at his departure. In time, the song of whales become grows dim until there's nothing. As dusk begins, he finds himself in a kelp forest and encounters salmon darting about the kelp.

As he goes to grab one, he notices something brown diving from the surface and he follows after, curious as to what the brown beast was. As he comes to the bottom, he finds a sea otter swimming about, nosing for clams or mussels. The otter spies him and swims up to him, circles him and with a hard splash of its mighty tail, returns to its hunt for a meal among the kelp and the rocks littering the floor.

The cry of a raven reminds him of why he's here and he swims up near the surface. A few miles later and he's pulling himself out of the water, onto a beach. Able to breath the air, he glances around for

shelter as the sun is almost gone from the sky. The black of night cloaking the orange of the day sky.

He spies a carved pole and heads towards it, then he spies the lodge that's a few feet from the very tall carved pole sporting stylistic images of animals with that of a raven being at the top of the pole. The paint used on the carvings is red and black. While he does cast glancing at the wooden lodge, his interest is on the carved animals. The pole is very familiar to him, like he's seen it before...

Shivering, he is reminded that he's not just damp but naked, his pajamas had slowly washed away during his time with the Killer Whale pod. Ike glances at the raven at the top before turning to regard the lodge. At the entrance he pauses and bites his lower lip for a few seconds before gathering up his courage.

"Hello? Anyone home?" Ike calls out. "It's getting kind of dark." He adds after a few minutes of silence.

The door opens and a man takes a moment to look him over. "Took your time, didn't you?" The man muses and he rubs the back of his neck, answering, "Well, I guess?"

"Come on in then. I have something of yours, Ike." The man says and opens the door wide while moving to allow him to enter.

Stepping through, his being ripples and he's on all fours as he finishes walking through the door. Glancing at his host, he finds Raven in his feathery glory. He feels guilt flare within and his tail comes to be tucked between his legs.

"I'm not angry with you, Raven Runs-Laughing." Raven states and Runs-Laughing sighs, his tail moving from its previous position. "Come by the fire. Make yourself comfortable."

He pauses to glance at the door, after all, it feels odd to leave who he is now at the door, it's strange, being Raven Runs-Laughing more fully since he had been reborn. *First Ptah and now Raven...* He

muses as he walks over towards the fire. It takes him a few seconds to get comfortable, curled up by the fire.

"How have you found life as a human?" Raven asks him after a few minutes of silence beyond the crackling of the fire. "It's... different, so much more worrying... Overthinking, not enough enjoying life as is." Runs-Laughing admits after reflecting on Ike's life. "More focus on either the past or thoughts of what can be. Then... then... something is wrong at the house, with new mother and litter-mate..."

Raven chuckles as only a raven could and he stuffs his muzzle in his bushy tail, waiting for Raven to speak. For now, he's just enjoying the warmth of not just the fire but of his fur coat. The company of his Totem is unexpected but very welcome.

"Yes, they do, don't they?" Raven muses and moves within view. Settling down, Raven's feathers puff up a bit. "Your litter-mate sports a Spiritual Seal, it's trying to deny him his Spirit and thus the Body is suffering." Raven suddenly explains after some time. "Your new mother, she's... if it weren't for you, she would be far worst. The man she married, his Spiritual Gift has provoked a reaction from her own, inactive, Spiritual Gift, thus creating her... fascination and attraction with him."

"Her power wants, seeks, to intertwine with that one's power. If not for your birth, it's likely the pining would have continued until either that man died or she dregs up the Will needed to say enough is enough." Raven admits after some more time of silence.

He's not impatient by the pace of this conversation, he already suspects that if he were more Ike then Runs-Laughing, he would be. Humans, so occupied with the concept of Time. Counting it, saving it, even spending it. Always rushing toward something, some goal or task. Then again, he suspects that no real time is really passing. Come morning, Ike will wake and celebrate the day of his Birth, but for now, he's once more the Nuwisha Raven Runs-Laughing.

"The arrangement of your reincarnation, it pretty much ensured that she knew that man will never, fully, care for her." Raven states and he asks, "He didn't want her to keep me as Ike?"

Raven causes a slight dip of his beak. So, he created a crack in the marriage, one that, perhaps, could lead to her recovering from this supernatural attraction. "Dawn comes." Raven states and he lets out a soft groan at the reminder.

Raven's feathers sleek back down and his Patron moves by the door. He gets up from his spot and follows behind a pace behind the Spirit. Raven pulls out a box and once he's near enough, he is given the box. "Your nature in the toy and now you have your knowledge of yourself."

Taking the box in his jaws, the door opens and as he walks through it, Raven says gently, "You are mine, Ike Runs-Laughing, always. You are my Son and I, your Father."

**/ - - - T - - - **

"Happy Birthday!" Ike groans from under his younger brother, who seems to think now is a good time to have jumped onto his bed. "Onii-chan, come on, it's almost noon!"

He sighs in defeat and stares up at the ceiling for a few seconds before doing his best to sit up to look at the younger boy. A glance at the alarm clock shows that it'll be noon in about two hours, not that it matters to his sibling. "Fine, I'm up, I'm up." Ike tells his half sibling and Tsuna turns to study his face for a few seconds.

"Alright then." Tsuna states and then moves to get off the bed. He pushes the covers off and then moves into a sitting position.

"Hey, Tsuna... Are you still cold?" He asks his brother, the question causes the younger to screw up his face in a cute manner. "Ah, well, kind of? It is Winter, still..."

"I mean, like... even in the hottest day, its heat... it doesn't reach every part of you." And this does seem to cause Tsuna's face to feature a look crossed between hope and despair. "I... I know I can help with that."

Tsuna looks like he has his doubts but Ike isn't offended. After all, with Mist Flames, he shouldn't have any trouble figuring out ways to recreate his old Gifts and Rituals. Or hunting through the Umbra to find the knowledge needed about this Flame Seal. His younger brother doesn't know about Flames yet nor about the changes to this world's Spiritual Reflection.

Yea, he needs to learn to call them up and to shape them, but well, its not like he doesn't know what it feels like, to cause a supernatural effect to occur in the physical world. The blue prints of the Gifts or perhaps, the patterns of how he once used Gnosis to cause things to happen, something might still be left within his Spiritual self. Or, perhaps, it's a matter of just relearning using a different kind of fuel?

Tsuna recovers and is heading out of his room. Ike pushes himself up off the bed and follows after, he pauses by the door and glances at the bed. The stuff toy is gone, or perhaps, it's merely returned to the state it was meant to be. Looking at his left arm, he focuses and his fingers shimmer as they transform for a few seconds before he wills them back to normal human fingers.

Ike Runs-Laughing walks out of the room, he's nine now, and he's complete. There's a bright future in this new world, Old Man Coyote is watching over him and what essence of Gaia he carried to this world, it's taken root.

Yea, it won't be the same Gaia that birth his kind and his cousins, but her daughter, so, who knows, maybe she'll create her own changing children out of the Dying Will Users. Wyld knows, they need some kind of task or end goal. Being criminals, what a way to waste their Gifts, so much potential and all focus on making money or being top dog in the seedy underbelly of human corruption, no Wyrm

whispering sweet promises of rewards for certain kinds of behavior or Weaver trying to create a certain kind of order.

He greets his mom once he's at the bottom of the stairs before continuing on to the kitchen. As he sits down, he puts aside his thoughts and just basks in what's going on in the kitchen, in the presence of his family. Content with the fact they were near by.

For today, it's enough. His family, as small as it is, is more then enough to bring him happiness, for the sense of belonging.

Ending it here.

To Readers: Here's a some game information for those of you who haven't played Werewolf: the Apocalypse. Currently playing a W20 (20th Anniversary edition) game.

Gifts are spiritual powers that are usually internalized and are easier to learn from a Spirit then from a fellow Shape-shifter as the Spirit may either unlock the power or install it. Some Gifts are easier to learn then others, generally, Rank is the limit when it comes to what Gifts can be learnt. The higher the Rank, the more powerful the Gifts can be learnt.

Rabbit Run is a Nuwisha Gift, it's effects are the same as the Silent Striders' Gift, Speed of Thought . It simply doubles the running speed of the user for the scene at the cost of a single Gnosis.

Rituals are expressions of Spiritual Compacts between shape-shifters and Spirits that typically require a Ritual Master to lead others through. Effects vary and require time to prepare plus special items.

Rite of Cleansing is a Ritual involving the Ritual Master drawing a circle and then placing the person, an object to be cleanse at the center of it, on a side note, it can even be used to cleanse a place. The Ritual Master will typically walk counter clockwise while holding

a smothering branch or torch over the person or object. The preferred time to use this Rite is at dawn but can done at any time.

Wyrm used to be the force of destruction in the setting until it got caught in the Weaver's web. This drove it mad as it couldn't escape and it became a corrupting force of the setting.

Weaver is all about creating things and at some point, it grew resentful of the Wyrm's actions of destroying its creations so it plotted to capture the Wyrm to keep its creations safe.

Wyld is the raw forces of the setting, it's untapped potential that the Weaver would then shape into things and the Wyrm would destroy said things, allowing the remains to return to the Wyld. Due to the Weaver's trapping and the Wyrm's corruption, it's not as unlimited as it once was, after all, two forces are taking from it and nothing is returning to it.

Umbra is the spiritual world and divided into near and far. Near was more like the physical world while the Far Realm tended to be more abstract. The gauntlet has varying levels of thickness with it being the harder to cross in urban areas due to the Weaver's influence being strongest to rural area, stronger in Wyld, having the thinnest levels. Umbra is the usual home of Spirits and Banes, the oldest of places or items are more likely to have reflections in the Umbra.

Gnosis is the Spiritual pool used to activate Gifts, used in some Rituals, or to slip through the Gauntlet instantly. Some of the shape-shifting races can regain Gnosis viva meditation typically at the beginning of a new day by reflecting on the inner spirit that is within the shape-changer. The difficulty goes up if used day after day. Spirits could be bargain with to regain Gnosis as well.

Fera is the general name for all shape-shifting breeds.

Nuwisha, werecoyote, don't form packs among themselves, so it's not unusual for them to have personal Totems. There's usually 100 individuals in the physical world at any one time, the rest tend to live

in the various Umbra Realms. In the setting, there's werecoyotes born from human stock and then there are those born from coyote stock, Runs-Laughing was born to a pair of coyotes, thus called a Latrani and those werecoyotes born from human parents are called Homid. Beyond the form of their birth, werecoyotes have four other forms and their own terms. Sendeh is the name of the form that could be termed near-coyote, it's size is smaller then a grey wolf but bigger then your typical coyote. It's not unusual for them to hide themselves among the Garou as New Moons.

Garou, werewolf, do form packs and typically have collective Totems, Pack Totems. Like the werecoyotes, they also call those werewolves born from human stock Homids while those from wolf stock are called Lupus. Unlike the werecoyotes, they have been known to get together and the resulting child is usually called Metis and usually suffers from some kind of medical condition, one could be born hairless while another with brittle bones. Metis are sterile and thus, can't continue the werewolf race. They also sub-divide themselves into Tribes with each Tribe having a Patron Spirit, for example Silent Striders' Patron is Owl. Then, socially, the Moon you were born under is your typical role in Garou society, those best suited to be Warriors are those born under the Full Moon while those born under the New Moon are considered to be Tricksters. Garou have strained relations with their fellow shape-shifters and have caused the extinction of the werebats, wereboar, and wereaurochs, then the extinction of one of their own Tribal siblings, the Bunyip, who were native to Australia.

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 9

I don't own anything!

August 1st Afternoon

Willow browses through some old table top RPGs while Xander is busy looking through the offerings of old comics the Used Bookstore has. The red head continues to watch her friend and crush out of the corner of her eye every few minutes. Majority of the titles of the books she's looking through are for Advance Dungeons and Dragons with a few source books for other, less known RPGs like Cyberpunk and Paranoia. At least in this stack from books.

As she finishes with that row, she moves onto the next and after the first six, she comes across Shadowrun. She's kind of heard of the game, it's one where Dwarves and Elves begin to get born, magic resurging in that world, and mega corporations pretty much took over the world, being the global powerhouses instead of countries. It's related to Cyberpunk only, it's popular enough that people made electronic games of it.

She picks up the mostly purple book, Virtual Realities 2.0 and flips it over to read the back of it.

"There I was, standing next to Joe on the corner, when outta nowhere comes this overgrown troll riding the hugest Harley Scorpion I've ever seen, blastin' away from all three firmpoints. What really scared teh bejeezus outta me were his arms - coupla big chainsaws, buzzin' away like a hundred million wasps. He rode right up and sliced through Joe like a hot knife though butter! Joe flickered a bit, his face contorting into a pirmal scream, and disappeared. I hotfooted it back to the squat with the words, "Buy Mitsuhama" running through my brain - don't ask me why, "Then Joe's brother unhooked us from the Matrix...

...AND THE REAL NIGHTMARE BEGAN."

She flicks to the front once more before putting it back. Willow continues to go through this stack, finding a number of barely worn game books, a lot of them seem rather new releases as well. She even finds a few GM screens along with campaign books and pads of character sheets.

When she came upon a Call of Cthulhu RPG and couldn't help but stare as she recalls what kind of stories that author had written and compare them to what she knows now. With a slight shake of her head, she continues on, coming upon the odd RuneQuest and Traveller source book plus more Dungeons and Dragon books.

There's a lot of Dungeons and Dragon books in this particular store, or at least, that's what she thinks. Then again, it's been around the longest. *Also the first of its kind.* Willow reminds herself before glancing in Xander's direction, noticing that he seems to have found another comic to buy.

As she continues she finds a few Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay, a dozen Gamma World books, a copy of Ars Magica, a selection of Vampire the Masquerade clan books, two Champions corebooks, and an old edition of Tunnels and Trolls. By the fourth stack of RPGs, she is beginning to find Palladium books and Rolemaster as well some foreign games in their original languages and a few of the previously mentioned games written in french and german.

By the sixth, she pretty much came to the end of the RPGs and is now finding novels that were written in those fictional worlds of the RPGs. Most of it is for Dungeons and Dragons in their Greyhawk or Forgotten Realms setting. At the third stack, she finds something interesting. A trio of Shadowrun novels, the first is Never Deal with a Dragon, the second novel in the series is Choose Your Enemies Carefully, and the final one is Find Your Own Truth.

As she reaches for them, Willow turns to look around before pausing to see if she can't find something to stand on to reach them without

straining herself. Soon enough, she has the three down from the stack and she flips the first one over to read the back.

As she opens the book and begins to read the first chapter, Willow jumps a little bit at Xander suddenly being behind her and having placed a hand upon her left shoulder.

"Hey, Wills, find anything good?" Xander asks with an easy grin, his own selection of comics, about three, where in his other hand.

"Ah, yea, I did. Ready to go already?" She asks and Xander nods, as he replies, "Well, if you're not ready, I could always come back with a search party by closing to dig you out of your pile of books."

"Oh, no, I'm ready. Just these three!" Willow tells him and Xander retracts his hand from her shoulder, leading the way to the counter to pay for the three comics.

She follows behind, her purchase is nearly sixteen dollars but the books were in surprisingly good condition.

September 13th

Noting that Willow had left three books, paper back novels, on the table of the library, Xander muses that they look familiar and leans over to pick up the top one, the title of which is Find Your Own Truth.

The title struck a cord within him as he looks at the picture on the front of the novel. A quick flip and he reads the back of it, then shifts his focus onto the other two novels. The other two were the first two installments of the trilogy.

He picks up the nearest one, Choose your Enemies Carefully and studies the front, again, the title causes something to resound with him. Then again, the two titles seem to be pretty simple statements about how to live one's life. The last, the one he couldn't easily reach was the first installment and its title is Never Deal with a Dragon.

The novels were set in the Shadowrun RPG universe and his eyes flicker towards a particular part of the library floor. Where a particular incident occurred at the end of the school year. At the memory, he scowls at the recent events that were connected with that particular event.

He gets up and as he reaches the door, pauses and then returns to grab the novels, deciding to return them to his childhood friend.

That night, even as he is laying in bed after an exhausting night, his considers the two titles and wonders, just what was his truth? Why was this his life? After all, Jess was avenged, the Master's dead, right?

My enemies, that's an easy one, right? Xander thinks as finds himself slowly drifting off to sleep.

October 20th

Xander is back at the Used Bookstore to browse through their collection of comics for those same ones he couldn't buy back in August. As he enters the store, he comes to a stop near where he had seen Willow engrossed with one of those novels that she had bought.

It's not that hard to find which stack of books she found those three at as he finds more novels set in that same universe along with more copies of those three books. Not that he's ever played Shadowrun before, he'd been more into playing Dungeons and Dragons along with Star Wars RPG when they wanted something different then fantasy.

Finding a different novel, Changeling, it's about a boy who ends up changing into a troll and how he survives as a Shadowrunner. He puts it back and continues to read the spines until he finds a novel that's different. "Catalyst Game Labs?" Xander mutters out loud and it takes some effort to get the novel out of the stack. As he looks at

the cover, it's strikingly different, for one, there's not that horned skull that's the usual Shadowrun mark, this one looks like it came off a totem pole.

The Vladivostok Gauntlet. Xander reads the title and he then opens the book to find the date of publication. Upon finding it, he starts dumbly at the date that's there, in black and white. "Twenty-thirteen." He states with a hint of disbelief.

It takes time before he realizes that this was most definitely an example of Hell Mouthy weirdness. With that in mind, Xander glances around the shop, suddenly wondering what other novels and books could be found, whether due to coming from a different time or maybe from a different dimension.

Or maybe it's just the one? Xander thinks to himself and decides to search among the stack before him to reassure himself only, he just finds more and not just of the Shadowrun variety. There's a series of books based on the adventures of one Percy Jackson and some kid named Harry Potter. There's novels set in the Forgotten Realms and Dragonlance that are also out of place due to publication dates. He finds some unknown series called Animorphs where a race of alien brain slugs are invading Earth, a number of Warcraft novels based off of an old Blizzard title as well as novels in two settings, Diablo and Starcraft.

It's not long before he finds some very interesting, but also unsettling table top RPGs. Like a fourth edition D&D book called Open Grave or books for All Flesh Must be Eaten game line. Hell, he's found a strategy guide for a Xbox game called Far Cry Primal. He sure as hell has never *heard* of an Xbox, let alone that Playstation has plans for a PS4!

Xander looks with new eyes at the collection of comics and find a few graphic novels among them, including manga titles Naruto, One Piece, and Bleach. He sure has hell don't recall seeing any of this in August, so why is he seeing this now?

What changed between then and now? He wonders to himself as he doesn't know where to begin. Just where is he suppose to start buying any of it? Should it matter if he does buy any of it?

Nobody seems to be noticing anything, heck, he even picked up one of those manga, a Naruto volume 1-2-3 and inquired as if they had more like this one. The man behind the counter took a look, seemingly not noticing anything off, and told him that if they did, it would be among the comics. He even asked about where they got them, only to be told it was among some crates that they bid on from an estate sale.

After some time, he makes his selection of what to purchase, thankfully, a number of what he bought were under two bucks even though a number of the titles look to be in either new or great condition. Then, as he is about to leave, he pauses as he stares at the window. For a second he thought... With a shake of his head, Xander pushes the door and leaves, already having made up his mind to head to the Library to get G-Man's opinion on this latest bit of Sunnyhell weirdness.

October 30th

Xander wipes his forehead, recently, his health seems to be more then a little off. At some point during the last few days, he seems to suddenly develop a fever that lasts for minimum of five minutes to, a recent record, of twenty minutes before vanishing and leaving behind a fierce set of aches that fade within an hour, though if the increase of him suffering from a fever is increasing, so might the time it takes before those aches fade.

Willow sends her friend and crush a look of concern, she would rather he was at home until they figure out what's the cause of his recent health issues. After all, he's been to the nurse's office for legitimate reasons so he could just skip the whole Tricker'Treater escort assignment and take it easy. She turns away to look at Buffy as the Slayer opens the door to Ethan's.

They enter while Buffy pretty much keeps the awkward silence at bay given that Xander had put an end to the conversation where they were trying to talk/order him home to get some bed rest. The topic? What kind of costume would attract Angel's attention, which Willow decides to focus on, to ignore her concerns for Xander.

Xander finally allows himself to roll his eyes now that his back is facing his two friends. He seriously doesn't see why Buffy wants to get it on with that demon possessed corpse, after all, that relationship clearly has an expiry date on it. For a moment, as he is staring down at the discount bin, a mental scene plays out as though it's something playing on a TV screen where Angel and Buffy make the beast with two backs.

It continues to show Angel running out of his shelter and after something happening to his eyes, feeding upon a concerned woman. The mental scene ends, causing him to shiver as he suddenly feels drained and cold. "What was that?"

It takes Xander a moment to realize he said that out loud. He closes his eyes and places a hand over his eyes as they throb a bit as he suddenly feels his head pounding. He suddenly wishes he could just sit down as his body seems to be still feeling a chill and it's not from the air conditioner that's keeping the usual heat of the Californian sun at bay. With his other, he does his best to support himself as he does his best to bring his breathing under control.

Then, there's a hand on his shoulder and he stiffens as he says, "I'm fine, Wills. I don't need..."

A distinctly male and British voice interrupts him in the middle of his argument, "Wowo, hold up there, mate. You just look like one good gust will cause you to crash. I rather not have a law suit, so why don't you follow me to the back and take a seat?"

Xander presses his lips but as his vision gets tinted with a particular color and realizes that while the man does have something planned, he isn't sure how but knows it's not aimed any him. Well, not aimed

at anyone currently in the store and the man really didn't want him to cause a scene, so, his offer was above board. "Sure." He says and allows himself to be lead to a back room.

As Buffy becomes silent at her admiring of the white dress, Willow looks up in time to see Xander heading into the back, likely to try on a costume, which makes her wonder what changed his mind about his costume choice. A bit later, the man returns and noticing that she's looking at him, approaches with a friendly smile.

"What can I help you, lovely young ladies with?" The man asks, a British accent coloring his tone. Willow relaxes upon hearing it as it reminds her of Giles and Buffy inquires about the price of the dress.

Xander somehow, dozed off sitting in the back. He's surrounded by colors of the rainbow and as he looks down, he notices a city below with Japanese advertisements mixed in with English and French. It's morning and as he watches, the city seems to fast forward as within minutes, it's noon and some more, it's evening. As time seems to slow, he looks up and around the circling colors that seem to dance.

Then, they seem to grow in size, only as Xander looks down does he realizes it's not them growing, it's him sinking into the floor! He struggles and as he's about to fully sink into the ground, someone grabs him and as he looks up, all he can tell is that the man is bright orange and warm. Then the orange tries to transfer onto him and he lets go of the man in panic. He's following...

Xander gasps and his eyes open as he jerks himself up off the chair. For a few moments, his left fist is alight with flames before they vanish, leaving him to wonder just what the hell did he just see. As he stares at his left fist and recalls what he saw, he doesn't hear anyone entering into the room.

"Awake, sleeping beauty?" A male British voice inquires and as he turns, it's the man from the store, or rather, the owner of the store.

"Your the owner?" He asks in a startled tone and the man blinks, for a second, a surprise and a few other emotions and thoughts flash withing this man's eyes.

"You know, cause you didn't need to go talk with anyone before leading me back here, you know? So I just kind of figured you were." Xander blabs and it feels as though the man believes him. "I mean, if you weren't then someone would have kicked me out of here sooner."

"Quite the young detective? And yes, I am. Ethan's the name." *Chaos' the game.* Xander mentally adds as Ethan introduces himself. "Looking for a Sherlock perhaps?"

"Ah, no. Maybe some purple face paint and, well, you ever heard of Shadowrun? Something to act as a fake Data Jack." Xander asks the man without knowing why but not about to tell the man to forget about it.

"Shadowrun?" Then the man's eyes light up after a minute and asks, "As in some title of the cyberpunk rpg sort I take it?" To which he nods.

Ethan thinks about it before saying, "The face paint is easy. I might have to... well, come along, let's see if we can't find something for this 'Data Jack'."

He follows after, soon enough, he leaves the store with said purple face paint and a glue bit of cheap metal and plastic that he feels will serve as the purpose. Xander was kind of relieved that neither Buffy or Willow were still in the store to ask what he'd been doing in the back for the last two hours.

Halloween Eve

Xander takes one last look in the mirror, making sure that the fake Data Jack will stay where he kind of glued it without his fingers there

to hold it at his right temple. Under his left eye, there's this purple mark that is a gentle arc with three large spikes pointing down to his jaw line. The rest of his costume is pretty much a suit he found in the attic, it didn't fit well and likely had been his father's wedding suit.

With a sigh, he turns from the mirror and heads out of his room. "I'm off!" He says in a chipper tone, not that either of his parents were home. They weren't even in Sunnyhell, having left three days ago to LA concerning, well, they never were clear on that point so he isn't sure why it had been important.

Locking the door, Xander heads to the Summer's Residence, hoping that his feverish afternoon was his last bout for the day.

Xander stares about him while sitting across from him is an albino man, only without bloody red eyes. The people around them, walking around, seem to blur along the edge but what he can see, it makes him glad to be sitting down. "Troll, ork, ork, ork, dwarf, dwarf, dwarf, human... Is that an elf?" He murmurs and follows the classy dress woman sporting rather long and pointed ears.

"Well, to be honest, I'm rather shocked myself. Big fan of Shadowrun I take it? I would have thought Dungeons and Dragons myself." The man muses and Xander turns his attention to the man.

"Not really, never played the game. Wills bought a trilogy of books back in August for it though. Then, well, I started Noticing some oddities." He admits. "G-man was rather shocked once he figured out how to pierce the rather strong illusions on these books."

"Oh, ho?" The man muses but before more could be said, a waiter approaches, human.

"Orders?" The man asks and his table mate orders for the both of them, "Green tea for the both of use and two slices of soy cheese cake, please."

Soy cheese cake? Xander couldn't help but think, it shown clearly on his face as the twenty something is clearly amused by his reaction.

"Well, it is on the menu. Really Alexander, you have a menu in your hands." And he stills, not sure how the man knows his first name.

"I'm Byakuran, by the way. Not that it means anything to you." Byakuran tells him. "And yes, I know who you are and what you've been up to. It's Halloween Eve, I take it. Looks like things will be diverting from... cannon."

Xander's eyes narrow as he become guarded, "What do you want? And leave Buff and Wills alone, if you have a beef with me, then let's keep it with me."

"You know you can't protect them from themselves, don't you? Also, you might want to take a look at your reflection, I think you'll find it enlightening."

"My reflection? What are you..." He stops talking as he looks at the glass of water seated before him, his eyes widening at the look at his features. His right hand moves to his right temple, the cheap metal band he shaped into a ring looking not so cheap or so mandible, even sporting a simple orange gemstone. His index finger gingerly touches a very real and very expensive Data Jack.

"My, my, been experiencing any health issues recently? It looks like someone's decided to give you a bit of a boost. No just wanting to gift you with Sky Flames but the natural charm and grace of a Shadowrun Elf at that."

His eyes flicker to his hair and notices that it's bleaching as he's watching. It's slow but it's there and he sits back as the waiter returns with a pot of hot water and cups that match. Rather gobsmacked, Xander doesn't do much other then meekly accept the tea cup and looks down at the tea within, waiting innocently for him to begin drinking.

"You see, Flames of the Dying Will come in a set of seven. Sky are orange, Storm are red, Rain are blue, Sun are yellow, Lightning are green, Cloud are purple, and Mist are Indigo." Byakuran explains, continuing on after taking a sip from his own cup. "Their properties are Harmony, Disintegration, Tranquility, Activation, Hardening, Propagation, and Construction. Skies have a tendency to draw the others to them, providing them with acceptance and a feeling of Home while they, in turn, become very protective of their Sky, taking the mantle of Guardian."

Then it seems that Byakuran is content to let silence hang between them, every so often, drinking his tea. Then, he asks, "Why? What's the point?" He looks up at the man, because there has to be a catch or over reaching purpose.

"Because a lone Sky is a very sad thing and they are so very rare." The way the other says that and the pitying look, it's clear that Byakuran feels sorry for him. "You won't have to worry about the Tri-ni-set, I doubt they'll be recreated in your universe. After all, you'll have your hands full concerning the plans of Demons, Humans, and Powers that Be looking to use you or be rid of you."

"Why me?" He asks and Byakuran gets a thoughtful look but the waiter arrives with their slices of soy based cheese cake. Curiosity gets the better of him and given that it seems his table mate is pretty much waiting for him to give it a try in stead of trying it himself. He uses his fork and cuts a small piece off of the dessert, Xander chews a bit and shrugs, replying, "It's no Hostess Twinkie."

With a wiry smile, Byakuran tries a bit and hums in agreement, "It's passable as most non-marshmallow desserts go."

"Ah, it looks like our time together, for now, has run out. I'm sure we'll meet up again, at some point." And Xander looks around, sure enough, white comes rushing at him and then...

With a groan, Xander opens his eyes and then closes them while bringing up a hand to block the light from his face. There's a soft beep and he feels something in his arm, he turns his head after a few minutes and notices that he's a hospital room and he's got an IV stuck in his arm. With a sigh, he rises himself up and looks around for something that could give him the date.

Noticing the washroom and since nobody has come to check on him, he figures out how to lower the gate and moves to stand. His legs ache but they hold his weight and taking hold of the IV, gingerly walks over to the washroom.

He reaches for the light switch only to realize, he didn't need it as the light from the room is more then enough for his vision. Moving to stand before the sink, he places both hands on it and then, looks at himself in the mirror.

There's no purple tattoo under his left eye but he does still possess that Data Jack. His hair is more off white then Byakuran's bright white and his eyes were emerald green instead of the light lavender of Byakuran's eyes. His hair is so much longer then it should be and with a slight push, he gets a good look at his right ear. Xander's index finger gently moves along the top of the ear until it comes to the point. He taps it lightly before pulling his hand away and letting his hair fall.

As he turns to look back into the room, he notices the ring from his meeting resting on an envelop. With a sigh, he finishes up in the washroom before walking over to the spot and he puts on the ring before opening the envelop.

To Alexander 'Xander' L. Harris

Greetings, I hope you enjoy my gifts to you, young Chaos Bringer. Now to get down to business, I expect that with the Sky Flames, you will find the edge you will need to protect your love ones, with the Data Jack I trust you will find ways in which to bring yourself profit as you do need to live for yourself every once in a while, and as for the

racial shift, I believe you'll find others listening and considering your words far more then they once did.

I am sure that the man who you have come into contact with find ways in which to remain in contact with yourself, consider him a second cousin.

From Wepwawet

PS - You owe me J!

Xander makes a note of the name, he does wonder who J was but it seems that this Wep guy believes that the guy would read this letter. He also finds a cable for the Data Jack along with a device to read the chips that were also within the envelop. He figures magic is how it all fit in the envelop.

He puts the letter back into the envelop and moves to get back into the hospital bed. After a little bit, he fell asleep as his body clearly hasn't seen much use recently and he used up whatever energy he had. Although not before he hides the chip case, the reader, and cable under his pillow.

Xander woke in time to punch the thing next to his bed with his right fist. Orange flames sprout from his ring as he realizes that it's a vampire and he will kill this vampire with his Dying Will! The vampire recovers but with ease, he evades the counter and as his fist finds the vampire's jaw, the flames flash and the vampire is dust.

Breathing heavily, his mind is a whirl but the important part is, he needs to leave, as in now. Listening to that instinct, he changes his cloths into that cheap suit and pockets the envelop and his other belongings. Taking out the IV, Xander leaves and nobody seems to stop him on his way out the door.

The need fades and his vision is no longer tinted with orange once he has been walking for an hour. With a sigh, glances around to

where he is and finds himself where Ethan's shop had been. He enters and while the floor is pretty much empty, he feels a pull to the basement and without a second thought, heads down.

Xander finds boxes filled with costumes, props, and some very interesting items that ping with him. He changes out of his dad's suit and into more causal cloths before he begins to take a closer look to the various Chaos Charged items. His only light comes from the street lights outside but in time, he has a mental inventory of what's going to fade by next week and what's going to last until destroyed.

Then he puts the dangerous items in their own pile, the harmless in another, and the useful in the last. With a soft sigh, he realizes that he's hungry and thirsty from the last hour's work. He picks up the wallet he's decided to claim and picks up the various fake credit cards.

With a quick look around, he heads up out of the basement and for the nearest fast food joint. Xander finds himself dusting another three vampires on the way, but then, they were positioned to ambush people heading for the place, just looking for easy meals. He is a bit surprised that one of his fake credit cards was accepted but then, they were in the useful pile for a reason, even if they'll fade soon enough.

While waiting, he finds a coffee newsletter and the date is November 23rd, thankfully, it's the same year as he recalls. As his mind slowly accepts this, his order is done and he heads to another table in order to eat it. Before he leaves, he makes use of the washroom before leaving.

Before he returns, he heads off to do some more late night shopping. While he's a bit unnerved to find that there's a real-estate office open twenty-four hours, seven days a week, upon meeting with them, Xander gets why as they were demons so, they didn't have to worry about vampires and they seem to assume he's one as well from their manner, which muses him.

By the time he leaves, he owns one of the ranches surrounding Sunnyhell along and has a number of a company that will build him a better house. Of course, he needs to know what kind of house he wants and has a bit of time constraint but he's sure that he'll know what to have built once he's spent some time in the library, not the High School one, just the public one.

He heads back to the building and to the basement, Xander then takes the time packing up the various piles into different cloth bags before heading to the second floor where he does find a bed. Closing his eyes, he calls his flames to see if this was a safe place.

Given that there's no nudging to push him out of the room, he assumes it's safe, for the rest of the night at least, and settles in to sleep as he's both mentally and physically exhausted.

Noon

He can't sleep any more so, he gets up and lets out a sigh. As he lays there, he considers everything that's happen so far and can't help but wonder how he knows how to use his Flames. It takes him a few minutes and letting his mind wander did the answer slowly came.

It seems that even though he was going through the SURGE event, his body had been possessed by a Flame using version of himself, one who was possessed Lightning Flames. That Xander, Lex as he came to be called by his Family, had Woken his Flames when he was eight and it wasn't long before he was pretty much absorbed into a Mafia family and trained until he knew how his Flame work on an instinctual level.

When Lex left the body, the instinctual level remained. Sure, the training had been for Lightning Flames but the basics were the same. As he does his best to recall what happened on Halloween, the events play out as though he was watching viva a third person view point. He winces, particularly as that Lex knocked the others

out, including Angel, before sneaking away once Willow had left. Before the event ended, Lex had been in the process of breaking into a house viva the basement.

"Byakuran never mentioned the Mafia..." He says out loud but, well, at least he now has some idea of what he wants in a house, if only due to Lex being skilled at breaking and entering into various houses, apartments, and mansions.

Well, satisfied at knowing what happened on Halloween while he was visiting with Byakuran, he gets up and off the bed. He begins some stretches and then takes some time to begin working on mastering his Sky Flames.

As late afternoon arrives, he takes out the Data Jack cable and the chip reader. Inserting a chip and putting the end into his Data Jack, Xander does his best to access the knowledge of the chip without any experience with any of it. Thankfully, some of Lex's Flame training helps in this particular task and finds that this particular chip is information concerning the basics of how to be a Rigger.

He ends it and comes out of the computer interface and switches the chip out for a different one. Two chips later, he finds one that actually is useful concerning hardware engineering and software programing. The previous two had to do with biology of paranormal species and meta-types. Seeing that the sun was fairly low in the sky, get doesn't put in another chip and instead gets ready to leave.

Xander stops off to grab something to eat before heading off to buy himself a decent suit for tonight's meeting with the contractors. It takes three hours for the suit to be done and he paid with a different magical credit card. He head for the bus stop to store the bags filled with Chaos enchanted items away. With the keys, he takes a moment to feel as though he's missing something, it takes him a moment that what he's missing is a cell phone or some kind of com device.

He pushes that away and continues on toward the meeting point, stopping off to buy some hair gel and shades. A quick stop at a washroom and he's adjusted his hair into a suitable style, Lex had fashion drilling into him by his Family and if he wants to come across as serious in this upcoming meeting, he needs to dress the part. Feeling a little more like Lex, he heads off to the office, thirty minute early for the meeting.

He waits for ten minutes before he's led into the office, which is filled with demons. Relying on Lex's manners and his Intuition, he manages to not offend either of the trio of demons, although their gazes do linger a bit too long on his Data Jack they were also polite if a bit doubtful of him, given his age. They spent the last of the night and majority of the early morning going over various blue prints, materials to be used, and drinking a great deal of coffee.

He two third up front before he leaves the office and a time table of when they'll be done. Heading back to the bus station to retrieve his stuff, he reflects on why he hasn't tried to get into contact with Willow, Buffy, or even the G-Man. In the end, it comes down to the fact that he wants a safe house first and foremost and the other, they wouldn't take the changes he's undergone very well.

And if either learn about how I'm paying for this, they wouldn't be very happy. If only because it's me and magic anything. He reflects with a slight frown. *Of course, if Buffy had found these cards, she wouldn't haste to use them, oh she'll feel bad but she'd justify it by claiming she's the Slayer and it's all going to a good cause as she says so **many** lives.*

Realizing he is both tired and hungry were part of his current negative thoughts, he decides to rectify it. Having eaten his fill, he heads off to the nearest nice hotel to check in until his house is built. Once within, he undresses and heads to have a relaxing shower before closing the curtains and falling asleep in the king size bed.

Nov 30th

Xander goes through his investments and when ever he feels a twitch from his flames, he makes a note on which investment was the cause along with whether to sell his shares or to buy more of them. From Lex, he knows to listen to his flame instincts when it makes itself known and despite logic or orders, to do as it tells him. It's what helped Lex survive, even thrive, in the Mafia world pretty much whole and come out of situations pretty much clean.

As he finishes, he gets up and puts away his breakfast dishes plus his glass. While tempting to drink coffee or even tea, he's keeps telling himself that he prefers his caffeine coming from soda pop along with the sugar rush it gives him. Although, he's been drinking more Brisk Ice Tea these pass four days then your usual name brand sodas, better for his teeth, well, he thinks it is, plus it's a decent enough compromise, at least in his mind it is.

With the dishes and glass in the sink, he walks back to his table and picks up the paper to see which new companies he should invest in based upon his intuition. As he gets half way through the list, making notes again on which to invest in, a knock occurs at his order. He pauses and within a second, summons his Sky Flames only to find his intuition seemingly purring happily.

Dismissing his flames, Xander gets up from his chair and walks over to answer his hotel suit's door. Unlocking it, he looks down to find two packages, one much larger then the other. His eyes flicker about the hallway before he crouches down to pick up the pair of parcels. He's sure to close the door behind him and once he puts the two down, he puts the lock back on.

Before heading back to his table, Xander picks up the smaller of the two. Once he sets it on the table, he pulls out his pocket knife and slices gently through the tape. Opening it, he finds a letter and he picks it up to read it. It's addressed to him and it's from Raven, oddly enough, and mostly about not letting a certain Egyptian God or Roman God being the only two to 'gift' him with something.

Curious, now, he picks up the item wrapped in simple brown paper. He opens it to find a mini totem sporting the image of a hyena done up in a particular First Nation style. "Oh, ha ha." He murmurs as he turns the wooden statue about before putting it down on the table top. He leaves the letter by the wooden statue that's about twenty cm long and twelve cm thick, moving the paper into the box before putting the box onto the floor.

He walks over and hefts the much larger box onto the table and uses the same pocket knife to cut the tape, again carefully. Another letter, only this time, it's from the Norse God Loki wishing him luck in his future battles and to remind him to never lose his sense of humor. With a slight smile, he puts the letter down and digs through the white foam packing peanuts to find note just a lap top with it's power cord and a wireless mouse but also a mini computer tower with its own power cord. There's a few other boxes within it, but he's more focus on the lap top.

He can't help but whistle at how clearly beyond the current level of tech the two where. Xander gets the lap top out of its plastic bag as well as the power cord. Within moments, the power cord is connected to the wall socket and the lap top.

Before he starts it up, he moves the mini computer tower back into the box along with the plastic ties and baggies, putting the box onto the floor in the living room part of the hotel room. With that done, he then quickly gathers up his papers and moves them onto one of the counter tops of the kitchen, clearing up the table so he can focus on setting his lap top without accidentally messing up his note book or his investment files.

As the lap top hums to life upon his pressing of the power button, he takes a moment to look at Raven's gift. His flames hum happily and he lights them up as he reaches for the totem statue. The moment his hand touches the statue, it changes until it's a hyena pup, only with dark orange spots and overly orange eyes. She yawns, and Xander just *knows* the pup is female before looking at him and starts to get up to walk over to him.

Xander quickly scoops her up and she snuggles into his chest, it doesn't take him long to realize that he now has a living, breathing baby hyena to take care of. "So... what should I do with you?" He asks the pup, not that he gets an answer as she fell asleep.

Slowly, he sets the pup on his lap before beginning to set up his lap top. Every so often, he pets the pup's head and scratch behind her ears. Mentally making a note to look up what kind of milk is best for a hyena pup while spending the rest of the morning going through the various programs for sometime before the pup wakes up hungry. Xander sighs and checks the time, realizing that it's almost noon and he still has other things to do, he shuts down his lap top to attend to the pup's needs and then getting onto the phone to manage his various investments.

By late afternoon, Xander heads out to buy a few things, namely for the pup.

Dec 4th

With Shenzi happily occupied within the little play pen, Xander closes the window and turns on the television. With the cord that connects the mini computer tower to the tv, he puts down the tv's remote before picking up the wireless remote for the tower. Within the tower are various movies, tv shows, and music.

He found a wireless internet router in the box along with various cords. Sadly, his Data Jack doesn't allow him to interact with either the tower or his lap top. Then again, he does have plans to build to make a converter to that would allow his Data Jack to interface with the two, he also just needs to write up a program for it as well.

Finding the season he left off at, Xander presses play and begins watching How I Met Your Mother, third season episode ten. Lilly kind of looks a bit like Willow, and he sighs but at the reminder. There's posters with his previous looks about the town, even Demons were looking for him, if only to get at Buffy through him.

It also seems that none of the nurses noticed his changing looks, but then, it could be supernatural influence of the town that helps people ignore the weirdness of the night life. Or it could be something somebody did to keep it a secret.

Whatever it was, whenever he thought about contacting Buffy, Ms Calendar, Giles, or Willow, his Intuition reacts in a negative fashion. It's frustrating, what's the point of staying in Sunnyhell if he can't be with his friends? It's not like he hasn't killed a few Demons since he's gotten out of the hospital, there's been more then a few that have tried to kill him, in various ways. It's only due to his Sky Intuition and application of Flames that he's been able to avoid death or capture.

Lex's memories are slowly fading, not quickly but they were dulling and he only just realized it was happening yesterday morning when he was out meeting with that construction company. The knowledge that Lex knew concerning certain details of the plans didn't jump to the forefront of his mind. Once the meeting was done, he quickly headed back to the hotel, not just because he left Shenzi alone and needed to get back but also to mediate to reconnect with Lex's memories.

Which bring him to the journal sitting in his lap and the pencil resting in his left hand. Xander sighs and quickly reaches the right state and opens himself to Lex's Remanent within him. Without looking opening his eyes, he begins to write out Lex's life from the moment he sparked his Flames. It'll take him at least three days to write it all out throughout various journals but it's something that he needs to do. He just knows it's important, then he'll reread them and create summaries and lesson plans.

Dec 23rd

With the various gifts now wrapped, Xander considers how he'll have them delivered. As he thinks about it, he scratches Shenzi behind the ears with one hand, which doesn't do much to distract her from wanting to nibble at his left hand's fingers. Shenzi's almost fully

grown and doesn't look anything like a normal hyena. She kept her black coloring and the orange of her spots only grew brighter while her once neon orange eyes have become more a pale orange. She's also displayed an ability to alter her size, taking on her pup size to the size of a SUV with but a burst of Sky Flames.

That particular discovery occurred when a pair of rather tall Demons of a particularly reptilian look came charging at them while Xander had taken Shenzi out to a park. They proved rather good at nullifying his flames, upon examination he found a relic implanted near their hearts, the feel of the two relics remind him of a particular black flame that only certain people weld. He's thankful that it didn't provide any protection against Shenzi's much larger bite force.

He's been rather paranoid after that episode, it means that he can't always trust his Intuition to avoid traps or ambushes. Thankfully, Shenzi's senses weren't easily fooled and he's taken to bringing her everywhere with him.

It also made him wonder if the reason he even received those two packages, Xander checked and found they had been placed on delayed delivery on October thirty-first, hadn't been to keep him from going out during that first week of December. It could also mean that he could expect another parcel from a Trickster that would do something to aid him in avoiding a course of action or maybe something to help in future conflicts?

He makes a face, it's unlikely that it'll happen and he shouldn't expect such aid to begin with. Xander needs to step up more, to start actually looking for threats that could be coming his way, not just reacting to them.

Which means hacking, a lot of hacking and creating an information net work. The hacking was easy, so very easy even if he hadn't been able to create a decent Decker board. Any professional Decker would more then likely rolling their eyes at it and proclaiming their disgust at the board even being worth its parts. But, he's in a different universe and having access to a different set of tech then

what the Shadowrun universe would have had at this point in their timeline.

What he's discovered from his various hacks and watching through various video cameras is, some pretty big players wanting him dead. Well, they wanted the Flame Cloaked, Wired Elf dead, funny how they all have the same Code name for him, Jack Frost. Given he's got a movie called Rise of the Guardians who's center character was a teenage spirit of Fun and Winter, he was kind of honored by the name. Not enough to make it his official name, nope, he's actually created his own ID for his new looks.

Edward, or Ed, as his first name, another name taken from a hyena from the Lion King and maybe from a certain Anime character, Alphonse as his middle name, taken from Ed's brother from Full Metal Alchemist, and lastly, Hammett for his last name, taken from the guitarist and songwriter for the heavy metal band Metallic, one Kirk Hammett. He figures it's a decent alias, Edward 'Ed' A. Hammett, age is the same only his birthday being September 13th instead of his actual one.

Fictional parents, fictional history, aka home schooled, and of course, the 'seed' fund he inherited when his parents had died when he was fourteen, nothing overt, particularly given they moved to Sunnydale when he was nine years old. He, of course, had to create a connection to some actual, although dead, people to be his grandparents.

He moves his right hand to begin scratching her under her jaw. He bit later, leans a bit more forward to and resumes scratching Shenzi behind her right ear while he brings his left hand to take over scratching her under her jaw. Xander feels himself relax a little as he watches Shenzi's eye half close in pleasure, causing a slight smile to bloom.

He really didn't know why he had an animal companion, it's not something that most Flame users typically receive from what little of Lex's memories remain within his head. But, moment's like these, he

couldn't bring himself to wonder about it too much, just enjoying the comfort and companionship the hyena offers.

"So, what do you think? Edward Alphonse Hammett, has a certain ring to it, right?" He murmurs softly to Shenzi, who yawns a bit before moving her head more into his right hand, demanding more scratches. He increases his scratching speed a tad.

After what feels like hours, Shenzi pulls away, stands, stretches, and moves to where her bowls are located. Xander hums softly before getting up himself, stretching a bit as he turns to gaze upon the gifts for Mrs Summers, Giles, Buffy, and Willow. Xander turns away from the gifts and heads for the bathroom.

He'll figure it out later, right now, he could use a nap.

Dream

"A field? Really? I was rather hoping for a graveyard or maybe even a club." He hears a familiar voice comment and Xander opens his eyes once he turns his head in the direction of the voice.

"What's wrong with a field? It's a wide open space, you can easily tell if anyone was sneaking up on you." He defends the field.

Byakuran smirks and then pops a few small, colorful marshmallows into his mouth with his left hand while his right holds the bag. The other looks down at him before offering his left hand to help him get up off the grass. Xander takes it and pushes himself up while his guest pulls.

The sun is slowly making its way up into the sky overhead, bring with it clouds and fog, or perhaps he should think of it as mist. Some of the clouds look stormy and he wouldn't be surprised for them to bring the other elements to display themselves over head. After all, what's a Sky without their Elements?

He feels a slight pain in his chest, a reminder that he is very much alone in not just what he is, has, and capable off. "So, what brings such a powerful Mafia Boss to visit little old me?" He asks Byakuran.

"You, old? I was under the impression as an Elf, you are still between the boundary of childhood and teenage hood." The other replies before popping a couple of marshmallows into his mouth.

"I live on a Dimensional Gate that leans itself to negative realms, like demonic or hellish." Xander remarks. "That ages a person such like myself rather quickly."

"Oh yes, you have worked with, working with, a Vampire Slayer I believe." Byakuran muses before giving him a foxy look as he adds, "Quiet the vixen I hear? A bottle blond if I'm not mistaken."

"Haven't seen her or the others since Halloween." He states calmly. "I get the feeling that my time with them has been cut short." Xander admits after a few seconds, kind of reluctant about acknowledging that fact but, well, it *feels* true.

Byakuran offers him some marshmallows and after a second of looking at the bag, reaches in and takes a handful. The bag's opening moves away from his reach as he pops two of the colorful marshmallows into his mouth while he feels Byakuran studying him, without opening his eyes at all, well, they might have tiny slits for the almost albino man to look at him. He merely slowly eats the marshmallows from his hand, more then patient enough to wait for Byakuran to break silence, after all, he hadn't answered his unspoken question of why they are meeting or the purpose of this meeting.

Although, I have to wonder how he even knows about Buffy? Or what a Vampire Slayer is. Xander privately wonders to himself.

"What do you know of the history of Dying Will Flames?" Byakuran asks him a little while after he finished his handful of colorful

marshmallows. Looking off in the distance, to where the various elements are displaying their might.

"Lex knew nothing, but then, he was a Lightning and citizen born one at that." Xander admits. He knew that was a very important distinction given what kind of encounters and exchanges the Lightning version of him had with others of his Elements.

"Yes, I can see how fitting you being a Lightning would be." Byakuran muses, turning his head briefly. "I wouldn't be surprised if your secondary would have been Mist either, given how observant you can be when you want to be."

"How is this history relevant to me?" Xander asks after a minute of silence, although he gets this feeling that, well, it's going to be a long discussion, one that will fully disrupt what little attempts he has of holding onto his former life and friends.

Byakuran moves to sit, gesturing for him to join him. Once he's on the grass before the Mafia Boss, Byakuran begins his history lesson, "Well, let's see, it all began when seven special meteors impacted the Earth during the time when the Earth had another kind of dominate life form, they called themselves True Earthlings..."

Ending it here

To Readers: Been sitting on this since Apr 17, 2016. It's my first try to include KHR! along with Shadowrun in with Buffy. Posting this due to it being my 200th chapter along with it being my Birthday today and pretty much just felt like posting it. Not sure if there will be another chapter for this week though.

Chapter 1: Let the Games Begin! Digimon

I do not own Digimon!

One tap upon the Q button and his avatar launches at the rookie Spore Infected Digimon, the right claws ablaze as it slices through the color mute Patamon. Pressing W and his left claws follow up behind the right slash, he keeps pressing Q and W in a rhythm, slowly his avatar combo hits only grow until the Spore Infected Patamon's health bar fully empties and there's a cut scene begins to play out. His Agumon avatar's profile appears at the end, showing that his Agility has increased from the reaching twenty hits in a combo.

Then the loot window opens up on top of his profile window, he receives five Shattered Holy Relics, two Holy Relics, and one Spore Data Fragment. Takato accepts the loot and that window closes, once more, he focuses on his Agumon's profile. He's done his best to customize his Digimon Avatar with in game items like Body Paint and Tattoos as equip equipment doesn't show up on the avatar. His Agumon Avatar, who he's named Bio|Haz|Mate, currently sporting crimson flame tattoos on the top of the head, back, and on the shoulders. He's used Body Paint to paint a black triangle in a circle on the chest, he's still got a day before he needs to reapply the Body Paint.

He's just started playing this pass weekend even though the MMO for Digimon came out months ago. He had been so excited, just like his friends had been when it was announced only, well, he ran into trouble. His friends have been playing since release while he, well, he kind of needed to finish paying off the bill for cleaning the family computer concerning a virus that he kind of down loaded, so he needed to pay that off before start saving up his money to buy the game. Plus, there's the fact that he had to re-earn computer privileges by not only bringing up his grades but keeping them up

there for the rest of the school year, which meant that he didn't have much time given he's been busy studying, helping out at the bakery, and hanging out with his friends, when they could tear themselves away from Digi-World Access to play the card game or just hang out.

Takato uses his mouse to press the close and the profile vanishes, leaving his screen showing the scene where he just fought the Infected Digimon. Using the mouse, he glances around the meadow before pressing and holding the forward movement key button. Directing Bio|Haz|Mate out of the meadow, heading towards the river to see if any new Infected Digimon spawned there, the Patamon he just fought had been the seventh Boss for the Core Story of the MMORPG. There's an eighth, a Gatomon, but he's got to leave Gate Island and travel to the Server Continent in order to find said Champion Digimon from his search viva the internet during lunch at school.

Finding a gang of Spore Infected Gizamon, their colors were switched instead of muted, trying to create another dam to block the river again. Starting off the fight with a Pepper Breath, he is quick to get into melee using Claw Attack and begin a slashing combo hit once more as it's the only way he could bring up his avatar's Agility. Thanks to him taking Switch Target from the General Skill Tree, he is able to keep using Claw Attack once the Gizamon he was attacking dies. The combo continues to climb as he's able to time it so he defeats the twelve Gizamon using Claw Attack and activating Switch Target to keep the count going.

The final Gizamon fades and Takato gets a message informing him that his Agility raised once more. He moves around, collecting what loot that dropped while the Dam begins to break apart and fade away, allowing the river to continue to flow. Most of the loot is vendor junk to be sold for Digi-Dollars with the odd common equipment dropping that he can sell to another player so they can scrap it for materials. Not wanting to return to the local settlement, he has his Agumon to range throughout the forest, looking for more Spore Infected Digimon to kill.

Reason for rising the Agility of Bio|Haz|Mate is due to him thinking of Digivolving his Agumon into a Meramon instead of the standard Greymon and, well, Centarumon didn't really appeal to him. Sure, there's the option of not Digivolving his avatar at all, but, well, he's mostly just using Bio|Haz|Mate as a test for what he wants to do with his next Digimon Avatar. Just trying to get a feel for the game, really. Takato started the game by picking to play as a Botamon and went from there. It wasn't until he Digivolved into his Rookie stage that he could even name the Digimon and it had taken an hour of play to achieve Digivoloution with Botamon and then another to reach Koromon.

Takato spent the rest for the hour hunting around for more Infected Digimon along with doing his best to keep going with his combo count to increase his Agility. Once he's leveled up a second time and all of his slots in his inventory filled, he directs Bio|Haz|Mate to the nearest settlement, Low Branch Hamlet, to sell the trash and to use the auction house to sell the Craft items and Uncommon equipment. Then, he browses through what's offered concerning better equipment then what he has now, not all of it he can afford but he puts down bids on two as he doesn't have the funds for the out right buy out.

Moving his Digimon near the entrance, he goes AFK to get something to drink and to stretch his body. Walking out of the living room, Takato heads for the small kitchen and opens the fridge, pulling out the carton of juice, he closes the door before setting the carton on the counter, and he grabs a glass. He catches sight of the time as he leans on the counter and drink his juice. He woke around six am and it's now eleven am, which, explains why he's beginning to feel hunger pangs.

His parents are down in the bakery, so, he'll have to make himself something simple for lunch or he could just settle for junk food, he's pretty sure he spotted an open bag of chips. Takato's mind gets made up after he goes through the fridge and freezer. "Chips it is."

He murmurs to himself and fills a bowl with said snack food before refilling his glass once more.

Once he's done drinking his juice once more, he places the empty glass in the sink. As he grabs the bowl, a soft giggle near his ear and he stiffens. Takato glances around the kitchen but finds nothing. "..."

Taking a slow, deep breath, he holds it and then slowly releases it, stifling a yawn, he walks back to the computer, he'll have to be sure to put the bowl away by even, it wouldn't do for his mom to scowl him about his choice of lunch. Sitting down at the computer again, Takato moves the mouse and his status of AFK vanishes, he heads about the settlement, looking for Quests to turn in, he kind of wants to finish up the Quests before he sails for Server Continent viva Whamon.

He received rewards of Experience, Digi-Dollars, and, at times, an item of some sort. He sells what he didn't see being of use, he seeks out the local Quests before heading out of the settlement, into the Wilds in pursuing of his Quests.

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Stifling a yawn, Takato climbs out of bed and begins to dress. He's got to met Kazu and Kenta for the release of the latest Boosting Packs for Digimon the Card Game by ten am. It's currently seven thirty am, as his alarm went off.

Once clothed, he finds his wallet on the desk and his belt carrying pouch for his favorite deck next to it. Putting the pouch onto his belt, he pockets his wallet, and exits out of his room, heading for the kitchen for breakfast. "Morning!" His dad chirps at him and he replies in kind, "Morning!"

Slipping into the chair at the table, he watches as his dad finishes flipping the pancake while he uses a fork to put a few pancakes onto his plate. He digs into the pancakes after adding toppings before pouring syrup on top of all of that. He does his best to go slow but,

well, he's excited about the coming release, after all, in a few weeks, it'll be the First Anniversary for Digimon Access, and that's what the booster packs are suppose to hold Game Codes that could be used during the Anniversary. Yea, the items the codes give were temporary for the duration of the Celebration Week but a rare few are to be for special, limited Digimon Avatars and for activating Quests.

Kazu, Kenta, and himself were pooling their saved funds together to buy as many un-open Booster Cases or, if they can't buy them in case format, Booster packs. They plan to have matches over any rare cards that they get along with the Game Codes. The two already had Digimon Avatars who have reached Mega while he, who's only been playing for two months, has only had two reach Ultimate. He's created five Digimon Avatars to date, he used his Agumon for his first week before moving on to create a new Avatar, he's yet to Digivolve his Agumon and though he hasn't logged in as Bio|Haz|Mate, he hasn't deleted the character either as that Agumon holds the special place in his heart as his very first Digimon Avatar.

His second Avatar is now a Tylomon named Ri\/er's Race and he mostly uses that one to explore the Digital Oceans. His third is now a GrapLeomon named ForUst/Paws, he's used Metal Paint to covert he metal in forest green along with adding feathers to the mane plus having one of his saber fangs have a craved tree on it. He's trying to figure out how to dye the dark gray leather body suit to some other color. Fourth is an Angemon named Keeper_of_the_Mou|ian, he waited until Patamon had Digivolve before naming the Avatar, and he's used Feather Dyes on the wings to add the same shade of blue of the cloth to the tips of the feathers along with using Hair Dye on the hair so it's a shiny silver instead of blond.

His most recent Digimon Avatar, his final Ultimate Digimon, Voice\Rage/Grapple, and is a ShadowWereGarurumon. He's dyed the white fur purple and used Nail Polish to make the claws navy blue. The previous stages had been Ogremon and Goblimon. He's been having fun with VRG viva the Arena Circuit where your Avatar

can suffer permadeath in the PvP ring, where the Avatar gets deleted from your account instead of the Avatar starting over from Baby stage that happens upon an Avatar's death in the World, also meaning you lose everything including the name they had. The rewards tend to be money along with special Tattoo designs and, of course, gear. You don't earn much experience compared to going out and completing Quests, Dungeons, or Infected Digimon though.

His first experience with that feature had been during his first week. Takato's had varying degrees of success of avoiding death having gotten much quicker at keeping an eye on his health bar along with assigning the health items at the number nearest to the attack commands. He's taken the suggestion about having multiple health items seriously too, given that each type has its own cool down along with some causing regeneration over time instead of instantly. He's reviewed various guides during the months he'd been unable to play and in the excitement, forgot about due to the simple fact he was actually playing the game.

"See you later." He says as he gets up from his chair. He clears his place, putting it all in the sink. "Oh yes, going to that booster release is today, isn't it?" His dad muses and he hums positively as he is moving out of the kitchen, towards the stairs.

"Well, take the cell with you, we might need you pick up some items for supper." His dad says and he alters his path, grabbing the cell phone along with the credit card that's next to it, pulling out his own wallet, he adds the credit card into one of the slots while just pocketing the cell once he checks to see if it's on.

"Bye!" He repeats his farewell and so does his dad. Takato carefully walks down the stairs. "Bye mom, I got the cell and the credit card!" He says as he puts on his runners at the bottom of the stairs.

"Ok, well, be careful and have fun." She tells him and he gives his mom a bright smile as he walks pass, heading for the back door of the bakery. "I will!"

Once the door clicks shut behind him, Takato jogs around to the sidewalk and quick walks his way to where he needs to go to meet up with his friends.

To be continued!

Readers: Been reading The King's Avatar , currently on chapter 62, and watched the sub anime of the same name. The first arc would be mostly just the gaming scene of the game before having the Tamers find themselves elsewhere. Foreshadows aplenty in what's been written alone.

Also, to my fellow Canadians, Happy Thanks Giving!

Actions and Masks: Naruto

I don't own Naruto!

Usagi Mori, really? Naruto couldn't help but muse at the current honey blond fifteen year old sporting hazel green eyes. The cloths that the supposed older teen is wearing is civilian in nature then again, her manners are so different then he expects given he knows that 'Usagi' is his team mate Sakura-chan.

He's playing escort for his two disguised teammates, which is why he glances towards the other 'civilian', one Yoshi Seito, the supposed Usagi's boyfriend. 'Yoshi' sports dark brown hair that's in a pony tail and eyes appear to be light gray blue in color. 'Yoshi' feeling his gaze turns to give him a flat look and he sighs before looking away, turning his gaze up to the sky, wondering why he can't help but feel as if something is off.

They just left Hidden Leaf just two hours ago and they will be traveling for three days to reach the supposed 'Birthday Party' and neither of them seem incline to break character and the conversation between the two, it was strange in the way they seemed so friendly with one another, with 'Yoshi' being generally friendly and talkative, even smiling! The few physical gestures... It just causes him to feel like he's actually escorting an actual couple of strangers.

"Is everything ok, Uzuamki-san?" Usagi asks with a touch of concern and Naruto blinks as he turns his gaze upon her. "Err... everything's fine! It's just odd being on a mission without my team is all." He states and neither of them wince or anything at the mention of who they actually are.

"What are they like?" Usagi asks in a friendly manner and as he takes a few seconds to study their respective faces, he feels very creeped out. "Unless you don't want to talk about them." Yoshi adds.

"Err... Maybe later? I... I don't feel comfortable talking about them... right now..." Both accept this, although Yoshi does seem a touch suspicious.

Yip, I can't wait for this whole mission to be over. Seriously? Why are they sticking so closely to their current disguised when nobody buy us are around? The blond wonders.

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"Kakashi-Sensei, what are you doing here?" He exclaims, they were just a few hours away from the town. Finally, someone looking and acting like they should!

The silver haired ninja looks up from his orange book, then, closes the book, even putting it away! There's a slight intense look in Kakashi's eye as the Jonin studies him before turning to observe his disguised teammates. "Hello, I'm Kakashi Hakate, Jonin of Hidden Leaf. I hope my cute little student hasn't made a fool of himself these pass few days." The man says upon relaxing and sporting a humorous glint in his only visible eye.

"Greetings, Hakate-san, I am Yoshi Seito and this is my girlfriend, Usagi-chan Mori." The disguised Sasuke says, again, not breaking character. "As for Uzumaki-san... We don't have any complains, we are getting close to our destination. Should be there before evening, from what I can tell."

"Although, he seems rather twitchy throughout our time together." Usagi reflects and Kakashi just seems to smile while replying, "Oh, he's just not use to being on a solo mission. Most people hire teams as an escort."

He can't help but send Kakashi a look of betrayal only this causes the silver haired ninja to chuckle and stepping over to ruffle his hair before suggesting they continue on their way. Kakashi doesn't take out his book and it's not long before the disguised ninja start a conversation with their teacher. Naruto just groans, wondering why

Kakashi hasn't given the code phrase to end the masquerade the two are under, it's not like they weren't pretty much there.

The blond just returns to staring up at the sky after a few minutes after giving Kakashi a frowning look. It shouldn't be long before things can go back to how things should be, right? It's just a fake escort mission, it's not like there's going to be an actual party, right?

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As they walk to the inn, Kakashi can't help noticing the sulky look his blond student sends him every so often along with the guarded look the blond gives the disguised ninja who's in character as one Tsunayoshi Seito, who had been waiting for them at the gate. As they register at the counter, as the 'couple' kiss before parting to their respective rooms, the expression on Naruto's face is confusion along with a frown.

Once they are in their own room, which is on a different floor, Naruto asks, "What's going on?" The blond walks over to one of the beds, adding, "I mean, they kissed! They actually kissed! Their lips touched each other."

"Well, Usagi-chan and Yoshi-kun are dating." He remarks and the blond sits up to glare at him. "Oh come on! I've spent nearly three days with them! It... This... How? Neither of them... They never struck me as great actors."

I wonder if they know him that well... Or could it be something else?
"Is that really what's bothering you?" He asks the blond and Naruto frowns.

"Well, it's... I can't explain it, ok?" Naruto admits after a few false starts. "But it's so fucking strange regardless! I mean, yesterday when I decided to test them so, I pretty much lied about them, even altered their last names along with their traits."

"No reaction! Not even a flinch or stammer! Not even a clinched fist! It was like, they really were the strangers they were pretending to be." The blond admits with a defeated sigh while laying back down on the bed.

"They underwent a makeover of not just the body but the mind. Right now, Sakura and Sasuke are... dreaming." He figures the blond deserves to know a few bits of what his two teammates underwent. No need to tell him that the selection had been rigged either, that it would have been the two regardless due to certain concerns about their respective mental health. "They are dreaming that they of being their current identity. That this is just a dream, in the end."

"Ok, but, why are we... Aren't we done?" The blond asks.

"Our part is done, yes. But they will be sticking around here for a few months. They are not the only ones to have undergone the process and their might be a few others in the coming weeks." He states and Naruto hums.

"So... am I to undergo this process?" Naruto asks, still laying on the bed.

"No, you will be on missions with other ninja until Sakura and Sasuke's part in this little mission is over." He informs his blond student. "We'll be leaving tomorrow to return to Hidden Leaf."

No need to tell him that in three days, I'll be joining them. Kakashi muses. He, at least, had a hand in creating his new identity and that it's something he's looking forward too.

And wasn't that depressing? He reflects as he is staring down at his book, he's not sure when he pulled it out of his pouch but its in his hand and already open at the page he had it at when he met up with the three of them.

At least Danzo is dead, now it was just cleaning house. That's what this particular experiment slash mission is meant to do, after all,

there's no telling what kind of triggers the old War Hawk left behind. The only reason why Naruto wasn't going to undergo this is due to the fact that his Yin Chakra is fairly weak compared to his Yang Chakra, meaning that there's a possibility that Naruto might just sublime himself fully into a new identity, maybe even preferring being that person then who he is now.

Which we can't have happen, not just for selfish reasons either. He muses as Naruto heads for the bathroom with his pack. "I'm going to have a shower." The blond says and he hums in acknowledgement.

He waits until he hears the water running before pulling out a scroll and begin writing about the meeting along with Naruto's emotional state plus a suspension concerning the reason why.

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Naruto races after Kakashi viva the tree tops, enjoying the feel of wind rushing through his hair and over his skin. As the walls of Hidden Leaf come into view, they drop down onto the road. He can't keep the wide grin from his face as he adjusts his cloths and various pouches as they walk towards the gate.

As they sign in, he pauses to look at a group of three standing next to Lee Rock. He can't help but cock his head to the side with a puzzled look as he studies the three. It takes him a few seconds to realize that it's another group who underwent what his team mates. Kakashi had mentioned others undergoing it, although, he can't help but look between the three, wondering if it was done right with that group or not.

"Naruto-kun! Back from your mission?" Lee asks and he nods, his attention focusing on the green clad ninja, giving the other a grin.

"Yea and ta be honest, happy that it's over. It was just creepy, but, well, it went smoothly regardless." He tells Lee. He's tempted to ask Lee about his teammates but decided against it.

"You're cleared to go." The Chunin at the guard inform him as Lee asks him about the condition of the road. "Right, see ya later Lee!"

"Yosh, good day to you, Naruto-kun! We shall catch up when I return in a few days!" With that, they walk off in opposite directions.

They head for the Hokage Tower to report about their completion of the mission along with him getting his new team assignment for tomorrow.

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"So, how is he? Really?" Lady Hokage, one Tsunade Senju, asks once Naruto has left the office.

"Lonely and left out." He states honestly. "He was at a lost as to the changes to their personality more then anything. He attempted to provoke familiar responses from them." Then he adds, "I think he may be a Sensor. That he knows who they really were and found it hard to wrap his head around their responses."

"He was even eyeing the three Lee were escorting with a puzzled expression." Kakashi reflects. "Anyone he knew?"

"Iruka Umino along with a colleague plus Cat." Tsunade informs him. "And we'll have to have him tested to see if that's the case. If so, then it'll be easy to keep him occupied with giving him the training he needs as a Sensor."

They then move onto confirming his decisions concerning his belongings along discussing medial concerns. Soon enough, their session ends and he departs to spend time before a certain stone, to tell those ghosts why he won't be visiting them in the coming future.

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Naruto taps his foot as he waits for Sakura-chan and Sasuke to come out, fully returned to themselves. It's been six months since he

escorted the two to the re-purposed ghost town for some mission he doesn't really get the reason behind. He can tell from the feel of their Chakra that their disguises have been removed, which means that now they just need to wake up.

Lee is next to him, more then happy to keep him company and to see Sakura-chan too. Given that Lee's own teammates had also undergone this process and won't be returning for at least a month's time, hopefully. Never know, the schedule about this mission seems kind of flex able, after all, they were suppose to return two months ago only, yet, it seems that they needed more time but now, now it seems that, they were to be returned.

He perks as he feels Sasuke wake and he stops tapping in his foot. Minutes tick pass and then, there's a scream, which causes Sakura-chan to wake. Lee jerks his head up and looks ready to rush into the back room, only he shakes his head, saying, "That wasn't Sakura-chan."

Then there's another loud voice, yelping and cursing. "That... kind of sounds like Sakura-chan." He admits and Lee surges to his feet but he shakes his head. "Let the professionals handle it." He tells Lee, resting a hand on Lee's shoulder and his friend looks torn about wanting to help and knowing he couldn't.

Lee sits back down and he does the same, although he does wonder where Kakashi was, after all, he was their Jonin instructor.

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"How did this happen?" Tsunade asks Inoichi Yamanaka as she rubs her left temple. *And how do we explain this to Naruto?*

"They must have had an accident and grabbed the others' slip by mistake." Shikaku Nara, Inoichi's teammate, states. "Unlike the others, they were given them at the same time, so, the switch happened. It's now more about how to deal with this mishap then debate how it happened."

She wishes she had a bottle of sake, concluding that Shikaku is correct, at this point, there's no point in the events that led up to, only acknowledging something happened that cause it and now, to deal with the gender issue between Sakura and Sasuke, as in, they no longer identify with their respective birth genders. On the plus side, the mental problems the two had were no longer an issue, only now it's a issue of gender and trying to think of ways to fix it.

"Are we sure we can't use Genjutsu on them to correct the mental issue?" She asks and Inoichi shakes his head, reminding her of the fact that the pair are rather over sensitive to foreign Chakra messing with their senses.

They circle around the problem before Shikaku wonders, "Well, if we can't fix the mental cause, why not do something to the body? Could using Yang Chakra to alter their bodies to their definition of 'correct' gender help for the time being?"

"We might as well try. At the very least, it'll keep them from getting caught using Genjutsu to disguise their gender." She admits after considering it, after all, for the last six months, the pair had indeed been physically transformed into said respective genders. It should be possible to use Yang Chakra to shape their bodies into the perceived 'correct' gender.

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Sasuke sighs as she examines her body in the large mirror with her Sharingan to be sure it wasn't a Genjutsu. She smiles at her reflection, yes, there's memories of her being born a boy, yet, upon waking from her 'dream', she just couldn't relate to being male. Everything felt wrong, from her balance to having that... just there, between her legs...

It felt like a nightmare but now, now her body *feels* right . Yes, it's not as far along the road to woman hood as when she was Usagi but then, she's twelve going on thirteen. It'll come in time, at least her body should, as long as she thinks of herself as a young woman,

then the Yang Seal will ensure that her body will remain that of a girl. Which sounds kind of ominous but, really, she didn't see why she'd change her mind about her gender, now that the body is the correct gender.

She puts on her cloths and exits out of the room to find Naruto waiting in the chair. Sasuke answers the unspoken question, "I feel much better."

Naruto just nods in acceptance, clearly still trying to warp his head around what happened with the two of them. Also, unsure how to treat the two of them given what happened concerning their undercover mission. Although, to be honest, she's finding it hard to resume the remembered annoyance she held concerning Naruto, back when she was a he. Then again, she had a serious case of tunnel vision as a boy, then again, according Lady Hokage, there had been a mental compulsion within her then mind that help structure the creation of that tunnel vision. On the plus side, the Curse Seal was gone as well, removing the temptation of power that it could grant.

"So... you think the pair of you will be good to go tonight?" Naruto asks as she walks back to the bed, sitting on it.

"Hopefully." She tells him as the blond fidgets a bit. It's rather bemusing but still...

"You somehow knew, didn't you?"

Naruto jerks his head up and blinks a bit at the accusation. "Knew? That you were Usagi? Not fully... I mean, the information said that Usagi Mori was Sakura."

"But..."

"But she didn't... seem to feel like Sakura." Naruto admits. "Usagi felt like Sasuke and Yoshi felt like Sakura."

"Didn't tell anyone."

"I didn't know what they did, Kakashi-Sensei just mentioned that you two were dreaming. Nobody told me the hows of it or even the whys. I didn't know you two where physically altered into those genders." Naruto defends and upon reflection, believes him, after all, Lady Tsunade had pretty much had mentioned that the whole process had been kept under-warps, more then happy to let others conclude Genjutsu and very convincing make up.

"Any word about our wayward Sensei?" Sasuke asks the blond and her teammate answers, "Yea, he underwent the same process a few days after you guys were dropped off and nobody told me, then again, it's likely that all the Jonin are going to undergo this and they didn't want the news to spread that they were lacking a few of Jonin in the village."

"So... ah... from a guy to a girl... I mean, you still know you are Sasuke Uchiha right? That you were a boy before this..."

She smirks likely and the blond blushes, from embarrassment or something more... "Yes, I know I was a boy and no, it doesn't feel strange to find myself a girl." She tries to find some kind of boundary in her memory that could be used to separate the him of the past to the her of the present. "There's no separation in my memories, where I stopped being a boy and became a girl. It just... happened, that I was a boy then and I am now a girl."

"So... what's happening between Sakura-c... Sakura and yourself? I mean, your masks had been dating so..." Naruto trails off and she sighs, that's... actually a more complicated question then the one concerning her change in gender.

After all, she remembers the feelings Usagi had for Yoshi, along with how they expressed that. Yet, does she feel that for Sakura? *No, not really.* To be honest, back when she was a he, he had been more fond of Naruto then Sakrua. Right now, there's a sense of empathy for the now boy, as they both woke up in bodies that had once been

familiar and then alien. They now had to deal with the issue their new gender along with how people will respond to it.

"Not going to add kun there?" She asks and Naruto gives her a dry look, yea, she can't blame him for not adding it. After all, Sakura is a very girly name, it's likely that he'll change his name to something similar sounding yet most definitely male.

"There's no romantic relationship between us and we're kind of not ready for one. After all, who'd want to be the boyfriend to Sasuke Uchiha, the gender confused ninja right here, right now?" Naruto looks startled and glances towards the door before focusing on her once more.

"Your... not gender confused. I mean, yea, nobody expected you to go from boy to girl, but, well, you pretty much seem to know what your gender is, enough that even Granny figured a way for you to be a girl in body, you know, making your mind." Naruto rambles and she leans back a tad, rather touched that Naruto, on some level, has accepted Sasuke as a girl, that she wanted to be seen as a girl.

The question now is, could Naruto accept that his crush wants to be viewed and treated as a he. "So... what are your feeling on Sakura-*kun* ?" She empathize the kun and the blond lets out a huge sigh, leaning back in the chair. "Are you going to stop pursuing him now that he's a he?"

"I... I... she never... yet, well, I had hoped, you know? You didn't do anything to encourage her... him, but..." Naruto groans and she kind of did, then again, fan girls seem to be stupid in that their continue pursuit of the then him.

"You modeled your behavior off of them." She groans out as it dawns on her and Naruto looks rather dejected at the reference. "So, since they never took No to mean No, neither did you."

"Nobody stopped them! So that means it was appropriate ways to express your feelings!" The blond defends and she... couldn't argue

with that as none of their parents or even the Chunin Instructors interfered with their declarations of 'love'.

"And that explains so much..." Sasuke groans as she rubs the bridge of her nose.

Silence takes over between them and she finds herself wondering something. "So... when will you undergo the mission?" She asks, looking back at the blond.

"Oh, ah, I'm not. Nor is Lee." Sasuke finds herself at a lost of words, while, she can understand Lee, after all, he's go a malformed Chakra System but...

"How's that fair?" Her voice frosty and Naruto flinches, looking to the ground. "Is it because your the Hokage's favorite?"

"I... asked and... It's... It's..." Naruto looks rather guilty along with...

She bites back her rant, after all, while she's pissed off at the moment, she can't help but hope there's a very good reason. Finally, Naruto looks up and stares into her eyes as he says, "I've got a huge imbalance between my Yin and Yang Chakra. Granny thinks that... That if I were to under go the process that... That I'd lose myself to the cover."

Yip, that's a good reason why he shouldn't. Sasuke reflects as it feels like ice water had been dumped on her. "You'd stop being Naruto..." And Naruto nods.

And here we are, his teammates and when we 'woke', we came out of it with a gender swapped. "And we aren't helping things." She reflects.

Once more silence hangs between them once more. "So... You're going to have to go shopping, right? I mean, you're wanting more... ah, gender correct cloths?" Naruto interjects and she's more then happy to change the subject.

"If they fit, I'll keep them." She admits. "It's not like I have the curves or cleavage that need to be on display. Or overly self conscious about my appearance." Sasuke muses.

"And you'd want another girl's opinion anyway." Naruto reasons and she muses over that thought, after all, just because she's a she, it doesn't mean she needs to be overly feminine, right? It's not like she really grew up knowing she's going to be a woman.

And now she's got something to chew on. After all, what really makes one a girl? Was it the body? Or behavior? Does she feel attracted to boys?

Sasuke looks over at Naruto and easily pictures him naked, after all, she's seen him naked back when she was a he. Then, tries to feel aroused at the mental image and, yea, there's a kind of... But it's not as strong as she recalls Usagi having when she was with Yoshi. Then again, was that really that surprising? She is only twelve and thus has the hormones of a twelve year. Maybe in a year or two...

"Well, ah, you got some training to catch up on. Did ya know I'm a Sensor? Granny tested me and I've spent months learning the ropes." Naruto says, clearly changing the subject, likely due to the silence that sprung up.

"You have a point, it's going to take a while to polish our skills after months spent as civilians." She admits.

"Mind if we join you?" She looks up to find Lee and Sakura by the door upon their knocking on the door frame.

"Sure, we were just going to talk about training... Sakura-kun." Naruto says, doing his best to give the former girl a carefree grin and Sakura seems to relax a tad at the way Naruto added the kun instead of the chan he once had.

Lee sits on one side of Naruto and Sakura on the other side. Sakura does look a tad nervous, sitting next to the boy, who has or had, a

crush on him when he had been a girl. Then again, he had a crush on her, too. *How was that never awkward?* Sasuke wonders.

Ending it here . . .

Readers: Yea, was reading some of my earlier chapters and inspiration struck on the UnderCover Girl chapter. Had two false starts at until I typed this out within twelve hours, yea, I started this around 2 pm on Nov. 20, 2017 and finished by 2:10 am on Nov. 21, 2017.

Shocked myself finishing it so quickly.

A Lion's Pride: RWBY

I don't own Naruto and RWBY!

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Naruto does his best to breath in through his nose and out through his mouth. The lion Faunus finds it hard to keep up a mask of calm as he's sitting next to a very motion sick Jaune Arc, he tries his best to help the other but, well, it's clear that Jaune isn't going to last until the bullhead lands and, well, neither of them had any kind of pills to help. Jaune groans and is quick to get to his feet and stumble off towards the part of the cabin that's got the least number of people and Naruto could only sigh as the other passengers let known their opinions concerning Jaune's motion sickness.

He runs a hand through his bright blond manish hair as his other pulls out his Scroll to check to see if his little sis sent him any more messages or mail. There's no new messages from either his baby sister or his dad, so he closes the Scroll and pockets it. Naruto ignores the sudden looks he once more is gathering, he doesn't pay it much mind, after all, he's a very unusual Faunus. Lucky to be alive, honestly.

Soon the hologram of Ms Goodwitch announces that the bullhead is beginning its landing. Naruto scans the cabin, trying to spy Jaune as the other had grown on him in the short time they've spend together, sitting next to each other. Allowing his thoughts to focus on Jaune's condition helps him ignore his nerves along with sense of surreal feelings that he's been allow to attend Beacon, allowing him to step out from his Dad's shadow and influence.

Once the landing ramps are deployed, everyone is surging to get out of the bullhead and he loses sight of Jaune. He stays sitting, waiting for everyone to get their things and depart before doing the same. Yea, people are likely going to come and collect the larger luggage.

Picking up his overnight bag along with his ammo case, he glances out from the cabin and feels...

Closing both eyes, Naruto breaths in through his nose and out through his mouth, opening his eyes as he firms up his resolve. Right foot forward and he walks down the ramp, people's chatter washing over him as he continues to walking as casually as he can, towards the main building, he's study the lay out of Beacon enough in hopes of helping him navigate the academy. Yea, he can feel people's eyes on him and if he wished, he could likely pick up various reactions as people discuss the fact that he's a Faunus along with how animistic he looks compared to others of his 'race'.

Naruto can't help but feel a bit under-attack yet, it's nothing new, really. His leonine features are very telling, particularly his legs and feet, but his hair is very manish, when left to its natural style. No lion ears featuring on his head though, then again, his eyes lacked the usual whites that pretty much all Faunus and every human have. No tail, thankfully, but then, he's still in needs to have his pants tailored just for him given his legs anatomy, thankfully he isn't required to wear shoes given that would just be torture as his claws would likely shred the insides of them within a month if not within a week.

As he arrives at the doors of the hall were they were to be addressed, Naruto pauses and looks backwards, looking for Jaune. Feeling a bit sheepish about forgetting about the other teen, yet, well, it's likely better for Jaune if he didn't walk with him. It's likely Jaune's nerves wouldn't be able to handle the kind of attention he gathers or even the comments his appearance garners.

Still, he kind of misses Jaune's company, even if Jaune had been suffering from motion sickness for the most part. Seeing a particularly tall and muscular teen marching up to him, he moves into the room and to the right, not that it matters as the other alters their path, he can feel the tension begin to gather as others realize someone's going to confront him. Naruto does his best to keep a calm look upon his face while he is just wanting this to be over already.

"Hey, who let you out of your cage?" Sneer plastered upon their face, the other snaps at him. A finger from the other is out and poking him in the chest, trying to force him to take a step back but Naruto doesn't.

"I can't believe you think you belong in civilized company! Look at you! It's like someone took a lion and taught it to walk around on its hind legs!" The chestnut hair teen exclaims with contempt aglow in his eyes.

The crowd murmurs to one another, not a single one moving to interfere. A few even chuckled at the comment about being taught to walk on two legs. Naruto's heard variations of that before and will always hear it, although, thankfully, he's got a surprisingly tough hide when it comes to these kind of comments. A few glance fearfully at him, expecting him to, what, attack the other in a rage? Start verbally defend himself?

"Not worth the breath." He murmurs softly as his eyes finish roaming about the other's frame and settles for gazing into the other's eyes in what he hopes is a bored expression within. The other flushes in anger and puffs up in, supposed, righteous fury while glaring into his own eyes. Silence settles within half a minute, people expecting a fight but, well, a minute into their staring contest, the other jerks his head ever so slightly, breaking eye contact.

"Go back to your cage so someone with talent can benefit from being at Beacon." The other snaps before walking away, his eyes not meeting his once more. Conversations resume and he looks back out into the hall, waiting to see Jaune's approach.

As it's about to begin, Jaune approaches in the company of a young girl wearing a red hood along with a touch of crimson in her black hair. "Jaune!" He calls out just a bit over the murmur once the girl leaves Jaune's side.

"Oh, hey, Naruto! Didn't see you there!" Jaune grins upon seeing him, walking over to stand next to him. Jaune does note the looks

sent their way and it keeps the other blond from saying anything, but then, it begins and Jaune, along with everyone, focus on those standing on the stage before them.

Naruto glances at the other teens, listening with half an ear to what's said. He's fairly confident that he's able to handle what is going to happen tomorrow, it's who his future team mates were that is cause for concern, as he's not sure how they pick partners or even match up pairs to form a team of four.

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Jaune glances around the room, yea, he's getting a few looks given his PJs then again, his friend, also seems to draw the eye of their fellow aspiring Hunters. *Well, to be honest, he's pretty...* He didn't complete that thought, after all, Naruto's been nothing but patient and sympathetic since they met in the bullhead.

Yea, Naruto is clearly a Lion Faunus, had to be given the manish style of the hair, but he's not hiding it. Well, it looks more like he couldn't hide it, what with likely natural black nails or the way he walks. Given the way Naruto's legs were... Yea, he could wear some kind of shades, maybe style the hair or even use nail polish to change his nails but, well, he couldn't think of a way for Naruto to hide the fact that his legs just weren't right as even with bulky pants, the way the fabric moves while he walks, it would have looked strange.

His fellow blond seems to be immune to the looks and whispers of the people around him, given he's on the fold out bed listening to music while reading a book. Jaune wants to get up and move around, he's got all this energy all of a sudden... Plus, he kind of wants to hide from the attention, to maybe find Ruby and meet Yang. Yet, he doesn't want to leave Naruto alone, surrounded on all sides with strangers and their comments concerning his appearance.

"So... who was the girl?" Naruto asks, jolting him out of his thoughts and him standing up from his 'bed'. One of his ears uncovered now

and the book closed with a book mark between its pages.

"Huh? Girl?" He repeats dumbly before he realizes who Naruto means. "Ah, that's just Ruby. Meet her in a carter, we kind of lose track of time along with neither of us knowing where we needed to be."

"You want to go find her? We've got a few minutes yet and I need to go switch out for nightwear." The Faunus remarks and he flushes but had noticed that Naruto hadn't changed his cloths.

"You sure you'll be alright? I mean..." He glances at their, maybe, future classmates.

"Go, Jaune, I'm a big boy and can finish what others start on my own." Naruto says as he moves to stand up. "Shoo."

"But... we shouldn't start any trouble!" He comments and Naruto smiles slightly. "I never said I'd be the one to start it, just finish it."

Jaune can't really see the difference but Naruto is already walking off with his bag, leaving his case be under the bed. Glancing around and suddenly feeling self conscious, he walks off to check up on Ruby, the only other friendly face he knows of.

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Naruto yawns widely and rubs the sleep out of his eyes. He feels around for his Scroll and checks the time. Pushing himself up a bit, he glances around to find most still asleep and a glance in Jaune's direction, the other blond is still asleep in his PJs. Yawning a bit more, he sits up and then moves to stand before checking his bag and then glancing at his ammo case, which is still locked.

He picks up his ammo case along with his bag, heading to change along with prepare for today's happenings. He's not sure what kind of test is going to happen but it's best to assume there's going to be combat of some kind. Naruto smiles in relief at finding nobody else in

the changing room and is quick to get his pants off so he can begin on his left leg's prosthetic, touching his Scroll to the metal, a file is sent from the leg's monitoring system to his Scroll which is then E-Mailed to his 'Uncle'.

Next is opening a panel so he can insert Dust Shards, which he gets from his ammo case, unlocking it with both his Scroll and punching in a pin code. He picks out a Gravity Shard and puts it into one of the slots then he picks out two Lightning Shards, two Ice Shards, two Fire Shards, and then, mentally debates if he should add more Gravity Shards or more Lightning Shards. In the end, he picks one more Gravity Shard and one Lightning Shard. Once all nine are securely in their slots, he pushes closes the panel.

He then checks the plastic on his foot, it's still good so he doesn't replace it. Glancing towards the door, he closes the case and puts his pants to hide his prosthetic from view. As he walks over to attend to a different need, someone enters, clearly sleepy so they don't seem to notice him right away.

A few minutes later, he's washing his hands while the other is having a shower, which seems to be the reason the other finally makes note of his appearance. Once his hands are dry, he runs his fingers through his hair. With a sigh, he walks over to his bag and goes through it for a comb. Once found, he runs it under the water and tries to tame his blond locks, mostly getting whatever knots within it. A few more guys enter by the time he's done with the comb.

He puts the comb away and pulls out what shirt to wear under the leather jacket he is planning to wear today. Deciding that he didn't want to worry about blood stains, if they do end up happening, he goes with the black long sleeve shirt. Stuffing the others back, he heads for one of the cloth stalls to change his top. Once hidden, he takes off his shirt and checks his left shoulder then the rest of the arm, still a little amazed that his left arm is fully recovered from whatever it is that lost him his left leg and his left eye.

Yea, he, after two years, his eye regrown, and then, his healing factor began on his left arm, once the rest of his left side of his body had fully regenerated the muscles and cause the various scars had been slowly vanished, scars earned from deteriorating of body to the need to cut out rotten and infection that happened due to whatever happened to his left side of the body, after all, what could cause his muscles to be shredded beyond belief? Is it any wonder people thought his left arm, forearm, and hand had also been replaced? He typically wore armor to cover the state of said limb.

It's strange not having the familiar weight upon his left arm or seeing the skin of his left hand. Then again, most of the various scars that once marred his skin have faded away long before they realized he had regrown his left eye. Flexing his left wrist after making a fist, Naruto sighs and hurries up to change his cloths, after all, he's starving but knew he should only eat a light breakfast.

Before putting on his long sleeve shirt, he takes out a pair of simple daggers and a belt. Threading the belt carefully, the dagger sheaths are added with one on each side. With that done, he pulls on his long sleeve shirt and then his leather jacket. Finish dressing, he checks his Scroll before repacking his pack and is sure to grab his ammo case as he heads out of the changing rooms.

He swings by where Jaune is sleeping, giving the other blond a slight shake. "Jaune, I'm heading to get breakfast." He says once Jaune's eyes open before closing and the other bringing an arm to cover his eyes.

Jaune grunts acknowledgement and Naruto sighs but his Scroll vibrates. As he walks for the cafeteria, leaving Jaune to his own devices, it seems to be an E-Mail giving him his locker assignment along with a code for it. Making a note to store his pack and ammo case in said locker, he pockets the Scroll and speeds up to a fast walk as his stomach growls slightly as he smells what's waiting for him in the cafeteria.

Naruto sighs from his position among the stands, watching as those who successfully retrieved the relics are introduced. Yea, he's angry and rather bitter about how the day went, his 'partner' for the forest pretty much ignored him, even pretty much called him a 'pet'. *Is it any wonder we attracted so many Grimm? She was hostile from the start and, yea, by the end there, I wasn't much better.*

Not that it means he won't continue his course of becoming a Hunter, just means he won't be studying at an Academy. He received an E-Mail from the Headmaster, it seems the man wishes to discuss something with him, at least, that's the impression he got after reading it a second time, once he took the time to do his best to let go of his simmering anger, it's cooled but not fully gone. This day's events are far too fresh in his mind and thus, his emotions are far too raw for him to fully reign in, then again, being a being of flesh, it's not like there's an On and Off switch for his various emotions.

His gaze travels towards the vary familiar blond and can't help but smirk at Jaune's expression, it's clear that Jaune is very much overwhelmed with the fact that he's been named Team Leader of JNPR. So sue him, he finds himself enjoying the other's bewilderment. He wishes Jaune luck in dealing with the pair of red heads, names Nora Valkyrie and Pyrrha Nikos , as the two will likely be the source of interesting times in two very different ways while the young man, one Lie Ren, seems like he'll be the one to give Jaune the less amount of trouble.

Then again, appearances can be deceiving. Naruto reminds himself. *Or maybe it'll be the men who causes the most serious trouble? Ah, well, it's not like I'll be around to witness that first hand.*

The various people begin filing out and he follows suit. He is feeling rather drained from both an emotional stand point and from a physical one. A shower then bed, once I get to the hotel room.

The doors open and Naruto steps inside the office, "Headmaster Ozpin. You wish to speak with me?" He does his best to keep his

gaze on the man standing by the window, staring out of it.

"Mr Ironwood, please, make yourself comfortable." The man turns and gestures at free chairs, which he glances at them while he hears the man take his seat upon the chair behind the desk. "I hope this morning finds you well?"

"Well enough, sir." He answers as he moves to the left chair, doing his best to get comfortable given the way his legs were shaped. Then again, back home, they've had to custom order chairs for his unique configuration. It's hard to sit comfortably on the more solid types that lack cushions.

Right now, he's reminded of the lessons his dad had given him concerning dealing with powerful people and wonders if now was the right time to put those into practice. After all, as the Headmaster of a Hunter Academy, the man before him has a great deal of political power and influence, then there's the fact that he's the adopted son of Councilman, Headmaster, and General James Ironwood, which means he could be used as leverage over his dad. There's many reason why he didn't want to attend Atlas' Hunter's Academy or look for an apprenticeship within Atlas, his dad wasn't really the top reason, the top reason has more to do with the current powder keg of the Faunus issue within said Kingdom.

"Your father taught you well." The Headmaster remarks after a time of silence, a slight smile. He inclines his head, returning the grin.

"Kind of had too." He remarks. "Given his posts."

"Indeed." Ozpin admits. "Indeed. Tell me, why Beacon? Why not Haven or Shade?"

"For one, my dad considers you a friend and for another, the weather." He gives the Headmaster a smile. The older man returns the smile.

They exchange small chat for a bit, nothing overly important about holiday celebrations, which lead to the fact that the Vytal Festival will be held here, in Vale, that Beacon Academy will be hosting foreign Hunters. Soon enough, the Vytal Festival is the center topic. So, when Headmaster Ozpin asks, "How would you like to help with the Festival?"

Caught off guard, Naruto's upper body jerks up at the offer, eyes widening while he tries to see just what kind of offer this actually was. He frowns in thought as he mentally reviews his options. "You haven't picked anyone among the students to award the honor?" He asks in turn with a questioning look.

"There haven't been any interest in the position itself." The Headmaster states and he gives the man a dry look. "Most like the idea of power and prestige of said title, not the responsibility it bears." The older Hunter admits after a few seconds of no response from him.

He snorts upon hearing that. *How typical.* Naruto muses as he glances out of the window.

"How'd you get my submission pass the Council? I don't see how they'd get pass the whole, not a student at Beacon Academy to accept your recommendation." The feline type Faunus points out and the Hunter just smiles.

"Well, that happened." Naruto remarks as he's sitting in the Staff Room with his lunch before him. *So... apprenticeship to... Opzin, Headmaster of Beacon Academy. Wonder how my dad is going to react to that?* He muses as he slowly picks apart his lunch, still trying to wrap his mind around the fact that not only is he in charge of planning the Vytal Festival but he's now an apprentice.

"Going to need to read up on what to expect." He murmurs as the Academy system had replaced the previous Master and Apprentice system. If only to know what his rights were as an Apprentice.

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"You took him on as your Apprentice? Really, Ozpin? We could have just listed him as an Exchange Student." Professor Goodwitch states while he is doing his best to go through the latest updates concerning the latest robberies concerning Dust Shards.

"Have you thought about James' reaction? The man likely has a spot waiting for young Naruto at his own school." She brings up with a slightly raised arms.

"Young Mr Ironwood wishes to make things easier on his father by removing himself from the political scene. Many have always criticized James' adoption of a crippled Faunus and there was that abduction." Ozpin states as he reaches for his coffee mug.

"Does he even know what the title means? What his responsibilities could include? What your responsibilities are towards him?" Glynda asks and he replies, "I'm sure he'll do his research into the subject."

As he sips his coffee, he reflects on what he knows of the young, Neo-Faunus and of this opportunity to get out of the office once in a while.

Ending it here

A Lion's Dream: RWBY

I don't own Naruto and RWBY!

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Waking to find himself on the floor, Naruto grunts and picks himself up from the floor. With sleep fleeing from his mind, the blond sits upon the edge of his bed and stares at the site where his leg is slowly regenerating. His cybernetic leg is resting next to his night stand where it's charging.

Controlling his breathing, the Faunus does his best to settle his emotions that came from his troubling sleep. *Kind of surprising...* "I thought I'd experience an episode last week." He murmurs softly to himself.

Swinging his body back so he can lay down, the young Hunter reaches for his Scroll and after a few seconds of staring at the screen, not sure why he reached for it, yet, he doesn't just put it back. His thoughts seem sluggish as he tries to decide on what he wants to do with the Scroll. "..."

With a soft sigh, he closes it and puts it back upon his night stand, content to just stare up at the ceiling. His mind circling the echos of his unsettling dream... or perhaps, what he dreamed should be called nightmares. They should be nightmares, they really should be given what little impressions of events that occur. Yet it is the emotions invoked are more along the lines of sorrow and self-hatred, of never bring good enough... Of loneliness and the acceptance of the pain that's happening... The hopeful peace that that pain promised once all was said and done.

Suicidal. The blond admits, his eyes lowering on their own accord as he moves onto his right side, curling in on himself. Moving the pillow,

hugging it a bit as his gaze turns more inward, not really seeing the wall.

A huge metal box. Burning about his upper body before the burning became something more painful and... eating at him. Something was consuming who he had been along with his body. Yet, even as death of memories and dissolving of the body, that past version of himself hung onto his name. *I am _ Naruto! I will remember my Name! I swear it!*

He finds it hard to pull himself from the remaining images that remain from the haunting dreams, ones he hopes were nothing more then old fears then actual memories.

Closing his eyes, he buries his face in his pillow while bending down to grab his sheets, pulling them to cover his body. He's still got some hours to try and get some restful sleep, as long as he controls his breathing and blanks his mind. Slowly, sleep begins to chip away at the edge of his mind and as he's about to fall asleep once more, the blankness gives away to sleep.

His Scroll alarm goes off and the blond jerks awake along with turning his body before sitting up. Already, his hand reaches for the Scroll along with fingers curling around it. Within a few seconds, he turns off his alarm and then, letting the Scroll fall onto the blankets of his bed, he rubs the sleep from his eyes with both hands.

Feeling more awake and ready to face the day, Naruto moves to the edge of his bed and begins the process of attaching his cybernetic prosthetic back upon his leg. It takes some minutes to do so and as he heads for the private shower, he sets his Scroll to auto send the results from last night and this morning. He gets the shower going before he finishes emptying his bladder.

Soon enough, he's finished within the shower and he's getting dressed. His scheduling is different then the others of his age group, after all, he doesn't attend classes nor does he eat at the cafeteria

with the Academy Students. Most of last week had been more about him settling into Beacon along with a lot of reading concerning what it use to mean to be an Apprentice Huntsman and what it means to be one now. Then there had been that conversation with his Dad, oh Dust was that a prickly talk, and then there had been the beginning frame work concerning the upcoming Festival, which he is now securely in charge of.

This coming week, starting today in fact, is when they are now going to start to test to see where he stands when it comes to book learning, his practical skills, and, of course, ability to defend himself. Given that last week had also been the first week for the First Year Students, it made sense that now that they were settled into the class routine of the Academy, few incidents should occur, which should free up his Master's time to spend outside of the office and away from Council Meetings. Which maybe be part of the reason why Headmaster Ozpin decided to be his Master in the first place instead of asking one of his teachers to take the position.

With his Dad being who he is, yea, he can understand the kind of responsibilities being Headmaster of Vale's Hunter's Academy are along with some idea of the politics of dealing with Council sessions. Then again, his Dad also holds a military position along with being his adopted parent. It makes him wonder just what kind of hours his Dad keeps to as there isn't enough hours in the usual day for everything.

"No wonder he's going gray." Naruto murmurs as he checks himself in the mirror, slipping his Scroll into his pants pocket. Taking a deep breath, he slowly releases it as he glances down at his one foot, wanting to see if he needs to change the plastic skin due to any large tears revealing the glint of metal.

It's slightly worn but fine, for now. With slight yawn, he turns from the mirror and heads out of his room, heading for the Staff Room for his breakfast. Once within sight of the Staff Room door, he feels fairly thirsty and he picks up his pace, moving a bit more quickly towards the promise of a hot chocolate and a filling, healthy breakfast.

Upon entering, he nods a greeting toward Professor Peach as she's clearly enjoying her mug of coffee, perhaps her second, as he walks over to fill a clean mug with hot chocolate from the machine. Naruto blows softly upon the surface of the steaming liquid before he drinks from the mug. With the warmth spreading through his body, he walks towards one of the tables, sets the mug down before picking up a plate and utensils, it the waffle machine about a minute to cook the batter so he only adds a few things to his plate, making sure that there's enough room for the waffle.

Once he's add the toppings he wants upon the waffle, he returns to the table where his mug is cooling. He sips his hot chocolate before starting onto his breakfast. His Scroll vibrates and he takes it out of the pocket. It's a message from his 'Uncle' inquiring about the comfort of his prosthetic along with a question if his little sis has messaged him recently.

Ah huh, ok, what kind of topic is she fixated on now? The blond wonders and sighs softly, as it seems that he'll be getting a video call from Penny today. After all, its not his younger sister's fault that she's an AI or that she's been uploaded in a body that appears to be far older then she actually is. *It would have been better if they created a body that appeared to be between the age of five to eight for her to spend time in, it would reflect her fair better then that of a teenager. People tolerate awkward questions from someone from that age then they do teens.*

He sends a reply along with a simple question about what their recent discussion had been about. Then closes the Scroll and returns to his breakfast once he sips from his mug. As he gets seconds on his hot chocolate and of breakfast, his Scroll vibrates and upon opening, it's from his Master, giving him the pass-code for one of the training rooms plus a time he's expected to show up at.

Once he's done with his dishes, he sets them in the collection tubs and then off to collect his weapons. There's a few people in the halls at this point, a few frown at his cloths as he's not in a Beacon uniform. The gossip grape vine will be occupied by the mystery of

him for a while. He wonders at what kind of stories they'll dream up and at how close to the truth they'll skimmer across or near in their need for juicy rumors and flight of fantasy.

Once before the correct door, he enters the pass-code and straightens his pose before entering the room. "We'll begin once you've stretched." Ozpin informs him once he's upon the field.

"Yes Master." Naruto states and the Headmaster nods, he begins his warm ups, excitement and anticipation slowly taking over his thoughts.

There's just something about combat that just made him feel so alive, so... complete.

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"So, according to some of the upper years, we've got a lion loose on campus." Yang tells not just her Team but his as well upon everyone sitting down for lunch. Jaune blinks owlishly while Nora does as predicted and began to wonder through ideas like Beacon now has a mascot to a trained attack lion to whether or not someone raided a mad scientist lab and it's a genetically engineered super lion.

Ruby joins Nora on discussing various theories while Yang adds a few of her usual puns. He glances towards Ren for... well, it just felt like it was the right thing to do. Ren seems unconcerned, which, well, is fairly typical behavior to expect from him and he then glances towards Blake to find she's more interested in her book. His partner, well, she seems to be acting in a polite manner that suggests she's listening and kind of interested yet, not really invested in adding her own two cents to the conversation.

His crush, Snow Angel, seems to be pointedly ignoring being pulls into said conversation. So she's pretty much focusing on her lunch, yet she's listening giving the sounds she gives at certain points of the topic. The blond takes note that Nora and Yang shared a quick

look before they look at Weiss for a second, it's clear they plan to draw her into the conversation, one way or the other.

"How about you, Jaune? What do you think about this?" Pyrrha asks, drawing him from his observations and lunch.

"Ah, what?" He says in a startled manner, then seeing the others look at him, he says, "Oh come on, they wouldn't allow an actual lion to roam the school. Or even allow anyone to have one as a pet, combat trained or otherwise." *I'm pretty sure they wouldn't... Well, if it were a Grimm lion for Professor Port... But it would be in a secure cage.*

"Maybe its a robot lion?" Ruby pipes in after a few seconds of silence. "I mean, aren't Atlas doing some pretty awesome things with machines?"

And Weiss, his Snow Angel, joins the conversation by pointing out how ridiculous the very idea of robot combat animals were. He's more then happy to let them keep talking without any input from him as he the topic brings up his guilt concerning his placement in Beacon when a certain blond and friendly lion Faunus didn't make it in. It's been a hard first week after all, a lot of things to get use to and a routine to learn.

He finds himself less hungry while doing his best to mask his current overwhelming emotions. *Last I saw of him was at breakfast.* The blond reflects and glances at Pyrrha out of the corner of his eye, stomach turning as his guilt and the lie he's living weight on him.

As lunch ends, Pyrrha hangs back, clearly wanting to speak with him. "Jaune, are you ok? You seem kind of distracted." She asks him and he gives her a fake, confident smile as he tries to reassure her that everything is fine, reminding her that they don't want to be late for their next class.

While Pyrrha doesn't look convince, she leaves it and lets him pull her down the hallway, heading for their next class.

It's late at night now and once more, they were out pass curfew searching for the 'fabled' the Lion of the Beacon. The sightings of the so called Lion had continued through the month with most agreeing that the training rooms and courtyard being popular haunts during class hours. The sightings kept adding fuel to the 'fire' of the mystery within the gossip circles within Beacon's students and thus, keeping Nora's interest in the subject.

Jaune really could have done without the continued interest as it just... Yea, he tried looking up Naruto's number in Vale only to not find a listing. There actually wasn't a listing of a Naruto in Vale at all as either a Huntsman in Training or as a resident, so he's stewing over having not thought of exchanging Scroll numbers when he had the chance. Or asking for a last name.

He's done his best to focus on his school work in spite of his stewing in his own guilt and the lie that is his transcripts. So, as they walk back to their dorm, his gaze is on the courtyard while Nora is leaning heavily upon Ren with Pyrrha slightly ahead of the pair, acting as point while he's bringing up the rear. Lost in his feelings and thoughts that, well, it had to be a hallucination, right?

Something created from a guilt ridden mind, a projection, right? "Like why would Naruto be here in Beacon? And... well, that looks like weird, particularly..." He murmurs as he comes to a stop as he gazes upon a scene that has Naruto hovering above the tree line with a pair of daggers in his hands, looking rather tired along with annoyed.

Then a Grimm comes flying up out of the trees and the hovering lion Faunus seems to be flying forward to greet the incoming black with hints of white blur. The hallucination vanishes from sight and he jumps as he hears Nora squeal out, "That. Was. Awesome!"

"Wait, you guys saw that too?" He exclaims. "I thought that was all in my head." Jaune states.

"An unknown blond hovering in the air with a pair of daggers? Might be some kind of Semblance." Ren reflects and he looks pass the pair to see Pyrrha's reaction to find that she has an odd look upon her face.

"To the forest!" Nora exclaims and she's already working the window to open to do just that. He's kind of slow on saying anything as, well, he's not sure how to react.

Would help if I could get a night of restful sleep instead of a night filled with fitful sleep. He mentally admits as he's pretty much in the process of trying to catch up with the rest of his team as they are already out in the courtyard and vanishing from view.

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The Beowulf is a fairly large specimen and just the second one he's been 'sparring' with tonight. His Master is off to the side with a mug of coffee in his hand while the other hand is resting across the stomach. There's little in the way of light, well, for human eyes there was, yet, he gets the feeling that Ozpin is very much aware of where he is hovering along with his 'sparring' partner.

Tonight's lesson plan is a study the adaptiveness of a Grimm in a fight. Which means, he's not to kill them outright but to harry them, to put pressure on them, to see if they'll alter their fighting over time. So far, the only difference he is finding has to do with his fighting condition instead of any real variation in the Beowulf's attack patterns.

It hadn't been hard, to lure this one to the courtyard, it had been a bit more difficult to get it here without it getting distracted by the buildings or the students out pass curfew. Then again, none of them expected a Grimm to wander close to the Academy or be drawn to the courtyard, so, there's no distracting emotions from would be passerby's to lure it from its pursuit of him. As it launches into the air, Naruto is already doing a controlled release of the Gravity Shard to drop from his 'perch' in the air.

As he manages to use the hilts of his daggers to stun the Beowulf, he couldn't help but feel... "Ah... Master? I think we're going to have company soon." He says once he's leaped over a lunging strike by the Beowulf once he realizes that what he felt.

"I see." Ozpin states and then takes a drink from the mug, which has him wanting to roll his eyes as he's moving to kick the Beowulf under its jaw, sending it into a tree. Keeping his gaze upon the Grimm, watching as it picks itself up and shake its body, sending some leaves and twigs flying with some dirt dropping off as it moves to 'stand'.

He's moving forward, aiming for the throat to keep it from its intended vocalization. The low pitch growls end as his dagger slices through where he assumes is the vocal cords, this being the sixth time he's sliced at this Grimm's throat in a shallow manner. The Beowulf swings at him with its hand like paws, he's not able to avoid both, but he is already spending Gravity so he lands on his feet. He can feel the Gravity Shard getting close to being depleted, not that it's the only one he's got equipped, but it's the third one he's been using tonight.

Those bright energies he feels are getting closer, the larger concentration of the bright energy feels like it'll be the last to appear. Not that he's can really put any real thought into who's coming, not with the Beowulf very intent on continuing to attack him. At most, he just figures that this was something Ozpin planned to happen, just not with anyone particular, just some students 'stumbling' upon the Headmaster training his Apprentice.

Still, he can't keep the slight smile from his face as he slashes the incoming pawish hands, spending a bit of Aura to extend the bite of his daggers. He actually slices off the upper 'hand' from the Beowulf and the Grimm pulls back, all the while favoring said 'hand'. Within seconds, a huge hammer slams into the Beowulf's head, killing it and he moves into a relaxed pose at the sight of one Nora Valkyrie doing a peace sign with her hammer resting upon her shoulder, she's facing off in the incoming direction of her team.

Lie Ren greets his Master. "Headmaster." Which causes Nora and the approaching Pyrrha to glance about for the Headmaster of Beacon.

Nora's eyes drift back to him once she knows where the Headmaster is standing and... He kind of didn't know what to make of the shear look of interest that's aimed at him, it's fairly different then the typical looks he gets. It's not long before wariness fills him as she gathers herself up, the way she looks ready to pounce at him, almost like she'd eat him alive in a literal manner.

"Naruto?" Jaune's voice causes him to look towards the slightly out of breath teen, who's looking right at him with a bewildered expression upon his face and slightly disbelieving eyes. "Jaune." He greets the other with a nod and slight smile.

"You two... know each other?" Pyrrha asks as she glances between Jaune and himself. He wonders at the tone that's coloring that question as he manages to take a few steps back from a certain red head, who seems to be trying to advance slowly towards him in a manner of how one would approach a stray animal.

"We met on the bullhead. He tried to help me with my motion sickness." Jaune explains and he nods in agreement while focusing on Nora, very much certain that whatever is happening, the Headmaster wasn't going to put an end to it, yet at least.

"We were sleeping neighbors that night." He adds. "I didn't pass the test."

"Oh." Is Pyrrha's reply while Nora decides to try a different tactic of getting close to him. "I see."

"Then, how is it you are still at Beacon?" Ren asks in a calm manner as Nora begins to try using the kicked puppy look on him. Too bad for her, her eyes give away her true intentions.

"A member of Beacon decided to take me on as an Apprentice." Naruto admits and Ozpin adds, "Indeed. We were just finishing up tonight's lesson on Grimm, perhaps now is a good time to end it."

"Yes sir." He says as he hears the Headmaster begin to move. "I hope you all will remember your respective schedules and get some well deserve sleep before the night is done." His Master remarks. "Good evening."

"Your the Lion of Beacon!" Nora exclaims once Ozpin has been gone for a few minutes and he blinks upon hearing that, not sure why he was overly surprise by such a title or was it nickname? "Where's your tail? Oh... you would look so cute with fuzzy ears! We should take him shopping! We could get ears and a tail for him!"

"Nora..." Ren sighs while she moves to hang off of her childhood friend and he can't help but relax now that he's the focus of her complete attention. "Even a collar with, maybe, a tiny bell!" She exclaims.

"You... aren't listed in Vale." Jaune states upon moving closer and he blinks as he gives Jaune a confused look. "Yea... I'm from Atlas." He admits.

Pyrrha's brow furls while Nora exclaims, "Oh! Your from Atlas too! So's Weiss! Do you know each other?"

Weiss... Weiss... Oh could she... "Weiss Schnee? No, never met her." He admits. "I've meet her older sister though. Winter Schnee, she works for..." *Dad.*

"For?" Jaune and Nora ask in unision while Pyrrha gets an Oh. Ren, well, he seems as calm as ever.

"General Ironwood." He answers simply while Pyrrha's eyes go towards his left side of his body, going from his left eye down to his foot. Yea, she knows, then again, the only time they met, he didn't look to healthy let alone scar free.

"You're... looking better." Pyrrha admits and he nods. "Have you two... met?" Now Jaune asks and he replies, "We didn't really get introduced and it was just the one time, years ago."

Pyrrha nods in agreement. "When?" Nora asks and he sends a questioning look at the crimson haired Champion Tournament Fighter, after all, did they know that about her? They both were in Vale for likely the sameish reason, well, that's what he got from the file Atlas has on her. Likely shouldn't have read that, then again, Dad really does need to follow his own rules about passwords and his work.

"About eight years ago, I was invited to attend a private function in Atlas. I saw Naruto there, with his father." Pyrrha explains.

"I wasn't at the best of health when I was younger." The Neo-Faunus admits. "I stuck like glue to Dad's side all night." He couldn't help but smile a little at the memory, even if it wasn't so much him being shy as the way the 'kindness' tended to fade away if he ever ventured far from his Dad's side.

"So you were a Daddy's boy when you were a kid, huh?" Nora coos at him and he blinks before recalling that she likely doesn't know about... *Well, I guess that's a point in her favor? Although... not sure if I like the whole, let's give him ears and tail plan from earlier. I really don't like having anything in my hair and I've got enough trouble without adding a stuff tail into the mix when it comes to seating.*

"So... Ah, you have your own room or do you share?" Jaune asks curiously and he replies, "I was given a room in the Staff Wing. I have been given leave to eat my meals in the Staff Room."

And that, seems, to cause Nora to stiffen up and get this spooky kind of smile on her face, one that looks very plastic and belongs on an actual mask of some kind. "So~ You have access to the Staff Room huh? Like, the coffee machine?"

"I think you need a code to have it make coffee of any blends." He states in a calm manner, already alerted to the fact that letting her know that, yes, he did have free reign of anything in the Staff Room was a Bad Idea. *Besides, it's true, you do need a code, it's just that it so happens that there's a list of hot liquid codes near the machine and in the digital booklet given to those who has access to the Staff Only Areas that's sent to the Scroll to be downloaded.*

This deflates her a bit, the mood shifts of one Nora Valkyrie make him feeling more cautious then confused or put down as her being childish. He's not sure how much of it was her exaggerating an emotion or her just faking a reaction because she's expected to react that way. *And... how can I tell that about her if this is the first time I've met her?* The blond wonders to himself. There's kind of a sense of... looking in a mirror.

"Your considered Staff?" Jaune asks and he shrugs, replying, "It's a mix of what I can't be considered plus flavors of the older system which lead to my current accommodations and privileges."

"I... don't get it." His fellow blond admits while it looks like even Pyrrha didn't get it either. Ren, well, he might have gotten it but, hard to tell or perhaps it's more, he wants confirmation of it.

"Let me put it like this, I didn't pass the Entrance Exam so I am not a Student of Beacon Academy. I am not a student of another Hunter's Academy, I can't be treated as an exchange student." He states and Ren slowly nods. "Then, under the old system, I'd considered a member of my Master's household."

Dawning realization spreads among the other teens and within seconds, Nora asks, "So... you can...? What? Assign detention? Oh, how about signing hall passes?"

Naruto does his best to remember if they ever covered what kind of... Then, well, "Well, if you guys want to help me organize the Vytal Festival, I could get you out of class for the purpose as I am in charge of planning it."

"Wait, what? The Vytal Festival?" Jaune questions. "It's happening in Vale?"

"Yea. I guess that isn't... common knowledge." He admits, then again, his Dad told him about it when they discussed which Kingdom was to host it.

"Shouldn't one of the upper years students given the honor?" Ren asks, eyes slightly narrowing. *Or an actual student of Beacon.*

Well, how to explain this? "Nepotism." He states with a shrug and Pyrrha covers her face to hide her bemuse smile. "With a large dose of Kingdom and Huntsman politics."

"So, your dad's an important figure then?" Jaune asks. "How important is he? Like, owns a company like Snow Angel's family?"

Snow Angel? He glances towards the other three and Ren clears it up by saying, "Weiss Schnee."

"My Dad's actually an important Hunter, has a lot of pull among Atlas' Military and with the Council of Atlas." He says honestly. After all, Hunters and the Military are currently go hand in hand in Atlas at this point in time.

"Ah, so... You came to Beacon?" *Why?* Ren asks, suspicion clearly the driving motivation.

"Politics, likely the same reason why Ms Schnee is here." *To get away from them.* He explains.

"It's getting late, perhaps we should each be returning to our respective rooms for the night." Pyrrha suggests and he's suddenly aware that, yea, the adrenaline that had been in his system throughout his engagements with the two Grimm, was leaving him, although something about Nora does keep that edge of alert up. So, he's getting tired and becoming aware that, well, he likely smells so he's got a date with a shower then bed.

"I think that's a sound plan." He admits and, well, they did end up parting, although they did end up exchanging Scroll numbers, as certain parties wish to speak with him about certain things at a later date. They part soon after, with him trying his best to stifle his urge to yawn.

o T - N = V = N - T o

"We met the Lion!" Nora's voice echoing from the hallway, she's likely standing before Team RWBY's door. The loud noise jerking him fully awake and it takes him seconds to recall that last night wasn't a dream.

Jaune checks his Scroll, checking his contacts to find Naruto's name there and he sighs, allowing himself to sink a bit into his bed. He feels so light, like some great burden was lifted from his shoulders. It's dizzying, although, as Nora returns from Team RWBY's dorm, she seems bewildered. "Ah... You know, Weiss wasn't happy to learn that Naruto's a Faunus from Atlas. She was, like, really super not fine with it."

"What? Really?" He asks, suddenly, there's an odd sense of foreboding about this turn of development.

"Yea, really, then Blake made a comment about how typical Weiss's reaction was for a Schnee and, well... They started arguing." Nora admits.

"I wasn't aware Blake knew Naruto." Ren remarks, he glances around to find that Pyrrha was likely in their bathroom. He sits up and begins to get ready for classes.

"I think it was more about Faunus in general then Naruto in particular." Nora admits, finger resting near her lip while her other hand rests across her stomach. "Come to think of it, I don't think I got pass mentioning how the Lion of Beacon was a lion Faunus who's staying at Beacon and isn't a student."

"Did you mention him being an Apprentice to one of the Staff?" Ren asks. "Or that he's been entrusted with organization the Vytal Festival?"

"Well, no, Weiss pretty much just kind of exploded, started on asking on whether Naruto's background was check and such." Nora adds with a frown. "She didn't even ask me about any of the details, like, how we watch him flying around the sky." "Hovering." Ren corrects. "Or about the fact that I saved his life by heroic bashing the Ursa's head in." "He was fine and it was a Beowulf." "Or even how Jaune and him were best buds before being cruelly separated by an evil plot arranged by dastardly sky pirates?" "They met on the bullhead and were just bunk neighbors. They didn't even think to exchange numbers along with the fact that there's no sky pirates operating over Beacon Academy."

"Are there such things as sky pirates?" The blond wonders as he tidies up his bed. Then he realizes, he likely shouldn't give Nora a line to feed into.

"Well, duh! The Captain's an old flame of Naruto's Dad who, feeling spurred, by him falling in love with Naruto's Mom!" Nora then goes on about a story of treachery as the Captain mutinied from the Sky Fleet of Atlas and began a campaign upon an ancient space station to get a recipe for some kind of super fuel.

By the time it's his turn to use the bathroom, Nora's forgotten the subplot of the Captain killing Naruto's mom, leaving a baby Naruto in the sole care of his Dad. Then again, she's pretty much slotted Ren as the head ninja from an ancient clan where pink eyes signify him inheriting some special, blood line power that's separate from his personal Semblance who's trying to stop said evil Sky Pirate Captain due to her unknowingly possessing the key to a dooms day weapon that was originally made to stop the Grimm, only it actually can empower them. Never mind how she slotted Pyrrha and him into secret agents for their respective birth Kingdoms, who just kept keeping important secrets from one another or herself into a rescued

slave girl turned kick ass and super awesome fighter pilot of a craft that's actually an artificial alien organism scouting out their planet.

With the door clicking shut behind him, Jaune sighs and leans on the door for a few seconds, trying to sort through his thoughts to recall what he wanted to do before they leave for breakfast. Collecting himself, he starts with a shower once he hung up his uniform on the hooks on the door and begins the task of undressing along with starting the shower.

It's lunch and the cold war going on between Blake and his crush seems to have gotten frostier at some point between breakfast and now. It's clearly wearing on Ruby, which is setting Yang on edge as the fist fighter didn't know how to fix this situation between the two so that Ruby would feel better. Seeing how the younger leader is and feeling responsible given Nora's the one to bring this clash on, he decides to try something.

Which is why, he finally asks, "What's wrong with Naruto? I mean, he's a great guy."

Weiss become startled and then stiffens while turning to look at him with a pair of wide eyes. "Yea, he's a lion Faunus, but he's been nice to me. I mean, he did try and help with the motion sickness but, it's not his fault I couldn't keep it in."

"Wait, wait, wait... We're talking about... a blue eye with black? Odd bend to his legs?" Snow Angel asks and he nods, which seems to, well, there's an odd mix of emotions that seems to happen with Weiss.

"Oh, that's who the Lion is? Well, that's fine then." The white themed Huntress states, only, it's clear that Blake wasn't having any of it. "What?" Weiss asks upon noticing Blake's very hostile expression that's aimed at the Schnee Heiress.

"Just like that, huh? What, just going to take a human's word that this Faunus is who you think they are?" Blake seems to growl at Snow Angel and, well, he's kind of curious, too, about the sudden change in Weiss' tune about the Lion being fine in her books as long as it's Naruto.

"Well, why not? It's not like the poor boy could do any real harm." Weiss answers and he glances around the table at the others, not really sure what to make of that.

"Actually, Naruto appears to be in much better health then his last publication picture had him in." Pyrrha admits and Weiss gives his partner a look of disbelief. Pyrrha looks helpless when it's clear that the Heiress sports a pitying look along with a slight shake of her head.

"Just because he's grown older doesn't change his ability to function in a healthy manner." Weiss states. "Yes, it's likely he's gotten prosthetic and maybe some kind of brace, but, really? I don't see how they'd replace that with current technology."

"So, just because he's infirm, he can't possibly be a threat?" Blake demands while he's trying to figure out just what Weiss means by... that, after all, Naruto didn't look like he had armor beyond his leather jacket nor did it appear like he's got a fake limb. "Or is it because of his adopted parent?"

Naruto's adopted? The blond thinks, then again, it's not like they've known each other for very long or really gotten into sharing personal details. Although... *How would Blake know? And... publication photo?*

"Naruto? Infirm?" Nora giggles and both Huntresses in Training turn to give his team-mate a glare.

"I don't see any reason to laugh concerning a crippled and half blind Faunus boy. Everyone knows he couldn't possibly be fit to enter into the program and I highly doubt his adopted father would let him

foster such a fantasy either." The Schnee Heiress states, which, does cause Ren to place a hand upon Nora's shoulder, calming her from her giggling.

He glances at Pyrrha, pleading look of, please explain. After all, Naruto wasn't wearing any glasses nor did it appear to him that Naruto couldn't hold his own in a fight. It's... this just seems... like they aren't even talking about the same person.

"How typical, he's seventeen himself, yet, you would still regard him as a boy? Or that the General wouldn't see about fitting his adopted son with cybernetic limbs and armor? It's been six years since Naruto's appeared in public, that's time enough for technology to advance enough to create a prototype cyber eye." And, he's now got... a lot of information yet, none of which fits with what he's seen of Naruto so far.

"So, you two are saying that Naruto's a cyborg?!" Nora explodes, her eyes out of focus as she begins spinning a yarn about what abilities he must have because of it. "That's. So. Amazing!" She squeals with Ruby just before lunch ends.

All the while Blake and Weiss sniping at each other over whether or not Naruto's able to train to be a Hunter, or, at least, he thought they were but, well, it seems that the argument has shifted into something more. He's pretty much at a loss at how to help calm them down, not that he was alone, given it looks like Yang is getting more worried over this change in her team mate and partner. His appetite kind of gone, he pretty much mentally prepares himself for calling Naruto tonight, like after class, hoping he'd be able to clear things up along with answer some of his questions.

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"Hello?" Naruto answers his Scroll as he's finished reading the applications for food vendors for a spot at the 'market' area of the festival. He wonders if it's Winter informing him of the status of the information about Penny's... ah, progress in team bonding.

"Hey, Naruto! How's it going? Were you tired this morning?" Jaune asks cheerfully.

"Pretty good, just finished reading some applications for the festival." He informs the other blond. "And I slept fairly well." *Likely due to the differences in our schedules.*

"Great! So... We were talking with Weiss, you know, Weiss Schnee? Well, she kind of had problems with something but changed her tune upon hearing your name." Jaune begins and he blinks a bit, pretty sure that information fishing is suppose to be more... subtle then this.

"Then Blake, who's on the same team as Weiss, seem to take offense to some of what Weiss had to say about you and, well, other things." The other continues and he frowns. "Then, well, your a cyborg?"

"Well... if this is the Heiress of the Schnee Company, then, yea, she kind of has reason to be on guard concerning Faunus. Is Blake a Faunus?" He asks curiously. "It's also just likely that she could be offended concerning the company's history concerning hiring practices when it comes to Faunus along with their treatment."

"Weiss as bad history with Faunus? Or is it just her family? Also, ah, I don't know if Blake is a Faunus as I haven't notice anything noticeable about her." The teen admits. "And, how bad are we talking about?"

"Fairly bad, actually, but then, since the White Fang switched tactics... It's, sadly, understandable that she's paranoid about her safety." He admits. "It's likely colored her perception of Faunus, painting them all with the same brush as those who run with the White Fang."

"So... she ever got targeted personally by this group?" Jaune asks in alarm. "Is that how she got that scar?"

"More like indirectly targeted, like most of the family and not that I am aware of." The Faunus states. "And, about Blake, does she... No, never mind." *I'll respect her choice to hide what she is. Although...*

"Oh, so that's what's going on. So, basically, Blake is pro-Faunus and the Schnee Company is, ah..." Jaune stumbles verbally.

"The Schnee Company is unpopular due to business practices." He remarks. "I know my Dad disagrees with Weiss's father about certain things but, well, it's a privately owned business that's supplying what the Military needs, which, means nobody really wants to rock the boat."

"Man... that's tough. So, Weiss is a target just because of how her dad runs this company? Well, damn, poor Weiss." Jaune remarks and he can't help but get a wiry smile on his face, knowing that there's a flip side to that argument, yet, it's not really the point of this conversation.

"Yea, life's not fair." He recalls his most common nightmare, of the fact that in that dream, he had clearly been suicidal... Not sure what was the final push had been, just that, there must have been one. "Still, life goes on. Time marches on."

Silence hangs between them for a few minutes before Jaune breaks it, saying, "So... Ah, your... I mean, they both seem to..."

"Yes, Jaune, I own and need to wear a cybernetic leg to get around." He admits with a sigh. "It's just something I need to live with." If only for the rest of this year, after all, the activity at the end of it seems to be gearing up for something, likely a spurt of regeneration. He's got an appointment with Professors Oobleck and Peach this coming weekend to do a physical examination of the area.

"Oh, ok." Jaune acknowledges. "Ah, well, they also seem to... Your eye..."

"It... grew back." *By the time I was about seven years of age.* He admits. "So, yea, any pictures you'll find about me, they will have my left eye covered or I'd be wearing a special monocle." Make up was used to hide the fact that the scars are gone too.

"I... kind of hope you, along with your team will keep quite about that fact. We're studying what going on concerning my regeneration as it's, well, flat out strange as we can't tell if it's my Semblance or it's something unique to me." He admits. "The study of it has help heal a number of people over the years and, well, given time, we maybe know how to regrow new limbs, maybe even figure out how to apply that to organs."

"Wow... That's so cool! I mean, that's nice of you, helping with, err, wait, Semblances can heal people? Or just their owners?" Jaune asks and he shrugs his shoulders as he replies, "Well, it's a strange field of study, just because nobody's ever recorded to having a certain ability doesn't mean much, particularly given the very nature of Aura and how people can change over time, never know when a Semblance will pick up a new application or become easier to work with."

"Wow!" The blond on the other side of the Scroll says with awe. "Hey, is there, like, a machine that can tell you someone's Semblance? Cause, I have no clue what mine, ah, is."

"You came to Beacon without knowing what your Semblance does? Huh, not uncommon, some are just far more subtle then others, which make it harder to discern their abilities." He remarks.

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Jaune relaxes a bit on hearing that from Naruto as, well, it means that there's nothing wrong with him not using his Aura super power. He's got answers to his previous questions, although, now, he's got some more questions to ask. Though, he guesses they can wait.

"Hey, when we spotted you, you were kind of perched on the air..." He trails off and Naruto chuckles. "It was pretty cool, seeing you kind of crouched up there, with your daggers ready."

"Yea, I'm very talented when it comes to Dust manipulation. That was a creative use of a Gravity Dust Shard, no records have mentioned anyone using it like that." The Apprentice Huntsman admits with a hint of pride and satisfaction. He can pretty much hear the wide smile.

"Is it something you can learn?" He asks and from there, Naruto talks about his own experiences along with a promise of sending him some digital scans of books on the topic plus seeing if he can't get a hold of some recordings for teaching the skill.

The calls ends with someone calling Naruto's name and they say their good byes. Holding his Scroll in his hand, he stares at it for a few seconds more before closing it and pocketing it. As he walks towards the cafeteria to grab dinner, he mentally reviews what he's learnt, what Naruto said (and didn't), and the fact that, he's got to talk with his team about keeping mum on the state of Naruto's health.

"Hey, Pyrrha, I need to talk with you." He says before adding, "Well, I need to talk with the whole team, actually."

"Oh? Is something wrong Jaune?" She asks him and he sighs a bit.

"Nothing's wrong with me, it's just that, well, I spoke to Naruto about this whole Weiss and Blake issue and it seems to boil down to the Schnee Company's business practices painting a target on her in concern of the White Fang and Blake's pro-Faunus." Glad that Naruto put it like that. "Which is why Weiss is so anti-Faunus, she's paranoid about getting targeted by the group."

"In a way, yes, that is true." The crimson haired Huntress admits. "But it seems that Blake's taking it far more personally."

"Ah, well, Naruto did... We'd tell if Blake was a Faunus... Won't we?" He asks his partner with concern coloring his tone and she kind of just presses her lips together in a slight frown while glancing off to the side.

"It's not really our place to speculate. If Blake wishes to not tell us, then we should respect that." Pyrrha states and he feels his stomach drop, then again, he does recall the looks and the whispers Naruto got during that camp out plus his own thoughts concerning Naruto not being able to hide the fact of his species either.

"I've never seen her without..." He muses and catches Pyrrha's eye before she sighs, "Me neither."

"Right, yea, ok. It's just, huh, you'd think she'd... I guess trust is... Then again... Your right, it's really is up to her." He does his best to gather up his thoughts. Not sure if he's feeling hurt on his behalf or on behalf of certain members of Team RWBY, after all, it's not like he's overly close to her. It's more of a my friend's friend kind of connection.

"And?" Pyrrha asks after a few seconds of silence between them.

"Oh, yea, I asked Naruto about being a cyborg and he admitted to having a mechanical leg, but, that's it. He kind of wants us to hush up on the whole, I have a left eye as it seems it regrew, they've been keeping a lid on it due to not wanting to draw the wrong kind of attention." The blond tells his partner. "They're doing a long term study of his healing and it sounds like, given time, his leg will be fixed."

Understanding blooms in Pyrrha's emerald eyes. Then nods sharply as resolve over takes the understanding. "Right, we'll have to meet somewhere to break the news to Nora and Ren." She says and as she begins to walk, he follows after, unthinking as he puzzles out why they'd need to go elsewhere to break the news.

Then they enter the room and find Nora talking rather loudly before noticing them entering. *Oh yea, Pyrr is right, we need some place less populated if we want it to tell Nora.* "Hey, Fearless Leader! Pyrrha!"

He smiles and returns the waving from their very energetic teammate. "Right, yea, that... sounds like the right idea." He admits with a bit of haste at not realizing that before now.

"So, why are we all the way out here?" Ren asks as they walk about near the edge of the Grimm filled forest. Nora's darting around the bushes along with chatting excitedly with his partner concerning how she'd kill any Grimm they encounter.

"Well, I spoke with Naruto and it seems that his being, you know, healthy, is something of a secret." Jaune admits and at the mention of him having contacted Naruto, Nora seems to come swinging over to his side, an arm is pulling him down into a headlock. "You phoned him and didn't tell us until now?! Oh, what did you two talk about?" Nora asks and he couldn't make out Ren's reaction.

"Was it about how he's a lab experiment?" Nora asks as she lets him. "Or is it because he's a secretly a super hero sent to save us all from some advance alien zombie plague?"

"Ah, well, they're studying his regeneration, so, he's kind of a lab experiment?" He finds himself admitting. "Also, he's got a cybernetic prosthetic leg and it sounds like his leg is regrowing so he'll be losing it? I think? I mean, why would he need one if he's leg is whole again?"

"Really?! I was right! Hey, hear that Ren! I was right!" Nora tugs on Ren as she celebrates that fact.

"Yes, Nora, it seems so." The pink eyed member of the team agrees. "So, he wishes for us to not mention this?"

"Yip, oh, and I asked if it was his Semblance only to find out they can't tell." The blond admits. "I also learnt that he's very good at using Dust, that's how he did that air perch, using Gravity Dust Shard."

"Dust? Really? Oh, that's so cool! I would love to do that!" Nora asks and he nods, replying, "Yea, he's pretty skilled at manipulating it and he's promised to send me book scans on the topic."

"That sounds nice of him, Jaune." Pyrrha says and he ducks his head, rubbing his neck. "Yea, well... It sounds pretty cool, some of the things he'd done with Dust and I guess I want to see if I could learn something similar, you know?"

"It's fine, Jaune." His partner reassures him while Nora grins at him. "Oh, so, what, looking for some private lessons? Eh, Pyrrha?" The lighter red head had walked over, nudging her fellow red head.

"I'm sure he has other things to do then that. After all, he's an Apprentice, he doesn't share the same scheduled." He says, not getting the odd look Pyrrha sent Nora upon the other nudging her.

"Well, Jaune, if you want, we could do some lessons together." Pyrrha admits and he shakes his head, "Nay, you guys have your own stuff to do during your free time then help me look this stuff up."

Ren seems to shake his head at him before asking, "Did you two talk about the festival?" It take him a few minutes to reply to that while Nora begins talking about what Naruto should arrange for it.

They begin walking back as Nora continues on the vein with little input from them. He struggles to recall what was mentioned but figured that it really wasn't something important as he's not required to remember those kind of details given he's not helping plan it.

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"So, Blake ran off?" The blond Faunus asks as he's resting in his room, resting on a small couch he's been able to find in storage and brought to his room. He's using two Dust Shards at the moment, it's a mixture of boredom and stress relief as he keeps the two elements from touching as he creates images viva water and ice weaving over his left hand, his palm is up.

"Well, yea, she kind of did." Jaune admits and he waits, they had talked a bit about the festival, mostly with his fellow blond listening to his complaints concerning his budget and how some seem to have problems dealing with a seventeen year old in arranging things like bargaining over the cost of the materials he's ordering in bulk or knowing when he needs the order to show up, let alone hiring crews to build the various stalls. "She's back, though, so no worries!"

He rises an eyebrow at the tone, replying as casually as he can, "But you don't think she's going to let this White Fang event go." *Yea, if Dad knew that an ex-terrorist easily joined Beacon, he'd be asking if the Headmaster is in need of a head examination.*

"She's upset." Jaune admits with a sigh. Which means that team RWBY is concerned over her obsession. "It's not like she was a member of the group or anything! She's just a really big believer in their original cause."

Still going through with the back ground check and sending her parents a heads up about where their daughter is. He thinks to himself. It's more of a question of how he'll go about it though. *They deserve to know and she's unlikely gotten around to sending word their way.*

"A lot of Faunus aren't pleased with their new management." He agrees. "All this terrorist activity has only increased the negativity throughout the Kingdoms." *Which draws in the Grimm.*

"You know, I'd almost suggest as punishment for running, they get her to wear a bell for a week." He adds with a smirk. The ice takes

the form of a bell with the water doing a bow, it holds for a few seconds as Jaune makes a few nervous noises.

"On please, no. I don't think that'll help." The blond on the other end remarks.

"It's about actions and consequences." He remarks as he causes the elements to shift into a fire works display. "Blake's actions have consequences and from the sounds of things, she's very prone to running from her problems at the drop of a hat. Having a bell, well, it might cause her to stop and think about the consequences of her current course of action."

"That still sounds like stereotyping." Jaune states. "I mean, sneaky cat needing a bell?"

"You know what they say about the shoe and it fitting..." He remarks dryly, which causes Jaune to sigh. Naruto can hear Jaune coming to a stop near a fountain.

Then, as he's about to ask about the trip to Forever Falls, he hears a young, feminine voice calling Jaune's name. "Oh, hey, Ruby!" He hears the leader of team JNPR return the greeting.

"Oh, sorry, I didn't know you were talking to someone." He hears Ruby says, clearly closer. Jaune chuckles in embarrassment, saying, "Ah, well, I was just talking with Naruto."

"Should we end the call here?" He asks curiously as he lets the Dust he's toying with disperse into nothingness. The chill feeling of the two elements slowly fade from within his being.

"Ah, well, it's not like I can't talk with Jaune at a different time..." The younger team leader remarks, clearly embarrassed. "Are you sure? I mean, we've been talking for a bit already." Jaune asks and he can pretty much guess that Jaune's got a concerned look on his face.

"Yea, it's not like Jaune and I can't talk more later, I kind of do have some work I should continue on with." He assures the far younger teenager. "I think I'm reading to return to it. So, I'll call you tomorrow, ok Jaune?"

"Yea, ok." Jaune says while Ruby pipes in, "If you're certain."

"Bye." He says and they echo him before he end the call. Naruto stares down at the Scroll before moving to get off the couch, heading for the desk that's become his work station, hopefully, he's got a fresh take on his current problem concerning what kind of games booths he's going to allow to be run before going through the effort of sorting through said booth operators, trying to figure out which of them were a bit more honest in running their games and seeing if they're interested in a spot to run said game booth for the upcoming festival.

Mist is around him, a male voice is speaking about organs and there's this sense of dread and fear, it's not a fear for himself, but, for those around him. He glances around but, the people standing next to and behind him, they are solid black, their cloths are the same shade as they look to be merged with the black skin and hair. There's no eyes or outstanding features of their faces. Then, there's someone among the group...

He's laying on his back and someone's shaking him awake. Once more, the other is solid black, in body and cloths. Words are exchanged, each word isn't one he can recall but the jest is about him sleeping out here and catching a cold. It's not long before he's helping the other with picking herbs for medicine. Then, he hears clearly as the other says, "When a person... has something important they want to protect… that's when they can become truly strong."

Now there's a collection of ice mirrors surrounding him. Thin shards of ice, phantom pain stabbing him about his dream body. Mist once more curling and obscuring the area beyond the mirrors. He has no

control over what happens next, his body moving and reacting, there's this dull sense of difference with his dream body. Someone takes a hit meant for him, his voice shouts a question, one that he doesn't hear.

There's a reply that he doesn't understand, just the meaning. That this boy, did this unthinkingly and then, there's Rage...

It's a stone tunnel and before him, is someone very different. Crimson red hair, long with similar crimson eyes. "So... you're alive after all... Naruto." The seemingly human standing before him muses, he feels the hairs of the back of his neck rise up while the other slowly approaches, the feeling of Rage and Fear seem to flow from this being like water from a spring.

"Almost thirteen years since then..." Muses the being, coming to a stop just four or three feet from him, looking down upon him. "Ah yes, I do look different, don't I? But then, you've undergone a few of your own."

He flinches as the other's arm darts forward for his neck, jerking back his head while his right hand shoots up to deflect the hand. The being is overly amused by his reaction but doesn't pulling his arm back. "What interesting times that are coming... Be sure to survive, boy." The being remarks as red Aura begins to flare up, cloaking them. "Be sure to thrive what's coming..."

Red floods his vision and he's falling as everything shatters.

He wakes and stares blankly up at the ceiling. "May you live in interesting times." He quotes an old curse to the silence of his room.

Curling his toes, sits up and tosses the blankets aside, staring at his left leg. He reaches out and gently runs his claw like nails about the very pale skin. There's feeling from doing that, proving that it's not a dream. "It's too soon... It shouldn't have..." Naruto murmurs before glancing around for his Scroll.

"Yes, Mr Ironwood?" Master Ozpin asks upon answering the phone. "What can I help you with this late... early in the morning?"

"Sir? I think I'm going to need help getting to the med ward." The blond admits, his throat tight with emotion. He's having trouble pinning down just what he feels about this recent development. After all, there's a week before the break and it's rather busy time for everyone at the academy.

"Are you injured?" The Headmaster asks. "Well, it's more like... I am not sure... My leg sir, my left one, it's..." His emotions coloring his tone and he's finding it hard to just flat out say it.

"Whole." He manages to croak out after a good minute of silence. He's using his other hand to wipe the tears from his left cheek. "I'm coming."

The call ends and he lets his Scroll drop onto the bed, his mind overwhelmed with emotions along with the words that stranger spoke in his dream.

Ending it here

Hymns of Rebirth: High School DxD

I don't own High School DxD or Katekyo Hitman Reborn!

The black sky of the underworld hid little from the gaze of the youngest member of the House Oriax. The seventeen year old Devil feels the drain upon his own reserves yet, he refuses to let go of the cloak of magic over his form. The Civil War might be over yet, there's still terms of surrender that's being hammered over and thus, it's still an uneasy time for all Devils, not sure if the embers of the war won't flare up suddenly for one last hurrah before the terms could be worked out and signed upon.

It's coming up! There! Terrance Oriax thinks, currently silver eyes glinting in excitement. His flight path altering with his resolve strengthening. All of his attempts at divination had read the same for the pass year, a grove, a rainbow of flames, and a chorus of pleas for aid and safety for someone they care for. It has only been two days ago when the Devil got a sense of Time of when this was to happen.

Pulling up, he lands in a crouch as both his wings and the magic cloaking him fade away. Taking some time to take a breather, the youngest Oriax's right hand moves into his pocket to pull out the very small vial that possess a single drop of Phoenix Tears, pilfered from his... parent's private lab. He hadn't dared to take much, not sure what alarms the lab housed let alone wanting to find out if they check for weight. Terrance figured that taking a single drop wouldn't set anything off.

Feeling better and a tad safer, the Devil moves to stand, his hands adjusting his cloths. Being alert to any changes is how he notices how the wind alters and there's this... pressure. It takes minutes before it's like something is ramming the air before an old looking tree, not being a botanist or caring much for potions, he doesn't

know what kind of tree it is. Keeping about ten feet between the shimmering air and himself, he's tempted to use a low power reveal spell.

It's only at the sight of color sparking at the spot that he decides not to chance it. Red and yellow, taking turns and then, it's like they latch onto something as they cause the air to burn in those colors. Next is green and indigo streaks in the red and yellow with sparks leaping about far more furiously then the previous colors. Then, the red and yellow fire grow, seemingly eating away at the air, green and indigo take over the center. As before, two new colors begin to express themselves, blue and purple. The blue seem to flow to the outer fires while the purple intertwine at the base of the others, which suddenly seem to fuel them and he jerks at how it's gone from almost a campfire to some kind of firestorm.

The fire spreads everywhere with blue leading the way for the others to follow. All around him, it's on fire and then, it's on him! Only, there's a new color now, orange, moving over his body and about cloths. The other colors move away from him and he lets out his breath, one he hadn't been aware that he's holding. He finds himself rather rather unsure of what this means for him as it's almost like there's now something dancing at the edge of his mind now, an odd emotion that's kind of out of place.

Then, the orange fire seem to move into his body and he flares his wings while doing his best to call upon his magic to defend him, only, it doesn't DO anything! So yea, he panics, taking to the air only it doesn't do anything! There's orange fire still humming under his skin, entering into his flesh, flowing in his blood, and settling in his bone! He tries to fly above the fire storm only, as he reaches the edge, he grows limbs grow heavy and his wings fail him, the blue and indigo gently catch him as he falls, lowering him upon the ground.

His limbs seem normal yet, he can't find it in himself to care as he's regretting ever following through with divination, for clearly, this has to be a trap! As despair fills him, that strange emotion seems to

surge forward, again, he doesn't know what it is nor does he overly want to know. He's a Devil, only... there's...

Involuntary, he takes a sharp breath before rolling onto his stomach but as pain begins to pulse upon his wings. Terrance bites his lip and his hands dig into the ground as it feels like his whole being is being uprooted. His vision swims soon enough while he goes deaf along with loosing all of his other senses. As everything returns, old, suppressed memories of what has been done to him along with by whom cause him to curl up on himself, tears now flowing. How could they not?

His one wing curl up, it's now sporting glossy black feathers with ebony stripes, not unlike a Fallen Angel's own, only, there feathers... Touching one, he is reminded of an owl feather and recalls how an owl can fly silently, it seems that his wings take after an owl's own instead of a crow's. It shouldn't be that surprising as his body... it was designed by...

Never mind the torment he along with his... brothers went through in that world of illusion. All of them being taught, tested, and competing for the chance to Live. It's unlikely they had been the first batch or that this body was the first. A lab experiment was what he continues to be. He ponders if any of the previous ones lived as long has he had or if the House were aware of the experiments. Although, now he knows what that odd emotion is and it's odd how much... more he feels.

With a sigh, Terrance causes his changed wings to withdraw. The fires continue to rage yet, he remains without damage from them at all. It takes him a bit to realize that at some point he dropped the vial and can't help but note how the purple and yellow seem to burn happily upon it. It strikes him as fishy, that none have appear as of yet, after all, shouldn't this cause some kind of stir?

After all, he's unsure how much time has passed and even trying to make out the sky, these fires fill the air itself. "I can't go back." He murmurs after a while, he just can't. The matter isn't about if the

House was aware or not, it's that he Knows and Refuses to allow himself be Used like that.

As he sits there, Terrance can't help but examine his options, yet, in the end, even if he succeeds in killing her, he wouldn't have his freedom, he's not a natural born Devil not even a half-Devil that she put through a serious of risky rituals that could eliminate the human half within a half breed's being. Her own egg yet, the 'father' was actually centered around covering the Fallen Angel's... something, to allow for some-kind of messing between the two?

Homunculus. He muses, it's not the prefect definition of what he is, yet it's the closest one he could think of. Both his body and his mind had been created by...

"Even if I manage to make it to... Then it'll be... I'd be just another Stray." He murmurs sourly.

He glances to the starting point and tilts his head to the side a bit, there's... *It's kind of like a... Whirlpool of color.* "Where does it lead?" Terrance wonders and then, with a sigh, he stands and walks over to where the vial is before crouching as he picks it up. The fires upon it seem to sink into it and he notes that the glass is indigo in color instead of the white crystal.

Pocketing the tiny vial, Terrance slowly circles the whirlpool of rainbow flames. No matter the angle he takes, it seems that he's always facing the flat surface. Terrance glances around him once more, noting that yes, the fires continue to burn without any material fuel. "What's there to lose at this point?" He mutters and he calls forth his wings before walking into the whirlpool.

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Fucking Seal! Damn this fucking situation! Hayato glares about the room, anywhere but at his Boss.

Damn fucking shit eating ass holes! He can't help but glare out of the window at the thought of the shit storm of messes the Ninth's generation left behind for them to clean up. It's only when the Ninth collapsed out of the country did anyone actually ran tests for the usual elderly health problems between the hospital calling them and them actually arriving with Xanxus, after all, the Varia Boss is listed as the Ninth's son, so family.

Civilian doctors diagnosed what Mafia ones never thought to test for and they turned over the results to Xanxus while explaining it all. Somethings started making disturbing Sense in regards to the Ninth's behavior and it wasn't long before they began to dig up everything that happened within the kind of time frame the doctors suggested and then they went a bit further and, well, they brought in a few of their own Flame doctors to run a few checks over and, yea. The Ninth should have stepped down decades ago given that he'd been using his own Flames to migrate the brain conditions, even in the end, using his Flames to influence his own personal doctors into Missing the onset of such things, which if caught early, could have been halted before they became such an issue.

What's worst? There's a bit of evidence that suggests that Iemitsu Sawada instinctively Sensed what the Ninth wasn't Well. There's evidence that the CEDEF began to grow in influence within the Family, moving out of their usual role of Advisors to... well, that's less defined but it wouldn't be incorrect that the External Advisor had made use of the Ninth, influencing the choosing of the next Heir once the three sons were dead. After all, they had records of who married who, that the Vongola hadn't Needed to settle on Boss, only Iemitsu Wanted it to be the Tenth, as if it was some kind of forgone conclusion that Boss was the Only one for the job.

It's... hard for him to put the whole issue aside, that his Boss should never have been picked in the first place never mind the whole issue of the Ring Battles either, after all, Xanxus is ADOPTED son, possessing no blood connection to the Ninth. They'll likely need to run blood work again those known to possess the blood of the

Second but, well, various people are now debating what this now means. Nobody can deny that the Tenth's Hour is now forever etched upon the Vongola Sky Ring, it's just that, it's his right to be the Don that's in question, which brings up the question if he's really the Tenth Don or just the place holder.

Reborn suddenly moves and marches out of the door, Hayato watches as the former tutor march off. The man's been in a temper for the pass two weeks, ever since that training incident. The stress had been trying to call forth the Boss's Flames from behind the Seal, more then the shattered hole allowed, and then, well, yea... There's still burns on the Tenth's body and the Seal, it Reacted Strongly, so Strongly it Slammed down Hard on the Boss. Trapping his conscious mind behind the now repaired Seal along with his Flames.

They've had various Skies come to help feed Sky Flames to the slowly Flame starving body along with trying to pick at the Seal, only, due to the use of the Vongola Ring having been on the Ninth's person... It's hard on all of them, Chrome and Mukuro have taken turns pretending to be Boss and they've done their best to keep some kind of scheduled so only one of them were here in the room with the Boss at a time. Everyone is dreading the idea of taking long term missions.

It's not fair... After everything we've been through... Maybe Pineapple-Head is right, we should just burn it all down. The nineteen year old Storm User muses.

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It takes a few seconds for his wings to stabilize him and upon noticing where he is, Terrance flinches instinctively at the various icons only, there's no headache from looking or sudden pains from being in a place of worship. It's clearly a chapel with stain glass never mind the holy cross with that guy they can't talk about hanging on it. He turns about, taking in the whole furnishings plus the slow on set of nerves at the idea that he might have ended up in the human world.

Something clicks and he reacts quickly, something hits the stone that the chapel made out of. The half breed glares at the human in odd cloths, holding something made out of green metal. The sideburns being fairly noticeable and there's this look of annoyance in those black eyes. The weapon moves and there's that sound once more, he move out of the way. More noise and he's evading the incoming metal just fine, this being slightly familiar territory for him as well as a situation of being under-attack viva range.

"Chaos Shot!" The human snarls and he's already entering into a dive to get in close to attack the man, noting that the energy gathered looks familiar. As he dodges, he already lets loose a deflect spell to cloak himself in and as he manages to get the man by the throat while batting the green weapon away, rising into the air, the magic does its job.

"Where am I?" The dark green haired half breed asks as they rise fairly high up in the air. The human sneers at him and he notes the yellow energy does seem to spring into existence, it's not until it's appears moves in the way fire does he realize why the energy is so familiar. "Impressive, a magician then? Odd choice of a focus though." Not really caring as the human tries to break his hold, the yellow seems to argument the man's strength but, well, he's far stronger and durable then a human is plus there's the fact that if he needs to, he could argument himself, but then, he just adds a bit more magic to the deflect spell that's hanging from his body, so that the damage isn't as much as it could actually be.

A kick to his midsection does push them apart but he's already moving a bit away, waiting for the magician to call up a levitation spell only, the man doesn't and a ripple of green appear near the hand, it looks like a lizard only then it's that green weapon once more. "Surrender and it'll be a quick death or don't and it'll be a slow one." The magician states in a icy cold tone, which only causes him to tilt his head to the side as he regards the human.

Terrance snorts softly, not believing that the magician could kill him. He gives the human a look of disdain with a hint of 'I'd like to see you

try'. He's mentally going through what kind of lightning spell to use to inflict pain, guessing that the magician likely knows enough fire protection spells or wearing something with that kind of enchantment.

That green weapon fires more metal and he finishes the spell by the sixth shot, the man dodges only for it to follow after. Closing his wings, he drops down as he watches as some plant vines snake at the location he'd been at. He's also dodging to the hard left as a laughing magician sporting a single red eye attacks with a trident. There's indigo fire cloaking this one and he's beginning to wonder just what kind of coven or cabal summoned him only to attack him, after all, he's pretty sure he hadn't done anything to warrant a bounty among the humans.

The eye is fairly odd, the half breed is pretty sure that even human eyes shouldn't look that shade of red or sport what's clearly some kind of magical glyph, why else would a magician bother sporting something like that if not to help argument their spell casting? "Nice Fallen Angel look. Very realistic, perhaps I'll make myself a cloak from them."

He can't help but glare as at the tip of his tongue was the denial of being mistaken for one, only he can't deny the fact that he's related to one. He couldn't find anything to say at this point but he does flare out his wings and easily snaps the trident's head. It's interesting to note how it breaks apart into indigo fire before returning to it's previous appearance while he's already moving to evade the incoming metal. The crimson eyed magician doing his odd laugh, he's heard far worst chuckling or laughter among his peer group.

He puts his training into practice, it's a basic maneuver and the pair fall for it. With easy the half breed flings the crimson eyed one into the green weapon one, confirming a growing suspension that neither was accustomed to fighting in an aerial setting. He's going through the sleep spell as fast as possible and even as the pair manage to dodge, they can't escape the black mist that's his sleep spell. It hangs there for a time yet the two don't automatically fall asleep,

there's a few more shots fired along with attempts at roping him, but he evades using his superior speed and reaction time, making sure to do so in a taunting manner.

They bark at each other, each having ideas of how to clear his mist only, not that it matters that they did get rid of it, the spell just hangs about the ground, the mist had been to cloak the nature of the spell. Only, they didn't sense it and it's rather shocking to see how much Will they had in order to ignore the urge to sleep for so long. *That was an over powered low level one, only did it due to the fact I was slipping it into that conjuration.*

Things just seem to be... Odd only now there's a young human a few feet before him in the hallway, given the features, she seems to be mimicking the crimson eyed one, he wonders if they're preparing her to undergo something given the eye patch. Moving down to the ground, which she's hostile, he notes she's not attacking, her pose is defensive. "Where am I?"

"The chapel of the Iron Fort." The human replies and he waits for a bit, only she doesn't continue. "Ok, and that's located?"

Here, the young magician in training studies his expression and she must have found something that suited her as she kind of stood down. "Clam Family?" She asks and he just gives her a blank face.

"What do clams have to do with this location?" He finally asks, it's been a long night and frankly, he wouldn't mind something to eat and warm bed. With a sigh, he pulls in his wings and her eye widens as she watches them withdraw into his back. "How about this, I was in a grove that caught fire with a rainbow colors. There was a whirlpool of it and I entered it, it brought me here." He decides to explain after she just keeps staring at him in awe, after all, it's clear that something strange is going on.

At this point, pride would only get in his way of getting answers and if all the men he encounters react like those two did, then he'd take his chances with this young magician in training as she's at least giving

him something to work with, even if it doesn't seem to be much. "What are you?" He felt something move over and then through him a few seconds before the young human asks.

"Half Devil, half Fallen Angel." He states simply as a reward for actually thinking to examine him in some kind of manner. "Terrance Oriax." He would have added of House Oriax but, well, he didn't see the point of adding formerly before that or invite questions of why that is. *I'm keeping the last name, I'm Owed that.* He tells himself firmly.

"Chrome, Chrome Skull." The young magician introduces herself, ducking her head. "And we're in the country of Italy." He feels like someone just punched him in the gut at the mention of the current country but does his best to keep it from showing while worry and a slight case of panic struggle within against his self control.

"You're not here for the Boss, are you?" Chrome asks after something seems to occur to her and she tenses up. "He's still alive! He's going to get better!"

There's something familiar about this. He admits as he does his best to wretch his thoughts from their current path. "You've been praying?" He asks softly, after all, he remembers the chorus of voices that his divination typically call up. He's very tempted to display his annoyance along with fending off a headache, after all, why? Why send this his way? Nothing seems to be adding up, honestly.

With a frown, Terrance pulls out the tiny vial and stares at it. The indigo remains and it seems thing hit it. Oh, he knows why he brought it, he'd heard the stories and, well, he thought he'd be meeting someone at that spot, someone who'd need to be healed, with a group. He recalled the offer he had planned and yet, that's not what happened, his world had been not just upside down but inside out. Things better left unknown or locked up and come to the surface due to those fires.

"It might help it." He admits with a sigh, gambling on the idea of one good turn deserves another. Looking over at the human, saying, "I have no idea if it'll be enough." Then asks, "What kind of injuries did he sustain?"

"It was a Seal, it... his mind is now trapped behind it." The young human admits, her eye staring at the vial with interest yet, at the mention of this Seal, she looks away and seem to age before his eyes. "If there's anything, please, help." Chrome begs and he does his best to look calm and collected in face of this weakness, one that he'd had preyed upon in a heart beat before that fire gave him insight into his own past and reminded him of what it's like to beg for aid only for it to lead from one 'master' to another until he managed to outwit the last of his brothers before killing them all while they had done a ceasefire. And was rewarded for it.

"What was this Seal for?" He held the vial over to her, startling her a bit before she cups her hand under. He lets it drop and does his best to ignore the temptation of reclaiming it, moving to walk pass her a bit, feeling helpless in a way that just makes him sick and how it grinds against everything he's become and been trained to use over others.

She overtakes him and begins leading him away from the chapel. "To Seal his Flames." Is all Chrome tells him.

"I... have no idea what you mean by flames, I deal with magic." Terrance states and Chrome pauses to look at him. Confusion in her eye. "The black mist?"

"Color conjuration meant to hide the sleep spell." He admits. "We can conjure it up in any color we want in regards to the elements; black fire has been so often that most don't even get insulted over it any more." Then observes. "I don't think that's what Flames mean for you though."

The young woman stares at him for a few seconds before she returns to leading him through the halls, he ignores the servants but

does keep alert whenever they pass those wearing non-servant uniforms while listening as Chrome stumbles over herself, he asks for clarification at times, after all, he's pretty sure he's getting a direct translation of meaning instead of slang meaning.

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Their guest, for lack of another word, is a puzzle. Her examination says the body is seventeen while the mind is nineteen along with Not Human. There's traces of Sky Flames soaked throughout Terrance, very recent and there's fresh changes of not just body but of the mind as well. Half Devil and Fallen Angel, black glossy wings with ebony stripes that sunk back into the back. No horns or cloven hooves, never mind a tail denoting the fiendish heritage. Dark green hair and the eyes... their normal color keeps slipping from her mind, yet she'd seen them go molten silver when he'd been staring at the tiny, almost bead like vial before holding it out for her to take.

He'd taken down both Mukuro and Reborn, yet, didn't go in for the kill, had been intent on leaving them alive. Asked her a simple question and clearly didn't seem to know anything about the Vongola Famiglia, asking what clams had to do with their location. Then the half breed asks for clarification of certain terms which means that there's something translating her words, that he doesn't naturally speak Italian and when she changes into Japanese, there's no notice from him only for her to keep understanding what he's saying, only for a while she wants to hear Japanese from him and so she does. *Translates what he hears and then translates what he wants to say into the listener's expected language.*

Chrome kind of wishes to ask him about that along if it works on written languages as well. There's many questions she wants to ask, none the least of which kind of had to do with the lack of horns and hooves to what Hell is like and the age difference between his mind and his body. Perhaps, the most important one, why is he offering to help without asking for anything in return?

Her right hand rubs the tiny vial with her thumb, curious as to what's in it that could heal the Boss, then again, he mentioned injuries which might mean that it might not work on the Seal. They're now on the floor where the Boss is, she's taking him on a bit of a tour of the mansion, giving the others time along with Mukuro and Reborn to wake up. Feeling his gaze upon her back, she slows to turn to look at him, it's hard not to be nervous, after all, he took out Reborn after all.

"We're on the right floor." Terrance states, it's not a question and it's a bit alarming that he can tell. "I grew up in a far larger mansion then this, I think the hunting lodge is about this size."

And now she's trying to picture how that's even possible. "Family's one of the seventy-two pillars, I think there's a book someone wrote about them. Don't know the title of it. It does list the titles of each of the Houses." The half breed recalls with a slight thoughtful look in his eyes. "Devils can live up to ten thousand years and are always competing among themselves and if it's not in combat or in politics then it's building it taller or wider, out of this material or that."

That sounds very overly familiar actually. She kind of admits to herself as she makes a note to search up devils and the number seventy-two. Chrome couldn't keep a slight smile from her face as she recalls some of the competition that the others get up too among themselves.

"What about Fallen Angels?" She asks and notices how blank his expression goes. "Ageless... They Sinned so their wings are black and they can't return to Heaven, never had time to give the other two factions much thought." Again, she files that away as it hints that he grew up among Devils.

"Wouldn't that make them immortal?" Chrome asks and he gets a bemused look that's common among those who grew up with money, given the previous information, it's likely he did. "Just means they can't die from old age, nothing keeping them from dying from any other method, same goes for Angels. Deal enough injuries and they'll

bleed out without healing spells to stabilize them and begin adding in their recovery time."

Are you ageless too? The Mist wanted to ask but decides not to press the issue. Much of his casual manners spoke volumes about his up bringing, which only makes her wonder why he'd given up the vial in the first place. Then again, unlike many who grew up with wealth and privilege, he's far too alert and clearly been mentally mapping each floor, again, that told its own story. *Polite, as long as you are polite back. Grew up privileged yet not really spoiled given how well aware he is over the concept that he's got enemies out to kill him given half a chance. Also recently underwent a massive amount of changes both physically and mentally, which brings to question if he's acting normally or not.*

Honestly? Chrome wouldn't mind getting to know him better. It's more of a question of if that's possible right now as the future is up in the air and both Mukuro and Reborn are very prideful, neither likely will take their defeat well.

Knocking on the door, Hayato opens and glares pass her, towards Terrance. Were they spied upon as they walked through the mansion? Yes, yes they had been and it's clear that Hayato watched the feed. "Reborn? Mukuro-san?" She asks.

"Sleeping, in the med ward as nobody's been able to wake them." The Storm glares more furiously at the half breed. The Mist can only guess what kind of look is fixed upon Terrance's face.

The door opens and she walks through with the half breed following a few steps behind, the door slams shut with the three of them within the room with the sleeping Boss. Glancing at Terrance, the half Devil slowly walks over and slowly speaks words, they both watch as something slowly appears in the air before their guest's hand. It's slow and very deliberately said, each word possesses this slight ring to it. It's clear he's going at this speed for their benefit.

The last word rings out in a strange way and then that which was made sinks into the Boss's body. There's a glow and then an outline appears, it's got different shades of Sky Flames about the body, she couldn't help but gasp at the sight of the head though. Sick Sky Flames with touches of black cover the head and goes down the neck to the shoulders before stopping at the upper body.

Her heart goes out to the Boss at the sight. Everyone just assumed that it was just centered around the forehead yet, it looks like it's spread. Or perhaps it's that the Seal is reacting to their attempts at destroying it. "Huh." Terrance muses after a bit, she couldn't see his expression.

"Have you just tried killing the one who placed it in the first place?" Terrance asks and, well, Hayato verbally attacks the half breed while she kind of winces while tuning him out. Mostly waiting until Hayato's done before asking, "Why would you suggest that?"

She feels the Storm glaring at her while the half Devil explains his reasoning, "Curses and Seals tend to take a lot from those that set them, small portions here and there to keep their strength up." Continuing, "If they die by someone who's acting in the stead of said victim, it weakens them and that's why I bring up Curses in this regard because there's intent to harm mix in this. Seals are generated with the intent to protect and while this does have something of that, it's not geared towards protecting..."

"Tsunayoshi." She supplies. "Tsuna for short."

"Which is why I thought it a good opinion." Then Terrence moves a hand towards the head. "Did... did he get permission to put this one him?"

"Ah..." Neither of them knew how to answer that. "I think his dad wanted him to live a life away from this one." She admits slowly.

"And the mother is very submissive in regards to her husband's wishes." The half breed says with a sigh and Hayato, once more

verbally lashes out about this slight against the Boss's mom, not that she didn't agree only, how could he tell that from just touching the Seal?

Terrance turns towards her, waiting for the Storm to finish up. "How supportive was she? Really?" Terrance asks and she shrugs. "She's always been like a mother to us."

"Is there anyone who knew the relationship between the two before any of you entered into his life?" The half breed asks and, well, it's confusing. She's at a lost on this.

"What are you implying?" Hayato growls. "She's his mother!"

"Bullied for most of his life, verbally and physically." The half breed reports simply and the Storm bristles but doesn't deny it. "I ask you, how could she Not Know of the bullying? A child shouldn't be able to Hide it that well that Young."

That's... Even Hayato seems to be wavering. "You can tell all that? From this." She asks, waving a hand.

"I'm getting more information just by touching it, it's a high level illusion spell meant for information gathering on unknown beings." Terrance explains. "I know your human but you're not like the humans I'm familiar with, you have enough in common yes, but there's differences too."

"The vial?" Chrome asks. "Would fix the history of physical abuse. The mental... Spiritual? That's..." He shrugs. "Phoenix Tears... I don't know. After all, it'll repair the brain which will likely lead to changes in behavior as the Seal did affect areas of the brain but get rid of that Seal? No, I don't think it will."

She stiffens as her hand clasps the tiny vial, the idea that the liquid instead came from the mythical fire-bird is rather shocking, let alone the admission that it's that powerful. That he parted with it? "How the fuck did you get that?"

"House Phenex are descended from the bird, they have a ritual to make them." The half breed replies while moving onto the bed, the hand moving towards the chest. "Expensive to buy but I stole a drop from the potion lab."

Then Terrance is leaning over the chest while they kind of absorb the idea that, yes, the half Devil clearly isn't from this world. Then, well, there's a shot to Terrance's head and, well, Reborn is at the widow only, that's when something bizarre happens. After all, the room erupts in Flames and she barely manages to cover her face as they rush over them.

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For the first time in what feels like ages, he opens his eyes and finds someone on top of him. Then they groan and he's staring into eyes that are like molten silver. "Your bleeding!" Tsuna exclaims as he moving to try to stem the blood.

"Don't bother, as long as your alive, I'll live." The younger remarks and he glances at the stranger, confused. "Huh?"

"Well, I kind of slipped something into the spell I casted. The moment I touched your chest, it sealed the deal so, congratulations, our lives are intertwined and the only way we can die is if we kill one another." The other explains cheerfully.

"Why would you do that?!" He finds his voice and the other chuckles a bit. "Insurance, actually. They love you and from now on, we'll be feeling each other's pain if we're in a certain feet of one another, which means they'll hast to attack me if it causes you undue pain. Also, if one of us is starving, well, we'll share it. Same goes with thirst."

"Meaning we can't just lock you up and throw away the key." The Sky realizes and the other hums. "Oh don't look so glum, you're not going to be human from now on, you know."

"What?!" He cries, eyes wide as he watches as the other moves to stand and watches as glossy black wings with ebony stripes grow from the back. The other offers a hand and he takes it after a bit, then, well, he turns his head to watch as his own wings grow from his own back, they're glossy black only with burnt orange spots. "Half Fallen Angel. Well, think of it this way, your still half human."

"I didn't want to be half anything!" He snaps but the younger just looks bemused. "I was happy!"

"No you weren't." The other points out and he glares before rephrasing it, "I was happy being human."

"How do you know you won't be happy being half Fallen Angel?" The other asks curiously and Tsuna pulls his hand away, crossing his arms, his new wings moving to cover him like a cloak. "You didn't ask!"

"They never asked if you wanted to be Sealed. They didn't ask if you wanted to inherit a criminal empire. None of those friends of yours considered your opinion in a lot of things back then and kind of still don't to this day." The other remarks simply. "Plus, do you really want me to bring up your tutor?"

All true point but... "You... So, you just..." He didn't know what to say and the other sighs.

"Just... just watch, ok?" Then, the other takes a step to place the palm of his right over his heart while the left touches the other's own chest. Eyes close and nothing happens right away before, well, then it does. It's not just images but emotions and thought.

He is an observer, witnessing life through the other's eyes. It's hard to witness the events as they unfold yet, he can't turn away. It ends for a brief moment of time before it begins, only instead of there's an actual name, Terrance. A ritual, memories suppressed so that something new can be 'built' upon the foundation. Life with the back drop of a Civil War between two factions of Devil Society,

expectations are semi celebrated, after all, Terrance not the Heir and he's barely the spare. Then he witnesses the events that led to Terrance's own shocking revelation about himself in a grove filled with Flames of the Dying Will.

The events of the chapel between Mukuro, Reborn, and Terrance. Of Chrome and the handing over of the vial before following her throughout the mansion, not really calling her up on the tour while learning and clarifying information. Of... oh kami... Then there's a sharp pain and that's the end of it, now he knows Terrance as well as the other had come to know him from that spell that, well, he didn't need to review to know where Terrance got his information about his life.

In some respects, Terrance is very much like Mukuro, only, instead of trying to possess him, the other linked them together. It's a mix bag of give and take, he knows that now. Having seen the state of his friends, yea, he'd offer anything in order to return to them. Terrance offered not just magic but a way for him to finally life his own life, for him to be free of the bindings other had placed on him. After all, there's no way he's going to stay the Don of Vongola once his friends have passed nor is he really as invested in Vongola like his father had been. He's only here because of his friendships. Give it a few decades and they'll be retiring in time, he it should be enough time to find an Heir cause there's no way in Hell is he going to allow the Vongola to claim any of HIS future kids.

As for Terrance, he gets a security of, you know, not dying or being tossed into the depths of some cavern once they learn they can't kill him. Cause, well, someone did just try to kill him, likely Reborn, given it was a gun shot. That's... kind of... well, reasonable, it's something he can understand really and, well, the other can't really be held to the standards of humans, after all, he's not one but he's also not the sort to go out of his way to kick someone who's down. Tsuna experienced the end of that fight in the chapel after all, having seen the kind of power Terrance could call upon, he went easy on the two, which is likely why the two weren't going to be happy about

the lack of tossing the half Devil in some dank hole and forget about him.

They're both desperate in their own way, after all. They were both gaining from this arrangement, after all, there's nothing saying he has to fund Terrance or even provide him with anything really. Just awareness that if the other can't physically provide the basics for himself, well, Tsuna's going to be well aware but on the same vein, it means that if he's in such a state, Terrance will be aware of it too. And honestly? He can feel that Terrance would rather make his own way in this world, he needs something to focus on or else he'd brood over his situation, driving himself insane over the whole thing. Terrance grew up expecting to do something productive in regards to his House in some capacity.

The other is oh so very different from him or perhaps, he's different to who he had been, after all, what kind of changes to his behavior will there be now that he's part Fallen Angel along with every injury beginning fix? Also... "Well, that's one way to get rid of the Seal." He admits.

"Yea, the Tears couldn't do it but a death? After all, it would hold unto death, just didn't expect it would happen that fast." Terrance states with a sigh while the other withdraws his hand.

"Time to wake?" He asks and the other glances up. He follows that gaze to find that, yea, it's time.

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"I can't believe you just let him go!" Hayato howls as they watch as Terry, it's a nickname that the half breed hadn't minded as it puts some distance between who he had been and who he is now, walk out of the gate. "Not even a Mist contract or even threaten him about what would happen if he indulges in his fiendish ways!"

Most of his friends were of that mentality, that he should keep the half breed imprisoned somewhere on the property or under a Mist

contract. He didn't see the point in doing either, after all, he's still trying to get a handle on his magic and, well, Devil raised kind of said it all. He's fairly glad that nobody realizes that the other is also a Sky, most assume that the Sky Flames clinging to the half breed linger from the gate that brought him or from the life link between them. Then again, it's clear that the Sky Flames had become more in tune with Terry's Fallen Angel heritage then his Devil one, although that might have more to do with Devils living Underground then anything, that if a Devil might be more likely to pick up a Flame from the Earth set then the Sky set.

It's surprising to note that he kind of enjoys the frustration that the others are going through about this. Then again, not being human likely wasn't helping let alone the fact that the other is a cross breed of two spiritual beings that stories claim hate humans or see them as their play things. *Like any of them have a leg to stand on, after all, I Know that beyond those... well, I guess brothers do work here, he's got fairly clean hands when it comes to having a body count.* Tsuna reflects as he sips his tea.

"He's getting no aid from us so I don't see any reason put restrains on him just because of what he is. He's leaving here without anything to his name, he conjured those cloths along with that ID." He remarks. "How far that'll get him, well, I'm sure you'll be bring him up at least once a month." After all, there's a lot of interested parties, the betting pool is still small but it'll only grow as time goes on.

He's slipped Chrome his bet and amount, she merely smiled at him before going to put it in for him. Tsuna's kind of tempted to ask but decides it'll be more genuine an act if he didn't know every little thing about who bet on what concerning events or body count. It's been a month since everything happened and yea, there's still the mess concerning not just the Ninth but also going through the CEDEF's records concerning his father.

"So... is he, you know, your half brother now?" Lambo asks as the others head off to do their duties and he blinks, glancing at his little brother and Lightning Guardian, they are his Guardians even if they

can't Bond properly. "That kind of makes him your brother too then." He replies after thinking about for a minute and Lambo looks startled.

"You are my little brother, same as Fuuta and if sharing half a heritage makes Terry my brother then he's also yours as well." He states firmly as he puts the tea cup down, giving his younger brother his full attention. It's not like Terry will care overly much about him arranging for younger siblings as long as he, you know, didn't have to ultimately are responsible for them. Which given the ages of the kids, pretty means that it's unlikely to ever happen, after all, Terry's use to having relatives that he's related to but didn't have any real close connection with. "He's not really capable of replacing you, Fuuta or Ipin. He's just... out there, he doesn't need me like you three did or still do."

Lambo studies his face a bit before slowly nodding and he moves down, pulling his little brother in for a hug, only for him to wiggle out after a few seconds, whining about not being a baby any more. He ruffles the teen's hair before Lambo stalks off, masking his emotions with a huffy and scowling mask. Before heading inside, he is sure to pick up his tea cup.

He's got work, yet, but between himself and his Mists, they're working on something in regards to his paper work. After all, he's got a time limit to enjoy the company of his friends and he'd much rather spend it with Them then with stacks and stacks of paper. He's got a long life ahead of him and in time, there's not going to anything keeping him tied to this empire of corpses, after all, try as he might, the corruption is pretty much the starting point for organize crime, never mind their Traditions and Code of Conduct. They could try to pretty it up but the fact remains, the Mafia doesn't want to change or perhaps it's more accurate to say that if it ever were to change, it wouldn't be the Mafia.

Taking Vongola back to its roots isn't going to do much, after all, who are they suppose to turn the captured Mafioso over to? The cops? Nor would it matter turning them over to the Vindice as it wouldn't

have been the Mafioso who broke the laws but Vongola. Personally, he's just temped to take the Vongola Rings and see if Talbot can create those jars to take over the function of keeping the Time Line stable. That way, none of his kids and their kids need to worry about the stupid things.

Issues for another time. He reminds himself. *Don't need to create any more work for myself then there is already.*

Ending it here!

A King and his Lionhearts: KHR!

I don't own Katekyo Hitman Reborn!

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Upon his left chest is his current level on display while the name Yo-Kun! floats over head in player black while the NPCs sport green or, if they have a Quest, yellow. This is his first time playing only the character is level ten, it's a character created and leveled for money. It's the most basic with basic equipment and typical skills. He... didn't have another name to replace the current one so, Tsuna left it be.

His father remembered his Birthday this year and bought not just the VR device but also a pre-leveled character for his Tuna-fishie to use. The character avatar's race is human and the looks appear late teens with light purple hair and crimson eyes. He'd have preferred to create a character from scratch, to learn the controls but, well, he can do that later. For now, the ten year old just wants to explore and at level ten, he could wander further afield then if he'd been at a lower level. The current weapon that Yo-Kun! possesses is a long dagger, it's common quality while the cloths being in colors that fit with the hair and eyes, again, just cloth armor, which won't lower his ability to run away.

"Hey! Want to come with us to do a dungeon?" He stiffens and whirls around to find a group of three lower level characters who asked. Their names appear to be Far-Tax being a fox person, Grimmaru being one of the human looking races, and R.U.=Chan being human with respective levels being two sevens and a single level eight. "Oh, yea, sorry, thought you were lower level then that." Grimmaru admits before the trio apologize, leaving him alone.

Relief flows through him at their departure while guilt also flares. Any words have been caught in his throat the moment he turned to face them. Once more, he found himself unable to use his voice, which

has been happening a lot lately. Often times, the only sound to really pass out of him being that startled shout only, even that seems to be failing to come from him.

The wonder of the plaza and novelty of being some place else fades now. Sighing, Tsuna picks a direction at random and just starts walking, after all, that's why he's here, right? Why he used Yo-Kun! character instead of creating one from scratch. To just to do a tour of the game without going through the hassle of leveling it up himself, which, to be honest, would likely take him months given that he's useless boy.

I guess people will be expecting something from me. Quests, tips, or dungeons... He thinks sourly. *Maybe I should just log out now.*

Still, if this is only going to be his only chance to explore... Might as well make the most of it.

So... sad. Is the impression he's getting from his current player. That... that shouldn't be, it didn't seem right.

He'd much rather experience the player's previous wonder and awe then this. Not even his creator and those who'd leveled him had not felt like this player nor did their emotions reach him like this one's did. Then again, this player Feels much Younger then his previous players.

Feeling the weight shift wrongly, he automatically counters, taking over to prevent them from tripping. The player didn't seem to notice what he'd done so... he takes ensures they don't stumble or trip, and after the third time of colliding with someone or something, he gently ensures that they alter their speed just a bit so that the player notices and takes action.

It feels Wrong to influence the player's movements yet, as they reach the gate that will take them out of the city, his player's rather confused yet amazed. "I didn't trip or fall..." That startles him a great

deal but... it's something and perhaps his course of actions were alright in the end?

"I'm not clumsy here?" The player wonders. *He's that clumsy in that Other World?* He couldn't help but wonder. After all, the player didn't Feel that Young to not know how to walk.

Then the player sighs and with a glance back, mutters softly, "Maybe it was just a one time thing..." The player directs their current body out into the wilderness while he wonders how quick the player's mood could drop so fast.

No, it's not a one time thing. Yo-Kun! decides and if he could, he would have frowned his face and narrow his eyes. *I'll make sure it isn't.*

After all, there's something Wrong and he can't help but feel Needed. It's a surreal experience as Before, it was him needing players to guide him, perhaps this time, it's his turn to be the guide? After all, unlike Before, his attempts at controlling their shared body worked nor did it feel like anything was resisting his corrections. Yes, he learned that when there's a player within him that he's more of a vessel of the player to experience this particular world.

There's another one he goes to when there's no player dwelling within him and, if he willing to endure the pain, that world where players live. As the player levels him up, he gains something from it and it's what allows him, experiencing pain in doing so, to visit the Other World where players live. He's only visited it twice and found himself weakly tethered to the last player, that if he's a certain distance, he returns to the waiting world, Home the other avatars insist on calling it. He's young enough not to regard that waiting world as his home just yet although the older avatars seem fairly certain that it'll be his Home in time.

They encounter some monsters in the form of enraged bears and he's already eager to see how this player will fight them. There's not excitement nor exasperation like he's experienced from previous

players, no, there's this huge Fear being projected that seems to lock up their body. There's an urge to scream only... there's that disconnect from before, when those three characters had been present. As the nearest enemy gets close, the urge to move, to flee grips the player and, well, seeing as the player can't seem to do it for them, he does it for them.

Once he gets them moving, the player finally connects and steps back as the player continues to run away from the path, heading deeper into the forest. Confusion reigns within him, so much so that he doesn't stop them from tripping over a log and falling onto the ground. The player causes them to curl up and murmurs of self insults come from them, he's reeling from the emotions that seem deeply rooted in this player and it Hurts.

So, after a time, when the player decides to log out, he denies it. He's not letting this player leave. Yo-Kun! refuses to let this player leave him, for if he understand enough of what's said, this player will leave and won't come back. He Won't Let That Happen!

Tsuna tries again and again, yet, it keeps saying his request is denied. So, he just kind of sits there, back against a log wondering how this was his life that he can't even log out of this game properly. He's stuck in as Yo-Kun! and in a forest, a forest that likely has monsters of... well, he doesn't know nor does he know how to fight them as he's never played this game before nor did he go through any combat training.

He's got a long dagger and his cloth armor. That's it, there's nothing in his inventory nor did he have money to begin with to buy anything. *Well, not true, I also have Skills.* He admits as he chews a bit on his lower lip.

Loathing himself for screwing up something as simple as logging out, he finally just gets to his feet and glances around, wondering if he shouldn't just find something to kill him, maybe it'll log him out. After all, what's the point in fighting when he doesn't even know how to.

But, well, that just... "This is a game, it shouldn't be that hard to defend myself, right? That's part of the game, fighting monster to get loot."

Right now... He glances at his cloths and at the dagger that's sheathed upon his belt, ready to be used. Looking at his current arms, he clinches and then relaxes his hands. Theses hands aren't the ones he's familiar with and looking at the palms, it's strange, they're so different. This isn't the body of Dame-Tsuna, this is a digital body of a character named Yo-Kun!, who's not weak, after all, this character is level ten, powerful enough to travel beyond the starting city and area, to explore the continent.

Only, he didn't level this character up himself. "After all, I encounter some monsters and what did I do? I froze then turn tail, like usual." Tsuna murmurs. "I'm such a coward."

Wind moves and purple bangs move, covering his eyes for a few seconds before he brushes them off. Another reminder that this is just a game, that he's not really Here. That even Here, he's still the same old useless boy that his classmates know him to be. Yet, when those monsters had been charging at him, it Felt so Real, that his Life had been in actual danger. Freezing like that, it was just so ingrained in him when it came to approaching danger, typically his bullies, plus, typically if he did try to run, they always hit him harder for daring to make them work to beat him up.

Yet, he managed to run this time, something that he'd found himself unable to do... Just trying to recall the last time just causes a headache, then again, just trying to remember anything that's beyond a few weeks causes a headache too. Oh, somethings he can recall better then most, namely the faces of those that beat him up along with the looks of disappointment along with his mom saying that she loves him In-spite of him being Useless. *She has to love me, I'm her only son.* He reminds himself.

Time tics away as he just kind of sits there, stewing in self-loathing and despair. He jerks as he hears rustling and watches as a monster

comes into sight, it appears to be a feral cow or bull, it's got shaggy hide and unlike real cows, it's got four horns that seem to glow a pale blue. Three eyes of green glance around until all three focus right on him. There's a blue text above its head but Tsuna doesn't care as he's very much aware that it just spotted him and it's horns are now sparking blue as they become a more rich shade of blue. *It's going to attack! What do I Do?*

He feels himself begin to stiffen and everything falls away, leaving just the monster in sharp focus. "Please... Help..." He whimpers, then again, who's around to do just that? He's going to die and he doesn't want to!

Yo-Kun! can't help but be thankful that there's something else to focus on then this player's emotions and how lost he is concerning how to even begin to try and help the player through his despair. By the time the player stopped trying to log out, he'd come to realize that, well, he really didn't know if he could even Help the player as he's having trouble grasping the player's thoughts and emotions, it's beyond his own experiences after all, so Alien in a way. All he's been able to pick up is that the player is 'bullied' by fellow players in that Other World and this player doesn't have anyone to lean on.

Then, the player pleads for help and, well, yea, the monster is level fifteen, meaning there's going to be at least five levels of suppression but, well, he recalls one of his previous players having him kill a much younger version by stabbing the central eye, it caused a massive bleed effect that caused that monster to bleed to death while that player just had them evade. Perhaps it'll work on this one?

With the player emotionally numb, Yo-Kun! takes over their body, rolling to the side as the, blue text means something, bull charges through the spot along with the log. As he moves into a crouch, he's drawn the long dagger and is charging at the head of the bull. Something... not him but not really the player prompts him to prepare to leap back, which he obeys and lightning of blue strikes the spot

where he'd been about to move into. There's more and that something seems to predict where the lightning is going to be before it whispers to him to ready himself for the lunge at the head.

There's a cool down happening and he's able to stab the third eye, although he does get tossed away viva the horns, receiving damage. The dagger stuck in the head but it's bleeding freely, now he just needs to evade the enraged bull. He feels the player freaking out now yet the player doesn't try to take over and that something seems gone now, so he's on his own for judging how best to evade. It's a new experience and he takes a few more hits before he picks up the pattern. It also looks like the lightning is directionless as it just strikes down within five feet of the bull.

It takes minutes for the bleed effect to kill the bull and once it does, the monster shatters, leaving loot along with the long dagger. With the fight over, he steps back, that fight had been tiring oddly enough, and the player jerks his head around along with moving their hands, touching their face before looking them over. "What? Huh? I didn't! How?" The player is clearly worried and stunned while looking around, as if there's someone around that could explain what happened.

After a period of time, the player moves their body and retrieves the long dagger along with the loot, which is four [Mystical Horn], a minor stack of eight [Cattle Wool Raw], a stack of twenty [Meat Steak Raw], and a bracelet that's a trinket called [Bracelet of Minor Forest Stride]. It grants a movement boost while traveling in a forest, increasing it by five percent. It's then that he recalls what the blue text means, the bull was an uncommon spawn, which means that in about a week's time, it'll spawn again. Kind of a minor boss of this forest, which explains the trinket drop as most beast type monsters under the level of twenty typically just drop crafting materials with the odd trash range ammo.

The bracelet appears to be made out of copper with frail looking leaves with the more green of the metal seen more clearly with the leaves. Yo-Kun! is pretty sure it'll sell for a bit at the Auction House

as it's a good quality trinket, well, as long as the player doesn't Bind it to their person that is, which would mean that they would only be able to sell it to a NPC. The player worries their lower lip, it's a strange gesture that he's beginning to link up to the player thinking something over in a deep manner while holding the bracelet in their left hand, the rest of the loot just vanish into the simple sack that all beginning avatars get upon reaching level one to store loot in.

The player then moves to put on the bracelet and when the option for Binding comes up, the player, wisely, decides not to and it's now on their left wrist. Then, their gaze moves from the trinket and he's aware that the player is unsure of what to do now. "Is... is anyone there?" The player asks in a louder voice then previous while looking around. "Thanks, I guess, for the help." The player admits after some time and if Yo-Kun! could, he would have smiled, for now, he's just pleased that the player approved of his actions in regards to the bull.

That's enough, although he worries if the player will now try to log out and he's not sure if he could stop the player from doing so as controlling their body seemed to tax him. The player glances around and then turns around, heading in the kind of direction they ran away from. He relaxes as they walk through the forest, the bracelet's effects helping them cover more ground the usual, allowing him to ponder the strangeness of the fight along with the ease of him being able to assume control of their body.

From what he's been told, it shouldn't be so easy to do so, yet he's still able to do it as they walk, intervening before they trip on something, which takes but seconds to correct before pulling back. It's not very hard for a subtle pattern to be felt by him concerning how the player keeps getting out of phase with them by just walking. It causes him to recall the awe the player felt about not tripping upon reaching the gates, perhaps this disconnect is one that the player has with his own body? That's why the player is so clumsy?

Is this disconnect the reason I can take control? Now that's a startling thought as they reach the path. The player glances back towards the city and there's that chewing of the lower lip for a bit

before turning their back on that direction. The player has them take a deep, calming breath before beginning down the path once more, there's still uncertainty and worry within the player but there's also a resolve to Try to make it to where ever the path takes them.

The town he sees up ahead causes him to sigh in relief. For the last few hours, he's encountered more mobs of monsters and found himself a passenger in this character throughout those fights, the body moving to defend or attack as needed. The long dagger's duration is low now and he's got a sack filled with crafting materials from beast type monsters to sell so he can either get money to repair it or, perhaps, buy a better one.

He's leveled up twice, that bull monster had filled his experience with a good chuck of the bar before he reached level eleven. Even now, he's nearing level thirteen and he's still not sure just what's going on, only that it seems that either he's been hacked or that someone is following him, doing something to cause his body to act on its own when he's in a fight. He's been tempted to try logging out but, figured he'd at least get to the next settlement before trying again, at the very least, if it doesn't work, he'd be able to ask other players for help.

Jogging the rest of the way, he notices a pair of guard NPCs who nod as he jogs past. He slows to a fast walk as he heads for the market to sell what's in his sack, he's debating selling the bracelet too, after all, he's not going to logging back on with this character so what's the point of keeping it? Then again, what's the point of buying a new dagger? Or looking for better armor when he's decided that once he's logged off to never touch the game ever again?

Still, there's nothing wrong with selling the stuff or looking for something better, right? After all, he could likely sell this character to someone and maybe he'd get a bit more from having better equipment for that person in the asking price? What's the point of keeping this character if he's never going to play it again?

Yet, he's uneasy about the thought after all, this character had been part of his Birthday gift but it's not like he really cares about breaking his father's heart, it's not like the man's ever around or even remembered he was ten instead of eight years old. Just being in his father's presence, it's... like he's colder then usual never mind that when the man had pat him on the head, he found himself frozen, everything just locked up and his heart seeming to be thundering within his chest from just getting touched by the man. Only able to move once the man's attention wasn't on him any more and he'd fled to his room, even putting stuff before the door before crawling under his bed to hide.

He didn't even stay the week like he said he would. Tsuna reflects, feeling relieved that his father hadn't yet hating himself that his mom once more alone with just him for company in the house. It's hard to tell what his mom really thinks about having a husband, leaving them alone for almost a whole year before phoning the house or maybe sending a post card every few months never mind him actually showing up to the house. The neighbors gossip about it yet, it never seemed to phase his mom in the slightest.

Somehow, he finds himself standing before a stall that's manned by a player and he's a bit unsure how he got there as he'd been lost in thought plus, he hadn't tripped over anything to snap him out of it. It's still a surreal experience, walking without tripping on something or colliding with something. The player is a woman and appears to be a member of the cat people race, level appears to be twenty-two and name is RedYuki. Her emerald gaze settles upon him and he feels words just die in his throat at the look she's giving him upon noticing his level.

"Well?" RedYuki asks and someone he manages to croak out, somehow sounding sharp and to the point, "Selling."

With a gesture, she motions for him to show what he wants to sell and it's not long before he figures out how to open the trade option, almost as though something is guiding him through it. Given his experiences so far? It's believable. RedYuki pretty much gives him

base cost for the meat, furs, and wool. He's not sure why he didn't add the horns but just accepts the offer before walking away.

As he slowly walks away, Tsuna takes note of the various stalls, most are NPC owned. There's a few weapons on display but he doesn't approach. It's likely for the best if he finds a smith player to buy from, only, may not? After all, he's not really sure how he even managed to speak under the gaze of RedYuki as he felt his throat tighten up. Even that simple word that he managed to say... it hadn't even sounded like him!

Wandering around the market a few times, he catches snips of conversation between NPCs and players, to one another and to each other. There's a few NPCs with yellow text that he could approach for quests yet, he's not sure if he wants to, not until he gets a new dagger at the very least to defend himself with and if he's got enough for another set of cloth armor in the same color all the better. It takes him on his third circulate about the market to notice that there are actual stores down the alleyways and he ventures down them, looking for a smith shop.

The shop Tsuna finds is simply called Black of the Smith and there's a NPC behind the counter. Feeling a bit more confident at the sight of the shop keeper, he enters and soft bells above the door ring out in a gentle musical melody. He walks up to the counter and the young fox person NPC greets him with a bit of an accent, "Good day, how might I be of service today?"

"Looking for a replacement long dagger. Please show me a listing." He requests politely to the shop keeper. A menu displaying daggers opens before him the moment the NPC says, "Of course sir."

None of the list are common quality, which means that the shop is player owned. After a few seconds, he sighs and alters the sorting to lowest price first. The more poorer selections now come to the top and he takes a moment to preview which design he'd like as he really doesn't know what qualities he's suppose to be looking for beyond damage and in good repair. He gets into the ones above the

price tag of hundred, they do look better along with sporting more effects, but he's got a limited amount of money, currently just a bit under two hundred. The better the quality, the more it costs.

As he reaches the bottom of the list, he scrolls back up and picks out two daggers from the under a hundred price tag, deciding to grab a spare. Then asks once the two weapons vanish into his sack, "Please tell me, do you sell cloth armor?"

"I'm afraid not, sir. The only light armor we have is studded leather." The NPC informs him with a hint of apology. "I can suggest a friend of the owner though. Her name is FashionGem and her store is called Varia's Grace."

"Thank you." He says and as he walks out of the shop, he can't help but notice how he didn't stumble over his words nor did he stammer. It's just another thing to add to the growing list of strangeness that's he's been experiencing and the thing is? He's kind of starting to accept it, even enjoy it a tad, as if someone wants him to guide him in how to play this game.

It takes him a few tours of the alleyways before he finds the shop. The sign is clearly custom commissioned as it sports a sun with a pair of red and black guns crossed upon it. The guns in the game, if they could be really called that, were from an older style rifles if they weren't enchanted by... well, he hasn't really looked at Class or Professions someone can pick. At level ten, you can begin apprenticing into a Class or Profession but Yo-Kun! hasn't nor was he sure if he'd want to really. It's not something you really need but it's easier as you can then activate an automatically priority system plus any Class specialty weapons and skills level up quicker while with Professions, one gets more experience from crafting items of that profession along with a passive bonus to crafting drops.

He's heard other mention how you can have a Class and a Profession, the thing is, you can have only one active viva the Title system which unlocks the moment you begin your apprenticeship. There's more to Titles but he'd been rather busy failing at school and

at life to care to find out more. After all, he didn't own a VR system nor did he really care much about it until he got it and this account as a Birthday gift. What was the point of reading up on a game he'd likely never get the chance to play?

"Won't you come in, darling~?" A woman's voice purrs near the door and he'd jump, only he doesn't. FashionGem hovers over the head of the winged humanoid who's at least a foot shorter then Yo-Kun! with level fifty-six upon the left of her chest.

He moves into the shop, the door opening wider as the spring green haired woman moves to allow him in with a pair of glasses hiding her gaze, not that it matters as he can feel the way she studies him in Yo-Kun!'s digital body. FashionGem follows a few feet behind him as he walks towards the counter, he's so embarrassed and flustered at the attention the player is giving him. "A bit old but you do look to be my type, Yo-Kun!"

He wishes to duck his head down and have the floor swallow him up. "So, darling~, what can I do for you?" FashionGem asks and a voice that's pretty much the same as when he'd spoken with RedYuki replies, "Looking for cloth armor, preferably in colors I'm currently wearing." The voice is calm and there's a bit of a sharpness to it.

"You do look good in those colors darling~!" The player agrees with a smile that's rather predatory. "Pity you likely don't have much in the way of money yet, just being level twelve."

"I have four [Mythical Horn] to help cover the cost." The other player glances at his left wrist, noting the bracelet. "Four you say? My, my, my, that's unusual, most of the time, they get damaged in the fight. Most are lucky if they get a single pristine horn from that one."

"Not your first rodeo I take it?" FashionGem asks and the voice responds, "Never left the starting city until today. Recalled a tip from a mentor on killing three eyed cattle, work back then and it worked with the bull."

"Oh ho! Well, it's always good to listen to your seniors when they grace you with some advise, darling~!" And now there's darling once again. Something about the gaze from those unseen eyes causes him to want to wail and curl up in on himself. "How about a deal, darling~? You model some outfits for me and discount the price of two decent sets of cloth armor?"

The head nods, stating, "Sound fair." And what follows is something he refuses to commit to memory and never speak about ever again, then again, FashionGem is taking screen shots. So clearly, the woman liked how Yo-Kun! looked in the various collection of cloths as it seems that over time, it just grows along with a number of accessories soon being added when he doesn't complain about it. Tsuna's not sure how he hasn't died from the embarrassment nor how whoever is in control could Stand this session of modeling.

The only reason it's over has to do with FashionGem's alarm going off and the woman sighing in a very regretful way. "Oh well, duty calls." And it's not long before he gets the two sets of cloth armor that costs him only three of the four horns. "Also, if you're willing to model for me in the future, I'm more then willing to continue giving your a discount, darling~!"

FashionGem logs out and it's not long before the store to close, it locks up the moment they're outside of it. It's then that he's in control once more and he blinks ahead for a few minutes, still trying to figure out if it wouldn't be better to just crawl into a hole and never climb back out. He's got plenty of money left and he's still got trash loot to sell, so, he heads off to find the nearest NPC stall and sells the trash loot before checking the time, he groans, he's been playing for hours now and it seems as though he's skipped dinner.

In the end, he decides to check into the nearest inn and see if he can't log out.

The player tried to log out and, once more, he denied it as the player hadn't changed his mind about returning to 'play' as him. He's grown

fond of this player and the thought of being sold to another is not what he wants. After all, as much as the whole modeling session clearly brought out embarrassment in the player, he could tell that deep down, the fact that someone was paying attention and complimenting him, indirectly, had been pleasurable experience and it made him aware that the player hasn't had someone do that for a very long time. After all, he's fairly sure that if the player really wanted to end that session, the player could have taken over their body as he'd been growing a bit tired by the end of it, being the one in charge had been taxing but the lack to told its own story.

After a time of laying upon the bed, the player blacks out and he's now fully in control without wanting to be. For the next few minutes, he panics and instead of moving about trying to fix it in this room. Going through the menus doesn't help nor did looking at his skills, stats, or inventory. Although the fact that he could access his stats reminds him that the player hasn't used the points to increase them but puts it off for another time.

In the end, he decides to see if the player hadn't returned to that Other World. So, laying upon the bed, Yo-Kun! reaches within himself and moves towards the connection that should be there between the player and himself. It doesn't lead to that Other World though and as he reaches to touch the pale orange sphere, things change around him. Nothing is overly clear nor does it look overly stable. Thing shift in colors to angles, the colors are all pale and dull.

He walks around for a bit, at times its like he's going no where while at others, it's like he's step into some kind of teleportation gate as the surroundings are so different then before. Growing tired and rather irritated at the lack of progress, he once more calls upon the connection and then, as he touches it, he jumps locations once more, only this time, it's a dark, mocking replicate of the Other World and he stills at the sight before him. It's a group of players... he'd call it fighting only, the target isn't standing nor fighting back.

Soft whimpers and cruel laughter seem to echo along with the words, "Dame-Tsuna!" He's at a loss at what's he's seeing as he's

always been told that players world, the Other World, wasn't as violent as the place called Home or the world where the players take an avatar over for a time. Reasons vary widely, after all, no avatar ever spoke with a player nor do the players seem aware that the avatars exist so it's just observations and theories.

Drawing his dagger, Yo-Kun! surges forth, a coldness descending on his emotions as he resolves that he won't stand for this... what ever this is. None of the muted players, likely fake, turn to acknowledge him, vanishing into wisps of shadow with a single stab. Then he's standing over the player who's far more real then the others, unsure what to do now. The enemies are gone yet, it seems that the pain remains.

Everything about this is confusing, the behaviors of the fake players to him even attacking them, yet it seemed the right thing to do. After a bit, he glances around before putting the dagger away and crouching down, he slowly moves to touch the player gently, which startles the player, brown eyes that seem to match the hair start at him with fright before confusion. They stare at one another, it's clear that the player doesn't know what to make of this any more then he, hand still resting on the shoulder.

This is my player, huh? Yo-Kun! muses as he withdraws the hand as his player moves into a sitting position. Questions shine in those eyes yet, it's clear that once more his player's voice fails him, even in this place.

"I'm not letting you log out until you promise you'll come back." He finally states and his player jerks his head back as if he's struck him. "I'm here and I will guide you, so please, promise to come back." He says in a far more gentle tone.

"But... but why? I'm useless! No Good!" His player exclaims and his reply is gentle yet firm. "Because I want you to."

Then the world shatters and he's in the bed with his player now in control. "What was that?" His player wonders out loud.

"Because I want you to." The words echo in his thoughts as he stares down at the plate of food that he ordered. He'd been unable to return to sleep since that dream and for once, he's not sure just what it is he should feel about it, about this whole not logging out thing. After all, by now, his mom should have noticed he wasn't up for school yet, he's still here, after all, even if... if Yo-Kun! wouldn't let him log off, it wouldn't stop him from being forced out if his VR headset was removed. *Even though falling asleep should have done the same.* A tiny part of him informs him.

He only ordered the food cause it's morning and he's kind of starting to feel a bit hungry. A few bites did help take the edge off but, well, it doesn't do anything for his actual body. Having skipped dinner and now breakfast, he'll be rather hungry when he's back in his actual body.

With a sigh, he deposits the rest of the food into his sack's inventory and walks out of the tavern, deciding he needs something to do then to brood on the impossibility of what that dream implied. *But was it, was it really?* Tsuna wonders a bit as he focuses on looking for a quest giving NPC. He's yet to trip or fall since he's been in this game from just walking around along with the fact that it's not him that really fought that bull or mobs of monsters, never mind what happened with FashionGem. He's also not collided with anyone or anything recently either.

Spotting one of the NPCs he's looking for, he approaches and, thankfully, his words don't get stuck. It's just a fetch Quest from a farm that's located east of this place, just needing to collect an order of grain for the NPC's baker wife. Checking his map and rechecking the location, he finds he can't add a marker as he hasn't explored the area or taken a look at a map for the area. With a slight sigh, he just heads out, it'll be cheaper to just explore it himself, before leaving the gate, he takes a look at his current equipment and notes that they'll likely shatter on this quest, but that's not such a hassle now as he's got spare weapons and armor.

Looking off east, he follows the minor road for a time before it snakes far more north then he needs to go. So, off the road he goes and entering a forest, which causes the bracelet to add speed to the journey. Surprise, surprise, he runs into monsters and he freezes up, this time he can tell when the character obeys an other's will. He's still in the body, experiencing the fight from first person point of view. The monsters being three levels higher pretty much cause Yo-Kun! to level up to thirteen and he's once more in control, with a soft sigh, he collects the loot, all of it going into the sack as none of it is equipment.

It'll be in the third fight that the long dagger shatters and in the fifth for the cloth armor, then again, whoever is in control over the fighting prefers to dodge attacks, waiting until the monsters are in cool down before attacking so the armor doesn't take as much duration loss as the previous long dagger. He's also beginning to realize that the one who takes over, they never really leave, it's more like, stepping aside for him to take over once more or stepping in when he freezes.

He's at a loss of how to deal with that, really. After all, if Yo-Kun! actually exists then why let anyone use him like this? Or why not just take over and have him ride as a passenger? Never mind the questions concerning if all the other characters were like Yo-Kun! either. It's just so confusing and beyond his ability to comprehend, plus, it's kind of looking like he might just stick to the whole, once I'm out, never coming back, no matter what stance Yo-Kun! has on the subject, after all, it's not like it could last for much longer, right?

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"How is this my life now?" He can't help but murmur as he's sitting on the roof top of a building. According to the calendar, he's been logged in for pretty much eight days now, missing at least six days of school.

At least his previous sleeps had been dreamless, no nightmares of his bullies beating him up and calling him Dame-Tsuna, yet he hasn't dreamed of Yo-Kun! either. He's bought more long daggers as they

hadn't been as good a quality as the cloth armor, then again, they saw more use and he's never seen the point in getting them repaired when he could just buy more from Black of the Smith, he's been by so often that Andrey Cleverskin the NPC seems to greet him and even know what he's looking for the moment he's in the shop.

Kind of wanting to know more, he'd spent a visit just asking Andrey questions about the Area, Classes, Profession, and asked for tips on what Quests lead to what rewards or just listening to whatever rumors the NPC wanted to gossip about. It wasn't until this last visit did he get an alert informing him that his Reputation with Andrey Cleverskin has graduated from neutral to friendly that he was even aware of that particular feature of the game. Perhaps it shouldn't be that surprising that he's found himself far more comfortable speaking with NPCs as they weren't human in the same way other players are.

Although, when dealing with other players, it's Yo-Kun! who is the one they're really talking to. Not that the players know that nor have he's ever managed to speak for himself. They've visited FashionGem's shop at least once more to purchase more sets of cloth armor, again, Tsuna refuses to acknowledge the reason for the discount on said armors, even if he's find it hard to ignore the effect the unwarranted praise has on him. It's not like he's Yo-Kun!'s creator after all. Yes, there had been more pictures taken but, again, he refuses to admit why they were taken in the first place.

Never mind the fact that FashionGem is now under his Friend's list. The woman was dealing with Yo-Kun! not with Tsuna in any real shape or form, but, well, he just couldn't deny the Invite on that, after all, given how patient Yo-Kun! is with FashionGem's demands, maybe the character views the woman as a friend? It's not like he'd know, after all, they've not spoken, not really. Then again, it's not like he's tried to communicate with Yo-Kun! either...

He'd avoid Yo-Kun! if he could but he can't as he's in the same digital body as him or was it that he's in Yo-Kun!'s body? How can you avoid someone like that? Who's there with you every step of the

way? *I'm such a coward, it's not going to just go away if I don't do anything. I can't escape this, he won't let me.* He lets out a defeated sigh.

So, why not just promise it and then just not keep it? A part of him asks him and he glances down at the streets below. It's strange how this simple settlement has become something of a new home for him. He's even renting a room from one of the local NPCs, not living out of a room at the local inn. *He's not a real person.*

He chews his lower lip, not really liking that idea at all. Yo-Kun!'s been nothing but there, really, more then willing to carrying him through a fight or when it comes to interacting with other players. He's started to try and fight when its just a single monster, he's getting better, taking more hits before his instinctive freezing locks him up, causing Yo-Kun! to step in. He doesn't have that movement control that he's seen other players have, then again, he's noticed at times when he's walking, Yo-Kun! would do a minor shift in balance before releasing, it's usually just a few seconds yet, it still happens. The few times he tried focusing on just walking, well, it's frightening to find that he's worst at walking when he's focusing on it.

That's not Right, it should be the other way around. That not playing attention should mean he'd be more clumsy not less! It's the same when he tries to focus too much on something as well, Yo-Kun! keeps stepping up to steady him. There's something Wrong with him, he can't deny that now. He's been told countless times that he just needs to try harder only now, it seems to be that just by trying harder he'd mess up more! How's that fair?

I can't promise him that and not keep it. He's... he's the only one to bring this to my attention. He's trying to help the only way he can. He argues back.

Yet, he can't stay logged in, his body is likely thirsty and starving at this point. Why nobody noticed him missing out on school... Never mind that his mom hasn't come to check on him... He doesn't want to

die and he's kind of got this feeling that his time is ticking away, that the clock is going to run out.

Closing his eyes he murmur softly, hoping that Yo-Kun! is willing to talk with him. "I can't stay logged in. My body... it's got needs, Yo-Kun! Please, I need to log out."

He ponders this, it's not that he hadn't known something was happening, there's been this emptiness that he's been keeping his player from feeling. He thought it would pass but it's only increased. In the end, it's likely the truth, that what he's been shielding his player from, likely was coming from his body.

"I can't help you if you leave." He replies softly, it's interesting, having his own voice instead of his player's. "You need help."

His player's relief is honest, that he was willing to talk but there's also that annoying need to retreat, to flee. It's part of why his player freezes when dealing with other players, it's why it's so easy for him to step in. It's not from that disconnect that his player experiences and that's frightening as it shouldn't happen when someone focuses their attention on doing a task, it's hard on him, wishing to Fix his player so he doesn't experience it but at a loss to know how.

"I have my mom." His player states and he's not sure what a mom is but, it doesn't seem to mean much in the way of anything. It's might as well be a Title or a nickname for all he cares.

"Where is your mom right now?" He asks and winces at the way his player withers under the weight of the question. "Your mom isn't helping." He states as gently as he can.

Eyes open and they're looking off at the horizon. "Your... right. She should have done something by now. Notice I haven't left my room or eaten anything." His player admits after a long period of silence and can't feel overly victorious over this admission.

"You flee too easily, scared to even speak with your fellow players." He tells his player with a sigh. "You do better with the NPCs and working on killing monsters."

"You... you remember that dream?" His player asks slowly and softly. "Dream?" He repeats curiously, he's had to grow use to periods where his player would just... not be able to control their body. Typically, the amount of time seem to be for about five to six hours that he'd have all to himself.

"You don't know what a dream is?" His player asks startled. "That place you talked with me, face to face. That was a dream."

"Is it related to your inability to control our body for a time?" He asks curiously. "You mean when I'm sleeping?" Then a few seconds later, his player answers, "Yea, I mean, I haven't dreamed since that first night but, usually when someone sleep, they can dream."

So sleep is important to players. He muses. *They need it. That's a relief.*

"You wanted to talk about that dream." He reminds his player after a short period of silence. "Yea, that's right. Well... I'm bullied at school. I get the worst grades and I'm clumsy, so, people don't... They just... Kids can be cruel and I'm told boys will be boys."

That doesn't explain anything, only now he has a word for what he Saw and angry that it sounds like such a scene has occurred far too often to his player. To the point where it's gotten to being the norm for his player. That his player is getting harmed for something concerning grades and for that strange disconnect that should not Exist, the source of the clumsiness his player has experienced in that Other World and would experience here if not for him.

He notices something, remarking simply, "Then don't go to school." If this happens at this school place then by not going, his player won't get bullied.

His player's emotions seem to just go still before whirling around as his player replies with a hint of panic, "I can't just not go to school! Hibari-san will bite me to death before dragging me there! I have classes! Homework! Kids my age go to school to get an education!"

Oddly enough, he actually catches an image from his player's mind, of a player who's got black hair with gray eyes with a very intense glare. It also causes him to wonder how could the dead be dragged anywhere, after all, most things in his experience shatter upon death, leaving loot and his player is still very much alive. As in, not shattered and not looted, or perhaps players have the same system set up in their world for when they die, that they'd be revived at a shrine or graveyard after an hour has past?

"Why would this player care if you go to school or not? Surely if he knew about this bullying, he'd let you skip it." He inquires curiously. His player's emotions still before his player murmurs softly, "I don't want to bother him about it. After all, I'm just a herbivore and I'd likely just crowd him, never mind what they'd do if they hear I tried reporting it."

It seems that even outside of this so called Game World, players find ways to be cruel to one another. Yet, even here, the players had to obey some kind of Code, so there should be something similar in that Other World too, right? Yet, didn't his player just admit that reporting it would only bring down these bullies wrath upon him? *He as good as admitted that those in charge are turning a blind eye to this.* And that doesn't sit will with him at all.

All the more reason to keep his player here, only, he can feel that sensation of emptiness, reminding him that if he does that, he'd be killing his player. Which decision is the right one? Allowing his player to leave and slowly be beaten for reasons beyond his control or keep him here and bear witness to his player's certain death? "If you leave, you're dying slowly, if you stay, it'll be quick." He finds himself clarifying.

"I... I guess your right." His player's voice wavering and filled with sadness. "Then, why not come back? Log out but come back?" He asks softly. "I'm here and I want to help."

"But I can't! Your alive!" His player snaps and he's taken back by that. "I'm an avatar, I'm suppose to be a vessel for a player to experience this world. I'm only here in this world because you are dwelling within me."

"Wait... your saying that... All avatars are?" His player's eyes dart about the street a touch of horror but also astonishment within him.

"We tend to take after our players, which generally are also our creators. I was created then passed through a number of players who leveled me so they can sell me. If I hadn't been bought, I likely would have been continued to be used by many players, leveling me even more, again, for sale or to be used for some other reason." He tells his player. "I'd known that not long after I was created and it's all I've known, it's what we've come to accept."

"But... that's... how can you?" His player trails off and he replies, "I can't level up on my own or come to this Game World on my own. Under the guidance of a player, we avatars grow in power, even able to follow the player to that Other World of yours. Though, none of you can see us, we can walk next to the player and watch but interact."

"So... you could follow me to the real world? Keep me company there too?" His player asks with a hint of hope. "Yes, though, you might not be able to see me when I do."

"But, I need to keep the connection with you which means coming back here." His player states after a bit of worrying of the lower lip. "That's why you want me to come back."

He doesn't see the point in replying now that his player Understands that he Cares and, perhaps, can Help. "I promise, I promise to come back, but, that might take a while as, as I'm not sure what kind of

condition my body is in." His player says before adding, "And... I'm Tsunayoshi, please, call me Tsuna, Yo-Kun!"

"Alright Tsuna. I approve." He tells his player, Tsuna, and they log out of the Game World together.

It's the feeling of his stomach and thirst that's really what he plays attention to as he drags himself up before moving to stand. He wobbles as his vision swims yet, he forces himself to walk, bracing himself on anything he can touch. As he's about to fall, someone holds the back of his shirt and he glances to find Yo-Kun! looking very concerned and a little stunned at the same time, with crimson eyes staring at the hand holding his shirt. "Thanks." He croaks and it's not long before Yo-Kun!, who's still kind of see through yet physical to his touch helps him to the door.

With his avatar's help, he makes it down the stairs and then the ability to touch him gives way, causing him to chuckle weakly while Yo-Kun! glances around the kitchen every so often while he manages to grab a glass and pours himself some water. He drinks it slow but it helps him recover some energy, enough to note just how much of a teenager Yo-Kun! appears to be, he's forgotten how the avatar looks from an outside point of view, making it hard to believe that for the pass eight days, that's what people saw when they looked at him, at them really.

Stomach growling, he glances around for something quick. In the end, he grabs the last banana and eats it. Yet, as he looks around, he doesn't find any more fruit to eat and checks the fridge to find something to eat. He doesn't find much in the way of prepared dishes and searches the cupboards, there's mostly food that needs to actually be cooked over an element or oven, no instant noodles. He'd cook something only, he doesn't want to accidentally set fire to the house.

In the end, he sniffs at his shirt as he begins to notice a rather foul smell. It's then that he realizes that it's worst then he thought and

pales at the idea of the likely state of his bed. As he almost falls five steps up, Yo-Kun! manages to help keep him from fall before looking a tad more faded then before. Which means that just by interacting with him, it's draining Yo-Kun!'s ability to stick around in the real world with him. Still, he feels filthy and smells to high heaven, so he tries to just walk up the stair, focusing on the state of his bed sheets and yea, the smell is ripe and sneaking a glance at Yo-Kun!, he heads for the bathroom, being sure to close the door once he says, "I need a shower, you should go save your energy right now. After all, doing all of that seemed to drain you."

"Yes, it did." Yo-Kun! admits with a sigh and a glance towards his room. So, he stripes and wonders just what kind of excuses to tell his mom about why he'd been cooped up in his room.

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Hibari-san had taken one look at him once he recovered from eating too much too soon and escorted him to the nurse's office, clearly displeased while Yo-Kun! seems to be studying the teen with a thoughtful and appraising look. "Very intimidating." He hears Yo-Kun! muse thoughtfully. "I can see why you'd be cautious when dealing with him."

The nurse pales slightly at the sight of Hibari-san before looking at him with worried eyes. It's not long before she's checking him over and clicks her tongue at how pale he currently looks before getting him to strip and he feels the weighted looks from the teen who escorted him here and the avatar that only he could see, well, perhaps not as he'd caught a few glimpses of other avatars hanging around some kids, each had looked towards Yo-Kun!, nodding in acknowledgement before returning their attentions on their players or with the avatar they'd been speaking with.

There's no names hovering above their head nor did they have a level display like in the Game World, he had though it was just Yo-Kun! being the exception only now, it seems to be the rule that outside of the Game World, they'd look almost like normal people.

After all, not all of those avatars had been human in race. None of the avatars paid him any mind, clearly not realizing that he can actually See them and, maybe, hear them.

He stiffens at the way the air seems to tense up by the time he's out of his cloths. A shy look over his shoulder and Hibari-san looks down right murderous at the sight of him. "I take it something's wrong with you." He hears Yo-Kun! state in a rather bland tone, new interest in studying his back and then his upper body when he's asked to turn. He's thin, far thinner then he'd been when he'd received the VR never mind that he now has a rash from...

The nurse directs him to a bed while Hibari-san asks in a very sharp and fury filled tone, "Explain herbivore." He's not sure how to explain it, after all, his mother hadn't asked nor seemed to have been concerned that he'd been enjoying the VR system his father got him for his Birthday. She did scowled him for the state of his sheets and mattress though. But, there hadn't been any concern from her, not even when he got sick from eating too much after having been starved for eight days and yes, Yo-Kun! did follow his instructions on how to look up why he'd been sick after the second time it happened.

His avatar had looked so depressed on finding out what kind of issues came about from keeping him logged in for so long, it's a shock to learn that it could have been worst though. Yet, well, he's kind of beginning to think it was worth it as if he'd been released without that promise or that discussion, he'd likely would have followed through with never touching the VR system or Yo-Kun!'s character ever again. He's already missing visiting Andrey the NPC at the Black of the Smith and the way he could just climb onto a roof of a building with nobody caring.

"Glitch, there was this glitch and it took sometime to sort it out enough so that I could log out." He admits as it's as close to the truth as he can get without getting sent somewhere so they can put him through a series of mental examinations or therapy over the

'delusion' of Yo-Kun! being 'alive'. "Then, well, I didn't know not to eat so much so I was sick to my stomach twice since I logged out."

"Why didn't your mother disconnect you from the VR system?" The nurse asks and he shrugs weakly. "Not really sure, might have thought I just lost track of time playing it?" He suggests.

"And she didn't take you to the hospital to get checked over?" The nurse demands. "Or think it strange when you got sick after eating that second time?"

"I don't know how to answer those questions." He admits honestly, not meeting anyone's eyes. It's painful enough, knowing that his mother didn't Care enough to disconnect him from the VR system or think to suggest they go to a doctor or the hospital. It hurts enough as it is, that he can't call her mom like he'd use to, that she's kind of a stranger now. That she could be so Blind or Uncaring concerning his well being.

What am I really to her? Some kind of pet? He wonders not for the first time since he logged out.

At some point, he realizes he's pretty much alone with only Yo-Kun! keeping him company. "Your Hibari-san stalked off with intent to bodily harm someone and the nurse has gone to speak with someone about your absent along with seeing if they can't arranged for your admission to the hospital." His avatar explains softly and he sighs.

"He's not mine." Tsuna states but the avatar shrugs a bit, replying, "Either way, I think he's going to be keeping a sharper eye on you from now on."

"How can you be so sure?" He asks curiously, after all, he's checked the date of Yo-Kun!'s creation and the avatar is, like, maybe two months old, pretty much a baby, if he were human. "There's this... purple thread that's settled on me since the moment he set eyes on

you and it's using my connection to you to reach you. It also seems that my own connection is a yellow one."

"But... he's not an avatar!" He exclaims and the avatar merely nods. "That... can't be right..."

"Right or not, he's decided to connect with you and yet, I don't think you really mind." Yo-Kun! remarks and he just sighs. "If it's not one thing, it's another."

"Well, at least somethings are going to be changing for the better in regards to this bully problem." Tsuna tries to give his avatar a blank look only, well, the look in those crimson eyes, perhaps it's true. Only time will tell, really.

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"Sun Ring Battle tonight." Kyoya remarks from the couch as he's sitting behind the desk. Glances at his Cloud Guardian as he reaches up to finger the Sun Ring that's on the necklace, Kyoya retrieved it the moment he spotted Oniichan with it, knowing perfectly well that it doesn't belong to the boxer, then again, he hadn't been the one to hand out the half Rings, after all, two of the Rings had actually gone to two of his actual Guardians, his Cloud and Rain.

"How's Mite=Biter reacting to your upcoming fight?" Tsuna asks curiously. None of his Guardians or their respective friends like the fact that he's even going through with the ring battles. It's not helping matters that Yo-kun! will be allowed to fight as his Sun Guardian, he would have allowed Ryohei to stand in that post, after all, he's not really sure how the Sun Officer will react to seeing Yo-Kun! in person, but Kyoya didn't like that one bit seeing as his avatar and Sun is able fight said battle.

"Almost released another virus into the Vongola's CEDEF data banks." Kyoya admits with a slight sigh. "Thirteen attempt to date." He muses, one wouldn't have thought such an avatar that looks like a classical half orc brute could be so devious in the brain

department. Nor would one think that Kyoya of all people would pick the Beast Tamer as a Profession and sticking to just playing the Profession. That's before they released an expansion that allowed people to try their hand at taming dragon type monsters along with allowing the training of flight capable mounts.

"Why are we humoring this again?" Kyoya wonders for the third time since they arrived in the other's office. "Distraction for Mukuro's operation." The office was sealed by Mukuro's avatar, a deceptively child looking character the Mist created that's of the fox person race and named young male avatar WaterDripping, Class being Wizard and Profession being Scribe. "Chrome's getting better under both Mukuro and Distant_Haze's guidance." Distant_Haze being a male avatar, race being one of the humanoid Fae and the Class being, of course, Illusionist.

Yo-Kun! is the one who recommended the avatar for Chrome with Mite=Biter being the one to track down just where the owner lived. A bit of actual money later and they retrieved Distant_Haze from the creator. Still, the avatar is adapting to the change in ownership along with having a player who they can actually interact with in a way and listened to their advice in both the Game World and in the real world.

Kyoya grunts and sighs as Mite=Biter arrives, the half orc looking rather disgruntled. "They installed a bunch of lamps and a boxing ring." The avatar states.

"Thank you for tell us and please send my regards to Distant_Haze for monitoring the set up for this ring battle." Tsuna says and the half orc displays a very familiar smirk, which is very similar to his creator's own, minus the lower tusks, before grunting and leaving them be.

"Supper?" He asks and Kyoya snorts softly, leading the way out of the office.

Yes, he knows that it's to be a boxing ring and yea, there's those lights up there too. He's standing to the right of Tsuna while Takashi's to the left with Catcher'sGUN standing behind the Rain. The rune engraved rifle slung upon the back as the wolf based avatar sports a slight sneer with crossed arms. At times, it's kind of hard to remember that Catcher'sGUN begged Tsuna and himself for help concerning Takashi when the rough and foul mouth avatar couldn't take the emotional baggage that Takashi had been carrying, that he'd taken note of the relationship between his player and himself. Of how at time Tsuna's gaze would sometimes drift to different avatars, even looking like he's listening.

They helped, of course, it had only been a year since they'd been together by then and, well, he recalled all too well his own feelings concerning his player's well being. After all, yes, Tsuna did have relapses when it came to everything, from the bullying and his mother's lack of any real caring to the whole Yo-Kun! being a living being and wasn't a puppet. Which was how Kyoya learnt about Yo-Kun! and how avatars are kind of alive, that they had their own world where they tend to live when not used to experience the Game World. It's also how Takashi came to begin reaching out to Cather'sGUN and how he talked to the other about contacting with the player through Takashi's dreams.

Among the Varia, he spies FashionGem standing next to the Sun Officer, Lussuria. The avatar keeps glancing between his player and Sky and himself, after all, FashionGem must find it amusing that for nearly five years, Luss and Tsuna have 'played' together, that Tsuna's done a lot of modeling for the physically male player. Even though it's always been Yo-Kun! who'd been the one in control during those sessions, after all, his player continues to deny that those modeling sessions ever happened despite the pictures taken and the way Tsuna always seems to soak in the positive compliments given so freely.

"You best be giving that ring back to Ryohei, Dame-Tsuna." The tiny Sun growls and he stiffens at the use of that nickname. "Well, I

guess it need to go to my Sun." Tsuna muses after a few seconds and Ryohei lets out a cry of excitement while Tsuna pulls out the ring that's on a chain.

He Actualizes before taking the chain with a deafening silent descending upon his sudden appearance. The reactions vary but FashionGem and Luss look dumbfounded at the mere sight of him. "Keep our Sky safe, Takashi." He says as he puts the chain on before leaping easily over the side of the railing. "Coming down to play, Luss-chan?" He calls out to the player with a slight smile and within a second, the Sun Officer recovers her wits before confirming, "Why of course, my darling~ Yo-Kun!~"

FashionGem unseen by the player, following at Luss's heels, clearly staring disbelieving at him. Out of the Officers, Luss is the only one to play regularly with the same avatar which is why she's the only one to be hanging around the Varia. "So... Tsuna?" The question is asked. "My Sky, my player. And it's too bad you can't see FashionGem's expression right now, she's just so pouting right now."

He stares at the glaring FashionGem and Luss glances at the spot. "Am not!" The avatar snaps with arms crossed before glaring up at where Tsuna is while he focus on Luss once more. "VOI! What the fuck?! How do we know this isn't a fucking illusion?!"

It's fair easier for an avatar to call upon their Flame once they develop one that is. With ease, bright yellow Flames begin to pool at the back before a pair of sun bright wings sprout, there's a reason why he decided not to wear a shirt, the back of his current vest now has holes burnt into it for his wings. He doesn't try to rein in his Sun Flames one bit and they pulse slightly, there's a slight gasp as FashionGem Actualizes for a good minute, even Luss staring at the avatar with an odd expression while FashionGem does her best to look unshaken and untouched by the transition. "I think swim suits next session." Is FashionGem's statement before it ends and she looks rather drained while his Sun Flames shimmer to more manageable levels with the feathers of his wings now the same shade of purple as his hair.

That did seem to be enough evidence for Luss, who hums thoughtfully before turning back to looking at him once more. "I'll have to be sure to see if you can't do that in the Game, those wings look lovely, darling~!" Luss remarks and he gives a familiar smile, he can it just... it hurts so much in the Game World.

Soon enough, the rings are verified and they engage one another with him taking to the air with his current long dagger out. The battle begins and he pretty much tunes out everything save for what's happening on the field of battle.

Reborn is at a loss, it's not that he wasn't aware of the VR system or its first and still popular game, it's just that, it was just a game. People made some character to control in the game world, that the characters being just lines of code, as in, illusion in an illusionary world. He'd done his best to break Pipsqueak Dino of playing it every day, that he couldn't escape him with it and grudgingly, it'd had some success.

With Dame-Tsuna though? He couldn't break him of it, couldn't destroy it or hide it. And Hibari Kyoya wouldn't aide him in breaking the young Sky of the habit either. Looking at the supposed digital puppet that is Dame-Tsuna's character existing before him, fighting against the Varia's Sun Officer? A powerful Sun Flame emanating from him and claiming Dame-Tsuna as his Sky and player? This being was no Mist illusion nor without a Will of their own.

"Swim suits?" Takashi asks curiously and Tsuna stats in clear denial, "Not my problem."

"How?! That's impossible! It's just data!" Hayato Gokuderu exclaims while Takashi muses, "So, it's one of those times where it's Yo-Kun!'s moments then?"

"Yes, yes it is." The young Sawada states with a nod. "So... how long has it been his problem then? I mean, Luss must have taken screen shots..."

Tsuna's cheeks redden while looking downwards, clearly embarrassed and also confirming that there were screen shots of Yo-Kun! acting as Luss's own personally dress up doll. Even he's heard of the Sun Officer's hobby of using unlucky mooks as dress up dolls. "Are... are we just going to ignore the impossibility fighting on the Tenth's behalf?"

"How is that impossible? I mean, we create them and humans have Flames, why is it hard to believe that we spark the beginnings of life in avatars? Created because we want something or to be someone." Takashi states in a matter of fact way and that makes a disturbing amount of Sense.

"Only reason Yo-Kun! is fighting is that he's the only Guardian among the avatars capable to maintaining Actualization during combat." Kyoya replies as the Cloud drops down from some hiding place, startling those who hadn't noticed him up there.

"How many Guardians of his are avatars?" He asks with a threatening under tone. "Yo-Kun! is, of course, the Sun, my Catcher'sGUN is his Storm, and Irie's THEdepthS is his Lightning." Takashi informs them and that finally explains Irie's involvement in Tsuna's circle of friends, at first he'd thought the boy had been taken the slot of Sun but that hadn't been the case, to his relief as the young latent Sun just wasn't suited to combat.

The teens around react to the news while he's now wondering what that means about the Mist, who's now confirmed to being human, never mind the fact that each of those avatars had different Flames then their users. After all, logically the avatars should share their creator's Flame nature. "How does that even work?! How?" Gokuderu wonders.

It's yet to dawn on the bomber that he's just a place holder until the actual Storm manages to achieve the same results as Yo-Kun! and that might be for the best right now. "I don't understand the question, Gokuderu-kun." Takashi admits, glancing at the Italian Storm.

"How can they not share the same Flame? How can an avatar even have enough Willpower to even manifest a Flame?!" The teen snaps.

"Well, to be fair, Tsuna didn't create or previously level up Yo-Kun!, his father bought him from a studio and the VR system. Kind of turned out to be for the best given Yo-Kun! was Tsuna's shield for the longest time, stepping in when needed." Takashi admits with a slight brittle expression before it vanishes. "I created Cather'sGUN to, you know, screw around with something that wasn't baseball and to vent, really. You'd have to ask Irie's about why he created THEdepthS or the avatar himself."

"Distant_Haze." He muses and Tsuna replies, "Yo-Kun! found him and got the information needed to track down the previous player. The guy 'out grew' the game and didn't have a problem selling the avatar."

"He's been helping Chrome with her Illusions and just being there for her really." Takashi explains and that explains the progress the preteen has made in her Mist Flames. "It's funny, isn't it, how life works? Tsuna got Sealed back when he was five and had been Active at the time. If he hadn't been, Yo-Kun! wouldn't have had the opening to reach across the divide between avatars and players."

"Then again, if he hadn't been, he wouldn't need Yo-Kun! and maybe he'd have been forced to move to Italy too, so Kyoya and I wouldn't have bonded as his Guardians." Takashi continues to muse. "Then again, would he even be the same person who became our Sky?"

"What is, is." Kyoya states simply and Takashi nods with a slight smile. "Yea, your right."

~ The End ~

Readers:

Ok, so I might have read Eirenei's various The King's Avatar stories, still, you get two stories this week instead of one. So, yea?

A Lion's Health: RWBY

I don't own Naruto and RWBY!

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"I made a friend, older brother Naruto! And I helped her bust a White Fang sealing Dust!" Penny tells him and all he could ask with a hint of disbelief, "You did what?"

They're in the med ward given his current condition concerning his newly grown leg. He's not sure when she arrived as he'd been trying to get some rest now that things have quieted down. Having sensed someone leaning over his body and kind of between sleep and waking, he jerked awake when his little sister decided it was ok to start poking his new leg, which had been fair more startling then painful.

"I made a friend." Penny tells him with a slight nervous smile. He takes a breath before expanding on what he actually meant. "I'm happy that you found a friend, I really am, sis, but it's the White Fang part that I'm more concerned about. Please tell me the events that led to your involvement with them."

Penny look of relief upon hearing he's happy she's made a friend that she gives him a rather lengthy report. It, sadly, wasn't surprising to hear that Blake tried to deny the depths the cell of White Fang have sunk to in Vale, working with a known criminal to steal Dust or how she fled from her team the moment things got a touch too personal, perhaps using the White Fang's involvement with Roman as an excuse to retreat from her growing closeness with team RWBY. Her parents hadn't been happy that he contacted them but they were relieved to hear actual news about what Blake's been up too, they pretty much firmly informed him that unless she's injured to not contact them again, given their history with said former protest group, perhaps its not that surprising.

"I see." The blond admits. "Have you spoken with Ruby? She must be worried about you." The teen states gently and Penny looks rather uncomfortable over the topic.

"Father wants me to lay low." His sis states with a hint of regret upon her features and in her voice. *And of course you obey it now, never mind the worry it's causing your first friend or the guilt of breaking the previous order in the first place.*

"It's a little late to do that, she's your friend, sis and right now, she's worried about you, likely expecting something has happened because of what happened." He tells her softly. "If you can't see her in person, then just text her, I'm pretty sure you already know her Scroll number." Penny is an AI after all, she likely got the information within seconds of Ruby agreeing to be his little sister's friend.

"You think I should?" She perks and he hums with a nod. "Yes, yes you should. Just explain that Dad's worried that the White Fang will be looking for you and that's why you won't be able to meet up with her."

There's relief and happiness in her face with a smile. "I'll do that... Ah..." He gives his little sister a smile as he replies, "Lunch, she'll be more awake and it'll between classes."

"Right!" Penny says and then, her gaze shifts to his left leg. There's a subtle change in her expression and he can't blame her, after all, it's a very recent addition to his body never mind the suddenness of having his leg back, never mind the being he dreamed of. His can only guess how this will effect his physical training, given he's going to have to get use to the change in balance or that he could get hurt from kicking something with his left foot.

"It didn't hurt, you know? It just... was there when I woke." He admits as he flexes his toes on the left foot, the claws coming out a tad before he relaxes and they return to their previous post. "It was more shocking then anything."

"Now you need a new way to carry Dust to use." Penny remarks and he chuckles slightly, nodding in agreement. It's something he does need to think about but, well, that's at the bottom of the list of his current priorities.

It's barely been five hours since Master Ozpin arrived at his room with Professor Peach, much to his embarrassment given that he'd only been wearing boxers and nothing more. The woman had rolled her eyes at his blushing while the Headmaster seemed rather bemused by his reaction. Thankfully, he hadn't been carried bridle style out of his room, just leaning on his Master as he did his best to walk, which is how he became rather aware of how sensitive his new foot pad was. After walking a third of the way, Professor Peach moved onto his other side and that made it easier for him to walk.

"So, were you staying with me or did Dad arranged lodging for you already?" Naruto asks curiously and Penny answers, "Oh, I have different lodging, in fact, I likely should have went there instead of coming here but I wanted to see you, big brother! It's been months, texts and calls just don't replace seeing you like this." Her gaze goes to the new limb before looking at his current medical gown.

"I missed you too, little sis. And I'm glad you visited. I really am, it's just..." He says a slightly strained smile, after all, it's been a rough morning.

"Ok, big brother." Penny says in a chirpier tone and asks curiously, "How's your friendship with that boy coming along?"

There's a good reason why he never told either his Dad or his little sister Jaune's name and, well, he's going to put off telling them for as long as he can. "He's doing well and I've been forwarding him scan notes concerning Dust manipulation. He's not confident enough to try it yet and he's likely going to be returning home to spend time with his parents and siblings this coming break." He explains and then moves onto the topic of the upcoming festival and about the upcoming dance that, thankfully, he doesn't have to organize as the job is in the hands of actual Beacon students.

Penny's expression is more of just happy to listen to him speaking then about the subject matter. He kind of wants to ask her opinion about her current team but decides that's really up to Penny to volunteer that information instead of telling him simply because he asked. It's why he hasn't asked her opinion on Ruby Rose, after all, if Penny wishes to talk about the younger Huntress then he'll be here to listen. It's likely going to be a bit before Penny broaches the subject of her friendship with Ruby but, well, he wants Penny to decide for herself if she wants to discuss it with him or not.

She's still growing, learning, adapting... I just wish people could give her time to figure out who she wants to be instead of what's she's suppose to be. Naruto thinks to himself. The what is always easy after all, one often just needs to look in a mirror.

In the end, Penny is politely but firmly asked to say her good byes so he can get some rest and his sis gives him a hug, which he returns, before she leaves him to rest once more.

"Wow... you really do look very lionish!" Ruby exclaims with sparkling eyes as Jaune and the leader of team RWBY approach, he'd been expecting only Jaune as the other wanted to say his farewells in person before leaving tomorrow. He's kind of regretting not thinking of bringing that eye patch right now simply because he's unsure if the crimson frosted teen won't mention every little detail over his appearance to her team.

With a half smile that's likely a bit strained, Naruto greets the girl once he moves to stand up. "It's nice to meet you, Ruby. I'm Naruto." He would have added his status as an Apprentice but then, it would likely devolve into explain what that means in their current modern day society, offering his hand, Ruby's eyes light up at the sight of his black nail before shaking it in quick succession before letting go.

"Ruby just wanted some air and, well, she wanted to meet you once she heard that I was coming to meet with you." *Hope that's alright?* Jaune gives him a slightly shy look.

"It's fine, Jaune, Ruby. I did come to Vale to try and find people my own age to befriend. It just so happens that I've got a lot on my plate right now in regards to my health and organizing the Vytal Festival." He feels Jaune's gaze sharpen slightly while Ruby looks rather concerned.

"What happened?/Should you be out here?" The pair of team leaders asks at almost the same time.

"It's just an adjustment concerning my left leg, I got a replacement from my previous prosthetic." *All true, after a fashion.* He reassures the pair. "My balance is off but, given time, it should return. So please, don't concern yourself over the issue."

Jaune nods in acceptance of the answer while Ruby still looks a tad concerned for a bit. "So, are you both leaving for the break?" The Faunus asks curiously after a few seconds of silence, this changes the mood and Ruby nods, beaming, "Yea, Yang, my older sister, and I are heading back to Patch to spend time with our Dad!"

"Yea, I'm heading back home too." Jaune admits with a less then enthusiastic tone. "Don't get me wrong, I love my family but, I have seven sisters. You don't know what that's like!" There's a slightly wild look in those blue eyes of the young Arc and Ruby pats Jaune's shoulder consolingly while he gives his fellow blond a sympathetic look.

"How about you, Naruto? You got any family related events coming up?" Ruby asks after a few minutes as Jaune collects himself.

"I'll be seeing my Dad soon enough after the break and as for my little sister, she's likely going to be sticking close to her team or lodging for the foreseeable." He admits. "I have a few final things to approve plus some physical exercises to go through concerning my leg for certain, the rest of the time..." The blond Faunus shrugs, it's more then likely that his Master will have something planned out for the two of them to do.

"Well, at least you'll be spending time with the two of them at some point." Jaune observes while Ruby nods in agreement with a positive hum. "So, what's your Dad and sister's names?"

"James for my Dad and Penny for my sister." He admits and Ruby's eyes flash upon hearing Penny's name. "Penny, as in kind of orange hair and bright green eyes?" Ruby asks and he nods, "Yes, she told me about what you did at the docks. I hope she got around to texting you like I suggested?"

"Yes she did! Are you sure she's ok?" The younger teenager asks, dark silver eyes shining with worry into his own.

"She's feeling a tad guilty about how it went down but last I saw of her, she appeared fine." He does his best to assure the younger teen. "But we kicked butt! How could she feel guilty about that?" Ruby wonders.

"Its more she wasn't to go off on her own or reporting the White Fang lead to someone authorized to deal with the situation." He explains. "After all, little sis is from Atlas and these robberies happened in Vale."

"Personally, if you want to do the right thing, it's best to just beg forgiveness after the fact then ask permission first." The blond explains, giving Ruby a wink which she slightly ducks her head under. "Not the best advice for a politician but it's likely meant for Huntsmen and Huntresses." Giving the pair a humorous smile and the leaders of team RWBY and JNPR shift slightly but give him slightly nervous smiles, with Jaune not really knowing what that's like while Ruby clearly does seem to get the underlining message there.

"So, what's your weapon?" Ruby asks a minute later before realizing something, speedy apologizing about asking given his situation. While, he's a bit confused by what she means, he manages to keep it from his face while Jaune just winces. He accepts the apology just fine, it's only when their respective Scrolls go off that Jaune and

Ruby say good bye, with Jaune promising to keep in touch as best as he can viva their Scrolls.

As he's walking back to his room does it dawn on him why Ruby retracted the question and he snorts ever so slightly. Then again, it's likely for the best that she had or he would have actually replied that he's current weapons are a pair of Dust treated daggers. Which would be repeated to her team and then Weiss Schnee would likely start asking pointed questions about his health or how someone like him could possible pursue such a physically demanding lifestyle. His medical history before his adoption by his Dad made its rounds years ago and they've done their best to keep a lid upon his odd regeneration abilities that nobody can say for certain if it's his Semblance or something else.

The media have long since discarded the odd bit of information of him having arrived in medical care as a young human boy as some tall tale, that blood transfusions form humans did nothing but decay in his body, to the dismay of the surgeons attending to him. That it was the blood donated by Faunus that helped stabilize his condition he had but it also the reason he's a Faunus, his body's response to the racial difference was to transform him. It's likely the cause for how many lion traits he sports, over compensation. It's just a head scratch about why a lion Faunus when the first donor had been a deer Faunus and the following blood donors were not feline Faunus either.

Once through the door, he closes it and moves to lay on the couch. With that, he sits so he can massage his foot's pad, being careful when his claws come out before moving up his leg. It's something he's still getting use to, having a fleshy left leg and foot. The foot pad is slowly growing tougher and the muscles are slowly filling out as well as he's exercising the muscles. His issue is still how he expects the leg to be heavier along with not feeling the ground under that foot pad or the sensation of claws flexing out of it like he's grown use to with his right.

Sick of the silence of the room, he brings out his Scroll and within seconds, the speaker starts up with the song that's next on his music list. Leaning back, Naruto brings up a game on his Scroll and begins playing it, a bit of mindless fun really. A time out from thinking for a bit.

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"How's Naruto?" Nora asks upon his return to their dorm room, moving her head phones off her ears, letting them settle behind her head. She's been king of down since the end of supper when it's clear that it'll just be Ren and herself sticking around Beacon.

"Doing well, there's an issue about his new leg though. Also Ruby ended up coming with and it turns out that girl Penny that helped at the docks? That's his younger sister." He says as Pyrrha looks up from her magazine while Ren is keeps reading his book. "He's sticking around Beacon too and it sounds like his Dad's coming for the Festival, so the three of them will likely spend sometime together at the Vytal Festival."

"That's great! Maybe we can met up with him for a spar or just hunt some Grimm?" Nora muses with a slow build of excitement.

"Might want to check with him before making any plans, Nora, it's the break for us but his Master might have lessons or something already planned now that there won't be many students around." The blond cautions, which does cause Nora to pout slightly. "You guys sure you two are going to be ok by yourselves?"

"Psst, we'll be fine, oh Fearless Leader." The lighter red head says with a dismissive wave of her hand before she's holding the magazine with both hands once more. "We're use to being alone together... I mean, not in that together together way but still together."

She then puts on her head phones in a bit of a hurry and he glances towards Ren, after a few seconds, the pink eyed teen looks up and

says, "We'll be fine." Then the other teenage boy on the team returns to reading his book and Jaune just nods, accepting that the two were childhood friends and thus know how to keep one another company.

Grabbing his nightwear, he changes in the bathroom along with brushing his teeth. The blond then settles into his bed and brings out his Scroll. He's been reading some of the scans Naruto's sent and, well, it's interesting plus, it's something that might be able to make up for his lack of experience when it comes to using his sword. Yes, Pyrrha's been helping him since that incident with Cardin's blackmailing him but, well, with the Vytal Festival coming up, he's going to be dead weight for his team and he hates that idea.

It's going to take time for his training to become ingrain instinct, time that he doesn't have. *And according to Pryyha, I've got a lot of Aura and you need that to use Dust or even Dust Shards like what's written here... I might be able to do more then just be a human meat shield.* He muses to himself and he's thinking about asking Naruto to observe his first few attempts, once he's back from visiting his folks, after all, the blond Faunus wouldn't really be doing anything stressful nor would the first sessions take overly long either.

He should also have the funds to buy some Dust over the break, before he returns to Beacon. He wouldn't need much, likely Water Dust would be best given all that would happen if it goes wrong is him getting wet.

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Resting easily upon a roof of the tallest building, he watches as the bandits wage 'battle' with the inhabitants of this settlement. It's rather amazing, really, just how the nature of humans just keeps sharing common threads, even if they are stitched together differently. Even in this world where causing misery and fueling hatred actually has some consequences for all involved, that they know it and have made a study of it, yet, evidence does little to persuade the inborn drive of destruction that seems to be at the very heart of human, and, perhaps, Faunus as well, souls.

The human race is standing on a blade's edge, one that's getting thinner and thinner the more their short sighted desires continue to grip them. It's clear that those in charge keep the rest ignorance of what's really going on, which feeds the cycle in their own way, by thinking that nothing is wrong with how they treat one another that they can continue doing so, maybe finding new ways to make their fellows more miserable. Kurama can already read the signs that the humans and their Faunus cousins either refuse to see or acknowledge and that their society needs to change their tunes and approach less their walls fall before the might of the Grimm, the created children of that odd entity that wishes to wipe the two sapiens races off of this world.

Never mind that those who aide her might as well dig their own graves before slicing their own throats, but then, that would be far to painless of a death for them. He'd love to be there, when their blinders fall away and they see the results of their collaboration truly costed them. Oh the despair that would surely fill their minds, perhaps shattering what grip of reality they had?

"But I won't be." The crimson haired being admits with a sigh. No, now that he's sure his former jailer is alive, his leaving this world is fair more certain. After all, how long until someone opens that box? Or try to summon the blond, thus himself?

Nor did he fancy killing the former human. *No point, not when there isn't a Uzumaki Naruto anymore.* Kurama muses to himself as the 'battle' ends and the looting begins. "Naruto Ironwood." He muses out loud softly with a bit of a smirk.

Most of the articles he's found concerning the former human. The medical history, even he'd been unsure just how the former Genin managed to hang onto life without him dwelling within the body. *Then again, the brat always did have a strong will when it came to surviving despite the odds, perhaps the fact that he could start over gave him the strength?* The entity shaped like a human muses.

With a stretch, Kurama falls back and fades from the roof, falling through the various floors, he is angling his body and when he allows reality to grip him once more, he's crouched upon the floor. Standing up gracefully and rubbing the dirt from his hands, the entity in human form walks in the opposite direction of where the bandits were. This world hasn't had anything new to teach him for the last few years, perhaps he should do a bit more digging into Naruto Ironwood's current situation?

He'd visit but didn't want what's keeping them here to degrade any faster then its current pace. After all, he kind of likes the freedom of wandering where he pleases, even if it's such a tiny shape, without humans calling forth armies to try and kill him for just being something far superior then them. His Semblance, as the locals call it, is something he wouldn't mind keeping, even if it means staying in this shape. No existence is perfect and being a sentient being made of chakra didn't deter the ninja from trying to kill him or harness him as some kind of weapon, perhaps having something as abnormal as a Semblance in a world of chakra using humans will grant him some peace and quiet, at least for a few years?

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Ozpin studies the sketch of the entity, as his young Apprentice insists on calling the man, and concludes to, for now, treat this man as a Wild Card. There's a number of question concerning the connection this man has with Naruto. "May you live in interesting times indeed." He murmurs as he recalls the words Naruto claimed this crimson haired man spoke, of the Aura of red that carried fear and rage.

So many things to puzzle out before the Festival happens, it's a matter of figuring out which pieces should go together and now there's this new unknown to consider. It's clear that there's a connection between Naruto and this man, it's now a question of when this man will seek his Apprentice out as there's no doubt in his mind that the two will meet. He believes the teen that he doesn't know the man but feels that he should, then again, the injuries sustained at five years of age were clearly going to leave their

traumatic marks upon the young child's mental state, that it's only come across as amnesia is more of a relief and a tad worrying as there should be triggers to subconscious reactions waiting like a minefield.

Then again, a human boy transforming into a Faunus isn't something he thought possible. Changes to young Naruto's brain could be the reason why nothing has triggered, that rewiring his brain to deal with a Faunus' more keen senses and night vision meant that nothing was firing in the same way as if young Naruto had remained human. Unlike most, he's fairly certain that the doctors had the right of it, that for some unknown reason, a five year old *human* boy began to transform into a Faunus upon introduction of blood sourced from the other sapient race, that the boy's body had rejected human blood, causing it to decay within minutes of being introduced.

That this same child would, in time, display some kind of regenerate abilities was likely just an off shoot from what caused his transformation in the first place. After all, sperm samples from the teen show up as perfectly human, although there's a bit of a puzzle concerning how the DNA was arranged at times. There's a lot of contradiction when it comes to the Neo-Faunus but perhaps they'll finally begin to unravel some of the mystery about him now that his leg has been regrown, that they can now see just what kind of potential Naruto can bring to bare.

Ending it here

The Dance Between Death and Life P1: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

The sun is still slowly rising as Naruto leaps through the air, the solar rays casting a subtle glow throughout his feathers and coat, causing the golden shade to brighten. Wings drip down, causing his body move move before pushing up, this repeats as he rises higher into the air, leaving the cliff he rested the night behind. He's not yet hungry, having fed rather heavily two days ago, he'd been mostly sleeping it off but now, now he doesn't feel dozy nor is his thoughts circling over the topic of food. For now, he'll just enjoy the fact he has wings and can use them to fly, a novelty given his previous incarnation as a human and that he Remembers that life at all is something that's he's long since come to terms with.

Thoughts of the Past are rather quick to fade as the over powering sense of Now and Here help remind him that he's got something to enjoy, that Now and Here isn't the time for the Past or thoughts of the Future. The sunlight begins to heat the mountains below and it's not long before he allows his wings to lock into place, riding the thermals up and then soaring to the next one. If Naruto could, he would smile he passes the morning in the air, often times taking note of what he passes over making mental notes about seeing prey at which spots.

As the sun begins to drip west, it's then that he spies something he's never seen before in this life or his previous one. It's a rather large white scaled lizard sporting wings not unlike those of a bat, also scaled. As he drips down a bit, it's then that he realizes that no, it's not just large but huge, even compared to himself and he'd been among the largest griffins bred by some God, the name escapes him and really, it wasn't like he Cared given he'd just been nothing but part status symbol and part of a pet breeding project. Flexing his talons as his eyes narrow at the strange being below him, there's

this feeling in the air that kind of familiar which likely explains why he feels his heart begin to race and anticipation stirs within.

White Scale shifts his head slightly, noticing Naruto before seemingly snorting before ignoring him. Another familiar feeling roars to life and he gives it Voice before entering into a nose dive, wings fold close to his body as his forearms move from their position, talons eager to pry some of those scales off to dig into the flesh below. As his talons don't leave a scratch upon the scales, Naruto flares his wings to re-balance himself so he continue attacking White Scale.

It's not often he lowers his greatness to the realms of mortal hood but then, he did not seek to bring attention to himself for the time being. *Perhaps I should seek out Ddraig?* Albion muses as he already feels the anticipation of a fight with the red Dragon.

Then he's not alone in the sky and notices a golden feathered and furred griffin above him. *Weak.* Is his thought at the sight of said creature. *It'll flee.*

Turning away, he continues on, only... There's this Roar from above and he's slow to react, the griffin is attacking him. The talons glance off but the Intent to Harm, he Feels it and finds himself slightly impressed, not that he'd going to go easy on it, just that, perhaps he found a toy to play with for a bit.

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How? HOW? Albion wonders at the sight of the broken, dying griffin. Blood oozes, one particular spot is on the right of his upper muzzle will likely leave a scar, if he wanted it to.

Yes, the beast is almost dead, yes, the out come ended as he knew it would, and yes, it proved entertainment. Only, it's now dusk, which means that more time had passed then he'd expected. "But you weren't just some lowly griffin, were you?" The dragon's form shifts

and shrinks into a human shaped one before moving to stand before the beast's side.

"Some God breed your ancestors and have continued to influence the line." He continues as he moves to crouch near the griffin, moving a hand under the head. "Beautiful feathers and coat. Well form talons and claws. Deadly beak and keen of senses."

"Such a will to live." The dragon in human form muses as he still feels something struggling to hang onto life. Life's blood spilling out and he moves the head with ease, the neck's damaged.

Perhaps he should give it a quick end? Before snorting and reaching into his being, then pushes it into the beast, curious to see the result. He's fought Ddraig enough to under stand some of what the other does. The power should rip the beast apart, magical in nature or not only, only the form shimmers and shrinks into a human like form, fairly tanned skinned with a slight sheen of gold, bright golden hair, and the lack of injuries.

Now, now the transformed griffin is just sleeping. What remains of the power seems to settle into the body, becoming one with the now human shaped griffin. Albion studies the sleeping male, there's nothing covering the other, and nods thoughtfully. "Golden, I name you Golden." He states as he smirks, it seems he'll be entertained for some time yet.

Shivering, he wakes and everything is different, it's night and he's hungry plus thirsty. Never mind that he's cold plus it seems that, he's not alone. He groans softly while moving to sit up, it's then that he realizes why he's cold, he's naked and, looking at his limbs and legs, human, was he human? When did that happen?

"Wake I see." He hears the other say and he blinks as he tries to see them, only, it's night and there's not a lot of light for him to see by. Cocking his head to the side, he can't help but be puzzled, then again, everything is so different. It's kind of surreal, dream like really.

The other moves closer and he gets a better look at them, white hair with light blue eyes are the most notable features. He tries to say something only, well, it's more of a croak and cough, followed by him swallowing noticeably and a shiver from the chill from the wind moving about his back. "I guess you would need something to drink, after all, you did lose a lot of blood, Golden."

Golden? He gives the other a blank look, after all, he's always regarded himself as Naruto, it's the only name he considers belonging to himself. After all, he might not be considered an Uzumaki any more or even Namikaze as they are clan names, but Naruto, that's just a name and thus something that he can keep, an identity. The memories of that incarnation remain and thus the name does.

"Golden is now your name." The other states in such a matter of fact way that he snorts softly before smiling and silently chuckling a bit, before he's shivering once more and he's rubbing his hands upon his arms. "Ah good, I don't need to find you a teacher."

"Teacher?" He swallows a few times before croaking out. It's a confusing idea, after all, before that jutsu forced reincarnation upon his friends and himself, he'd been eighteen, would have been nineteen if it had occurred two weeks later.

"You were a mere beast less then a day ago." The other remarks and he blinks in understanding, snorting in bemusement. "Human... last time... Memories..." His voice is harsh and he's just so thirsty but the other's seems rather pleased.

"How interesting but that explains so much." Those blue eyes study him with great interest. "I very much approve of this turn of events."

And the former ninja just can't help but stare at the stranger, not really sure whether the arrogance flowing from this guy is justified or not. He watches as a cup seems to appear within the hand of the other that's now being offered. Then water fills the cup as Naruto, he'll consider Golden to be a nickname coming from the other, takes

it and then drinks it. His thirst stated and he is still cold, the cup vanishes and he wonders just what kind of power exists in this world.

"Thanks." He murmurs softly and asks curiously, "So, the cup? That water? How'd you do that?"

"Why, magic of course!" Chirps the other in a slight mocking tone with a clear arrogance.

"Magic huh?" Naruto muses. *So, this is truly a different world.*

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"Scales..." He growls at the dragon in human shape, yes, he does know the other's name is Albion and that the other is one of the two Heavenly Dragons with a fairly long list of titles. Said dragon gives him a flat look but there's a slight shift of weight.

"Come now, this isn't that hard of a concept to grasp." Albion states simply.

"You want me to steal into Apollo's palace and grab a jug of milk that his divine cattle produces? Why not just bribe Hermes?" *Again.* He asks, they've known each other for almost twenty years now and their relationship's early years have been fairly rocky, never mind the leers directed at him by said dragon that... well, Naruto's never been subject to such a Look from any member of either of the sex.

"What's wrong with wanting to see you use such magical talents in a practical setting? You never know when you'll need to break into or out of a Deity's home." The other states and he just sighs but, well, there's no point trying to argue right now.

Running a hand through his bright golden hair, the former ninja feels the points upon his ears, the points upon the ears weren't overly noticeable as his hair tend to hide the tops of them. His human appearance is different then his incarnation as one Uzumaki Naruto, but again, he's current incarnation started out as a divinely breed

griffin and its only the pass almost two decades that he's been gained a human like form, even being 'gifted' with some of Albion's magic once he'd unconsciously used it to not just heal but to alter his form. "Fine, I'll go."

Albion relaxes just a tad and he sighs, not really sure why the white dragon is trying to put so much effort into trying to keep him alive, after all, everything that's alive must die. Since his altering of his form, what kept him ageless broke and that age is catching up with him. Even now, if he were to return to that form, it won't be the same nor would it restore the divine enchantment. His existence as such came to an end the moment the dragon won that fight. There's times when he wonders if Albion and Ddraig even know that they were Friends as well as Rivals, but, well, how could they Not Know?

Reaching into himself and touching the firestorm within, he manipulates the current as it flows out of him. The words that flow are spoken in a tongue that Albion taught him, very musical yet possess a Ring to them. The spell settles over him, a cloaking spell of light and shadow before moving to stand upon the circle that the white dragon had crafted, an entrance into the Greek Deities realm. A single word and the circle activates.

"So, this is where you've been holding up." Ddraig grumbles once the other finally decides to step out of the forest in a human shape. Crimson long hair and green glinting eyes, the build is far sturdier then his current own. Simple studded leather armor covering up said frame.

"I'm not in a mood for a fight." He tells the other, given how long their bouts tend to last, he rather not engage in one, not when there's Golden to consider. The former human has proven to be fair company and fearless in stating his honest opinion, never mind the interesting reaction the reincarnated ninja has concerning his leers, after all, the former human's current body was fair from unattractive compared to those of mortals and more so then a few of the supernatural races.

"And what makes this mortal so special that you'd teach him that language?" The Red Dragon Emperor wonders after a time once the other studies him with narrow green eyes and a scowl. Arms crossed over the chest and standing rather tall.

"What business of it of yours what I teach a mortal?" The White Dragon Emperor counters as he draws himself up and places his hands upon the belt, titling his head ever so slightly. "Did you not teach the written half to that half breed? Did I not ask you the same then that you ask now?"

His fellow Emperor of Crimson's head jerks and noses flares in anger, snapping, "Don't speak of her!" By which he counters, "Then go and I will not."

They glare at one another, after all, that half breed girl child had been pretty much a daughter to the Red Dragon Emperor of Domination and the treachery of her death by her husband likely still hurts even though a thousand years have at the very least have pass since her death. "He's going to die." States the other simply and he gives a sharp nod in agreement, all of this was simply trying to squeeze a few more years before it happens, a way to know that they did everything they could to extend Golden's life.

"When he passes, I will at least be satisfied that I tried everything I could to delay it." He states simply and the other in human shape's eyes soften in understanding, nodding.

"Another time then." The White Dragon Emperor of Supremacy watches as a Dragon Gate is summoned and the other leaves. There's an odd mix of emotions whirling within but, there's foremost a feeling of fondness and graduated towards his rival for understanding and respecting his wishes. It's a nice feeling, one that's not unlike the feelings the former human have fostered within him.

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Forty-nine years they've been together, a good over half of those years had been bought from Golden consuming various divine food belonging to Deities of the Sun using various methods ranging from buying and bartering to stealing and black mail. It is winter when Golden is dies and he finds himself rather numb for the first month, they've long since prepared a place of burial. It's hard for him to grasp that he's alone and that, that's rather unacceptable.

So, as that first month ends, he roars his grief, loss, and pain to the world before assuming his rightful form. Once more, the White Dragon Emperor flies through the sky, heading straight for the only one who could withstand his need to fight something, someone really. And so, the two Heavenly Dragons battle once more and all around them, the other races flee out of their moving battle, some of the more curious ones did so while wondering just what the Red Dragon did to rile the White Dragon so. All Albion cared about was that he wasn't alone right then nor did Ddraig seem to mind that he wasn't at the top form.

The alien soul now slumbers in the shell he crafted for it, only reason the Apocalypse Dragon even found this soul is due to Albion aiding in ripping the skin of divinity enchantment of agelessness from this male soul. It is rather amusing to learn that this one had been reincarnated among one of the non-sentient magic creatures, likely another cause of how this soul managed to escape his notice. The majority of other souls had been born among the mortal race of mankind and had trouble dealing with the aftermath of their forced reincarnation, thus dying as late teenagers or as adults.

Impressive, at how easily this one converted a small dose of the Vanishing Dragon's own power into his own being. The True Dragon muses to himself. There had been another soul who'd done something also different when it came to using alternate magical sources beyond his reserves, only the power never got cultivated within the being, it got absorbed, nestled within the body, and once spent, was gone from the soul's magical reserves.

How interesting... The Great Red muses as he studies the results of various magical scans. *Like the other one, last life he carried some being made out of raw power and it's left its mark on this reincarnation. Also the younger brother of that pesky soul and, again, a much more solid list of previous incarnations.*

"Wouldn't be hard to..." He murmurs under his breath. *Be easy, actually and he's got the experience of being in a body plan similar to one.*

Yet, it's more of a question of why should he try it then could it work. Snorting, the Great Red places the shell among the others, for now, the spells woven with do their best to stabilize the alien souls, repairing what damage they experienced from being forcefully ripped from their previous bodies and flung into the Dimensional Gap before landing into the more psychical world that allows the other races to flourish, ending up in bodies that had been barely able to house them, more then one of them hadn't been born the correct gender after all.

Why Ophis didn't just fling them back to their home dimension upon entry into the Dimensional Gap, he didn't know but then, he wouldn't have involved himself in collecting them if it hadn't been for the issue of a number of them trying to tear their way back into the Dimensional Gap in the first place, likely not believing whatever warnings they've been told about why it was a Bad Idea, let alone doing so in a Safe Manner. What fools. Dragon of Dragons muses to himself as he heads for his currently favorite resting spot.

He pauses as he senses the two Heavenly Dragons at it again in the world. For a moment, he wonders if he should intervene and pull the White Dragon aside, to inform the Vanishing Dragon of the fact that the alien soul is under his care before brushing that impulse off. The two hadn't even spent a century together and the pair must have said their farewells as the end drew near.

Wake. And Naruto's not sure if he wants to. *"No."*

The former ninja is already drifting off into slumber again, it's warm here and he feels so Safe. **Wake.** Again, that voice commands and he feels like he should Obey but, well, he really doesn't want to.

"Make me." He murmurs sleepily. The soul can't help but sense something akin to mostly annoyance and bemusement, yet command giver might also be slightly impressed with him.

I am beginning to see why you held Albion's attention for as long as you did. That voice remarks and it's the name Albion, its familiar and he finds himself feeling sad and regret connected with Albion. **He misses you.**

And a wave of guilt hits him as he finally recalls who and what Albion is. Much more awake and aware, the soul of Naruto, nicknamed Golden, tries to 'glance' around and 'blink' only, he's got no eyes really nor eyelids. Everything within his space, he's aware of it and that there's nothing fleshy about him. The experience is rather startling yet, it's not New, not really, it's just that before, it was just there and now, now he's awake and can recall experiencing the world in a different way.

"Why bring up Albion? And... where am I?" He wonders but can already tell, the speaker isn't in this space with him. That they are outside of it.

You woke up did you not? The voice remarks and Naruto would have frowned or pouted at the point the voice made. **In a magical relic meant to stabilize and repair the damages you lot experienced upon your forced your souls out of your unprepared bodies and into the Dimensional Gap.**

"Shit." He sums up, after all, he kind of recalls that location is off limits for its hostile nature and the current owner, some Dragon God who's name he can't recall. *"Are my friends safe?"*

I would not know as I have no idea who among the hundred alien souls you count among that number. States the voice. **I will**

admit, you are far more resilient out of the souls, but then, unlike the others, you had been incarnated into a body that resided in a God's Home. Most Solar Deities are associated with healing or medicine so it is not that surprising that what problems your soul and that body had likely been attended too.

It's familiar knowledge, after all, that's what Albion explained to him back when they'd been trying to push off his death to a later date. The only new bit of information in that has to do with his soul and his being born as a griffin being cause for concern. He never gave much thought to his soul having any troubles with getting housed in a body before and now, now he's worried for his friends and any issues or problems they had. *"How bad?"* He asks with dread.

There was a number who had been born the wrong gender. The voice explains calmly. **Then there were those who regarded magic as your dimension's power, chakra, and expected it to obey the same kind of laws, with a number of them needing to be killed before they ripped into the Dimensional Gap in such a way that it would not be repaired for a number of years if they had succeeded.**

"Shit." He curses having decided to just keep his swearing to that one word, not wanting to offend the being who could mess with him in a way that he likely didn't fully grasp. *"So... now what? You just going to toss us back to our home dimension's afterlife?"* He could deal with that, after all, they were dead and likely occupying relics this voice created to capture them in.

I could do that with You but not with the others. States the voice and once more, Naruto would love to blink or have a way to display his puzzlement. **My plan for them is to create bodies that could not just house their souls but also prepare said souls for that journey back to your dimension.**

"Ok, that's nice? So, I'm leaving before the other then?" He's pretty sure he's missing something here. *"You could have just sent me without waking me, right?"*

Are you not interested in living once more? The voice inquires and if the former ninja had a face or body, it's clear what kind of emotions Naruto is experiencing. **Would not your friends be looking for you? I believe they would.**

"Yea, they would..." He admits softly. *"But, wouldn't that be a waste of resources for you? You said I'm more then capable of surviving that journey." What's your price?*

The voice laughs and it's then he realizes he's dealing with a Dragon as the way this guy laughs is very similar to Albion's own when the other assumed a draconic body, one that's not the White's true dragon form but something that's still formidable. *"Which one are you?* " He finally asks once the laughter comes to an end.

The Great Red, the Apocalypse Dragon, the Dragon of Dragons. The voice tells him and he can't help it, *"The True Dragon?!"*

Indeed. Naruto could only imagine the smirk the Apocalypse Dragon likely has. *"Why even give me a choice in this?"* He finally asks in a flat tone, after all, it's not like he's able to do anything right now, he's not even sure if he's even able to call upon any magic that might be clinging to him.

Boredom and this promises to be fairly entertaining, after all, unlike the others, you will be far more in the know and also ahead of their curve as you still recall that language the Vanishing Dragon taught you never mind the lingering draconic magic you converted into your own being. States the Apocalypse Dragon. **If you decide upon human or even half breed human, I believe you will end up with a draconic Sacred Gear.**

Like calls to like. Naruto recalls Albion mentioning it once. *"How do I still have draconic magic? I don't have a body right now!"* He remarks.

And you should not have been able to do anything but explode from that tiny drop of power Albion sent your way but, you did

use it and then absorb the remainder of it. You did so instinctively I might add, which means you have had experience in taking in foreign energy and using it. Great Red states and he'd flush if he could.

"What are my options?" Naruto asks after a bit as he collects himself. *"After all, some of those I might be familiar with are extinct by now."*

Or in decline. Great Red agrees and that means a lot of things, really, after all, pantheons have been known to war among themselves or with one another. Never mind the kind of fights Dragons can cause, he's fairly certain Albion and Ddraig's matches are more akin to natural disasters that range where ever they will. There's a lot of people Naruto misses but, well, Albion is someone he spent the longest time with, nearly fifty years and his most recent friend, teacher, and traveling companion despite their not seeing eye to eye on a lot of things, some of the issues had been personal in nature while it about ethics and views of the world to the manner of how to live their lives and how best to treat others.

Actually... Naruto listens as the Apocalypse Dragon lists off not just species but also crossbreeds. He easily recalls some advice about walking in another person's shoes for a bit, and, well, it sounds like he could. But at the same time, should he? It wouldn't be a matter of days or a limited amount of time but for... Kami knows how long, after all, this was the Apocalypse Dragon and he's still got some draconic magic tied up in his soul it sounded like. *What do I have to lose? Really?*

Yet... his friends from before... they'd likely wind up human or at least human shaped. Then again, he knows Dragons can assume other appearances, yet still, they can live a hell of a long time unless something happens that kills them. He recalls the looks Albion in human shape received without trying, but then, that's not new really. Sasuke and Neji were able to turn their share of heads, well, admiring ones from the fairer sex.

"Just out of curiosity but, how's Albion?" He asks after a bit of silence once Great Red finishes. After all, it couldn't hurt to hear about what the Vanishing Dragon has been up to, right?

Sealed. Both Albion and Ddraig's souls are now in their own separate Scared Gears. And now he's kind of freaked out.

"You mentioned Sacred Gears before... What are they?" Cause he's got this feeling of deja vu.

Ah yes, you would not know. The Biblical Pantheon's God created these vessels to contain dangerous beings and weapons that pass to those with human blood in their veins. Set up a fairly decent system to govern how they pass from one heir to the next. It is not a perfect system as he died along with his rebellious son, Lucifer and three of his trusted underlings, before he worked out all the kinks out of it. The Apocalypse Dragon explains.

"So, how much human blood does one need to get one?" Naruto asks curious as it seems that yip, it's something he's kind of familiar with only a very different twist and take. **Half and higher are best.**

In the end, the former ninja finds himself between two choices, one where he'd be human again, to find his old comrades from his time as a ninja of Hidden Leaf and the other choice was to see what life might have been like for his most recent precious person. There's no point in trying for half and half either, it would just paint a more desirable target upon his back. *"I choose ..."*

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The young boy sports white hair and a simple sniff reveals the presence of the child sporting Devil blood with undertones of Dragon. It's clear the half breed hadn't noticed his presence, which would be rather impressive given he's using that tongue to cast his current cloaking spell. Darkness and light bend to hide him from view of others.

He's standing at the middle of a ritual circle he drew to draw the current possessor of Albion's Scared Gear to his location. It had taken time to adapt to his new body and life style, hatched in the Dragon Lands of the Underworld, one of five eggs which hatched into whelps to a pair of Flame Dragons, although unlike his current siblings, his scales were polished gold in color upon hatching along with sapphire blue eyes. It wasn't that surprising, really, the Great Red had likely slipped him into the nest during the laying of the eggs with neither the wiser.

"Boy, do you possess the Divine Dividing within you?" Naruto asks in English and in a stern voice, allowing the cloak about his location go. The boy jerks and head snaps to his location, eyes widen at the sight of him.

He mentally sighs at the reaction, not that the former ninja could blame the reaction given he's about a century old and a fair bit larger then most Flame Dragons of his age. **How pitiful, Vali, it's just a simple Dragon, you can take him.** He hears Albion proclaim as wings flex out from the back. The boy regains confidence and readies himself.

"Scales." He smirks with a grin. *"Been a while."* The language is one of extincted magical races.

Vali blinks while looking confused, being half Devil meant that it's human languages that are auto translated so the boy tensing up in confusion and annoyance evident. **What did you just call me?!** Albion demands in fury and he gives the boy a fangy grin as he allows clear amusement glinting in his sapphire eyes. *"Scales, you know, given my first thought upon seeing you then had been White Scales? Also, you can take issue with Great Red about him gathering my soul, it seems the others that cross with me got up to no good."*

The boy does his best to keep a calm look but then, he can only guess what kind of emotions Albion is leaking from their connection but, the wings vanish. *"Yea, then he gave me the choice to pick the*

race of the body for me to give life another go in this world." He explains lightly. *"And I recall your arguments about how I couldn't understand your point of view fully simply due to, you know, having been a human or griffin and, yea, your right. So, I picked Dragon and got slipped into a Flame Dragon nest, not sure what species I am really, then again, Dragon of Dragons is the one to craft this body for me, so, I'm assuming I'm a unique breed."*

Golden... Well, at least he got the coloring right. Albion grumbles after some minutes. **Name?**

"Known commonly for my eyes among the Dragon Lands, Sapphire, but the name I've given the Devils has been *Golden* ." He replies, using that magical language's word as a name, in honor of the nickname Albion gave him. He's done some work for Tannin after all, which means he's come into contact with Devils.

Vali is doing his best to look unaffected but all of this but, it's clear that the boy is out of his depths and a little unnerved about the fact that it seems they know one another. Moving from his sitting position, he walks over and says gently, "This won't hurt."

Placing his left hand above the youngling's head, he speaks a spell in that language and with the final note rung, his form shimmers and shrinks until he's the same size as the boy. His form is now that of a half Devil only with different coloring and slight tint to the skin. Glancing down at his form, he murmurs a simple enough chant and simple pair of pants and shirt, both white, now clad his form. "I'm *Golden* and an old traveling companion of Albion's who's been given a second chance at life."

Vali blinks dumbfound at him and that he's now addressing him. He tilts his head slightly to the side, waiting patiently for Vali to introduce himself and their eyes go out of focus for a second before the half Devil scowls, introducing himself, "Vali, Vali Lucifer and the current White Dragon Emperor."

Eyes narrow in challenge and he merely hums in acknowledgement, giving the other a slight smile. "I'm sorry for inserting myself into your company in this manner or any disruptions my presence will cause." He states simply and Vali grunts, crossing his arms about his chest. "But I'm more then willing to be your sparring partner. After all, I did manage to deal some superficial damage on Albion upon our first meeting. Even caused him to bleed in that altered state."

Pretty much killed you regardless. Albion remarks and Vali's eyes widen at the idea that he had fought against said Dragon and did cause some damage. "Perked your curiosity though, enough that you transferred a small drop of power my way."

Which you not just used to heal and alter your body but converted into your own reserves. The White Dragon agrees and Vali finally gives a sharp nod, saying, "Fine. But what name do you want me to use?"

"Uzumaki Naruto while I'm in this form and in public but in private, call me *Golden* ." He tells the half Devil.

With that, he follows after Vali as the boy turns around and marches off. He wonders about the future, after all, the world is a far different place then when he had traveled in Albion's company never mind the fact that his friends were out there, likely trying to make sense of the world and finding anyone who came from their home dimension, never mind if they find themselves born among non-humans.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P2: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

Hyoudou Kazu, formerly known as Uchiha Sasuke, groans as once more, his 'older' brother, one Hyoudou Issei, bolts pass with his two 'friends'. He doesn't consider the pair to be actual friends given how flighty the two strike him to be and might just be joining Issei for the attention the other gets from people. Stepping more to the right and coming to a stop, the group of enraged girls continue in pursuit of the trio, the air rushing in their wake, ruffling his honey brown hair and his Middle-School Kuoh Academy Uniform. His hazel red eyes turn upwards in prayer to whatever powers that he's not needed to carrying his older twin home, they were only fraternal twins instead of identical, thank Kami as he wouldn't know what to do if he'd be always mistaken for Issei.

"Kazu! Over here!" Cries one Hibari Kenta, formerly known as Nara Shikamaru while Rokudo Goten, formerly known as Sai, waves at him. Gently shaking his head, he starts jogging towards the pair of boys his year.

The pair watch as he approaches, each with their cells out. "News?" He asks Kenta.

"Yes." Is his fellow reincarnated ninja's reply with Goten adding, "Dragon."

He stills at the mention of the race, after all, they've heard things concerning that race. "I know he was seen in the company of the latest White, but everything pointed to half Devil like the bearer." Kazu points out as calmly as he can, after all, Naruto seems to be the only one among them that still bears his previous name. They've yet to make contact with their former comrade due to the spotlight

that's typically on one Lucifer Vali due to the young man's Scared Gear, Divine Dividing.

Goten hands over his cell once he starts the video and before his eyes, he watches as the current incarnation of Uzumaki Naruto fends off attacks from a group of Church Exorcists, about twelve of them. Then two of them begin to pray but the golden haired seemingly half Devil doesn't overly notice as the other ten keep up the pressure viva range using guns. Blue eyes glint a bit with power as an arm is raised up covering the lower part of the face.

The bullets don't get pass the cloths or skin if they do manage to hit. A wave of the arm, a shield of molten gold shimmers between them. Naruto gives the group a blank look before turning and walking away with nothing getting pass the shield in a confident walk. Then one Sellzen Freed comes flying down with a Holy Sword in hand and Naruto blocks with ease, only, you can see golden scales now on the bare arm.

"Fuck off." Naruto growls, someone did a subtitle as his former teammate said that in another language. Freed says something that nobody bothered to put subtitles while the Exorcist darts back and to the side.

The camera doesn't catch whatever expression is on Naruto's face but the head tilts and says in a mocking tone, *"Well, if you're sure."*

And Naruto's whole being shimmers and then, there's a fairly decent size Dragon sporting golden scales, perhaps the size of a two door car or bigger, it's hard to tell given there's not much to use to scale the size correctly. Within seconds of this transformation, the Church Exorcists are panicking and backing away, including the camera person. Freed's expression just goes manic and blood thirsty. Freed speaks with an underlining tone of thrill at the current challenge before him.

Naruto seems rather calm, watching the clearly insane Exorcist as the camera is fleeing, the video ends with Freed readying some

attack and the Dragon that is Naruto just waiting.

"It's confirmed, Sellzen Freed is dead by beheading and the Holy Sword he had been using is missing." Kenta explains and he finds himself with a mix reaction over the news, that Naruto got away from that uninjured yet the fact he killed Freed, something he doubts Naruto would have done in his previous life. "The Factions are in a uproar over the fact that a Dragon has so openly aligned himself with the current White Emperor."

Naruto's been sticking close to Vali's side since the other had been eight years of age. He recalls as he hands the phone back to Goten. "Yet, it makes sense, as to why he could go by his previous name. Those in the know... they just assume it's an alias plus... what kind of names do Dragons give their kids?" Kazu wonders and Goten snorts in amusement over his question while the former Nara just sighs.

"At least we know he's capable of taking care of himself." Kenta admits after some minutes of silence and he nods. In a month's time, they'll be graduating from Middle-School division and begin attending the High School division as First Year Students.

"Heavens know the Baka could barely do just that back in Hidden Leaf." He agrees a tad gruffly. With that, they walk off to find a spot to eat their lunch, they don't have long before the classes begin once more.

"You know what's his name will want that." Vali states before adding, "I also believe he'd wanted Freed alive too." He's once more admiring the sword he took from the artificial human, watching as the light moves along the blade.

"You don't care enough to remember his name so why care about what Kokabiel wants?" He asks the half Devil as he finally sheaths the Holy sword, one of nine that the Church managed to create in the last five years before their prized weapon smith got 'kidnapped' by a group of Stray Devils. They used Dragon Gated to the Dragon

Lands and have been walking towards their shared Lair for the pass three days, doing some hunting and he's visited his adopted parents and siblings.

It's not like they've been in much of a hurry to return to their Lair, few dare to step far into the Dragon Lands not just due to the race that inhabits the land but by the very fact that Tannin has been seen visiting a great deal in recent century, which has more to do with the former Dragon King visiting him and sounding him out concerning taking some jobs that weren't ones discussed in polite company. After all, he's proven himself to be good at subtly and possessing a flare for diplomacy, he's got a different disguise for when he's acting as Tannin's behalf, few could mistake *Golden* as anything other then someone with some dose of Dragon blood at least, fewer expecting a Dragon of his age to be capable of subtly or possessing the patience needed to deal with politics of 'lesser' races.

Typically, the only Faction they've really ever had to worry about had been Devils since Vali killed his grandfather and managed to maim his father by way of destroying the man's right eye along with almost gelding the Devil before the drug his grandfather tainted the dinner with began to take effect, having him to haul the half Devil out of there viva Albion's Dragon Gate. The ancient enemies of Devils, Angels and Fallen Angels, never really mattered to either of them nor factored into their plans, yes, there have been Church Exorcists looking to prove their skills by going after the half human descendant of the original Lucifer but that's hardly due to orders from on high, from Heaven, just humans trying to rise up the social ladder that is the Church. Most, like the Lucifers, had thought he'd been a fellow half Devil orphan that Vali found and decided to bring home out of loneliness, now though, now the world knows that the fellow half Devil in Vali's company was in fact, has always been, a Dragon sporting golden scales has been at the current White Emperor's side since the age of eight years old.

"Knowing an other's horde is valuable knowledge, isn't it?" Vali states in a slightly mocking tone and he snorts softly, pointing out, "Since

when do Dragons acknowledge the ownership rights of other races?"

Never. Albion states from the Divine Dividing Sacred Gear. **We are the pinnacle of species after all.**

"Be that as it may..." He does his best to not roll his eyes. "Are you considering the Khaos Brigade's recruitment offer?" Naruto asks, after all, that's how they met Kokabiel in the first place.

"It's tempting." The other admits and he guesses it would be, after all, there's only been really three people Vali has interacted with on a regular basis these pass few years, all three of which either had been or are Dragons. After all, they had only been in Germany to enjoy themselves, neither of them had thought they'd encounter that Stray Devil that a member of the Khaos Brigade, one Kuroka, formerly a Nekoshou or the hunting party of Church Exorcists.

One stolen kiss and Vali was both flustered and vowing to wear her tail as a neck tie, leaving him to keep the Church members occupied, leading them to some empty building and, well, it ended with that insane artificial human thinking that this was some kind of plan to extract him from the Church's clutches once the twelve Exorcists fled the area. Oh the things he managed to get Freed to talk about and the disgust he felt as the dead Exorcist upon the detail he'd gone into about the killing of suspected Devil sympathizers or excommunicated members of the Church. *Just a rabid dog in the end.*

"I'd rather you take Azazel up on that offer from years ago then join the Khaos Brigade." He admits honestly. "We know more about him now and he seems a great deal more trustworthy then the hydra organization that is Khaos Brigade." *Why is it that being a pervert when it comes to some being in a human shape seem to make that person more trustworthy opinion when it comes to my life?* The former ninja wonders to himself.

As much as I hate the idea of joining a per-established organization, Azazel would be the best opinion and all he wants

is to study my Sacred Gear. Albion admits with a sigh. Vali kicks at some rock a bit after hearing that, it's not like there's much any of them could do concerning the events that are weaving their way throughout the supernatural world, there's too many players with various end games never mind their underlings being more then able to become the torch bearers of any of the leaders they get around to killing.

If they could find a way to free Albion from the Scared Gear, perhaps that would throw more then a few of those schemers pause. *Or not, given that they now know that the Heavenly Dragons can be dealt with, their reputation as untouchable isn't what it once was.* He reflects as they get in sight of their Lair.

"Funny, isn't it? Everyone seems to expect me to be at the heart of what's coming yet, I don't give a fucking damn to their expectations nor their fucking damned power plays." Vali growls as his friend picks up the pace now. "I just don't give a shit about them but they just keep poking their over sized noses into my business." He sighs, very much incline to agree with that statement, after all, he knows what's going to happen to his soul when he dies once this life is over as does Albion, no, it's Vali who's got the most to lose, who's only got the one life to live.

"So, ice cream for meals for the next couple of days then." He muses lightly after a minute of silence and Vali snorts but doesn't disagree with the idea, which causes him to smile slightly. The entrance shimmers as the barrier allows them in before closing up with stones behind them, soft orbs of light flicker to life as they walk pass before going out once they've walked pass.

He adds the sword to the collection of blades hanging on the wall, many of them broken or shattered, it's one of the rare swords that arrived intact as he saw potential in adding more enchantments to it, after all, Albion has been giving them lessons concerning an old runic language that the Nobility of Fae help mankind create before their interests in this world faded and they migrated slowly away from this world. The sword is a very good candidate after all, the Church

invested a great deal in being able to create Holy swords never mind welders to use those ancient ones they hold onto while Vali's been trying to hack into whatever system the Biblical God left behind. He hasn't really bugged Vali about results of said course of action nor asked Albion either, it's none of his business unless Vali wishes for his aid after all.

This front part of their Lair is more of a trophy storage, although Vali doesn't usually take trophies while he's only done so concerning weapons or interesting magical items, both tend to be brought here broke more often then not. He's got am intact Devil's King Piece on a shelf next to the shattered into three large parts is a granite plate that still sports silver and gold wiring that sports Divine Egyptian short hand. Pausing, he takes a few minutes to study the collection, nothing seems out of place nor active, although his eyes settle upon a visor made out of quartz and the helmet that's got a lot of body growth and illusion enchantments, it's some kind of training head gear that a particularly nasty Cabal, named after a bird and some word meaning shadow, used on a number of kids, trying to create powerful body guard slash attack dog, none of the kids lived for long once it had been on them and the Cabal couldn't cancel the training once it started, in time, they used it as a threat to keep their members in line, threatening to use it on their kids or their members of their family.

He keeps meaning to take the thing apart but there's always something going on and it's not like it's causing any harm, just sitting upon the table with a rather old, blank notebook. Naruto wonders if maybe he'll get around to doing it while Vali is sulking for the next little while. Then again, Tannin might contact him about what happened in Germany, concerning the 'fall out' of that incident. *Bova must be amused by this turn of events.* He muses as he turns his back on the collection and follows the hallway towards the common rooms. That I let some human get under my scales enough to cause me to transform.

Once stepping foot within the room, he allows some of his current shape alter, taking on more of his actual nature yet keeping the size and shape. His nails are much sharper looking and from the tips of his fingers to his elbow, his skin is now pretty much just golden scales. His shirt vanishes as does his runners and socks, wings sprout but fold onto his back while his feet pretty much match his hands, only the scales stopping at his knee. His eyes take on a more reptilian look while some scales highlight his forehead, it's likely that along his spine, he's got scales there as well.

He begins to stretch a bit while walking over to the kitchen area, keeping his wings folded as he doesn't want to knock any about stretching them. Yawning, his teeth are much more pointed then before, most noticeably his front ones. Given Naruto doesn't see Vali now, it's clear that the younger is likely off for a soak in his private bathroom. So, he takes stock of what they have and then glances towards the couch, finding that Tannin has indeed arrive and in a human like shape, the former Dragon King is sitting upon their couch and seems to be content to wait. "Rum or mead?"

"Mead." Tannin states simply and he heads for the closet like room they keep the liquor, finding a clay jug filled with it, he grabs it by the ring that serves as a handle. The door closes behind him and Naruto wonders if things were really that bad that the elder requested mead. "Just got in." It wasn't a question, more of an observation as he hands off the jug to the seemingly delicate looking elf that's maybe five foot two.

Once more, belaying the current looks, Tannin gulps a few mouthfuls of the honey-wine. Letting out a satisfied sigh, the elf gives him a rather predatory, tooth filled grin that again is at odds with the current looks. "Why a simply beheading?" The other asks curiously.

"Oxygen starvation." He states simply and Tannin snorts. "Kokabiel's been in contact with Freed, the idiot thought we were there to extract him, likely didn't tell him that it was going to be the former Nekoshou, just an infamous Devil." Naruto informs Tannin and now there's a frown, so he tells the former Dragon King about the conversation,

leaving nothing out. After all, Tannin is a fairly neutral party even if he's now a Devil in regards to the Biblical Faction, only interested in seeing that Dragons still have places to call their own in this shrunken world that seems to have out grown such things as Dragons and the need for Deities.

"Now they know you can shape shift." Tannin muses and he sighs. "I was emotional." Overwhelmingly annoyed at not just dealing with someone from the Khaos Brigade but a mob of minions from the fucking Church. Tired of having to 'act' like those simple words have any effect on him and that they just keep hunting Vali and him like they was their Prey when in fact it were they who were lucking to leave his company alive. He missed the days when all his fists and feet could do was just bruise people, that they'd live once their fight was over.

Now, now the other races were so fucking fragile that it's best to never lash out at them in anger nor could he glare at them in a proper manner, not without causing them to freeze up while pissing and shitting themselves in fright or just fainting, or if they possessed a weak heart, outright kill them. Never mind just shouting at them. Yes, he's gotten a great deal of insight into why Albion had been so pleased at how quickly he could adjust to using magic to help strength his body let alone know how to roll just so that he could take less damage from the White Emperor. That he could factor in the kind of force the Dragon could sometimes unleash even in the shape of some being similar to a man, showing he's a quick study when it came to learning by doing.

That he never really altered his manner when it came to addressing the White Dragon, just continuing in his brash and rough manners. Happy to argue his points without crumbling under the unyielding, inhuman blue gaze or unafraid to try to put him into a headlock and give him a noogie. Or when the Vanishing Dragon would return the favor, never shying away from his touch outside of their spars.

So yes, he's beginning to realize just how much of an impact his death caused Albion and the kind of value the other had put on their

time together. It's one of those times where he's not sure if picking Dragon was as worth but at the same time, he's also getting an understanding of, perhaps, what the Tailed Beasts also went through when it comes to being far too large for the world at it is. Although, unlike Dragons, the Tailed Beasts never could walk among humans as pretending to be one.

"I tend to forget you're so young." Tannin admits with a soft sigh and he looks off at some point at the kitchen. "It's a complement really. You act far older then your collection of decades."

"Not much of an excuse." Naruto admits as he lets his wings hang a bit behind him. "Then again... it's not like Orphis is wandering around in their truest form." They both shutter a bit, neither really wanting to discuss the fact that the Dragon God has assumed the form of a young girl, a Gothic Lolita is the name given to a young girl who dresses like that.

"Given your association with Albion, most will likely believe you learnt how to from him." Tannin states and he smiles ever so slightly, after all, the former Dragon King isn't wrong, after a fashion. "How's Vali?"

"He's tired of being harried and I wouldn't be surprised if he's lonely, not in the in need of a bed partner way either." Naruto states honestly. "I think... I think I'm going to teach him how to shape shift, including his age."

Tannin takes some sips from the jug while he stares off towards the sealed off area that is Vali's part of the Lair. "That is, if he doesn't approach Azazel about that old offer." He adds after a bit, he doesn't know which he'd prefer, honestly, both had their pros but there's also cons. Namely, Vali growing to resent the mask that the shape shifting would allow him to assume, that it's not really him or that it's keeping secrets from those friends but at the same time, it'll continue to allow Vali to be mostly free from the tangle of supernatural politics.

"Sacred Gears and their users." Tannin recalls and he nods. "Azazel isn't the bad sort, but he's clearly not keeping a better eye on his underlings or if they aren't in possession of divided loyalty."

Tannin gulps down the last of the mead once he stands and tosses the empty clay jug at him, he catches it. "I'll be sure to keep my youngest occupied so he doesn't show up to pledge himself to either of you." Tannin states.

"Might want to keep an eye on him even then. After all, you never know when the Red Dragon Emperor's going to be roaring onto the scene and with everything that's going on, he's going to be found within this decade." Naruto points out. "He just might slip away the moment word gets out and pledge himself like he thinks I did only to Ddraig and his bearer."

"He could find a worse role model then you." Tannin states simply and he shrugs his wings in acceptance as Tannin opens his Dragon Gate and walks through, body already assuming his true form. The Dragon Gate closes, leaving him alone in the common area.

"He didn't even try to make a bet about that." He mutters which means that the former Dragon King's own private thoughts and instincts concerning Ddraig's appearing soon is very much in alignment with his own assumption. *Which is kind of worrying, after all, just what kind of person will we be dealing with in the future?* He wonders.

"You alright there, Oniisan?" Kazu asks his 'elder' brother as they are at the table with their mom supervising them as they do their homework while she is waiting for a tray of brownies to finish baking, a bribe for a certain someone to finish their homework instead of sitting before their lap top computer watching questionable movies or looking at suggestive pictures.

"I'm fine! Perfectly healthy!" Issei says while he gives the other preteen a searching and slightly concerned look. Then again, the

mob of teenagers did a real number on his twin and the other kind of huffs and pouts, which only highlights the bruise on the right side and the split lip.

"You call looking like that fine?" He remarks dryly, after all, there's no iryo ninjutsu to fix all that bruising or the few scraps. "Just why can't you, I don't know, not peep on the High School Division's girl's gym room lockers? Isn't it safer to do that on your computer? At least for the next few days?"

"I must agree with your brother, honestly, you're never going to get a girl friend at this rate never mind that you can be expelled." Their mom states with a sigh. Given the few tests he's done on Issei of a magical nature, his brother is in possession of a Sacred Gear and given that the Devils own the academy, it's highly unlikely for his brother to be expelled at all, after all, Issei is a prime candidate to join a young Devil's Peerage, even if the nature of the gear is unknown.

"But, but, but... Oppai!" Issei whines and he wonders if this was karma based on how he lived his life as Uchiha Sasuke, to be the younger brother of a breast pervert. *Maybe Jiraiya's soul traveled with us? And ended up reincarnated as my older twin brother?* Kazu wonders ideally. *And having already been dead instead of ripped from his body, he won't get his memories back?*

"Oppai does not justify anything. There's actual women who get paid to have their pictures taken in the nude and they should be far more developed then any of the High School girls. Or star in those porn movies you keep getting viruses from downloading off of questionable sites." He states flatly and earns himself a look from their mom, the one that clearly says they'll be having a chat about how'd he would know.

Issei just pouts with slightly teary eyes, doing a very good impression of a puppy actually. "But, it's not the same!" His twin whines and he snorts, remarking, "I'd almost point out that you wouldn't want

anyone peeping on you while your changing only, I think you'd be flattered."

With that, he focus back on his homework, there's a great deal of information to be read or accessed using a computer. It's amazing at what you can read up on concerning any subject or how easy it is to share ideas with someone that's living on another continent and speaking a different language. Videos and music to be found at certain sites or watch a live feed of someone's camera.

The site they use, it's a faux gaming forum that's post by post and the 'game' is based off of their previous lives only there's certain changes to the terms or using alternate words when describing the 'setting'. It is an easy way to keep in touch with one another and a great excuse for meeting up in RL. A few of those born as Devils or among them, they typically don't know about the site until one of them gets directed to it as a means to get in touch with the others who were also reincarnated. *Which begs the question, how old is Naruto?* Kazu wonders to himself.

After all, Dragon whelps can be found in the familiar forest and, well, nobody keeps track of the age of said hatch-lings, never mind what effect being a Familiar could do to a Dragon's life cycle. *To be that big, how many decades has he lived?* He wonders. *What type of Dragon was the former baka? Or is he a child of one of the Dragon Kings?*

He'd wager on the being a child of a Dragon King then the former blond ninja coming from one of the so called common breeds or even one of the higher level types. Although it's been over seventy hours since that footage was taken, there hasn't been any official statements from any of the various pantheons, let alone from a Dragon King coming forward to say something about the incident, which isn't that surprising as the Dragons aren't organized in any real manner. It would be very surprising if one even did, then again, he recalls that there's a former Dragon King among the Devils, so good odds are that the Devils might be the first to put forth some kind of statement due to having someone like that among their ranks.

His attention returns to his homework as the timer goes off and he blinks while staring at what he wrote on his page. With a sigh, he flips the pencil around and erases the last few sentences, after all, nothing he wrote had to do with the literary homework he's working on. He can sense Issei's attention on the brownies while he is busy reading what he wrote before continuing on that tone.

Soon enough, he's done with it and closes it, putting his homework away and looks up to find Issei no longer sitting across from him. With a quick scan, he spies his brother hovering near their mother as she guards the tray, waiting for the brownies cooling. It's times like these that cause him feel guilt over the fact that it's like he's betraying the memory of his previous parents and elder brother by loving his current set of parents and a fondness for his twin, yet, he's not really Uchiha Sasuke any more, as Hyoudou Kazu, he's never been subjected to an older brother using illusions to show how their parents died nor does he have the weight of a legacy of a powerful clan and its Bloodline Limit demanding so much from a traumatic child who was thrust upon a pedestal and people willfully blinded and made themselves deaf to the fact he had just been a boy, creating a false identity of him as the Last Uchiha, of him being another Genius Uchiha, the Rookie of the Year, and a Loyal Genin of Hidden Leaf.

"I want the first piece!" Issei declares and he rolls his eyes, a fond smile making itself at home upon his face at the sight.

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It's vacation time and he's traveling out of Kuoh Town viva a bus, traveling to the next town over to use the Teleportation Circle to arrive at one of the five communal training grounds. Since he Woke at ten and been introduced to magic a few weeks later after using the internet to try and find others, he found that he's got a talent for Elemental Magic and Norse style of Magic, but he, like all of those that could learn to harness magic, make it a point to study Teleportation Magic if only to know how to activate one of the prepared Teleportation Circles they've set up for their use. He hasn't

dared try and set up his own private spot to use for his own purposes.

Noticing that they are arriving to the other town, he's slow to gather his thoughts but once he does, he walks off the bus with his two bags, he's got cloths for the week and the excuse has to do with a LARP meet up. As he begins to get more into the town, Kazu can't help but feel that there's Something visiting. So, he begins to debate if he should get involved only, he spies a very familiar face exiting out of a business ran by one of the native supernatural races of Japan.

The age is off along with the business attire but it's someone he knows, someone they've all been waiting to get into contact with. Without a second thought, he follows after the seemingly thirty year old in business man, the hair is more yellow then gold and the features are more Japanese with the usual age marks for someone of that age, stress of office work might be what's giving the illusion. Kazu's mind is in a loop, after all, there's no signs that this man bought anything but then, supernatural races have far more talent and flexibility with magic then magicians do.

"So, why are you following me?" It's then that he realizes he'd been led far from the popular streets, a place that's got a lot of magic ensuring a private meeting. Blue eyes looking fairly blank and the face passive, so very different then the smiling blond from his memories or from the pictures of a young man standing next to the bearer of the Divine Dividing Sacred Gear with a various smiles or smirks with glinting emotion.

"Baka." He manages to say and the seemingly adult man raises an eyebrow. "Dobe." Kazu can't help but wonder if he's misstep in this encounter given that there's no reaction from the other.

Then, a minute passes in silence before his eyes the form shimmers and it's not long before even the cloths take on the attire he's far more familiar with. "Teme." And there's fondness in the tone along with a fond smile.

Relief floods him as the pressure in the air retreats and the magic that had been pressing down lightens. "Dragon?" He can't help but ask and Naruto snorts softly, replying, "Well, like I told Albion, take it up with the Great Red."

He stiffens at the mere mention of the Apocalypse Dragon and his stomach drops. "What?" He couldn't help but whisper harshly, although he kind of wonders just what Naruto means by telling Albion the same. After all, the former ninja can't have a history with the original White Dragon Emperor, right?

"Our souls are alien to this world and he's the guy who went around collecting our souls when we died from our... well, invasion, yea, that works." The Dragon before him explains. "I guess I shouldn't be surprised you don't remember your previous body, then again, according to that guy, a number of us ended up the wrong gender never mind the damage the Dimensional Gap did to our souls as we passed through."

Kazu pales as he recalls reading about said Dimensional Gap and the implications that it affected their souls... "I ended up in the body of some God's Griffin breeding program, ended up getting a Divine Enchantment of Agelessness, never mind getting healed by said Deity or fellow Deity due to the body not meant to house a former human's soul." Naruto continues, rambling a bit. "Managed to get out of their Domain and ended up attacking what I thought was a white lizard someone added bat wings to, turned out to be Albion and, well, Dragon vs Griffin, it ended the way you'd think, only, I piped the Vanishing Dragon's interest."

Of course you did. He can't help but think as Naruto is silent for a bit, clearly remembering those memories. "He mimicked Ddraig's Transfer and sent a drop of his power into my dying body. Didn't just heal using the magic but altered my body into a more human looking one before converting the magic into my being for my private use. It broke the Divine Enchantment though, so, I grew old and died near fifty years after our encounter."

"Well, you know me and, well, we talked about things, argued about a lot of things. So, since I wasn't as damaged as you guys and cause the Great Red was bored, he decided to wake me up and give me the choice of what species my new body will be." Naruto continues and he suspects that the former human was mindful of his manners when dealing with somebody who could squish him with little to no effort, that it was likely because of the entertainment value the other could provide was the reason he's still exists. "And, well, I picked the opinion that would give me insight into Albion's arguments. It's been a mix blessing really." Naruto admits with a sigh and he blinks, after all, how could being a Kami damned DRAGON be a mix blessing?

Dragons are considered to be power incarnate, other races feared their wrath, and they're capable of drawing powerful people into their sphere, either as allies or enemies. *The last part is most definitely a trait Naruto had long before now.* Kazu admits to himself although some of his disbelief must show on his face.

Naruto rolls his eyes before explaining, "When someone is looking to make a name for themselves, what supernatural race do they tend to seek out and fight?" Then it clicks, after all, killing a Dragon of a particular level of fame does seem to be a good way of becoming famous, one way or another. It's more of a question if that being is still alive after tangling with said Dragon and upon the duration of said fight.

"Yea, been sticking close to Dragon Lands since the reveal." The former blond ninja admits with a careless shrug. "Rather not rile up interest with a pile of corpses, it just causes excitement among the hot heads. They'll grow bore and someone will do something, causing the hot heads to switch targets, I'll be old news and people murmuring how obvious it was in hindsight it was that I was a Dragon."

He couldn't help but nod in agreement, it sounds like Naruto's just trying to wait out this surge of interest. "And Vali?" He asks curious

and Naruto's brows furl slightly. "I mean, you don't generally stray far from him." Kazu adds.

"Safe." Naruto states simply and he guesses that he had been a bit nosy. "And none of my business." He concludes and Naruto nods, some tension does seem to leave Naruto's eyes, making it clear that while Naruto doesn't mind talking about himself, he didn't want to discuss anything concerning the White Dragon Emperor, and for good reason more then likely.

"We have a web site." He tells the Dragon and it takes him seconds to pull out a business card, pulling out a pen, he writes the address on it along with the name he uses on the site. He walks over and offers the card over, Naruto flips it to see what's on the other side and a slight rise of an eyebrow causes him to ask, "What?"

"You do know Kuoh Town is co-owned by the younger sisters of the current Leviathan and Lucifer?" And he stiffens while swallowing the 'What?!' but it's clear that it's on his face. "Yea, they're going to be attending the Kuoh Academy when the school year begins. My sources says that Zeoticus Gremory himself has been the Administrator, not sure what House Sitri contributes to Kuoh Town." Naruto says with a frown before glancing at him.

"Well, it's your life." Naruto states simply after studying him with said frown, the frown fading away. "I'm sure you are aware of the stigma human reincarnated Devils face." The Dragon remarks in a light tone with a bit of a smirk and he nods, yea, they were. "Good."

With that, the former human nods and begins to turn, walking away. "I'm Hyoudou Kazu." He says and Naruto glances behind him, pace slow. "Sapphire among the Dragon Lands. Not sure if any of you are brave enough to approach the range but, if you are and you do encounter one of the inhabitants, just say your looking to speak with Sapphire about a Debt."

"Sapphire?" He can't help but repeat and the Dragon states, "For my eyes. Better then most names given out to young drakes, like, oh, I

don't know, Breezy or Puff." And as Naruto's head turns forward, he hears the former human adds, "Give it a few more decades and I'll Earn my Right to choose my own Name."

Then, he gets his first sight of a fable Dragon Gate, its white meaning that it belongs to Albion. Naruto walks through without pause and it vanishes, leaving him alone. The magic ensuring privacy holds but likely not for long. There's a lot for him to review but it's safe to say that it seems that the Dragon of Dragons have some kind of interest in them and that Naruto clearly befriended one of the Heavenly Dragons, enough to access the Vanishing Dragon's own Dragon Gate.

Pulling out his phone, he pauses for a few seconds before doing a massive text with simple message. Meeting tonight at Sunrise Communal Grounds, by order of the Head of Uchiha Clan. With that sent and the phone pocketed, he heads for the Teleportation Circle to head to said training ground.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P3: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

"I can't believe he wants me to attend a school!" Vali growls from pacing in the kitchen and Naruto isn't overly surprised, after all, it's not like they've had cared much about bits of paper stating what level of 'official' education either of them possess. Not that he had been part of the discussions between three, after all, he's a 'subordinate' and 'pledged' to the current bearer of the Divine Dividing Sacred Gear, although it's questionable about whether Azazel bought into that particular party line, then again, they've never interacted nor has the Fallen Angel seen how Vali and himself interact.

"It's only for the final year?" He hazards a guess upon hearing that, he just arrived from arranging a shipment of a special Sake as a Birthday gift to the eldest son of Tannin. Encountering the current reincarnation of the former Uchiha Sasuke, now Hyoudou Kazu, had been a rather welcome surprise along with a way to get into contact with the others.

"That's not the point!" Snaps the half Devil and glares at him, then blinks noticing his current appearance. The other frowns as it's clear two desires seem to be in conflict.

"Met one of the other souls and got a way to get in contact with them." He explains, deciding that it hardly matters and Vali frowns with a hint of worry. "What other terms did you agree too?" Changing the subject from him back to what happened with the young Lucifer.

There was the school issue but there's also a physical and psych tests. I managed to talk Azazel out of having Vali demonstrate his skills in combat and magic. Albion speaks up and he hums. **Political cover and medical care, personal lessons**

in supernatural politics, and free access to the Sacred Gear research.

He nods as he begins to head for the kitchen, allowing his form to take on his Dragon traits, save for his wings, his back likely far more covered in golden scales then when he usually has his wings on display. "Well, at least this way, nobody will suspect that Tannin gave you those lessons on politics." He remarks and Vali groans.

Oh no, they'll just suspect that Tannin had his newest pet project give a general over view. Albion remarks dryly and he chuckles. "They wouldn't be wrong..." Vali remarks and he snorts, after all, it's kind of the truth. It's not like he's kept the two in the dark about his doing jobs for Tannin under a different disguise and using a different language that pretty much means Golden.

"I rather resemble that remark, Scales." He remarks as he grabs a two liter of milk that he's collected himself from Apollo's Divine herd of cattle, closing the fridge, he walks over to one of the chairs while Vali's got the look that shows that the two were having their own private conversation. The magical seal on the cap fades after exploding into a shower of sparkles, he's drinking from it before he sits down, letting out a soft sigh and licking his lips, feeling very mellow as he puts the cap back on.

He leans back and watches with half lid eyes as Vali finally seems to sigh. "So... I'm not going to be living here while I'm attending the school." Vali states and he can't help but feel a bit of tension in his muscles. "I'm going to be taking some potions to alter some of my appearance. Azazel's the only one who's going to know the name or appearance I'm going to be using. It's an experimental personal ward."

He forcefully swallows, doing his best to keep his anger at the thought of the two not being in his presence for a year from controlling how he's going to respond. Naruto does his best to not rip the cap off the plastic bottle and takes a gulp of the milk. The milk

does help and he begins to control his breathing while his head pounds at the mere idea of Vali being kept from him.

It's clear that Albion and Vali seem to sense his mood and he refuses to express his anger viva shouting and overt displays of temper. It's hard but, finally, he feels like he's got a good enough hold on his reaction. "I see." He says softly and winces at the amount of cold rage is in the undertone of that statement.

Standing, he stares at the hallway that marks his part of the Lair. "Forgive me but I need some private time." Naruto states softly and stalks into his section of the Lair. "Just... let me collect myself." He adds before he stalks through the threshold and it seals the way upon sensing his mood. It continues to seal the passage way and then, once in his first room, his whole body shifts in a violent manner into his Dragon form and gives voice to his emotions, knowing that the sound shouldn't reach either Albion or Vali.

So, he vents.

Well, that could have been worse. His partner remarks and Vali would have love to glare at the Sacred Gear. "Well, we knew he wasn't going to take it well." He admits and sits down on the couch, the plastic two liter of milk resting on the floor now with the cap already on.

He really doesn't know where some of the food *Golden* often brings home, only that it's typically divine in nature. Having asked Albion about it, the trapped Dragon mentioned having taught the golden Dragon how to sneak into various Pantheons to steal from the Deities back when the other had been born a Griffin and used some of Albion's transferred magic to assume a more human like appearance. Oh, he's had eaten some of it, usually cooked up and served to him when he's sick or as a reward for things, like mastering a new spell or lasting a minute longer in a spar between them. It's rather tasty, he admits, but too much of a good thing can be harmful, especially if the food in question is from a divine source.

Leaning back in the couch and staring up at the ceiling, he feels rather guilty about that little detail of the agreement and knew that Azazel wasn't wrong that people knew how attach *Golden* and himself were, even if they're assumptions about their relationship misses the mark. After all, as far as he's concerned, *Golden* is more a protective, supportive, older brother then a subordinate and *Golden* is an old friend of Albion's, although he kind of wonders if the two had ever been more then just friends. It's going to be hard on him too, not coming to their Lair or being separated in both physical and having a communication blackout for the year of attending the high school.

"Are you sure you'll be ok?" He asks after a time of silence. Vali feels Albion stir before replying, **As long as he's alive when we return, I can deal with this time apart.**

Well, given how long they were apart, is that answer really that surprising? He muses as he finally gets up off the couch, moving over to pick up the milk, he returns it to the fridge before grabbing stuff to make a light meal. There's no point making anything heavy, not when *Golden* likely won't be coming out of his area any time soon for the rest of the day or, maybe, tomorrow.

"What's the point of this meeting?" Kevin Smith, the reincarnation of one Sarutobi Konoharmaru, asks now that those that could make it have arrived. Many of them murmur in agreement.

"I got into contact with Naruto." And that causes a few moments of silence before people who were close to the former blond explode in questions and demands. "Silence!" The voice belongs to one Iris Andrealphus, the reincarnation of Tenten, one of the few who reincarnated as a Pure-Blooded Devil. "Please continue Hyoudou-san."

"Thank you, Andrealphus-san." Kazu says with a slight smile as it had been overwhelming having so many people shouting at him. "He

remembers and according to him, we have the Apocalypse Dragon to thank for our current reincarnations."

It takes some seconds for that to sink in, by now, everyone knows the who's who of Dragons. He glances towards Faust Dantalion, a half Devil reincarnation of the former Kazekage Gaara. "And your dreams, Dantalion-san? According to Naruto, when we invaded this world, we ended up in bodies that were ill suited to house us and our souls had been damaged from exposure to the Dimensional Gap."

"What do you mean by that?" Kevin asks and he replies, "Some of us weren't born the correct gender and it seem that the Apocalypse Dragon gathered up our souls upon our release from said bodies. That the Dragon of Dragons set about healing our souls before arranging our current incarnations."

"How would he know that when we don't even know it?" Julie Zeams asks with narrow eyes, she's the incarnation of one Tomoe who was a civilian who got swept up in the wake of that jutsu. "He ended up born in a God's Home in the body of a Griffin, likely to a solar Deity at least so it shouldn't be surprising that Naruto's soul likely did get mended to some extent by said God."

Yip, those among the crowd possessed a wide range of expression from disbelieving that little fact to exasperated acceptance. "Any more world shattering information you're going to spring on us?" Goten asks and he gives everyone an apologetic look, which causes a lot of groans and sighs.

"How mind blowing is this bit of information?" Iris asks, voicing the thoughts of the others. "He somehow befriended Albion, back before he was sealed in a Sacred Gear. After losing a fight with said Dragon."

"Of course he did, he's fucking Naruto Uzumaki." Kevin remarks with Faust sporting a slight smile, making him wonder if the half Devil just won a bet or bets. "He also was given a choice of picking his race for this incarnation and picked Dragon due to wanting an insight into

Albion's point of view simply because the Apocalypse Dragon was bored." Kazu says with a sigh, which pretty much means that the Apocalypse Dragon is the reason for which race they found themselves being reincarnated as along with picking out their respective parents.

"So, the reason why he's sticking close to Vali is because of his old friendship with Albion?" Kenta muses and he shrugs while Kevin remarks, "Might be the reason why he sought the welder out but I doubt it's why he sticks around."

"Yea, this is Naruto we're talking about." Faust agrees and he decides not to share the bit about how Dragons in the Dragon Lands seem to name their young, after all, Sapphire is often considered a woman's name, then again, given the two examples, it's likely the best name out of his generation. He watches as money gets passed around, with most going to Faust while people pull out their phones, likely alerting the results of bets then the information he just shared, it's too sensitive to share outside the security of magical wards.

"Was he well?" He glances over to look at Ye Rou, the current reincarnation of Hyuuga Hinata, a possessor of one of the seven Twilight Healing Sacred Gear. Rou is in her late teens and born to a couple as their third child but eldest daughter.

"He's a Dragon, Ye-san. There's few things that can harm one of those." He admits but there's a look in her eye so he admits, "He's been sticking close to the Dragon Lands, waiting out the current interest in him, not wanting to rouse any more interest then he has already."

"He told me that if any of us visited the Dragon Lands and attracted the attention of the inhabitants to say that we're there to speak with Sapphire about a Debt." And yea, there's that look of disbelief. "Named for his eyes, I'm told that some have been called Breezy or Puff."

Rou nods as the look fades and it's clear that Rou's already mentally making plans to do just that. "Thank you for telling me." Rou says and he gives her a slight nod.

There's a lightness in the young woman's step as she walks away, it's clear that Hinata's crush is influencing Rou's feelings. Then again, who is he to judge? As Sasuke he wasn't all that mentally stable after everything that happened to in his life. After all, it's only after thrusting a ball of lightning into his best friend's chest did it dawn on him just how he, as Sasuke, had been skittering the edges of becoming what he thought Itachi was like. Never mind the whole reveal of the fact that Naruto and himself had been their generation reincarnations of the two arguing sons of the Sage of Six Paths.

Being Hyoudou Kazu, he kind of prefers it. This world isn't perfect but there's more evidence of people working to fix that. People try for the diplomatic approach, but that could be more towards the fact that with the current level of technology, it makes it easier to do so. It's also reflected in the supernatural world, which is rather surprising given that there are Gods and Goddesses of War among the various Pantheons. Oh sure, there's discontent among members of various Pantheons but the peace holds, particularly the cease fire among the Biblical Pantheon and given how long its been since that cease fire came about, maybe they'll get around to talking about a peace treaty in a couple of decades.

Which reminds him of the fact that Kuoh Town is co-owned by the heirs of two Devil Houses, Gremory and Sitri. *Which means, I should speak with Iris and Faust about who the heirs are and what their situation is.* He decides and glances at the pair before deciding to approach Iris as she's likely more to have encountered the pair then Faust as she's a Pure-Blooded Devil.

"Sapphire! You got a Debtor!" He blinks and glances towards the entrance at the sound of Nipper's bellow in Dragon. It's been a month since Vali left, Azazel wanted to work out any kinks in the potions and personal ward before the school year began, which was

reasonable even if he would prefer to spend more time with his self adopted younger brother slash charge.

"Gender?" He bellows in English as he's current form doesn't have the right lungs or vocal cords to speak proper Dragon. Naruto tilts his head expectantly.

"Female!" There's a bit of a snicker in the undertone. *"Got one of those Gear things in her too by the smell of her!"*

Getting off the floor, he pulls in most of his Dragon features until it's mostly just his nails, patches of scales about his body, and leaving his eyes pretty much alone. "Coming!" He bellows and walks down the walk way to the entrance.

He gets to the entrance to find a young woman looking nervous behind his clutch sibling, Nipper. The Flame Dragon takes a moment to study his appearance before nostrils flare, they both turn towards the human woman, while he doesn't have as acute sense of smell as Nipper does right now, he can tell from body language alone that the young woman seems to like what she see of his current body, much to the shared bemusement between Nipper and himself. "I'll take if from here."

Nipper snorts before giving a sharp nod and leaping straight up into the air, a bit of magic to get high enough in the air to take off. His focus remains on the young woman who's features are primarily from Asia. "This way please." He states after a minute of studying her features, trying to place if he's seen her before, turning and walking into the Lair, trusting she's following behind.

It's hard for her to keep her eyes from wandering about the back of Naruto's reincarnation. There's no shirt so she can easily see a collection of small golden scales about the spine and the shoulder blades. The gentle lights that come to life as they walk down the hall are not harsh in the slightest and she wonders of the magic behind it, after all, the lights also fade off once they get some distance away.

He's a shape shifter, is it any wonder he's so good looking? Rou reminds herself yet it doesn't help at all, really. *He also doens't recognize me.* But then, looking into the mirror and trying to match her current face to the one she had as one Hyuuga Hinata... None of them looked like they had during the life they lived in Hidden Leaf Village never mind their current names, well, accept for Naruto, but then, he could get away with it due to his race it seems.

They come to a large room that sports a lot of interesting items, most of which seem to be broken or shattered weapons, but at the sight of a certain, almost innocent piece, she breaths in sharply at the sight of it. "Took that from an idiot trying to rig Devil Rating Games for their own asinine reasons." The Dragon remarks upon realizing what's caught her attention. "Tannin didn't want it nor did I want to destroy it, so, I put it there. I guess I could use it to barter with Azazel, it's not like I have any plans to study the thing."

"That's an actual King Piece?" She finds her voice to ask in English, she's not sure just what her reaction should be. "And the Satans don't know you have it?!"

"I doubt they knew that idiot had it in the first place." Naruto remarks with a touch of amusement. "Besides, it's not like they can't recreate one, it's more they choose not to."

"No safer place then a Dragon's horde for it at this point." She remarks with a sigh as she notices a table that's got a strange helmet on it plus an open notebook, no chair in sight but then, the table isn't that tall. "I'm Rou Ye, the reincarnation of Hinata Hyuuga." She bows politely at her current host.

"Sapphire among the Dragon Lands, among the other races, Naruto Uzumaki." She shifts her weight a bit as she tries to figure out what emotions are lurking in those beautiful blue eyes. "I'll answer to either, but I do prefer Naruto."

"I tend to prefer Rou." She admits and Naruto nods slightly. "I asked Kazu about you and he's the one to tell me how to visit you."

"Ah yes, that... kind of slipped my mind." Naruto looks a tad sheepish with a matching grin. "Something kind of popped up and, well..." She smiles at the embarrassment the fairly young looking man displays in an honest manner.

"Well, you are a Dragon, I guess getting internet is rather difficult out here." She teases and Naruto snorts, saying, "Not really, it's more not use to having something like it. Usually it's used for watching things or quick references on topics that I want to look up when I'm bored."

"Vali uses it to play games online and to help Albion 'Troll' people." There's a touch of sadness at the mention of Vali while she's trying to wrap her head around the idea of the White Dragon Emperor of Supremacy engaging in something so petty as Trolling people on the internet. "So..." The currently transformed Dragon muses after a bit, looking at her with a curious look.

"I wanted to check up on you." She admits and Naruto nods slightly. "He mentioned about you having been a Griffin and befriending the Vanishing Dragon during that life. Of you picking your current race."

"Being a Griffin... the focus was more on the Here and the Now, not so much on the Past or thoughts of the Future, so it wasn't as bad as it should have been. Even when I managed to assume a human like shape, the mentality more expanded then altered, really. Clearer thoughts with a superior ability to plan using the Past knowledge and experiences, still didn't make much plans for the Future though." Naruto admits with a 'what could you do' shrug. "Never got around to marrying nor was I able to have kids, my bed partners after my altering of my body weren't the correct species after all."

She frowns at the mention of the one night stands but, well, couldn't blame him, after all, she's dated a bit in this life. "I was fairly old by the time I encountered Albion, as a Griffin, I had a Divine Enchantment that warded against old age and it's not like Albion didn't help me look for you guys, but, well, I think I might have been the last one to be collected." She sighs and nods, after all, they've

known that beasts belonging to Deities do live beyond the natural life span, that it's an Enchantment, fueled by Divine magic makes sense.

"This life?" She asks curiously and Naruto snorts softly. "Too young among Dragons, I'm a bit over a century and even though I'm clearly bigger then my clutch siblings, I'm still regarded as a... preteen I think is the best word for it. Far too young to be thinking of seeking a mate or mates and eggs."

"Found anyone in this life?" Naruto asks curiously and she sighs, shaking her head. "Some were nice, at first..." She trails off and there's a looking of sympathy and she sighs. "Not sure about..."

"I'd be surprise if you can recall that time, to be honest. I mean, for all you know, you could have been born a guy." She blushes at the thought.

"I'd rather you born man for it then a woman." Naruto adds softly and she stiffens upon hearing that, she looks into his face to notices how serious he looks. "You really mean that." Rou can't help but remark.

"You think being a woman in this day and age is bad? Arranged marries, camp followers, sold to a whorehouse, or being pimped by your male relatives with any kid you had likely getting killed within hours of birth." There's a rage there at the mere thought of her experiencing that and, well, hearing it like that, she kind of found herself in agreement. "I wouldn't wish that on any of my friends from that life, maybe not even on my enemies."

That bad? She feels her stomach flop and at some point, Naruto's got his arms wrapped around her, hugging her as she trembles as she recalls some of the darker news stories and realizes that it might have been worst once upon a time. "Sorry, didn't mean to..." He says softly and she closes her eyes, leaning into him, finding him to be a rather warm comforting presence.

"No, no, you were just being honest and explaining some of what you've experienced." She says but Naruto sighs, saying, "I shouldn't

have that blunt. Not with you especially."

"I forgive you." She tells him and hears, senses, something moving and folding behind her. She opens her eyes to find a pair of wings now coming from Naruto's back and also embracing her. She wonders if the wings were for her piece of mind or for his.

"We have ice cream, though I might need to make a run for more if you want to stick around for a while." Naruto admits after a while, the wings moving and folding onto the former ninja's back, allowing them both to take a step back from one another. She can't help but smile as she says, "I would like that."

With a nod and a smile, Naruto turns and leads her to a wall only for it to turn out to be the beginning of another tunnel, she follows close behind the other, not wanting to be left behind.

Feeling Albion seem to perk up, he waits to see if the elder Dragon will share only for a slight snicker after a bemused snort. He does his best to keep from frowning or moving, after all, Azazel is doing a full body scan with the personal ward on. After a while, Albion remarks, **Just thought it would be you to get around to it first. Must be one of his old friends visiting him.**

Well that explains everything. He thinks to himself as he does his best to keep from scowling. Then again, it kind of sounds like *Golden* has company, which is kind of a relief really.

After all, they're going to be apart for a good year with no connect at all viva magical or mundane means. Even Azazel will be leaving him to sink or swim once he moves into his dorm, cutting off direct contact, entrusting him to someone who owes the Fallen a number of minor favors. A wealthy someone given the school he's going to be attending.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P4: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

Snow is falling, melting upon touching down onto the ground, sidewalk, or road. Issei and himself walk towards the nearest grocery store for some ingredients for some holiday baking as soon as school let out, thankfully, his twin didn't try and play peeping tom on the girls locker room, then again, Issei wants to stop at a certain store to pick up a new release of a game, a dating sim if he recalls from his brother's chatting about it at home. He's the one carrying the money for the ingredients and they both have the list of what they need to buy.

Once within the store, they pull out their phones. "Ok, dry goods first, then frozen, and finally fresh." Issei declares with an authoritative nod and he merely hums before grabbing a pair of baskets, handing one over now that his twin finishes unzipping the jacket and lowering the hood of the jacket.

Following behind, he does the same with his own hood but doesn't unzip his jacket all the way down, stopping mid way. Seeing that Issei's phone is still out, he pockets his own. With Issei goofing off a tad, mostly in the form of a commentary that would be found in a spy movie or novel with him receiving 'harsh' and 'scratching' looks for not being 'stealthy' like Issei 'clearly' is.

He didn't even try to keep his smile from his face at his twin's antics and does his best to not chuckle at how the looks he gets from Issei. After all, soon enough they'll be entering into the awkward years of being teenagers and he shutters to think of how his brother will be once hormones get introduce into him, how much more into oppai his twin will become and likely control over his brother's course of action. He's been tempted to see if he can't find a way to curb Issei's future obsession with woman's oppai viva Magic or placing a Geas

of some sort, Naruto does seem to know some aspects of Fae Magic from the few times it's come up on the forum.

But, well, is it really his place to decide what's best for Issei? After all, Itachi did that to him when he'd been Sasuke, all with good intentions of keeping him safe only, it just help screw him up. If Issei ever admits this obsession with oppai is a problem, then he'll offer some help in a supernatural manner, likely through magic but until such time and how much it irritates him, it's best leave Issei be. It's not like his twin isn't aware of their, his mom and his own, opinions on the matter, after all.

Putting the issue out of his mind and deciding to just enjoy his twin's more innocent antics, he finally notices that someone seems to be rather interested in Issei as they are in line to play for the groceries. The man is tall, nearly seven feet in height if he's to judge. The man is also sporting dark purple hair that's done up in corn braids with eyes of dark amber. Dark brown skin with features being a mix between Asian and Western. The build is that of an American Football player with cloths that are very much in line with a punk rocker, including a black stone skull necklace on a chain. *I quote, a WILD Rugged Bad Boy Type has appeared, end quote.*

There's something about this guy that clearly wasn't right, that couldn't be human and thus, he likely wasn't human. *Actually, the passive pressure isn't all that different then... But why would one of those be here? After all, this is Devil own territory.* Kazu muses.

He comes out of it to pay and before leaving, they each take a moment to get their jacket zippers up and the hoods. Issei leads them to said game store and leaving him with the bags to watch over. The younger Hyoudou can't shake the feeling of being watched, so he's mentally going through which Elemental Spells he can cast quickly.

Once Issei is out, he mostly just follows behind his twin, mentally gearing up for an incoming attack. "Ah, hey, Kazu? This isn't the right way home, right?"

Blinking, he glances around to find that yip, they were now in an isolated spot and he now notices the feel of some ward that's likely been set up to ensure privacy. "Just who are you and what do you want?" He calls out and watches as that guy from before seems to 'appear' out of a snow flurry and Issei stiffens near him.

"Name's Bova and I'm here to Pledge my support to the current Red Dragon Emperor." The newly named Bova states with a wide, toothy grin and Issei groans, saying, "So, another one of your LARPing friends then."

"LARP?" Muses Bova who he's beginning to suspect is a Dragon. "Live action role playing." He supplies. "We disguise our get together as a game."

"Hiding in plain sight." The Dragon muses, clearly nodding in approval while it finally sinks in just who Bova is here for. "He doesn't know, it's not active." Kazu states flatly while he's beginning to panic.

The very idea that Issei's Sacred Gear is the rival of Vali Lucifer, that his Oniichan is the bearer of one of those Heavenly Dragons, it's stomach turning while Bova merely hums. "That's... easily taken care of, after all, you two are twins. It helps that you're already got some training which means you'll help filter what's going to happen next!" Bova states cheerfully as a ritual circle lights up in purple and within seconds, there is a tall Western Dragon that's standing on their back legs standing before them, causing Issei to freak out and discover that no, they can't leave the circle they've standing in.

"Why are you jump starting this now?!" He cries out as he notices the build up of magic. "Shouldn't this, you know, happen naturally?"

"Oh I would, if not for the whole political climate going on, after all, given the rampage of the last Red Dragon Emperor, it's likely that the local Devils will allow him to die and use the whole 'I resurrected you, you owe me' deal on him, might not even really help him learn what his limits are even, just model him to a certain extent and call it a day." Bova explains and some part of him kind of had to agree that

it did seem like the course of action a Devil would take in regards to obtaining the Boosted Gear. "He deserves a chance to figure out what he wants and I'm more then happy to follow in Naruto-sama's wing beats in this matter, it's not like he's going to be without aid in discovering himself, I promise you that."

Then the light is overwhelming and as his whole body fills up with magic, he's kind of aware of cloths ripping and tearing.

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Groaning, Kazu finds himself laying on his back and feeling kind of chilly. Opening his eyes, it takes him a bit for his vision to come into focus and glancing to his right, finds Issei is without cloth and sporting some bright red scales that match the gauntlet that's now covering his brother's right hand and lower arm. Small dark gold horns seem to be threatening to grow from Issei's hair line, they are just nubs right now. Watching as Issei's chest rises and falls means that his twin is alive, which he's thankful off.

Then, he turns his attention to himself and finds that he's also got his own scales, the difference seems to be that they seem to be sea blue in color. Moving his tongue about his own mouth, he finds that yes, his canines seem to a slightly thicker now, both sets with some of his back molars pushed back in his jaw plus feeling a bit more pointed then before. Gingerly moving his right arm, he checks his own head for nubs and finds them along by his hair line.

Pushing himself up, Kazu glances around and is actually rather relieved to notice that the groceries seem to have been teleported away from them before the ritual began, not that they had been in a state to notice. "Now then, if only I knew how to create cloths viva magic." He murmurs as he notices the remains of their cell phones.

After trying to stand, he gives up and crouches down before moving on all fours towards his elder brother, sitting down on the ground, he gently shakes Issei. "Oniichan... Wake up!" Eyes slowly open and the gaze is clearly unfocused.

"You called me Oniichan." Issei murmurs. "You haven't called me that since we were ten, after those nightmares started..." His twin observes in a distant manner, clearly still not really wake.

He looks away guiltily, it's true, he's been calling Issei Oniisan since his memories started to come back, he couldn't find it within himself to go back to Oniichan, yet, he had. After all, it's hard to use that term of endearment after recalling what Itachi did to him as Sasuke. "We'll discuss that later, I promise." He says as he finally notices that Bova is once more human and is kind of cowering before someone who is little over five feet tall and very delicate looking, not that sound is reaching them as it seems that there's a privacy ward near the two.

"What the... Where did this come from?!" Issei cries out and he glances at the Sacred Gear. **Huh, you talking about me? Hmm, well, this is rather surprising, never had a partner already get Dragon features just waking me up before.** The voice is male and oozing with a more condense confidence then Bova and Naruto likely possess, which are the only two Dragons he's met so far.

"Ddraig..." He murmurs and he feels as though that green gem on the gauntlet is looking right at him. "Hyoudou Kazu, younger twin of Hyoudou Issei. Magician with talent in Norse and Elemental Magic." He introduces himself.

That explains it somewhat. The Heavenly Dragon muses after a bit. **Sharing a womb with my bearer would have left some kind of mark on you, it seems that it manifested itself as you having potential to awaken to Dragon kin levels.**

He swallows a bit on hearing that while Issei seems to be clearly freaking out in a more mental manner then physical. "Bova mentioned using me as a filter." He admits and this causes the trapped Dragon to chuckle. **Well, at least this will prove to be an interesting experience, never had a Dragon kin weld me before. What's the word on Albion?**

"Awake and his bearer is one Vali Lucifer, half Devil." He reports. "He's got a Dragon by the name Naruto working with him, though most seem to think he'd been a half Devil himself."

Naruto? Uzumaki Naruto? Ddraig asks in a slow with some odd undertone in that question. He can't help but slowly nods, hurrying to add, "Take it up with the Great Red, he's the one to collect our souls and reincarnated us."

The dark mood that even has his brother paling and coming out of his panic does seem to hover before it lessens. **So, you're one of those souls then?** He can't help but feel relief at stopping whatever mood the Welsh Dragon was working himself into.

"Uchiha Sasuke." He admits and Ddraig laughs, it's clear that Naruto talked about them with Albion and it seems that Albion shared some of that with his fellow Heavenly Dragon. Issei gives him a concerned look and he says, "My memories as Sasuke started returning when I was ten, Issei. His Oniichan, one Itachi, massacred the whole Clan save for Sasuke when he was starting school. Itachi... he used a temporal illusion showing the deaths of the whole clan for a good three days, it looped."

He looks away from Issei. "That's why I couldn't find it within me to call you that." He admits with a sigh as his gaze settles on Bova and the stranger, likely another Dragon.

Huh, that would be something hard to live with. Anyone try and talk with you about it? Ddraig asks and wasn't that kind of surreal? But then, perhaps it's more like wanting to dwell on whatever thought started that particular mood.

"They didn't try very hard, accepting when Sasuke pushed them away." He states in a matter of fact way. It's something that happened and, well, it's more of something he recalls then what actually happened to him as Kazu. There's a kind of dissociation between recalling a memory and living through the experience that

created that memory. "Might have been slipped a compulsion to strive to kill Itachi too. Suicide by younger brother."

"That's messed up." His twin states and he chuckles a bit. "Well, according to Naruto, that was two life times ago. Plus, child soldiers." He explains with a shrug because that's what the academy turned out and was the tradition when it comes to ninja, kids learning to kill people by any means. The academy just pretties it up but that's the bottom line, then again, the teaching staff or lesson plans became crap.

"That's even worse!" Issei snaps and he snorts, shaking his head a bit. "It was kind of the same here, wasn't it? Some centuries ago? Even now, military groups will enlist kids into their ranks just because they are warm bodies and just need to know to point the nose away from them before pulling the trigger."

"Ah, who's that with that guy?" Issei finally asks and he gently corrects, "Bova."

Hmm, oh! Then Ddraig laughs and he finally glances at his twin who's staring at the green gem. Then the Red Dragon Emperor of Domination bellows rather loudly, **Tannin! Still looking like a dandy elf, eh?!**

He can't help but turn to look at the elf, trying to match up the delicate looking shape to the former Dragon King. "Tannin?" Issei wonders and he answers softly as the elf turns in their direction, "Former Dragon King, gave it up to become a Devil. Something about Dragon Apples, I think."

The ward shimmers away and the very short elf like being hollers back, "At least I'm free to find bed partners, unlike you, oh Crimson Emperor. You have to experience it viva your hosts."

So, which son is this one? Ddraig asks and it actually makes a lot of sense, given that Bova does look a lot like Tannin as a Dragon.

And why did he force this ritual on these two instead of waiting to see if I'd activate naturally?

"Politics and trying to emulate the young drake in the White Dragon Emperor's company." Tannin explains with a sigh and Bova grins widely upon looking at them, clearly pleased that his efforts bore fruit. "And this is Bova, my youngest son."

"You mean Dragons have politics?" Issei asks and he sighs, correcting that assumption, "Dragons don't group together so they don't have much need for politics among themselves, if two Dragons argue with one another, they fight it out in a physical manner."

Correct. No, he's speaking about the politics of the supernatural world. Ddraig states. **What's Albion's bearer's role?**

"Vali's been a free agent and managed to keep out of it but events march on, regardless of any involvement of the current White Dragon Emperor. He's out of contact right now, part of a deal that was worked out with Azazel." Tannin explains and it's kind of confusing as Naruto's usually by the Lucifer's side but Rou's been staying with the Dragon these pass few months.

"Who's Vali and Albion?" Issei asks and he explains while Ddraig switches to a different language as does Tannin, clearly discussing things in a private manner while Bova slowly walks over to join them, slipping pass his father to do so. He privately wonders if that language is a dead one or magical in nature.

"Lucifer Vali is the current bearer of Albion, he's a half Devil and a blood descendant of the original Lucifer." He explains. "Albion is Ddraig's rival and fellow Heavenly Dragon, he's got a long list of titles as does Ddraig, although these days those who are born with either of the two Heavenly Dragons are regarded as Dragon Emperors, Red for Ddraig and White for Albion."

"So you are now the Red Dragon Emperor and no, you don't have a kingdom to rule, although in time, you'll likely begin attracting allies

to your side but you'll also have enemies. Dragons are very charismatic." He continues while Issei pouts a bit at the fact that it's more of a ceremonial title then an actual position. "As you've heard, the White Dragon Emperor has a close friend with a Dragon who goes by the alias of Uzumaki Naruto, which is why Bova approached you, wanting a similar relationship I assume."

"He did all this just to become my friend?" Issei asks with a hint of disbelief. "In his defense, he likely saved your life as Kuoh Town belongs to a pair of Devils, both are looking for humans to reincarnate into Devils to serve as members of their Peerage and given the rampage of your predecessor, someone might have arranged to have you killed so one of them could reincarnate you, holding the resurrection over you as something you owe them and, well, knowing you, you'd feel obligated to fulfill it never mind the subtle compulsion to listen to your King."

"But what if I didn't want to be a Devil?" His twin asks and he sighs, explaining, "It wouldn't matter, you couldn't go back to being human as you'd be a dead human even if someone manages to reverse it and, well, Devils do allow Harems."

Issei's expression now wavers between the idea of fulfilling his dream and then the fact that he'd have to be a Devil to fulfill it. "If you go rogue from your King, you get a kill on sight order on you and any member of the Biblical Faction will go after you. They'd put it on you no matter how long you've been a Devil, your the possessor of the Boosted Gear, a Longinus Sacred Gear and given time, you'll grow in power." He admits. "And yes, the Biblical Faction means Angels exist too."

"You're not in league with one, are you? Devils I mean." His twin asks and he rubs his check as he tries to think of a way to answer that. "Well, more like I know some Devils and half Devils through my LARP group, which is a cover for our Magician Cabal. And no, I'm not in a pact with any of them." He explains.

"And the scales we have now?" Issei asks and he just repeats what Ddraig had said, just in a different way, "Well, it seems I had the ability to achieve the means to convert into a Dragon kin, it just means that I have a dose of Dragon blood in my body, waiting to activate the transformation. Bova just didn't take that into account so, we both became Dragon kin along with activating your Sacred Gear."

"Then, why are mine red and your scales blue?" His twin asks and he reminds his brother, "We are fraternal twins, not identical." Which Issei seems to nod slowly and it's then that he realizes that yea, his twin is still having trouble accepting everything and he doesn't know how to help.

"Can we get some cloths?" He asks Bova as he turns to regard the Dragon and Issei jerks slightly at the sight of Bova being so close. "Sure." And with that, a set of cloths form about their respective forms, each in their new respective colors, red for Issei and blue for himself.

"How do we disguise our new features?" Kazu asks curiously and Bova blinks, as if such a thought hadn't crossed his mind, which it might not have. "You planned to just kidnap my Oniisan, didn't you?"

"I would have brought him back early next morning after giving him a quick run down." Bova defends himself. "I already bought a house here and planned to give him a key so he can return to begin training in welding his Boosted Gear and lesson in such subjects as magic and supernatural politics."

"So, you didn't plan for either of us to grow scales or these... growths?" Issei moves his hair to give them a clearer view of the nub of a horn. "Didn't factor into my calculations the idea that he," Bova looks at him, "possessed a dose of dormant Dragon blood. That he was capable of converting himself into a Dragon kin."

"Either you are born Dragon kin or you under go a ritual to infuse some Dragon blood into your being." Bova explains at the blank

looks of understanding and that makes a lot of sense about the condition. "You don't awaken to it, it's there or it's not."

Unless a bored Dragon of Dragons decides to engineer it to be dormant in my body. He muses privately to himself as he moves a hand up and studies the scales that's on the back of his hand. "So... what does it mean to be Dragon kin?" His twin asks before he decides to do so.

He flexes his hand, watching the scales move along with his skin as he listens as Bova begins on his first lesson concerning supernatural matter for Issei.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P5: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

Snorting lightly at the ranting tone of the private message viva the forum, Naruto types out a simple reply to it. Congratulations on achieving a power up and I also know for a fact that Bova Tannin favors his old man's taste in liquor, so if you ever need to bribe him, it's best to offer a few jugs of rum or mead. I'll leave it up to you to discover his favor brands. He reads it a few more times before being satisfied with what he typed and sends it.

He exits out of the browser and puts the lap top to sleep before closing the screen lid. Given that he doesn't know the password for the desktop computer in the common room, he slipped out under his disguise as the Dragon kin agent serving under Tannin to purchase the latest Devil made lap top as it's generally a few years ahead of anything on the human market. Rou helped him set him up with an e-mail account and in creating a user account on the forum that the other reincarnations use to get in touch with one another.

Glancing at the bed he transformed from the couch, Rou is still fast asleep and moving the lap top onto the large coffee table, he walks silently over, grabbing some blankets and pulling them up to cover her again. The Winter Solstice is coming up, which means there's a holiday season, three days of Christmas celebration and one of the New Years. Typically, Albion, Vali, and him tend more towards doing something on the Winter Solstice then for the Christian Christmas celebrations. Generally, they don't keep to Christian holidays anyway nor did they really subscribe to any religious holidays actually.

They do things for one another during the Seasonal Solstices and Equinoctes. Which causes him to wonder if any of the others are expecting to exchange gifts for the upcoming holiday as the Christian holidays do tend to be global. He'll have to go through the forum to

see if they did anything special for the upcoming holiday and if anyone is expecting anything from him. It's not like he's lacking money after all or means to grab a few novelties that none of them could get their hands on for any amount of money. After all, he still practices the skills Albion taught him when it comes to breaking into other Pantheons collective communal grounds and the Deity's individual Homes, general experience has to do with Deities of Health and Healing along with those related to the Sun.

Coming out his thoughts, he blinks as he gives Ye Rou one last look before heading for the fridge to grab a few fruits and heads back to the front area of the Lair that he keeps his trophies, he's got a few ideas of why that helmet kept killing the user and with some insight into a better model to use as an interface for the sessions, the Dragon is fairly confident that given some time and conferring with those more knowledgeable concerning certain fields of study, he might have a money maker among the supernatural world, of course he'd have to get rid of certain concepts, like causing physical growth and a time limit for wearing it. He's also planning to run searches about the topic concerning virtual reality, it's more then likely that humans have spent a lot of time fantasying on the subject of a more complete gaming experience.

Reading Naruto's reply to his rather lengthy private message did nothing for his temper, never mind the currently useless tidbit of information concerning Bova's taste in liquor or the fact that it's clear that the son of the former Dragon King already has preferred brands. The former human also logged off from the forum and it wouldn't surprise him if the golden scaled Dragon is away from his computer now. *Guess I'll just have to wait on Ye-san to come online.* He realizes with a groan as his temper finally dims as he releases a loud sigh.

Tannin had escorted them home once he allowed Bova to give Issei a key to said house, the son did leave in a hurried fashion once the former Dragon King suggested Bova check to see if everything is in

order at his house. Once away, the elder Dragon then altered their current cloths, making sure they got hoods and walked with them to their house. Then Tannin introduced himself and once within the house, had them show their parents their new looks at which point the current Devil explains about the supernatural world while they put the stuff away in the kitchen and upon returning, Ddraig introduced himself, much to their parents' dismay at the fact that their eldest son was born possessed by a sleeping Dragon in his right hand.

It had been a rough time with their parents clearly frighten on their behalf concerning this turn of events and he came clean about his LARPing group, even Tannin had looked impressed at how they managed to hidden in semi plain sight. The issue of lying to them was pretty much swept away at the fact that he'd been able to hide from any negative attention that being a Magician tend to get or that he's not in a pact with a Devil of any sort. Then again, they didn't take the news very well that Kuoh Town is considered Devil territory and the reason for the co-ed change in the Kuoh Academy is due to Devils influencing the school or that the co-ed has to do with allowing young Devils to look for humans to reincarnate into Devils as members of their Peerage.

Sure, not all Devils view their Peerage as, well, pawns or tools but even still, until someone joins a Devil's Peerage, they might as well be a non-entity that just exists. It's just that if you aren't with them or against them, then, well, you aren't worth much attention outside of certain situations. It applies slightly to lower class Devils too, although they are a step above humans in the Devil social ladder of regard, more exists to help run Devil society as a whole then just existing cause they take up space.

Unlike his parents and brother, he has a general knowledge of things, the difference has more to do with getting insight into how Tannin approaches the subject or explains answers to their questions. He's fairly sure that Ddraig is keeping silence for his own reasons, maybe not really paying much mind to what's being

discussed. A number of things actually got cleared up and some of his preconceptions proved right but for different reasons. In the end, Tannin hands over a business card once it's clear that this was proving to be rather tiring and he helped his twin to bed, it wouldn't surprise him if his parents stayed up far later, likely talking among themselves about what they learnt.

Their mom phoned the academy, saying they're sick as they haven't a clue how to hide the fact that they're gained some supernatural features, it's clear that the Devils will notice the change with them. Their dad headed to work rather tired while Issei decided to help their mom bake stuff to take their collective minds off of everything that got revealed. He'd been going through his various books looking for something to use to hide their newly magical surge before feeling the need to vent at someone who wouldn't take it personally. Ok, so maybe he should have put in a request for help in that message but typically, Naruto's usually one to leap in to help without ever needing to be invited, then again, Dragon so it seems that the former blond picked up a little thing called personal space and respect for it.

His phone gives him a notice after he's going through some of the forum, looking up Transformation Magic disguised as genjutsu or maybe iryo ninjutsu. It's noon it seems and he grabs the cell, opening it he swipes the screen. It's from Kenta about his absence while noting that he's online at the forum.

Was out in the weather a bit too long without the right protection. Boredom kicked in and looking up genjutsu disguises or body alterations viva iryo ninjutsu. He texts back, knowing that Kenta will realize something big happened and that he's looking into Transformation Magic. Messaged SONoftheFOURTH a venting commentary. Should have asked for his advice instead of just venting. He admits before Kenta likely finishes typing out a message.

Waiting on White|Eyed|Heiress to act as a go between? Kenta asks and he pretty much sends a nodding emoji. Might take a while, never know what dastardly things the two have been getting up too. His

fellow classmate texts back and he makes a face at the idea of the two being busy with THAT.

Please, I doubt White|Eyed|Heiress would engage in THAT with someone she just met some months back. He replies back. But then, Hinata and Naruto had been dating when... *No, they are two different people now, after all, Naruto's a different species and been around for some time by now.*

It's unlikely the two will just pick up where Hyuuga Hinata and Uzuamki Naruto left off. After all, Elena Spade, current incarnation of Haruno Sakura, was at least four years older then he is and is currently in a relationship with the leader of the group of 'Stray' Devils that 'stole' her from the Church, one Giotto Squalo, likely not his actual name but it's the public identity of the known 'kidnapper' of the Miracle Smith nor does Elena plan to share her boyfriend's actual name with any of them. He's sure that there's going to be a wedding coming up between the two or perhaps there's actual substance to the reverse harem rumors that are circulating about in certain circles.

Either way, it's doubtful that either of them are going to be trying to salvage anything beyond a friendship from their previous lives as Sakura and Sasuke. They grew up in different cultures and his temperament is fairly different compared to his previous incarnation as Sasuke along with appearance. From what he's been able to tell, Elena's free in a way Sakura never could have been when it came behavior and expressing herself even if her appearance is also different then Sakura had looked. Never mind that instead of medical training, Elena's passion is working with metal and creating interesting items out of said material, which is how she created nine Holy swords, taking it as a challenge, and why the Church did its best to cage her within itself.

Getting up, he heads for the kitchen to get something to eat, his stomach rumbles at the idea. "Lunch?" He asks as he finds his mom in the kitchen, having passed Issei laying on the couch with a far off look in his eyes, the Boosted Gear finally gone from his twin's hand.

She blinks at the question and turns, it's clear that the events of yesterday still trouble his mom. "It's going to be ok, you know that, right? I mean, yea, sure, Issei was born with a Heavenly Dragon's soul trapped in some ancient artifact but at least that Dragon isn't angry at us for the situation, right? Plus, there's Tannin's offering to help explain things when you guys have questions." Kazu tries to assure her, not really sure if he's doing it right or anything of that is even remotely comforting to his mom.

Tears threaten and he moves to give her a quick hug, it's kind of awkward to be the one giving the hug but he's sure it's the thought that counts and that's what's worth it.

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Shouldn't you text him personally about this? Is the reply he gets from Rou once he's back at his desk, he spent some hours keeping both his mom and twin company once he's had something to eat. He admits to her the venting session he did.

A bit later, there's a reply, He says to talk with Bova about learning to shape-shift the Dragon way. It seems that it'll also allow you two to hide some of your magical nature while mentioning that you guys need rely on the guy as Bova's not that bad just over eager. Plus, Bova's been wanting to prove himself so he's invested in seeing the two of you succeed. Apparently, he won't take issue you two questioning things, more from Issei then you, as he knows it's new information with Issei, so there's going to learning your new limits in regards to not just body wise but magic.

I think Naruto believes that Bova's ready for this responsibility and trusts him to do right by you two. Which seems to be a ringing endorsement given that he's a Dragon himself. And he blinks, it's clear the last bit was more personal opinion then anything Naruto said.

So, there are other ways to shape-shift? Kazu muses before sighing. Getting up, he heads to grab a shirt and socks for his twin as they

have a Dragon to visit.

"We're going to visit that guy." He tells Issei as he drops the items of cloths onto his twin. "My source says he's on the level and that if we want to pass as human, we need to trust Bova to teach us how to."

"Are you sure? I mean, look what he did to us!" Issei says, gesturing at his chest with a hand, displaying not just the scales of the chest but the arm as well.

"As much as I hate to say this, but I rather we have scales then your cooling corpse at my feet and a Devil waiting in the wings to 'save' you." He stares into his twin's newly transformed emerald green eyes with his own emerald green eyes. His twin stiffen at the mention of that possible situation.

"How can you be so sure that would have happened?" His elder twin asks and he replies, "They might not have been the one to arranged for that death but they would have profited from it. The current owners are the younger siblings of two of the current Satans. And someone might think they are doing a favor by arranging said situation, allowing one of the two to recruit the current Red Dragon Emperor into their Peerage."

"Not this year but next year? Or the year after that? Someone knows you have a Scared Gear, Onnisan, they just don't know which one it is." He explains with a hint of disgust. "Bova's a Dragon and, perhaps, it's not that surprising that he could puzzle it out. As much as people think they know what Dragons can do... I doubt anyone save one of the more powerful examples of their race know what a Dragon is truly capable of simply because they've lived that long and attempted things that people never expected them to try."

"People freaked out some months ago when someone they assumed to be a half Devil transformed before their camera into a gold Dragon as nobody thought that the guy was anything but a half Devil until that point. It's kind of died down but it's got some wondering about the topic of are there other hidden Dragons among

the supernatural population or human population?" He explains. "People know that the Dragon God known as Orphis, the Ouroboros Dragon who's currently in the form of a young girl being the prime example of a shape-shifting Dragon and they want such individuals to be the exceptions not the rule."

"And I don't know anything about Dragons and Ddraig, well, he's old and I think he's kind of got his mind on other things then teaching us, never mind the fact that he's far beyond the basics that it's an insult to except him to do so." He adds and the entrapped Dragon laughs, clearly tuning in at some point in the discussion. "Bova is offering his services as a mentor and likely willing to act as a body guard, for now, and we should give him a chance to strut his stuff. After all, He approached Us." *Even if he was more here for you then me.* He mentally admits.

"You can even ask him that question you're likely burning to know." The former ninja remarks. "Your life's goal."

"Oh! Well, wouldn't Ddraig know the answer to that?" His brother wonders and he shrugs, remarking, "He's ranked just under Orphis in the list of powerful Dragons, it likely different standards for him and you're not at his level plus, former human."

"Are we sure that Ddraig won't know the answer?" Issei asks and he counters, "Again, your not really human now and it sounds like Dragon kin have never welded the Boosted Gear before, so even if Bova doesn't know, he can start looking for the answer for you."

What's the question? Ddraig asks curiously with a hint of amusement. "Can I be a Harem King because I'm the Red Dragon Emperor?" His twin pauses while putting on one of his socks, the shirt resting next to Issei as the Heavenly Dragon roars with laughter, the kind that's clearly belly shaking.

"And I think the next question is, being a Dragon kin, does that mean he needs to be careful in bed?" He adds when it sounds like the laughter is dying down, the question was meant to add fuel to the

laugh and he's rewarded with more laughter, although it's a bit more subdued, which is kind of surprising when you consider that Ddraig doesn't need to breath. Issei merely nods in agreement with that question upon him voicing it only now, his twin finishes with the sock before putting on the shirt now that the socks are on.

Yea, I'll leave Tannin's youngest son to answer those, it should prove entertaining to listening. Ddraig states and he mostly assumes there's a grin on the astral body's face or snout or was it muzzle? They leave a note for their parents before they bundle up, making sure to cover their faces and cover their hair, which hasn't changed color.

Arriving directly into his part of the Lair, he's more then happy to be done with school and teenage drama, never mind the fact he's missed spending time in *Golden* 's company. Stripping his current cloths off, the potions will be wearing off soon enough and just walks out in the nude, heading for the communal kitchen for something stronger then his stash of wine. His height changes within seconds his bangs return to his natural color, which means that the rest of the effects fade by the time he enters the communal portion and pauses at the sight of a stranger sitting in a chair with a lap top.

The stranger is a young woman and he's quick to craft a set of pairs before he makes a sound to grab her attention, she jerks and turns her body around to look at him. "Ye Rou, formerly Hyuuga Hinata." The woman introduces herself, likely in an Asian language given the last name coming first.

He blinks at her, it seems that *Golden* hasn't been alone without him. Vali can't help but tilts his head to the side, kind of puzzled. "You know he's not old enough for that, right?" He inquires and Rou nods, saying, "He mentioned among his race he's considered something of a preteen, far too young to think of mating or rearing clutches."

Sighing, he nods before continuing towards the liquor stash, grabbing a bottle of actual Scottish Whiskey. "Is he?" He asks as he

moves to sit on the couch.

"Mentioned Tannin needing an errand but that was about week ago." Rou explains and glances towards the kitchen. "He showed me how to access the storage space as he filled it with a few month's worth of food and spices."

"Sleeping arrangements?" He asks curiously, never mind the fact they don't have a communal washroom. "He created a room plus bathroom for me to use two months ago in his section. I was sleeping on the couch before that." The only laundry machines are in the communal area as neither of them like the sound of them so she's good on cloths as that storage space also has the supplies for it.

"Lucifer Vali." He says to be polite. "Bearer of the Divine Dividing Sacred Gear."

"Bearer of one of the Twilight Healing Sacred Gears." Rou returns the favor and recalls Azazel mentioning someone with a similar Sacred Gear. "Doesn't the Church have one of the current bearers?" Vali asks curiously.

"Yes, her name is Argento Asia and they have granted her the title of Holy Maiden. She's rather young and fully indoctrinated into the Church's teachings." Rou clearly doesn't sound please by the situation, the idea of someone so young or the indoctrinated being used thus. "She makes a decent target to use against the Church."

"They did lose that sword smith." He agrees and Rou smiles in amusement. "She's one of us." Rou grins rather widely as she adds, "In fact, she's Naruto's former teammate, one Haruno Saskura."

Given what he's heard about the Miracle Smith's temperament and love of all things mechanical, it's hard to believe Elena Spade had once been a medical professional. Yet, it's not like Rou has any reason to lie about something like this. Humming, he opens his bottle of whiskey and then creates a pair of glass stein, enjoying the feeling

of his magic moving to his will instead of always flowing into that ward anchor points he'd been wearing.

Pouring a small among for their current guest before adding a generous amount for himself. He gestures to the glass stein which she thanks him for before getting up to grab. "Bova forced the Red Dragon Emperor active." Rou tells him as he turns on the rather large TV, going through his recorded shows and he feels Albion stir but still seems to be asleep.

"Oh?" Rou hums, "He's the elder twin brother of Hyoudou Kazu, the incarnation of Uchiha Sasuke. The process... it caused the two to become Dragon kin."

He couldn't help but snort before laughing at that fact. Not only did he not have keep gently decline Bova's attempts at Pledging but that the Dragon will be sure to train the other properly! "Best news ever!" He states with cheer and drinks from his glass stein as things are finally looking up. Plus, it'll be interesting to fight a Dragon kin who's got access to a Sacred Gear, the fact that it's the Boosted Gear was just icing, few want to go through the ritual to transform into one and fewer still have been born these pass few decades.

Give Bova a year or two and perhaps he'll get two sparring partners instead of just the one. Yes, things were looking up and he doesn't keep the smile from his face, he's just so pleased at the news. Rou clearly doesn't know what to make of his reaction but that's fine, this is just their first meeting after all and it's unlikely to be their last given it's clear that *Golden* isn't going to kick her out of here any time soon, although she'll likely need to leave at some point, she's human after all.

"What's his name?" He thinks to ask before he picks to play an episode. "Issei, Hyoudou Issei." *Issei, huh? Kazu and Issei.*

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P6: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

"Dragon." Koneko reports to their shared King, one Rias Gremory concerning the Sacred Gear that one second year student, Hyoudou Issei, is the bearer of as they watch from their club room window as said teen and younger twin walk under their window. Yuuto's gaze is on the younger, Kazu at the news, after all, the two were twins, even if they weren't identical and clearly care for one another.

"How strong is the scent?" The Queen of Rias' Peerage asks, one Akeno Himejima. "Very strong." The former Nekoshou states in her typical manner.

"Strong enough to hold the Boosted Gear?" Rias wonders in the nude, an arm under her chest with a hand near her mouth. No answer but then, it's not like she's asking them to answer it.

How long will their bond last? When one becomes a Devil and the other doesn't? He wonders, not sure if wants to find out yet, the out come will come about regardless, after all, they were humans and powerless before a Devil's desire, before any supernatural might really.

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He's busy dealing with clients, wanting to be away from the coming fall out of that Fallen Angel's interest in one Hyoudou Issei. So, when he returns to the O.R.C. club room viva Teleportation Circle, he half expects Rias to be gone, likely dealing with a newly reincarnated Devil but, she's there and it's late now, midnight under two hours away. Glancing at the Rook, Koneko doesn't seem to be awake and Akeno seems to be else where. "Did he not get a contract sheet?"

"My familiar handed one to him before meeting up with her." Rias answers and she's clearly feeling guilty about allowing the Fallen to even approach Issei but, if the teen is indeed the inheritor of the Boosted Gear, then having this debt hanging over the Red Dragon Emperor's head should ensure that what sense of honor Issei possess will see him honor said debt, then again, given the kind of Vice said teen would fall into, it shouldn't be that hard to keep him attached to Rias as his King.

"Should I alert Sona-san of his likely fate?" Yuuta asks politely but Rias shakes her head. "No, perhaps she didn't make a move against his life tonight."

"Understood." He says before excusing himself to head home for a shower and to rest.

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Issei is in the company of his twin and his two of his fellow LARPers. There's a particular look in Kazu's eye upon glancing at him. It's gone a blink of an eye later but it's enough to make him want to avoid said twin for the day.

There's teasing among the students about Issei's 'date' throughout the day. "No, I'm not going to be seeing Yuuma-chan again. It didn't work out." He hears Issei admit a touch of embarrassment in the hall, heading off for lunch. "It seems we just had different life goals."

"Active?" He asks Koneko curiously once the school day is over and they're getting their assignments of clients. "No change in his scent." The Rook states calmly yet there's a slight furl upon her forehead.

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"The abandon church looks like someone used dynamite to blow it up." He reports as he decided to check the old church for clues concerning what became of Yuuma. "It looked recent."

"Well, according to Sona, one Asia Argento's going to be joining the Academy in two weeks time." Akeno remarks from her position from standing behind their King. He stiffens at the mention of the former Holy Maiden.

"She's here? In Kuoh Town?" He can't help but ask in disbelief. "How did the Church let her leave without sweeping her into one of it's other divisions?"

"We don't know, we didn't even know she's here until the request landed on Sona's desk." Akeno states sourly while Rias is looking at a picture, likely the teenager who bears one of the Twilight Healing Sacred Gear. "The address checks out as one in town nor does the owner appear to be connected with the Church in anyway."

"Anything more to report about that church, Kiba-kun?" Akeno purrs out after a few seconds. He takes a moment to put the current issue mentally away for review later.

"A small number of Fallen had made the church their hide out and there's belongs that also suggests that excommunicated Church Exorcists were with them." He reports. "There's traces of Elemental Magic used and it's likely what bodies were there have been burnt to ashes."

"So, we have Stray Magicians now instead of rogue Fallen?" Akeno asks and he shrugs, not sure how to answer that. "Lovely." And much harder to track down as they are humans among humans, it's doubtful that they're purchasing their spell ingredients locally or have them delivered to their current residence.

"It's looking like we've been lax in keeping track of the comings and goings of other beings in Kuoh Town." Rias muses as she gently lets the picture, which drifts onto the table, showing the latest picture of one Asia Argento. He privately agrees with that sentiment after having investigated the abandon church's rubble.

"I'll speak with Sona about how we'll begin correcting this." The Crimson-Haired Ruin Princess states.

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He jerks his head at the sight of not just the color of the glow about the Hyoudou twins but the two LARPers as they glow as well, the color displaying that they were practicing Magicians. Those that they already knew to possess Sacred Gears also glow but it's those four that he's to report on. The glow fades within seconds but that doesn't keep him from shaking slightly, after all, not only did Issei light up as possessing a Sacred Gear but as something not human as well.

Returning to his own body, having piggy back on his familiar to stand guard at the High Schooler's Gate. His mind a whirl as he tries to recall concerning that color the twin glowed but it's not one they covered it seems.

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The twins arrive in the meeting room, neither look overly surprised to see the two co-owners or their respective Queens. Sona's Knight, one Tomeo Meguri are with him and just as tense, ready to act if either of them prove hostile. They still have no clue what kind of supernatural beings they're dealing with, thus they are cautious.

Yuuta closes the door as neither of them did. Kazu is on Issei's left and seems a great deal more at ease then Issei. "You are trespassing." Sona states in an ice cold tone.

"Once could argue that being born here, it's you who are the trespassers." Kazu remarks lightly. "Never mind the kind of pests we've been cleaning up that you allow to lurk in town."

"After all, did you both really think you wouldn't attract interest not being in the Underworld? Out of the way of your elder siblings' sight?" Issei adds, not really pulling off the light tone of his younger brother.

The two keep their emotions under control but it's clear that they hit the mark with some of their comments, after all, the two were indeed born here and been living here before either of the current owners took over ownership from when Cleria Belial abdicated ownership of Kuoh Town to pursue a relationship with one former Exorcist Masaomi Yaegaki. The pair are missing and nobody knows if they're alive or not, not when Church Exorcists are hunting for the pair.

"Kuoh Town has been Devil Territory even then." Sona states, ignoring the statements concerning their elder brother and sister respectively. "And we're are now correcting out oversight concerning the issue of our Territory."

"That's nice in... theory. One could argue it's a little late for that, after all, we've already reported the Fallen to Azazel and handed them plus their stage crew over to him." Kazu remarks and they all stilled. "Oh, don't look so surprised, we spoke with the Governor when Yuuma approached my Oniisan, which shouldn't have happened if you had done your job."

"And why would the Governor General take you serious?" Rias asks but he knows his King and there's worry. In answer, they watch as Issei's right hand and lower arm transform.

"Being the current Red Dragon Emperor does come with perks." Issei states holding said Boosted Gear up so Rias and Sona. "And I guess I should inform you that Asia, Goten, and Kenta are under my protection. Plus, since you seem to want to know who's also here in town and connected to me, Bova Tannin is my mentor and acting political advisor slash lawyer."

"So, if you want to continue on this vein, I'm obligated to inform you to contact Bova in concern any legal issues." Issei states smugly. "He's the lawyer of Asia, Goten, Kazu, and Kenta."

"Here's his business card." Kazu takes out a business card and takes a few steps to place it on the desk. "Good day."

With that, the pair leave the room and the Boosted Gear fades away, leaving the arm bare. He's pretty sure everyone is gobsmacked at the idea that not only is Issei active but he's also the current Red Dragon Emperor and somehow, managed to get someone related to the former Dragon King in his corner so early. "Who's Bova Tannin?" He glances at Tomoe upon her voicing his own question.

"The youngest son of Tannin, he's a Dragon." Sona answers as she reaches for the business card.

"First the White Dragon Emperor has unknown Dragon called Naruto and now the Red Dragon Emperor has a son of a former Dragon King." Akeno states with a hint of something. She laughs softly, a hand modestly hovering over her mouth. "My my, I wonder just what's coming that the two end up with a Dragon so early in their respective careers."

"They are not human." Rias states. "It must have been a recent incident."

"Kazu might have been a Magician like his two friends." Tsubaki Shinra, Sona's Queen, suggests. "Might be a magical experiment gone wrong? Or right?"

They part ways not long after, there is no point in bringing in the two Magicians now that Issei made it clear that the pair have his protection. "Are you worried that the Governor General will speak with your brother about the fact some Fallen set up shop in Kuoh Town?" He asks once they are in their club room.

"Why would Azazel get into contact with the current Lucifer?" Akeno wonders. "That's like admitting that he's got no control over his Faction Members, that would just show how weak he is."

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"Rias! How could you let a Fallen near a student?!" And so the current Lucifer arrived, gave his younger sister a hug before

beginning in to lecture her over the matter.

"Who told you that?" Rias asks in alarm, it's the weekend and they're here to gather up their assignments. Yuuta is sure to keep to the back, planning to enjoy the scene before him with a simple polite smile.

"Azazel did, of course." As if it's obvious. "Who called him about the matter of having a Fallen in Kuoh and offered to arrested the girl, only for it to turn out to be more then just the one, so he asked the student for a favor but the student mentioned that being that he's not the owner, he shouldn't be involved, that he'll wait a bit to see if the owners would notice."

"You didn't investigate and now, now it's questionable if two will be allow to continue living in Kuoh Town." He winces slightly. So, that's how they spun that. "After all, when you were given Kuoh Town, you're responsible for noticing these kind of things, you can't just ignore the matter when it looked like it solved itself."

"It's not like the student couldn't defend himself." His King states but the current Lucifer sighs. "Rias, its not a question of whether or not the student could fend off a Fallen, it's the fact that you didn't intervene nor did you look into the matter as to why the Fallen failed to kill said student."

Very true, in hindsight. He admits, after all, if they had, they might have found out sooner that the twins were more then they appear to be and maybe that they had Magicians among the students. Might have been able to get to Asia before Issei did. It seems that instead of driving a wedge between the Hyoudou twins, the pair have turned the tables and it's now more then just two brothers growing apart, oh no, it's taking ownership of the town from Rias and Sona.

"I just assumed she moved on." Rias defends. "That she likely just toyed around with him as a stress reliever before modifying his mind."

"You just can't trust assumptions, Rias. You have to study what happen and to do that, you need to investigate to get facts." The crimson haired Lucifer repeats, clearly disappointed in regards to Rais' lack of accepting that she made a grave mistake.

"That doesn't excuse the fact that Bova Tannin's been visiting the town." Rias states and Sirzechs sighs. "He's not just visiting, he bought a house and has been living out of it for nearly two years now."

"How did you know that?" His King asks and Sirzechs says, "He's just one of the few that are living here that you're suppose to discover by doing your duty of checking for unregistered supernatural beings. It's a controlled learning experience meant to get to you do your job."

"We knew you two were young and that's why we pulled some favors to get some we trusted to take up residence here as we know they are here and knew they were safe for you two to encounter them." The message was fairly clear, that they failed in this exercise. He glances towards the Queen and the Rook, it seems that Akeno isn't happy about this particular test while Koneko remains the same as usual.

"Are you aware he's mentoring the current Red Dragon Emperor?" Rias asks, trying to distract her brother, yet, while there's a clear look of interest but, well, it's clear that Sirzechs isn't going to get distracted.

"Regardless, Rias, he's a Dragon and his business is his own." States the current Lucifer. "We're talking about how you failed to do the basics of your job as co-owner of Kuoh Town."

"So, did they get ousted?" He asks Issei viva the head set, he's busy trying to build up his Zerg forces while keeping up a steady supply of fighters at the current battle ground. "Of course not, but they should

be more motivated to keep track of supernatural beings throughout the town that aren't Stray Devils."

"Put a fire under their collective, lazy asses." Vali observes with a touch of approval. "Though, they'll likely won't give up trying to pin you down."

"Of course not but they clearly won't ask their siblings about what color we glowed. They'll likely research it themselves, they are striving for independence and they're have their pride." His rival states without sending a fresh wave towards their current battle field.

He begins directing scouts about the map. He finds some of Issei's forces and begins directing quick response forces while sending minor armies about his three bases. "How's Asia's Japanese coming along?" He asks ideally, mostly wanting to keep the other talking.

"Better with that nifty necklace you made for her." The younger Emperor states and he roles his eyes, "You commissioned it."

"Can't believe you wanted an air hockey match as payment." The other remarks and he remarks, "Got to start somewhere in our rivalry and you're not ready for an actual fight just yet."

He's building up his defenses and beginning to look for a fourth base as his first one isn't looking to last longer. They continue to make small talk as Issei presses an attack on his third base while he's looking to counter attack while setting up his fourth base.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P7: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

"Irina-kun?" He hears Issei ask with a hint of disbelief and glances at the duo that's standing near an alleyway entrance. "Issei-kun?"

"Kazu-kun." He states in a light tone and the pair of teenage girls blink before turning to look at him, with the brunette girl's eyes widen at the sight of him while the blue haired girl seems to frowns, clearly not likely the looks of either of them. Or perhaps it's due to Irina's reaction?

"Wait, you mean Kazu was right?! You were a girl all a long?!" Issei exclaims, pointing at said old friend viva left index finger. He can only imagine the look of betrayal on his twin's face and Irina's eyes widen at the look directed at her viva the current Red Dragon Emperor.

"But... I've always been a girl! How could you Not know?" Irina asks with a look of bewilderment and a touch of uncertainty at this accusation. Even going so far as to look at the blue haired teen for support.

Not that the as of yet introduced Church Exorcist is incline to come to Irina's defense. "Irina, you know these Pagans?" *Well, she's blunt.*

It's kind of hard to believe that Irina grew to become a Church Exorcist, yet it's clearly what happened concerning their old friend. "They're... well, I guess, maybe... Anyway, Xenovia, these two are Hyoudou Issei and Hyoudou Kazu, they're old friends of mine from when I lived in Japan." Irina introduces them to her partner. "Issei-kun, Kazu-kun, this is my partner, Quarta Xenovia."

And with that opening, his elder brother senses a chance of mischief, takes it due to the poor wording on Irina's part. "Ach! Really Irina-

chan?! But... I guess it makes some sense as to why you allowed me to call you Irina-kun, guess you knew even then, your preferences." He places a comforting hand on his brother's shoulder while Xenovia looks suspicious while Irina looks rather puzzled by what Issei's implying.

"There, there Oniisan. Just think of it this way, at last she's happy and with people clearly accept them as partners." The former ninja says soothingly while chuckling inwardly as the pair still don't get it. "Of course they accept us as partner, even if she's a Protestant."

"See? They're clearly got a good base for their partnership even if they have their own religious conflicts going on in private among other issues that they are clearly working through." He says while Issei's now looking down at the ground, body shaking with his bang helping to hide his twin's expression. It's more then likely that it's a wide smile and suppress chuckling that's really the cause for the shaking.

"Well, of course! We might have a different way of approaching the teachings of Jesus Christ but we both work for the betterment of Heaven!" Irina states confidently while it's clear that Xenovia suspects that something about this conversation is going over their heads but nods in agreement with Irina. "Indeed. We shall smite any threats in the way of the Church's goals." The blue haired teen states, puffing up and glaring at him as he's the only one who's really facing the pair.

Issei's shaking only increases and he's having trouble keeping his factual feelings off his face, keeping to a polite look. Then, Xenovia senses Kiba Yuuto who's only just arrived. She glares while a much more hostile look enters her eyes while a sneer, he glances in that direction and finds that Yuuto's gaze isn't even on either of them but on the two Exorcists, he wonders as to why but the change in the mood does effect Issei, who recovers from his laughing fit.

"Is there something wrong, Kiba-san?" He asks the Devil politely and the Knight jerks a little at the sound of his voice, blinking as the

double Sacred Gear welder takes in the sight of the two of them. "I just have business with these two, Hyoudou-san."

"I see. Shall we continue on our way, Oniisan?" He asks Issei as the current Red Dragon Emperor shrugs. "I guess so, after all, I wouldn't want to be accused of interfering with an other's business when it doesn't concern me right now." His twin remarks simply, the two teenage girls don't get it but Yuuto does so he relaxes a tad.

"See you later, Irina-Kun! Quarta-san." Issei says with a friendly smile, he nods in agreement. The pair of Exorcists murmur their own farewells with Yuuto just watching them walk off, leaving the three to discuss the matter of missing shards of a legendary Holy sword. Given that the Fae did created said legendary sword before they fully withdrawn and from discussions they've had with Albion and Ddraig about said race and some lessons about Fae Magic, it's doubtful that those shard are the genuine article, perhaps the remains of God's failed attempt at matching said Holy sword.

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"Well, we've got permission from the four Satans and the Governor General to intervene before it goes any further." Kenta reports from their observation point within Kuoh Academy, a place they had been granted permission to create from Duke Zeoticus for emergency situations that could occur at the academy. Like invasions from other supernatural forces, like what's happening right now concerning the attempt to reforge the various shards to 'recreate' Excalibur with the backing of one off the rails Fallen named Kokabiel.

Asia is with them and in possession of the Holy sword Naruto enchanted that he named Soft Sunlight. Elena had examined it back when she inquired about what happened to said sword that had been in Freed's possession and, well, she's not speaking with the former blond nor is she overly pleased that the Dragon pretty much redesigned the sword, including a great deal of steel smelted on the sly at at least two Divine Gods' private forges or other resources used. He hadn't the heart to tell their former team mate that the

sword was just a mere side project for Naruto, a way to test if the Fae really could have created a Holy sword before the Biblical God thought to.

After all, despite its name, Soft Sunlight is a fairly powerful Holy sword even if it's relatively new and rather untested in actual combat. It easily absorbs sun light even in its sheath, which allows the welder to call forth a ball of soft light that will follow the bearer around, lighting up the area, even if it's a darkness caused by a spell or an illusion clouding the welder's mind. The orb will always grant the ability to See anything its light touches, which is actually a passive trait then an active one. It pretty clear the sword is named more after this passive trait then any of its other features.

He's been doing his best to teach Asia how to weld a sword in defense of herself and any being that's in need of protection, she's only really trying for the latter reason really as she's rather selfless after all. Naruto lent him Soft Sunlight not long after the Devils became aware of his brother's status as the current Red Dragon Emperor, clearly expecting him to field test said sword against any incursions plus a stand in until he finds an actual weapon he prefers to use in this life, after all, he's just the reincarnation of Uchiha Sasuke and in possession of said memories, it does not make him that same person as their life experiences are very different as is their mentality. Maybe if his memories came to him earlier then ten years of age, it might have a greater effect on his current life as Hyoudou Kazu but they didn't and he's learn to manage the memories without losing the who he is now to who he'd been.

Which is why he's in possession of a long dagger and a one handed battle axe, he's been liking the feel of welding two weapons but didn't want to use twin swords. Both weapons are light and the axe will allow him to try and disarm weapons from foes. Plus, both can be thrown, even if the manner is different. He feels confident enough to use the two in what's going to happen tonight, thus he asked Issei to talk Asia into carrying Soft Sunlight instead of coming unarmed as Asia seems unable to say no to her brother, likely due to the crush

she has on his twin given how kind and considerate he's been to her since they met.

"Right, so, weaken Kokabiel down enough for you two to chain him up." Issei muses with a slight grin, which Goten punches Issei lightly in the right shoulder for. "Mind out of the gutter, oh great Emperor and fearless Commander." Goten states in a light tone with a hint of mocking at the two titles.

"But didn't you like to bring up dicks last life as Sai?" Kenta asks Goten with a bemuse look and Issei snickers as Goten sends the former Nara a scratching look. "It was hardly Sai's fault for his socially ineptness or emotionally trauma." Which has the former ninja look towards Asia at the reminder of mental 'conditioning' not that Asia likely understood why Goten often went out of his way to get her to try different things, trying to pry her out of the mentality the Church had been subtlety installing into the Sacred Gear bearer. Only that he clearly wants her to have experiences beyond just school and dealing with the supernatural world.

"I'll drag the wounded away when I can or if I can't do that, use Soft Sunlight to fend off any attacks or use Twilight Healing just enough so that I could drag them off to safety." Asia repeats, clearly not likely the idea of not totally healing said person in one go or even using Soft Sunlight to cause harm to the enemy, but, they weren't asking her to go on the attack, just defend another life, which is likely more acceptable to her sensibilities.

"And I'm to watch my reckless twin's back from friendly fire." He reports as he glances out of the window, the sight of some old guy beginning to fuse the current set of Holy swords collectively called Excalibur into a single sword. The resulting sword likely won't be that nice looking let alone that strong as the Genocide Archbishop wasn't someone who was trained as a smith or engineer, let alone knows anything about Transformation Magic and Alchemy. After all, if the shards were a failed attempt by the Biblical God to create duplicate the Fae created Excalibur but shattered in the end, what are the

chances someone like Valper Galilei, the Genocide Archbishop, have of succeeding where said Deity failed?

"My scales are better suited then yours for taking punishment." Issei reminds him and he counters, "But do you really want to expose us as Dragon kin so easily?"

"Point." His brother admits with a bit of a sigh and the three of them head out of the room, leaving Goten and Kenta to watch and prepare for the upcoming capture in this safe place. As they reach the doors that will allow them to join the battle, both Issei and himself glance at Asia, who stares back with a bit of a confused expression. "Did you want to do a prayer before we join in?" Issei asks softly and Asia flushes, nodding slyly.

It's a short prayer that Asia speaks and in Church Latin. Once done, he stands to his twin's left and, they both take a deep breath before pushing the doors open, causing more then a few to look their way. "By order of the Governor General of the Grigori, Kokabiel, Valper Galilei, and your current associates are under arrest for disobeying the ceasefire and attempting to restart the hostilities among the three Factions. Either surrender now or be prepared to face me in battle, for I am Hyoudou Issei, the Red Dragon Emperor!" His brother calls forth the Boosted Gear and holds it up for those gathered to see.

Irina's eyes widen while her jaw drops just a bit at the sight of the two of them while her partner, Xenovia, looks annoyed and rather angry, as if they lied to her, which they never did, after all, neither of the two ever asked if they were aware of the supernatural world that's hiding from the view of normal humans. After all, the pair only asked if they were associated with the Student Council or the Occult Research Club of the academy and they answered honestly, they weren't nor have they been invited to join either. They prefer to avoid members of the two and they mirrored their actions in that regard unless it's about assigned school projects.

Kokabiel looks down at them from his position, it's clear the Fallen isn't overly impressed by either of the, but, well, that'll change. After

all, Kokabiel won't be taking this serious at all and they'll use that to their advantage, after all, let the Devils and Church Exorcists deal with the rogue human elements, they should be able to do that at least as they'll be 'playing' with Kokabiel. It's a question of what kind of tune they'll need to use but, they'll do it simply because they've not as green or untested as said Fallen thinks they are.

Dragon shape-shifting is such a wonderful thing and something they already promised not to mention to Vali, more to do with Vali's personal concerns and issues then because they want an advantage over said half Devil. They've used it to hide themselves in the name of dealing with on the job training and tests. He knows there's a memory he's intentionally repressing concerning his twin and is happy to continue repressing it, even though there's time when Issei gives him looks of nervous concern and a touch of guilt whenever they are alone in the bathroom.

"A slip of a boy like you is the current Red Dragon Emperor? You're human!" The Fallen states with a sneer. "And look, you brought some friends too."

"We're more powerful then we look." States Issei in a firm voice but allowing himself to glance towards him and then at Asia who's behind him and to the right before again looking up at the Fallen. Asia's reaction is clearly more real then his own expression but then, they had more experience acting as they did, unintentionally ended up that once on Leviathan Serafall's show due to them needing to steal an actual set piece of the show. They've been unable to use those identities or even the last names since as she's current looking to have them on the show again.

And then a light spear forms, with Kokabiel stating, "Here's my answer." The spear sails towards them. "Make. Me."

Issei is sure to grab Asia while going right while he dodges to the left. Within seconds, they're both using magic to argument their bodies, from their skin and muscles to their blood vessels and bones. He recovers faster and quick casts Lightning Spells at the hovering

Fallen. They didn't cost him much but it ensures that he's holding the Fallen's attention on him, although he could feel someone else staring rather intently at him while Irina cries out their names while Xenovia clearly realizes that they won't need to worry about the Fallen for a few minutes at least.

"Attack!" The blue haired Exorcist cries and he hears the engagement going on. Kokabiel moves somewhat in the air and just as it's clear the other is going to be coming at him, a rather large orb of fire hits Kokabiel's current exposed wings, with Issei cursing, "I missed! Fucking damn it!" *Which wing was he aiming for?* He wonders as Kokabiel's feathers burn.

The Fallen's pain is a soul wrenching bellow and sends waves of power around as Kokabiel tries to extinguish the flames. Which don't go out given the likely nature of enchantments intertwined with that orb of fire. The flames likely meant to consume the Fallen's reserves of magic as fuel instead of anything on the physical plane.

It's not long before the Fallen is raging out and he's already moving towards his twin, his weapons out and he just manages to swing a second before Kokabiel seemingly teleports before his elder brother. "You insect!" The Fallen growls, all the while the wings continue to burn, the feathers gone and the skin is beginning to expose the muscles under it. Without those feathers, the appendages look fairly odd, kind of like an actual bird's wing only far thinner and clearly with less 'meat'.

The axe causes a minor cut while he attempts to stab with the long dagger, aiming for where the kidney would be on a human, after all, the body plan should be similar enough to that of a human, why reinvent the way a human looking being works when there's already a decent one right there to be copied? The dagger enters cleanly and a light spear begins to form, only for Issei to punch Kokabiel in the face with a nasty right hook. His grip on the dagger is loose so he lets it go while ducking under the way Kokabiel is being sent flying.

The wall gives way to the flying body that is Kokabiel, then the next wall, and then a third with the fourth managing to put an end to the flight path. Sure, there's a number of other things destroyed but at least the fire isn't spreading. "I would have thought he'd go through five at least." His brother remark with a hint of a pout as he helps him up off the ground.

"If there hadn't been things in the way? Yea, sure, it could have happened." He assures his twin.

"You really think so? Oh, well, it's not like we'll get the chance to test that out." The fire is still burning brightly and given the number of wings this guy is reported to have, it's going to be a while before those flames fully consume the magical reserves, then again, getting Kokabiel to fling around more light spears should help eat away at said reserves as well.

The Fallen growls and a shield flares up, one that Issei likely been mentally preparing once that orb of fire had hit. Numerous light spears hit the shield, not just from the one side either but from all around them. While his brother holds the shield up, Kazu is busy crafting a particular nasty lighting bolt that's he's intertwining an enchantment into that will cause a pair muscle to paralyze up for a minute before fading to do it at a different location within the body, it should last for a good ten minutes and it's meant to annoy this guy, after all, allowing Kokabiel time to stop and think is a Bad Idea as the other is fair more experience in battle then the two of them and could pull out more then his share of tricks.

Now it's a balancing act of keeping Kokabiel from realizing that fact, which is going to be Hard and neither of them were any good with Illusion Magic which could help them compel the Fallen into not thinking anything through, to just keep attacking the two annoyances with last names Hyoudou, something the Fallen could easily fall into the trap of wanting to do anyway. He's going to have to keep it up with being 'weaker' then Issei in both magic and in a physical manner until the point where it's to their advantage to disillusion that idea.

The shield drops as the number of light spears seem to be less then before and Issei does a Transfer into the prepared spell. It activates and darts around until it hits Kokabiel, who's on the roof of a building. He begins to quick cast more Lightning Spells, some hitting while his twin is leaping up the side of the building to get at Kokabiel in a physical manner. Once his twin is engaging the Fallen, he takes a moment to get his bearings and walks over to pick up his two pieces of his long dagger, he sighs at the sight of it, picking the two pieces up off the ground.

"Well, it's to be expected, after all, it's not like I asked for an enchanted dagger or axe." He admits to himself. "Shouldn't be hard to find someone to reforge it." There's some of Kokabiel blood still staining the metal and he grins a bit at that fact, after all, he work with this.

Taking the butt of his axe, he crouches and begins drawing in the dirt some Norse Runes, nothing overly complicated but something to ensure that Kokabiel can't attack anyone save Issei and himself without incurring a Curse to his strength. It's actually helpful that they are twins and lived in the womb at the same time, meaning that he can stand in for his brother in this particular manner. It helps that both of them have engaged the Fallen, even if he's the one to cause first blood to be drawn viva his axe.

He knows he's in a bit of a rush but at the same time, he's never tried to use Norse Magic in this particular way so he's got to be careful by the order of runes. Plus, he's likely only got the one chance as he's not sure he'd find any more blood from said Fallen just laying there next to a weapon that shredded the blood. That's important, some of the more powerful magic deals with symbolism and the fall out of random circumstances. There's going to be random chance here and its clear that even if the Curse effects Kokabiel, there might be a loop hole, like preventing him from physically attacking them but allowing spells instead. Still, as long as the others notice the spells, they should be able to dodge or set up some kind of shield.

Concentrating, he does his best to keep his arm steady while taking calming breaths. Yes, he needs this done and his mind is racing with a number of emotions, doubt being the primary with the feeling of worry in concern for Issei being a secondary. Still, minutes flow pass and some of his worries are soothed by the cries and curses the Fallen bellows at his elder brother. Studying it a bit more, he adds the completion rune and then activates it by transforming a nail into a claw, cutting himself across the palm, balling said left hand into a fist with the blood dropping down from his hand, and it glows blood red as it accepts the two types of blood.

"What the fuck did you do?!" He hears Kokabiel roar as he feels something etch itself onto his own forehead, causing blood to drip a bit down his nose. He wipes it away and puts the axe onto his belt, calling upon his magic, he casts Flight Spell upon himself and flies through the air, rising up and dodging a few light spears before landing.

"Huh, so that's what an Angel's wing bones look like." He comments as he gazes thoughtfully at the bones hanging from Kokabiel's back while the fire continues to burn only closer to the back. His gaze switches to the forehead to find a Norse Rune etched into the Fallen's own brow and it's clear that the Fallen's really beginning to feel the toll of the fight.

Issei's looking far worst for wear but then, they're both still looking human and operating to current body limits, even with them using magic to increase that limit, after all, Issei's using Boosted Gear to Boost his ability to self heal the injuries he's taking from this fight. The rune upon his twin's forehead is the same as Kokabiel, which could mean that he's sporting the same rune. "You know, you could just surrender at this point. After all, there's nothing wrong with losing to this generation's Red Dragon Emperor." He remarks as it seems to be a bit of a breather and the Fallen's glaring look says it all, it seems that this one's pride won't let him end this peacefully.

He's rather stubborn. Ddraig states dryly and both of the twins snort at the slight widening of Kokabiel's eyes at the fact that yes,

Ddraig is very much awake and likely been watching this whole time. **Not wanting to admit he's at a lost as to how to deal with that fire, never mind the random jolts from your last lightning attack, the effects that Issei Boosted before the spell released.** It's clear that the entrapped Dragon is finding this battle to be entertaining.

And then Kokabiel calls upon his other wings and the flames roar in response, transferring to the new wings, not that the multi-winged being likely noticed or cared, clearly thinking that killing them will cause the fire to go out, which it will not, not until those chains Goten and Kenta plan to call forth chain the now ten winged Fallen Angel. "Just die already! The war will start again! With the siblings of two of the Satans dead, it will be the Final War!"

It rains light spears once more and he's not able to dodge all of them, but then, he just managed to evade enough not to have any actually enter into his body, cut into his skin yes, tear his cloths, yip, but he's been lucky that the light spears being so weak that they can't get pass his deeper into his magically enhanced body. What cuts Issei gets are already healing and his twin's got a rather cocky smirk, even if his brother is almost naked at this point. He is rather glad they left their actual possessions in that dimensional pocket, then again, how could they not learn after the fifth time their cells and/or wallets get destroyed during a fight?

It's really the reason they learnt to create said space pockets really, neither Naruto or Vali carry anything of value, any wallets and IDs are all conjured but then Naruto does not own cloths, he just conjures it since as a Dragon and a skilled shape-shifter, he doesn't see the point of owning cloths suited to a particular body form. Then there's the fact that they never did get how Naruto can create a cell phone out of magic when it's clear he doesn't know how it even functions let alone as number associated to himself, Vali could conjure a duplicate cell phone that he owns but then, it seems he needs to own one to duplicate it and the number he has is from the US, its set up to automatically pay the monthly bill. It's a work in

progress for them but given Vali's success in the field, they're confident that they'll figure it out given time.

Issei is already moving to engage Kokabiel in a physical manner while the other calls upon his magics to create a Light Sword. He takes out his one handed battle axe and moves to engage said weapon. They trade blows, with Issei doing his best to shield him from any of Kokabiel's counter attacks. More light spears try to spear them but they don't get pass their magical enhancements, not that it isn't taxing his reserves and Issei does Transfer a Boost to him when he's bleeding a bit more then he should.

The two magical effects from their respective spells continue to plague the Fallen with the fire eating away at the magical reserves while the lightning causing paralysis in a pair of muscles for a half a minute before moving to another part of the body to do it again, a count down of two minutes before it activates in the new location and repeat. It's clear that the Devils and the two Exorcists did finish with the humans that were aiding the clearly mentally unstable Kokabiel in this endeavor of restarting the war. The new wings are not looking so good and as minutes tick by and an hour finally passes, it's clear that Kokabiel's stubbornness is really what's fueling him now.

He manages to slice into a knee while rams the Fallen off the edge of the roof, upon landing on the ground, chains erupt from the ground. The flames slowly burn low before fading from the base of the now bony wings. Taking a breather, they both take note that it seems that the current Lucifer and Duke Gremory arrived. "Cloths." He murmurs to his brother, who snorts before looking pointly at him in return and he glances at his own cloths, it seems that his belt survived, just barely but it did.

Even though they both know they'll be feeling the backlash later, they keep up their magical enhancements within their respective bodies while conjuring something far more suitable for their official introduction to Sirzechs Lucifer and Zeoticus Gremory as the Red Dragon Emperor and younger brother. The Boosted Gear fades away as they call forth magic to ensure a soft landing. He easily

moves to the left of his brother and with magic keeping him together, he doesn't feel much of his own injuries. The same is likely true for Issei as well.

Asia looks like she'd love to run over to them but then, she's near the pair they are approaching anyway. It seems that the pair of important Devils seem rather impressed with Soft Sunlight, it seems that she used it after all, more then likely in the defense of someone else but still, it's clear she understands that you do need to take a stand and fight, even if it's not in ones own defense. He would look around to judge what kind of looks the Holy sword is getting from the others but, well, best not take your eyes off the pair of predators standing before you. They demand the respect of their full attention after all, best not to insult them.

"Satan Lucifer. Duke Gremory." Issei greets the pair, bowing the right depth as etiquette demands and he follows suit. "Sorry it took so long but as you can see, he is in our custody and will be handed over to the Governor General for his disobedience."

"And what of the others that served under him?" Sirzechs inquires curiously, its clear that the Duke is content to allow his eldest to do the talking. "If any are fellow Fallen Angels, then they, too, will be handed over along with Kokabiel."

"As for the former members of the Church, I believe there are currently two Church Exorcists here to speak on behalf of said institution for I doubt the Governor General will welcome them as they have decided to follow Kokabiel on his quest of restarting the war between your Factions." His brother states calmly and clearly. *Well, let's see Xenovia play nice with the current Lucifer and a high ranking member of the seventy-two pillars.* He muses, after all, she's been needling not just Sirzechs' younger sister but Leviathan's own younger sibling.

After all, one thing has always been clear when dealing with the blue haired teenage girl and it's that she's blunt in her opinions plus she's really into the bigotry the Church sprouts. "I think they're kind of too

new as Exorcists to be able to make that kind of decision, Issei-kun." Asia admits, not aware that she's likely saved the pair from falling into any number of pit falls that they'd likely run into blind when dealing with the two high ranking Devils. "Isn't that why they could be sent here? Because they couldn't send more experienced Exorcists without anyone taking note?"

"Indeed, I do believe you hit it on the head, young Argento-chan." Sirzechs remarks and the young teen blushes at the comment. There's a slight glint of amusement at how the young bearer of the Twilight Healing managed to inadvertently derail Issei's attempt at watching Xenovia try and be polite to the current Lucifer and Duke Gremory.

"At the very least one of them can make a phone call and have it on speaker to discuss matters." His brother remarks just as politely. "After all, it's not that late there as it is here. Plus, it'll allow them to report to their superiors while at the same time receive new orders."

Asia doesn't seem to have any objections to that idea and neither did Sirzechs, so, he pulls out his cell phone from his dimensional pocket and Asia walks over. "Please hand this over to Irina-chan and direct them somewhere safe before they make their phone call." He says kindly to Asia, who nods and before leaving, turns to say her farewells to the Satan and Duke.

There's a touch of interest in the Devil's gaze but then, it's understandable as it's unusual for a human to create something like that without a Sacred Gear. "It's been a while since I received a report of you peeping on the High School girls locker rooms." The Duke notes, piping in for the first time.

"Well, as my brother pointed out numerous times, women are being paid to have their photos taken in said states and in being filmed in said situations. Far be it for me to deprive the porn industry of funds to continue producing more of both." His twin explains in a light tone and there's a soft snort from the current Lucifer along with clear mirth

in his eyes. Then again, a flicker of mirth had also been seen in the Duke's own eyes.

There's another reason for that but... it's in that repressed part of his mind so he doesn't even try to recall it. Sure, one day, it'll come flooding back to him but for now, his mental fortitude is standing strong as is his extreme desire to not remember whatever it is. "It just took a few years for it to sink in." He explains with a slight smile.

"That's an interesting sword you have entrusted Argento-san with. I don't recall a Holy sword like it before." Remarks Duke Zeoticus Gremory.

"It's one of Spade-san's creations, it was taken as a prize, and they decided it was a decent enough sword for their interest in enchanting it using an old method." His twin explains. "They lent it to my younger brother until he found what kind of weapons he wants to focus on."

"We could make out the axe." Sirzechs remarks and he pulls out the long dagger, only it's mostly the hilt that comes out. He shows the state of said weapon for a few seconds before sheathing it once more, after all, how could something snapped in two like the dagger is be any use in that fight? It didn't have its former reach nor did it have a point to stick into Kokabiel once again.

They make some small talk from there, news concerning the sightings of the current White Dragon Emperor and rumors of Vali's current agenda to subtle probing about Issei's goals and about what kind of training Bova's given them. Privately, he would love for them to put this off as he's getting pretty hungry and knows that Asia is going to fuss about the fact she can't do anything about the feedback they're going to be receiving from keeping the magical enhancement up and running for so long. Yes, Asia will be more then able to deal with the damage they're likely suffering from, or rather, he's suffering as he's pretty sure even without the Boosted Gear out, it's still aiding in Issei patching up his injuries.

About thirty minutes pass and the trio walk over, Xenovia clearly not happy while Irina looking subdued, and Asia not being overly affected, then again, it's not like the Church has any authority over her. The phone is in Irina's hand and she bows in polite respect, saying, "Until a team from the Church arrives, we ask that the prisoners be held here in Kuoh Town and under the care of the current co-owners, the Land Owners Sona Sitri and Ria Gremory."

"We will be collecting the remains of the attempted reforged Excalibur and any of the recovered Holy that the Genocide Archbishop has in his possession." Irina finishes before turning to him, offering the cell phone back. "Thank you for allowing us to use your phone, Kazu-kun."

"You are welcome and it was Issei's idea to lend you a phone." He says easily with a touch of an easy smile. Irina seems to be relieved that he's not any different. "Thank you both then."

"It's good to see you are ok, Irina-kun." Issei says in a light and teasing tone plus smile, she huffs at the -kun but, again, some of the tension leaves her. Xenovia doesn't say anything as he pockets the phone, no point in wasting any more energy.

"I believe I will come with you as you hand over Kokabiel and his followers." Sirzechs states while the older Devil says, "I best see about canceling school and begin taking stock of the damages."

"See you later, Irina-chan, Quarta-san." Asia says as they begin to break apart. They each saying their farewells before walking over to where the chains holding Kokabiel, the other Fallen have been placed near their leader with their own bindings. They are subdued and there's a frightful respect at the sight of Issei and a touch less respect for himself. The sight of the scabbed over run upon Kokabiel's forehead likely means their own remain, or at least his did.

Kokabiel is very much out of it, which means that the chains also had a secondary function woven in, then again, the two had time to

prepare the creation of said chains. Issei calls forth Ddraig's Dragon Gate only it's under them and they sink into it. Soon enough, they arrive at the meeting spot that's not in Kuoh Town. "Sirzechs! You're looking well!" Azazel declares once the Dragon Gate fades away.

"And you look like you could use a shave." Sirzechs remarks in turn, not that the leader of the Grigori seem to mind the remark, then again, Azazel's fairly laid back kind of person. It's not long before Azazel tisks at the sight of their collective brows, then again, there's a slight snicker at the sight of the rune upon Kokabiel's forehead. Then a flat look at the bones upon Kokabiel's back.

"Given time, they should repair themselves." His elder brother states simply and there's more then a few Fallen that take a step away from the current Red Dragon Emperor. He places a comforting hand on Asia's shoulder as she looks half tempted to offer her services.

"Perhaps they'll serve as a visual reminder of what can happen to those that cross the current Red Dragon Emperor." Sirzechs remarks and Issei shrugs. "It's doubtful he'll be able to have many visitors will want to visit him at his new home in Cocytus." Azazel states and those Fallen Angels presence look shocked at the declaration. "Perhaps he'll come to regret his actions, perhaps not."

Then the Governor takes a few minutes to study the collection of others who fell under Kokabiel's sway. "I'll have to speak with Shemhazai and Baraqiel about their fates though. I didn't expect any save for Kokabiel to be returned."

"Is there anything more you need?" Issei asks and Azazel takes in the sight of them before saying, "Thank you for your aid in this endeavor and I'll be sure you receive a bonus for these others."

"Are you leaving as well, Satan-san?" Asia asks as Issei calls up a Dragon Gate that will take them straight home. The current Lucifer smiles gently at the teenager as he says, "I have some things to speak with Azazel about and perhaps lend him a hand in regards to this Murder we deposited upon him." It's clear that Sirzechs Lucifer

already has a soft spot in regards to Asia, but then, that's not all that surprising given her caring and gentle manner, it's clear it's something she naturally possesses then what someone forced her to grow into.

"Bye Satan-san!" Asia says before she walks through the Gate, they waited for her to enter first. "It was a pleasure." He says politely before stepping through himself and he's pretty sure Issei's own is polite.

They are in their room and they both get to their respective beds before releasing the magic enhancing them, they both let out hisses of pain and begin to feel the feed back. Asia is clearly in distress over this but his body begins to heal so that it's just more of a mental feed back with phantom pricks throughout his body. Feeling Asia's hand let go, he's miserable but then, that's the price he's paying for the continuous use of his magic to enhance his whole body outside of battle and instead of just keeping it to just his muscles and skin.

In the end, he's form shifts into his natural body and the pressure in his head lightens enough for him to begin dozing. Once it feels his brain isn't telling him the room is spinning, then he'll get up to grab something to eat as he's Starving now. He's pretty sure that Issei also reverted to his actual appearance too given the soft sigh he hears from Issei. They just need to be careful of their current nails and horns as he doesn't feel like temporary enchanting his bed and such against his current features.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P8: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

Naruto in his disguise as a Dragon kin agent of Tannin known as *Golden* in that magical language Albion taught him still trying to wrap his mind around the request that the current Leviathan wishes for him to preform. "Why?" He finally asks with a touch of puzzlement.

"Because she doesn't like it when I show up." The Devil summarizes and he tilts his head in a manner of confusion. "Which reminds me, I have a gift for you to take with you!"

Serafall uses her magic to summon a rather large box that's covered in pink stars on a white background. There's a bow on the top of it as well, it's color being bright pink with white trim. *At least it's color scheme works with one another.* He decides upon studying the gift.

Personally, he's not sure why the Satan before him just attends the conference anyway instead of sending him as her witness. He wonders why she's even bothering to send anyone as it's clear that Sirzechs Lucifer will be attending on behalf of the Satans along with his wife slash Queen. *Then again, it might have more to do with delivering this package then needing someone to act in her stead.* He muses to himself, he knows Vali's going to be in attendance as will the Hyoudou twins.

Well, I'm kind of busy and Rou already agreed to attend if I can't with Vali. Which it's looking like is going to happen. The disguised Dragon admits to himself. "As you wish." He states calmly as he straightens up and puts on a politely professional look.

Stepping forward, he feels Serafall's gaze upon his hood. He's wearing simply black robes with a deep hood so it can hiding his face while the rest hide his body's form. Upon his body, his collection

of Spell Gems gently move and click against one another, glowing softly to show they currently contained a spell. He stands nearly seven feet in his disguise as Agent *Golden* and his color scheme for his scales is light gray with black being reserved for the horns, spines, and claws. Both eyes sport a dark purple color and clearly more Dragon then, well, he never really picked a race that had been *Golden* 's original one, which kind of means that he's usually contradicting himself concerning his origins, not that any seem surprised as he's clearly been through that ritual at least three times from how pronounce his Dragon features are, so much so that if it weren't for the set of small wings, many would likely mistake him for a lizard man.

The gift doesn't seem to weight much to him but it does clash with his robes and the glow of his Spell Gems. Putting it under his left arm, he asks, "What is the time I am to arrive it?"

"I think now is a good time." Serafall says and it doesn't surprise him as a Teleportation Circle glows in activation from under his feet. After all, this is the eighth time Serafall has done this to him and wonder if it might have something to do with his refusal to appear on her show as a token villain.

He appears in what he assumes to be the Student Council room and the work stops at the sight of him. "What are You doing Here?" The current heir of the House Sitri hisses out at the sight of him, this is her third time meeting him in his role as Agent *Golden* . It'll be Rias' sixth time, it's not that odd that the Lucifer has been trying to get his little sister interested in trying to recruit someone who's proven to be fairly capable in political matters and is in good standing with a former Dragon King but it's kind of because it's always her brother subtly directing her to him that she doesn't even consider the idea.

Then again, that engagement has been sorted out just fine, so there's no pressure for her to recruit heavy hitters for her Peerage. He reflects as he smoothly bows before one of the co-owners of Kuoh Town, saying, "Satan Leviathan has engaged my services to

this night's meeting and has asked me to deliver this gift, although, I do not recall who it is to be given."

He easily moves the box from under his left arm and places it upon the desk, it's clear that in Sona's eyes, it might as well be a venomous baby hydra. "Hey! Why do you have your hood up?" Asks the seemingly only boy among the group of girls.

"You have delivered the package and can now be on your way." The younger sister of Leviathan states, cutting into the beginning of what could be an enlightening discussion. Then again, given his association with Tannin and the recent events concerning the current Red Dragon Emperor, its clear that Sona rather not have him around any more then she must.

The current situation between the co-owners and Hyoudou Issei is still rather brittle even though they did deal with Kokabiel, leaving the others to deal with the underlings. That the pair owe the Dragon Emperor in their mists for helping to contain the situation isn't something they liked. The two's pride have been bruised by the fact that a pair of 'humans' not only engaged a Fallen Angel possessing ten wings but managed to win let while also get away without losing a limb or almost dying from some life threatening wound.

"As you wish, Heir Sitri." He says smoothly and bows before he exits out of the room, wondering if she's now regretting her hasty decision as school is still in session and he's rather tall never mind suspicious looking. Not that it matters as he taps one of the Spell Gems before the door closes and it covers him in an illusion of a thirty something, non-descriptive Japanese business man in a neat black suit and shoes.

After all, using a Teleporting Circle in the 'secure' Student Council room would just shatter what little confidence in her spell work concerning the security of the Kuoh Academy. It's not that Sona's bad at magic, it's just that as Agent *Golden* , it's in his job description to be a sneaky son of a bitch with a silver tongue and sharp of wit, capable to getting into and out of places he really shouldn't be.

Funny how it just clicks with what I did back with Albion and as a ninja.

Then again, even back then as a blond human who just happened to be the prison for the nine-tails, he'd be able to sneak around in an orange jumpsuit. Out run various pursuers, never mind setting up pranks done up as traps. His Henge Jutsu wasn't an illusion and looking back, he should have used it for a hell of a lot more then just knocking out pervert men, like actually go buy groceries at a cheaper price and if he'd known about his luck at gambling, use it to appear as an adult to add more padding to his wallet.

Conjuring a cell phone and using a bit of magic to ensure it'll connect to the local network, he texts Rou and Vali that he'll be observing the meeting in his role as Agent *Golden* . Once they reply, he allows the phone to return to its previous state of energy. He'll grab a few bottles of Sake before arriving at Bova, after all, this is Japan, it's unlikely the local store will have decent rum and zero chance at finding mead, never mind the idea that the two co-owners might engage in a petty revenge on Bova by ensuring that there is only cheap rum to be found in Kuoh Town and a slight pull of the strings for the surrounding area.

Well, that's only if they are aware of Bova's tastes in liquor... Naruto muses to himself. *It's not something Tannin or his sons likely mention or the topic ever comes up. After all, who would think that a Dragon cares about the taste of food or liquor?*

They arrive at the room to find Kazu and Issei already near Azazel while Asia is off to the side speaking with a pair who are clearly Church Exorcists. Few of those here likely knew that Vali's an agreement with Azazel, after all, the current White Dragon Emperor has proven in the past that he doesn't care for the politics of the supernatural world and many likely continue to assume that her often roommate and friend is still an independent recluse with no ties to any Pantheon or Faction. Or that if there's a group of supernaturals he favors, it's the Dragons.

In contrast, Hyoudou Issei has been in contact with Azazel and given the events concerning Kokabiel, most are taking it for granted that the Red Dragon Emperor answers to the Governor. There's no official agreement between the two, the only reason why Issei even reached out had everything to do with the assassination attempt on his life viva some random Fallen with too much of a power lust and too little sense to realize that maybe she's been played. Issei got the number from Vali and, well, that's that.

Oh, Azazel likely guesses where Issei got the number from and is slowly figuring out that the current pair of Dragon Emperors aren't going to engage in the traditional all out brawls of their predecessors whenever they meet up. Not that it they won't get into said brawls but they'll likely have them arranged in advance and maybe in some pocket dimension so that nobody notices them going at it, so that nobody thinks to take advantage of them during or after said brawl. For now, Vali's waiting for Issei to fully mature in body and become skilled in magic so they can have something of an equal match where they don't have imposed limits or restrictions, given that both aren't fully human, a decade wasn't much of a wait but then, given the current political climate, it's not like either of them won't have something keeping them busy.

It takes Rou a bit to realize that Asia is wearing Soft Sunlight, she recalls Naruto doing a bit of reforging concerning said sword along with making use of special runes that apparently the Fae help humans create once upon a time. Then with the leftover Divine metal, he'd forged her a nice metal shirt that's enchanted to fit her, passively self mend itself, self cleaning, and to comfortable, it's decent armor given it's as thick as an actual shirt. She's knows enough Transformation Magic to alter the shirt to appear in many different cuts, colors, and sport images that she wants it to display, the magic typically lasts a good five hours before the shirt reverts back to its natural appearance.

She's not wearing it tonight though, more for the fact that it would be hard to explain why she's got a spell active and who made said shirt,

after all Divine metals are found in the smiths of Deities. It's a headache best never experienced or for anyone to be aware of in the first place. Even if there's a good chance of something happening to interfere with this meeting to begin taking steps towards a lasting peace, after all, there's plenty of people in opposition to the very idea of peace with their ancient enemies among all the Biblical Factions and who knows who among the other Pantheons don't like the idea of it happening as well as peace means that the avenues of profit into buying or researching weapons will go down, never mind the private bounty lists.

The Church Exorcists pause at the sight of Vali and herself before glancing in trepidation towards the Hyoudou twins while Asia just looks at the pair of them in confusion. Then the blond leans over and whispers who Vali is and her eyes widen before glancing at her in a questioning manner. It's hardly surprising that any of them know of her or her relationship with the current White Dragon Emperor, in a way, this is her first real public appearance as being officially in Vali's 'camp'. Not even Azazel knows of her as they've never meet nor have either Naruto and Vali spoken of her, so, in all likely hood, they're going to go with the most obvious conclusion even though, currently in this room, only four people know who she's really dating, well, six if one includes Albion and Ddraig but those two aren't likely going to be asked about something as 'silly' as if she's really Vali's girlfriend slash bed-warmer.

"Hello!" Asia calls out cheerfully at them both. Vali nods an acknowledgement while she gives her fellow bearer of the Twilight Healing a smile, greeting in turn once she strolls over to the trio. "Hello, who are you with?"

"I'm with Issei-kun and Kazu-kun. I'm Argento Asia." Asia introduces herself. "Ye Rou and I'm attending in place of Uzumaki-san tonight." She says after giving the two a chance to introduce themselves, only for them to decline.

"The Dragon isn't coming?" The blue haired teenager questions with a hint of disbelief. She hums a positive, explaining, "He's on an

errand, it's one that will keep him from Lucifer-sama's side for the night." All true as Naruto will not be standing with them during this meeting.

"I don't think we've heard of you before, Ye-san." The blond comments politely while Asia looks a tad uncomfortable, likely aware that they are being rather rude by not introducing themselves. "I'd be surprised if you did." She states calmly and politely.

"Do you have a Sacred Gear? I have one, it's the Twilight Healing!" Asia says, breaking the slight tension that rose up. "I, too, am in possession of one of the seven Twilight Healing Sacred Gears." She replies to Asia and the younger's eyes wide at the claim. "Wow," then after a bit of a pause while the two Church Exorcists stiffen slightly, it seems nobody told them that there were more then just the one Twilight Healing Sacred Gear, "So... what does that make us?"

"Whatever we decide it makes us." She says simply. "Sharing the same Sacred Gear isn't all that odd as most of the more common ones have at least two to their number."

It's clear that this is a rather new plus and that it'll take some time for it to sink in. "So, how have you been finding Japan?" She asks, changing the topic to something that should be safer and not overly so personal.

And so, for the next little while, she listens as Asia talks about the differences between Italy and Japan, if she's asked something, she mostly answers honestly, making mention of being from China herself how some of that differs from Japan from with admissions of having gone on a few trips about Europe and America. Yes, she admits to being a Magician and belonging to a cabal or coven, she can't recall which should be applied to them really, which is how she's been able to travel so much even though she's not that wealthy. Summoning and Teleportation Magic tend to aid one another when it comes to long distance travel.

They stop at the arrival of the Devils, which include Naruto in his Dragon kin disguise. The dull black robe with glossy black embroidery, it's the kind of look that isn't typically associated with Naruto which is likely why it's so strange for her to know it's the former Hokage aspiring Naruto who prefers lighter shades of colors, never mind the effect of the soft spring green and baby blue glowing gems which just makes the whole look all that more eerie. *All that's missing is a staff of some sort to complete the image of a sinister caster.* Rou muses to herself. The hood is up, so she doesn't get a glimpse of his features and the robe helps hide his body's shape and deep sleeves hiding his hands.

Asia and herself give one another a look before they drift off to their respective Dragon Emperor. Rou's getting a better look at the rest of the Devils, the crimson haired male is clearly Sirzechs Lucifer and it's Naruto who's to the Satan's right with his old friend and fellow Satan Ajuka Beelzebub to the left with Rais Gremory and Sona Sitri following behind with their respective Queens walking next to them, she's forgotten their names honestly or did she ever been told the names of their peerages? She glances to find both Kazu and Issei frowning slightly at Naruto, but then, it's likely hard to not look at the seven plus be-robed unknown who just entered with the Devils.

Greetings are exchanged while Naruto merely murmurs his own greetings while moving to the back of the group. "So, who's this?" Azazel asks once the pleasantries have been exchanged, nodding towards Naruto.

"Satan Leviathan couldn't make it so she requested *Golden* , to attend in her stead." The name is in a very odd language and from the look upon Azazel's face, it's one that even the Fallen doesn't recognized. She wonders what it translates too, then again, Albion and Vali often call Naruto by another name as well, one that Vali doesn't know the translation to. All Naruto says on the matter is that it's the name Albion gave him back when the other 'donated' magic to a dying Naruto the Griffin.

Naruto pulls down the hood and there's a sharp intake of breath, even she does it at the sight of light gray scales with a pair of black short ram horns and a slight row of black spines. The head is more akin to that of a Dragon or lizard and dark purple eyes are in evidence. "Dragon kin." Azazel notes after a few seconds.

"I serve under Tannin and he had no objections to my presence on Satan Serafall's behalf this evening." Naruto explains in a rather odd accent and the way the mouth moves. She glances to notice that both Kazu and Issei look rather interested, but then, the two have every right to be. It's the look of thought upon Asia's face that answers if she's aware of the twins' actual race and a glance towards Issei and then at Kazu, although it's clear that she's more interested in Issei then in Kazu.

"Born or ritual?" The Governor General asks and there's a slight snort from Sirzechs, who beats Naruto in answering that, "Ritual, given the inconsistencies of his back ground."

There's a look of fake offense in those purple eyes. "Wait, what? You mean someone put him through a ritual?" The blond Exorcist asks and the room kind of turns to look at her.

"You can't really force someone through a ritual like that." *Tell that to the twins over there.* She thinks to herself as Azazel continues. "And expect them to survive, I believe the turn over for the animal infusion ritual has maybe ever two in five surviving only to be killed to be served up in a special meal that can only be stacked thrice and even then, people can and do end up not benefiting from it if eaten too often in a certain amount of time."

"And judging from *Golden* 's appearance, he's been through the ritual at least three times." The leader of the Grigori muses after a calculating look. "Which explains the memory inconsistencies."

There's a feral grin upon Naruto's current appearance's snout. "Maybe I have, maybe I haven't." Naruto states and most of the

leaders seem to dismiss said claim but Vali and her know that he hasn't undergone said ritual at all.

"Why would he want to like a monster?" The blue haired Exorcist demand before an elbow from the other manages to find a home in the other's mid-section. The blue haired one glares at her partner while Ajuka picks up the explanation.

"For the power it grants those that survive the infusion process." The green haired Devil states. "Unlike most empowering rituals, none have yet to figure out how to fully rob a Dragon kin of their newly gained body and magic. Nobody knows of a way to reverse the change as well, it's one of the oldest rituals of its kind and it's also the one most likely to be preformed compared to the others, one that even the Evil Piece system was inspired by."

She's kind of interested in hearing more only, it seems that the rest of the Church group decides to arrive. Two Archangels, Michael and Gabriel, arrive accompanied with a much older woman, one who inspires a slight gulp from the blue haired Exorcist. More greetings exchange and introductions made, with Vali introducing her as Rou Ye, one of the seven Sacred Gears of Twilight Healing which Issei used when introducing Asia.

Gabriel's gaze softens upon the sight of Asia but widens slightly after a light study of Soft Sunlight. It seems another realizes the modifications Naruto made to the Holy sword he took off of Freed, not that they likely know that it's that particular sword. *At this rate, Naruto should just gift the sword to her as everyone is going to assume she's the chosen welder or something along those lines.* She muses to herself as she listens as minor banter begins now that the introductions are out of the way.

Some minutes in, she glances around to find that Naruto's put up the hood now and Kazu seems to be studying the glowing gems strung around the body. While interesting, she's not sure what the point of them are given. Rou glances a bit over to Vali who seems to be politely listening to the current speaker and decides it can wait for

either a break or when Naruto's not playing his role as Tannin's Dragon kin agent.

Then the meat of the conference comes up from the Archangel Michael, "How do we prevent another Kokabiel from starting the war up again?"

"Why, we officially make peace with one another instead of keeping to the ceasefire." Azazel states and, well, there's a number of voices ringing out, "What?!"

Well, that's a waste of time and resources. Naruto can't help but think as he watches the Khaos Brigade's forces for this attack upon the likely beginning of peace discussions are easily becoming nothing but blood and corpses. It's not just a bunch of Devils among the assault forces but Fallen and Stray Magicians.

The Khaos Brigade's own forces aren't even under the same banner and so there's a great deal more friendly fire then there really should be. The Stray Magicians do their best to follow the orders of the other forces but, well, that's a lost cause and more then a few Stray Magicians are out right killed by angry Devils or Fallen. In this situation, assassinating the commander wouldn't end things as it's clear that this whole attack is a passion driven thing then done with any real thought out plan and carried out in a disciplined manner.

A few of the enemy forces die from his ice spears to the head, tapping a Spell Gem to conjure up said ice attack. He's skulking through the shadows and sniping at those who look like they are about to cause serious damage to someone who's not among the Khaos Brigade. Both Asia and Rou are busy moving about the field of battle with one of the teenage Exorcists guarding them, the blue haired one is with Rou while Asia as the other, their names have slipped from his mind given the situation.

Then Vali comes into sight of his hiding spot and it's then that he gets his first glimpse of the infamous God Killing Wolf of Norse

Pantheon, Fenrir. Then a pair of smaller wolves, one sporting streaks of yellow among its bleach white fur and the other is ebony black with frosted silver about the back coat. *Hati, the Moon Chaser and Skoll, the Sun Chaser.* He realizes as the nearest of the smaller of Fenrir sons catch whiff of his scent, glancing his way, it's Hati's blue gaze not yet focus upon him while the ears flicker while the nose is busy sniffing.

Tapping a Spell Gem, he calls up an ice spear while Hati growls within seconds of said creating it. Skoll pauses from following their father's example of using magic to empower a leap towards the roof tops in pursuit of his charger slash younger brother. Skoll's bright yellow eyes don't really focus on him and Hati huffs something in Wolf, the Sun Chaser whines slightly but, in the end, follows after Fenrir, leaving the Moon Chaser to deal with him.

"Dragon kin." Hati growls out with a hint of dark pleasure in Norse. *"Hati."* He states in the same tongue in a simple and passive tone, he's not liking the thought of fighting this magical wolf in his current disguise. It's limiting him to a certain skill set, all of which deals with striking from the shadows and dealing a killing blow before the target is even aware he's there if he must fight at all.

The head lowers and ears turn backwards with a hint of flattening, he gets a better look at the silver glinting from the black coat as it puffs up. Tail goes up and tension coil, ready to spring forward to snap at him. There's just enough room at this point for Hati to bite him before he can withdraw deeper between the school buildings.

He's mentally prepares his next course of actions, in the end, it's best to do the unexpected in this case. Hati is clearly also going over his own set of tactics but given his image of a skulker... As he is about to complete that thought, Hati's front paws lift a bit off the ground and he releases the spear, sending it at the left eye, he's also leaping forward. His robe alters itself the moment his hands touch the ground so he can move on all fours far more comfortably, running under the now leaping Hati, it's unlikely the ice spear managed to hit the eye, the cheek is the most likely.

Hati growls in wolf, curses most likely, while he's rearing up, leaping into the air to land on the Moon Chaser's back. Clamping down into the hide of Hati viva his small talons on his hands and toes. His hood bounces around but does keep his head covered. Both of them snarl, although Hati's is far more throaty then his own as he curls his scaly lips back to bare his own set of fangs, not that anyone can see it.

Hati's eyes display the shock and a hint of disbelief at the fact that he didn't flee like the skulking rat or that he had the balls to leap onto his back. The growling becomes a tad more thunderous as Hati recovers and the Moon Chaser flex to bite down on him. Naruto does his best to back hand the incoming snout, hitting the nose, which is rather sensitive given that Hati's jaws snap shut before getting close. A hint of disbelief and astonishment that such a thing even happened.

A minute of inaction is enough for someone to the pause and the senior Exorcist of one Griselda Quarta arrives with Yuuto Kiba, bearer of one of the Sword Birth Sacred Gears, yet, there's something... Pushing the matter aside, he does a back flip off the back of Hati the moment the two attack the Moon Chaser. He taps a good seven Spell Gems to conjure an icy net to entrap Hati, hampering the legendary wolf's movements before he lands in a crouch.

While he would love to look about for Rou or Vali, he knows he shouldn't take his eyes away from his current opponent. The two sword warriors press the advantage while he keeps a finger upon a Spell Gem to help keep the icy net empowered. The sight of Hati getting attacked by the pair, it's hard for him to not recall memories of Kurama and the fight of getting said Entity to submit to his will. *So not the time to be remembering any of this.* He reminds himself as he switches to the next gem.

As they are about to do the killing blow, he subtly casts a spell upon the dying Hati, ensuring that the Moon Chaser enters into suspended animation with and illusion of blood still flowing from the various

wounds, he moves from his position in a crouch. "My thanks." He states to the pair as the icy net vanishes as soon as he stops touching the Spell Gem.

"You have our thanks as well." States the elder woman before the two glance behind him and head off to continue doing their part. He approaches the 'dead' Hati and places a hand upon the flank of the mythical wolf. Glancing up along the roof tops, he then glances around the battle field. It's clear that things are winding down and he taps into his actual reserves to begin creating of a duplicate body of shadow and blood. Then, he Transforms Hati into the form of a normal size wolf pup of about a month of age.

Gently picking up the pup, he pulls the tiny body into his robes, sending the now puppy Hati to his room at his Lair before seeking the brother, Skoll. He arrives in time to barely save Skoll's life and does the same for the Sun Chaser. Feeling the weight of memories concerning Kurama lighten on his conscious, he finds Vali speaking with Odin with an unconscious Fenrir. Loki is covered in chains, he's not sure when the pair of Gods arrived but clearly they had at some point.

Naruto moves about the battle field, observing the fall out and moving among the bodies, looking for any damning evidence of informants or clues to any over reaching goal, then again, its founder being the Dragon God, it's likely to do with the Apocalypse Dragon and the Dimensional Gap. After all, for some reason, the Dragon of Dragons is now set up in the Dimensional Gap and that's kind of strange as it use to be Ophis claiming that space as their own private Lair. Nobody knew where the Great Red had claimed as his lair before taking residents in the Dimensional Gap nor did anyone know why he moved into the space when he hadn't shown any interest in it before.

Ophis wanting their previous Lair back is understandable but there's more going on then just the two getting into a fight over the Dimensional Gap. There is something going on, some kind of recent development and it involves the Dimensional Gap. Glancing around

until his gaze rests upon Kazu before switching to Asia who's next to him, healing him. Tilting his head a bit as he tries to recall any Deity setting up something like the Sacred Gears or creating what could be considered a magical computer that covers the world, yet none come to mind.

Beyond collecting some notable items from the dead, like magically enchanted items, damaged scrolls, and what personal effects beyond just jewelry or wallets, he also had to disable a number of traps to keep said bodies from exploding or destroying any of value on the bodies. It's likely for the best that it's him who's doing this morbid task as he's got the right skills then the younger Devils or the young Exorcists as they never dealt with the idea of people turning their own bodies into a grenade in hopes of doing further damage to the victors. Some of the humans, he had to reach into their very body cavities to get at the trap with his bare hands, using his own strength to get pass whatever magical barrier that sprung up once the body stopped moving to get at it.

The leaders likely knew why he'd do that but they are busy with what reinforcements that arrived, thus busy and not able to explain what he's doing when he does that, not even Griselda seems aware of the reason why he'd thrust his right hand into the dead bodies of apparently at random. He's fairly certain that the ones he does it to are the less experienced Magicians as they likely hadn't noticed what someone had surgically implanted into their upper body cavities, typically near their heart. The older and more experienced ones seem to go in two paths as they typically go about disabling and removing it upon finding it, they don't set up a new trap or, rather uncommonly, they have a prepared ritual that springs up the moment they've been dead for ten minutes, something meant to leech the very life out of the one approaching said body with a secondary effect meant to mask the life leeching.

None of the Devils or Fallen have their bodies trapped upon their deaths, likely out of foolish pride of them being able to survive such an attack or just evidence of their lack of preparation. With the last of

the Khaos Brigade bodies searched and what traps they held gone, he walks off a distance before tapping one of the Spell Gems and washing away the grim from his arm before doing another cleaning spell on his robes. With that, he find a decent spot where he can begin unloading his inner pockets of what he found, turning it all out.

Once that's done, Naruto takes a few seconds before glancing out at the latest turn of events and finding himself rather emotionally spent, yet, he really should pay attention to what's going on. Tapping a Spell Gem, he uses a spell to magically sort the items into two categories while activating the spells in the hood of the robes to help him pick up the words being spoken about the collection of groups. Most are to be expected while some going on among the younger Devils of the co-owners' peerages are doing their best to decompress over the night's battle with Xenovia cursing out his actions towards the dead, mentioning how he singled out the human members among the fallen for mutilation, and then there's the one going on that's going to have greater impact down the road that's going on with Issei and Vali plus their respective Heavenly Dragons, yes, it seems that the two had set up some security for their discussion yet, it's hasty and needing to be few in nature not to draw the attention of the various groups.

The four are discussing how they're going to proceed from here, the act they each felt they could pull off honestly. Mention of compulsions and a single mention of a Geas croup up, at least for the remainder for the night as tonight's battle has taken their toll upon the pair of Dragon Emperors. He glances among the non-important items before picking out a ring and begins to create a pair of clip on earrings, it's just a simple old gold ring so no gems on it, but he pulls the two to his mouth and uses Transformation Magic to create carbon crystals as he exhales into a setting on the two. The crystals are very fragile and barely visible but should serve as an anchor for the matrix of compulsions that it sounds like the pair are thinking of inflicting upon themselves.

He then Teleports the clip ons to the pair just as they began to realize they don't have anything to be a physical medium for said matrix and they haste, for good reason, to set them on themselves, on their own magical reserves. Naruto hears Albion and Ddraig chuckle at the appearance of said clip ons while the two bearers clearly didn't know what to say for a good minute. "Thank you, Naruto." Vali finally says and Issei echos the current White Dragon Emperor, although Issei now knows that he'd been bearing witness to their discussion.

You are welcome. He thinks to himself with a slight smile and widens his listening spells to get a better idea of what's going to happen next before the farewells are exchanged. Putting the non-important items back into his inner pockets, he grabs the rest and begins walking over to where Ajuka is, as the Satan Beelzebub isn't busy beyond studying the body of 'Hati'.

"I sorted out what's important from the not important." He states calmly. Ajuka turns away from the 'body' and inclines his head slightly.

"I see, anything interesting?" The Satan inquires and he replies, "Nothing ground breaking. It's clear that for at least two sub-groups, this was an act of passion while the stray Magicians were likely given orders to support their fellow Khaos Brigade beyond just going for the Seal Bishop."

"Never mind the inclusion of Loki's son and grandchildren." Ajuka notes and he is fairly sure that the reason why body has started to skill the two dead wolves have to do with Odin being here. Before leaving, the Norse God will likely order the pair of bodies burnt to ashes.

"I saw the young White Dragon Emperor speaking with Odin with an unconscious Fenrir near them." He recalls thoughtfully. "I did not wish to get too close as to attract their attention."

"A new recruit under the young half Devil's banner." The Satan remarks and that's a conclusion it thought up as well, but hadn't thought it was something Vali would go for. *Then again, Hidden Village LARP is going to be under Issei's banner once Kazu's membership to said group is more common knowledge and they are in need of protection from being considered a stray Magician cabal.* He reflects.

"Hard to believe that the current Red Dragon Emperor and his twin brother are Dragon kin." Ajuka remarks and he blinks, oh, he's seen the pair in their natural form. "I would not have thought Bova would allow the Red Dragon Emperor to under go one of the rituals given the random element involved." He idly muses out loud. "Never mind their current age."

"Indeed." The Satan states and they turn their attention to the number of items that he's carrying under his respective arms. Ajuka barely makes a gesture and the various loose papers are pulled from the various places, unfurling while hovering before the Beelzebub for the Devil to read.

He is patient and that he's still on Stage, so he can't break his Role until this Act is done, allowing the Actors to file off the Stage.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P9: DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

"So..." Naruto glances over towards the Fallen Angel who's leaning against the door of the hotel room that he's sharing with Vali. Stepping in, the Governor General allows the door to close before adding,

"Uzumaki Naruto, commonly known as Sapphire in the Dragon Lands and the infamous Golden Dragon."

He closes the book he'd been reading to give the elder supernatural being his fully attention as Vali's off grabbing pick up their supper. Rou's doing her own version of damage control concerning her connection with the LARP group that the other reincarnation people started up and yet, she's clearly in the White Dragon Emperor camp. It's getting well known that Kazu's been training as a Magician before the ritual Bova put the twins through that woke not just Ddraig but the trace remains of Dragon blood within the younger twin and it's the same Cabal Rou also got her own magical training and learnt to use her Sacred Gear.

"Should I repeat your own, Azazel? But then, I would assume that the list is must be nothing but background noise at this point." He remarks in his disguise as a Half-Devil with simple chemical hair dye making his hair glossy black and a pair of non-prescription glasses, taking off the glasses, he puts them on the end table.

The elder seems rather bemuse by his remark along with the frank tone he spoke in. The Dragon considers just why he's getting approached by the Fallen as they let the silence hang between them, then a number of reason slowly come to mind. "Does it bother you that I got to Vali first?" He inquires softly as he does his best to pick up any ques about the Fallen's state of mind upon that question.

"More that Dragons seem to see if fit to approach the current set of Dragon Emperors." The other male states and he represses the urge to sigh along with looking away. "I doubt my assuring you that it was my own idea to seek out the latest White Dragon Emperor won't reassure you any." He states dryly. *Only perk his curiosity even more.*

"You have seen the video recording of my natural form, have you not?" Naruto asks, deciding for something not as hard to swallow as being an old friend of the Vanishing Dragon reborn as a Dragon and waited until he was at the acceptable age to start looking for the latest bearer of the Divine Dividing Sacred Gear. "Pretty different compared to the other known species. My clutch siblings are all Flame Dragons as are my parents." He admits with a sigh, it's unlikely the Fallen got that bit of information.

"I'm bigger then them already and yet we're the same age." He continues. "How old would you say I am?"

"I doubt there's any true expert on your race but I'd have guess at least a young adult." Azazel admits after a bit. "I'm a preteen in Dragon terms." He states and that sparks interest in the Fallen's eyes but also perhaps else...

"So, is this Q and A?" He asks one of the leaders of the Biblical Faction with a hint of curiosity after a bit of silence. After all, Vali's due back soon enough and he doubts that Azazel is someone the half-Devil wants to see upon returning to this hotel room as they are here to take a break from reality by playing tourist along with attending the local Gaming Convention, which they are both keen to attend for slightly different reasons.

"How are you getting along with Fenrir?" And he doesn't see how that is relevant, then again, nobody knew beyond Albion, Fenrir, Rou, and Vali that he saved the two sons, who are now looking like twelve week old pups for... reasons that center around them being far less likely to cause permanent injury to Rou when they want to play with her. "I established my dominance and other then I am making clear

minor displays of that dominance, he tends to keep his fangs and growls to himself."

After all, the Great Wolf knew his sons when he smells them and it's clear who's scent it is covering them, so Fenrir is a touch more willing to tolerate him as a fellow second in command then put Naruto into his 'place' under Fenrir's chain of command. The split is, Rou is Naruto's while Hati and Skoll fall under Fenrir. Given time, who knows how things will play out but for now, things are stable among the White Dragon Emperor's 'camp'.

"Must have been some fight then." Is all that Azazel comments and he shrugs slightly. "Wolves need a clear hierarchy, they feel secure knowing where they stand in their pack." He states calmly.

"Are you sure you're a preteen?" The other asks with a hint of exasperation and he holds out his left arm, allowing it to transform into a miniature version of his own natural arm. Turning his gaze upon the golden scales, he tests a few until he finds one that clearly ready to be shed. Plucking it takes a few seconds as he moves it back and forth a bit before beginning to tug it out from its place, with it now in hand, the limb flows back into the previous state.

"This is for testing my age and life stage, nothing more, understand?" He tells the Fallen as he turns his gaze back upon the other, holding the now much larger scale up in his right hand. "Just your age and life stage." Azazel promises after a bit, interest clearly glinting in those slightly red hazel eyes.

After a few seconds of giving the elder supernatural a hard look, he gets up off of his seat and walks over, handing the scale to the Fallen. The scale grows to its natural size now that it's not touching him and Azazel's gaze is now on the golden scale in his own right hand. *I better not regret this...* He thinks to himself, it's not like it's uncommon for a Dragon to sell their own discarded scales on the magical market but then, those have been magically 'sanitized' so there isn't a 'living' connection between the one who shed them and the now sold scale itself. The process also is the reason why nobody

could create an actual suit of good armor out of Dragon scales, even if they came from the same Dragon.

The old male puts the scale away and is about to say something when the door opens. "AH!" Cries a child's voice and they spy Vali coming out of Albion's Dragon Gate.

Concern for the kid, he's already moving to give the red head a look over, the cloths being a bit on the worn side plus there's something kind of familiar about the kid... "Huh, where did you find a kid Devil, Vali?" He wonders out loud as the kid recovers enough to notice him, wide eyes blinking into his own sapphire blue.

"What are you doing here, Old Man? We're here on vacation, remember?" Vali remarks while he realizes just who's kid this is and then snorts at the sight of the cloths, after all, they really do help hide the fact that this is the son of the current Satan Lucifer and the entitled Strongest Queen.

Millicas ducks his head upon realizing that he's been staring at Naruto and bows as he introduces himself, "Hello, I'm Millicas Gremory. Sorry for staring but... You're a Dragon!" He wonders if there shouldn't be illusions of stars shining in those grey blue eyes.

"Just checking to be sure you arrived safely." Azazel replies to Vali's question while he sighs a bit, it's pretty clear that any male traveling with Vali at this point who comes across as a half-Devil is likely Naruto, dyed hair or not. "Yes, yes I am and how long have you been away from your parents and grandparents?" He's pretty sure that the kid is living with his grandfather, Duke Zeoticus.

"Ah..." Millicas glances off to the side, likely at Azazel at this point while he hears Vali groan, he can already imagine the hand that's covering the young Lucifer's eyes at this point. "He's a softy for kids." He assures the youngest member of the supernatural world.

Vali snorts while Azazel chuckles, but doesn't deny it and Millicas does his best to not look unsure but clearly at a loss of what to do.

Then again, how often has the young Devil ever spent time in the company of strangers without a member of the Gremony house hold? "Vali rescued you and it's not like any of us are nameless strangers, you know our names after all." He gently points out and that did seem to get a nod from the kid.

Yes, he feels measuring gaze of a certain Fallen but he's a bit more focus on the kid before him. It's been a while since he's had to deal with someone about this size, let alone age. He crouches down but is careful not to touch Millicas, even if he wanted to place a comforting hand on a shoulder, he didn't want to invade Millicas' personal space given the situation. After all, they were still essentially strangers beyond the boy knowing their names and that Vali is responsible for getting him away from whoever took him.

Millicas stares at him a bit more before reaching out and, well, touching his hair. He doesn't react although Millicas does flush in embarrassment but it's clear that the kid is curious. Naruto's certain that if he were in his actual form, the youngest Gremory would be likely itching to touch his scales. It's just something about not being human or naturally human shaped that just seems to cause people want to reach over to touch the clearly non-human shaped being as long as it's not a scary situation.

Mentally sigh, he shifts into a miniature version of himself, about the size of a Great Dane as he doesn't want to take up a lot of room once Millicas isn't touching his hair. Eyes widen and awe is once more on the young Devil's face while the door gently closes and Millicas glances likely over to Vali, as if seeking permission which he only allows his tail tip to twitch slightly in annoyance of being thought of as a pet but, again, somethings are just that ingrained into most cultures. With likely a sign of approval, he mentally hears Albion snicker in his head, Millicas takes a step closer before beginning to pet his scaly neck.

"Well... I'm not sure but there was this... I thought it was a mirror only, it turned out to be someone looking exactly like me!" Millicas begins to explain with a touch of anger and undertone of unease

after spending a few minutes collecting himself after moving to sit down on the floor next to him. Leaning a bit into him while he remains sitting and he lets the kid do so.

He glances towards Azazel as Millicas continues, "Then, whoever they were, push me and... I don't know what happened afterwards only that I woke to find myself dressed in these cloths and with my arms tied up behind my back in a small empty room. I don't know how long I was out only that it must have been a while."

Azazel's face sports a frown while Vali's stormy expression... *Oh look, it must relate to the Khaos Brigade.* He concludes while Millicas' talks about the few interactions with a pair of his captives and how they would only bring him food and drink for six times along with only two trips to a restroom, not that Millicas ever visited one before as he just remarked about it having more stalls and toilets then normal plus odd smelling and in need of a good, through cleaning.

Millicas recalls the food and water tasting odd before he woke in a new room and he knew it was new as the previous one didn't have a table in it nor had the metal door been any color other then black. "There was also a bucket but I don't know what function that served as it was empty." *Right, sheltered kid.* He muses as the elder males within the room all share a look and mutually decide not to inform the child what the function of that bucket was for while Albion chuckles, likely only being shared with Vali and himself given the lack of reaction on Azazel's face upon the chuckles getting started.

"Any way, a trio of entered into the room with this lady giving orders on a phone, about not engaging the person that they saw while the two pretty much ignored my questions with one of them threatening to knock me out if I don't shut up and walk before them." Millicas sniffs a bit and he moves so he can wrap a wing over the Devil like a blanket, the kid is a bit startled but relaxes once more, although the head bows down a bit.

"Not your fault for obeying." Azazel says in a comforting tone. "Better to be awake and able to evaluate the situation in order to escape then to be out cold."

"You did get away from them, after all." Vali adds and Millicas just nods. "Your safe now." The current White Dragon Emperor reassures the kid, which Millicas just nods in agreement with. Silence hangs in the room for a bit, it's clear that the emotional toll was settling in, particularly as he's not at his home just yet nor was it his parents or grandparents who came to rescue him. Nor were they present, that he's still in the company of strangers who he only knows from gossip or mentions from his elders.

"Hungry?" He guesses while Azazel manages to draw Vali away from the door, getting his younger brother's side of the story and the kid's stomach groans in a wet kind of way. "Well, Vali should have grabbed something for us to eat, so just wait a bit longer."

Millicas angles his head to look at him, a few tears have already fallen and he raises up a bit, moving his arms wide in a slow and deliberate manner. Then Millicas moves in under him and hugs him, he returns it and brings both wings about to also 'hug' the kid. He gently murmurs reassurances while the child clings a bit more tightly to him, taking comfort in his presence. It's hard for old memories to not surface up from their usual home within his mind, after all, Devil or human, this is a kid in emotional pain and he's not going to ignore that, he couldn't ignore it really.

Azazel leaves viva the bathroom of the room while Vali is placing the shrunk food order onto the table, dispelling the enchantment and he whispers, "Food is ready." Millicas hums but doesn't seem to want to break out of the hug just yet.

"Wow! Look all those people all lined up!" Millicas remarks, their hotel room hadn't been invaded by Devils but nor have they received word concerning what's being done about this body double, so, they decided to bring Millicas with them, only Vali went out to buy a few

things while he kept the kid occupied by asking him about general things like music, video games, movies, and TV shows.

"Video games are very popular among the general population." He agrees, they had gone over what words to use in public and that if he gets caught forgetting, to just mention a game, book, comic, manga, TV show, and, of course, movie to cover up the slip and find a polite way to slip away from said person. Given Millicas' age and clear innocence, the tactic should work.

I wonder how many will mistake him for a girl? He muses at the son of Sirzechs Lucifer, who's currently sporting dark purple hair that he used a minor spell to alter the hair style into one that Millicas liked the look of upon going through a number of hair styles, since it's a minor Transformation spell, he's pretty sure said parents and grandparents will let the current look go, it's likely the fact they used chemicals to dye the hair that's going to cause a fuss. Never-mind the whole we didn't take him back to the Underworld right away but to a human gaming convention isn't going to help our case any.

Millicas keeps near them but does stop to gawk at the group photos going on with people dressed up in their favorite game characters or in the style of a certain game. They are standing in line to purchase a ticket for Millicas, who's going to be answering to Miles for now while Vali, now sporting a different dye job of light pink and pretty much just decided to dress up as G from Kateyo Hitman Reborn! with fake tattoo plus cloths, is going by Zack and he's going by Jer, short for Jeremy, he's also dressed up as another character from the same show that he could easily pass off as, one Chikusa Kakimoto.

Yea, Millicas hadn't fully believed them when they assured him that they'll have an easier time fitting in dressed up, now though? Given the kind of costumes and or props people are wearing or carrying around? The young Devil's doubts should be gone.

"One child please." Vali says while they also hand over their phones sporting the e-tickets for the event in question. Once they all had their wrist bands, they enter into the con proper.

There's so many people! So many different costumes! Then there's the noise and music while moving through the various booths. TVs are set up with game systems up and people waiting in line to play the demo of the game while others are gathered around a speaker, listening to a discussion. Plus, people are getting pictures taken at displays or with models, again, dressed up too.

Neither of the two seem to be in any rush which means that he can take his time checking out the various displays and even stand in line to try a demo of various games, which they also gave a try even if said game clearly wasn't one that suited their taste in games. After all, while the White Dragon Emperor was out buying a few things for not just for Millicas own disguise but to alter his own given what happened last night. Pink hair, minor Transformation spell for the hair style, then watching as Naruto used the temporary tattoo ink to put a tattoo on the cheek, and then the final touch being a business suit. Ok, so, maybe he didn't really believe either of them about nobody really batting an eye at their choice of disguises, even Naruto deciding to dress up even though he wasn't there with the half-Devil in rescuing him from those people, yet, they were right.

There have been a few who have waved at the White Dragon Emperor, a number commenting on the costume being decent and others taking a few second to realize who Naruto dressed up, some made comments about him being a Skull due to the purple hair but that's about the only comment he really received, but otherwise? Nobody seem to be aware of the Dragon, the Dragon Emperor, and himself, a full-blooded Devil, among them. The emotions that causes within him are all mixed up and head spinning, but it's also something of a relief as he's just another kid, Devil yea, but still a kid, in the crowd in the company of an older cousin? Elder brother? Maybe uncle?

There's this lack of pressure, lack of expectations that's kind of freeing yet it's kind of frightening too, as this is truly unknown territory for him as he's not sure if he's able to fend for himself as he

doesn't know the rules of this new setting. It's a bit much and then they're in off in a quiet spot and glancing to his right, he finds Naruto studying him with a hint of concern while the White Dragon Emperor is positioned between them and the crowd. "Getting overwhelmed?" The Dragon asks softly and he flushes a bit, he wanted to deny it but, well, looking out at the crowd, he turns away, feeling his heart race a bit faster.

"It's so different..." He admits and Naruto crouches down, it helps, not having to look up at the other and it's oddly comforting, having someone going to the effort to look him in the eye near his own eye level. It's kind of strange at how patient and comforting the Dragon had been, is, towards him, the son of Satan Sirzechs Lucifer and Grayfia Lucifuge, a pure blooded Devil when there's no real need to be, after all, Naruto doesn't answer to the Devil Faction, just to the current bearer of the Divine Dividing Sacred Gear. "Are these gaming conventions always so... so... big?" It's really the only word he could think to use.

"Depends on the convention, actually. This is a video game one, so you'll find larger booths plus the needed equipment to play said games." Naruto explains patiently and calmly. "Most of what is here... It's more for advertisement purposes, generating interest in their upcoming releases then them trying to sell any merchandise."

"There are other kind of conventions?" He can't help but ask while feeling a bit better about the lack of need to buy anything. "Yes... Huh, you'd think..." Naruto snorts and gives his head a slight shake, a bemuse expression upon his face as he continues, "Anyway, do you want to continue on?"

Millicas glances between the two before looking back out at the crowd of people, yes they were all likely human but, well, they just... The numbers of them... *But I trust them, to protect me.* He admits as he glances at the White Dragon Emperor and then at Naruto. Yes, he wants to see his parents and grandparents yet, it's more of the fact that the White Dragon Emperor does have a cell phone and Governor General Azazel should have given them a way to contact

him, which means that his family likely do trust his current care and well being to this pair.

"We can take some breaks from the crowd, right?" He asks and Naruto hums in agreement, remarking, "You're hardly the only one out of us that's bothered by being surrounding by so many bodies, it's just a matter of tolerance at this point."

That makes him feel a bit better about his own wariness of the crowd being something they got and could relate to as well.

His King is a hasting a bit while Rossweisse, latest member of Rias' Peerage and her second Bishop, seems to be scowling at the sight of a banner for some a Viking video game. Akeno, Koneko, and a recently unsealed Gasper are still back in Japan and working on setting up a room for Millicas to use for the next little while due to some counter operation going on within Gremory house hold, never mind the overhaul over their security as it seems that Millicas had been successfully kidnapped without anyone being the wiser. Which clearly has the whole of House Gremory's hackles raised and looking for blood.

His King included which is why both Rose and himself have been running interference between the usually gentle mannered Heiress and any unfortunate people that cross their collective paths. From what little murmurs Yuuto heard from his King, he prays that she won't be trying to tear apart whoever Azazel hired to be Millicas' current bodyguards. After all, they weren't the ones who kidnapped the young Devil and likely were just doing their job.

"I'll go stand in line." He offers and Rose nods, in her hands a gem that's homing in on Millicas is still reacting so he's still in this building. Rias just gives a sharp nod, being sure to hand him a credit card, he's pretty sure that if it were for any other reason for coming to such a place, she'd be able to enjoy the current setting, maybe even want to linger a bit longer.

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"Rias?" He looks about for a red haired child only to find a kid who's got purple hair done up in a pony tail with hair that's fairly long, longer then Millicas should have yet, the eyes look right as does the face. "Millicas?" Rias asks with a slight bewilderment.

"Do I really look that different?" The kid asks with a hint of bewilderment before glancing down at his orange hoodie that's showing a navy blue shirt plus wearing blue jeans plus dark gray runners. Rais surges forward to give him a hug, which Millicas soon returns after being a bit startled at the sudden express of emotion, all the while he finally gets notices a pair of young men near and looking on, one sports a business suit, tattoo, and pink hair while the other has a beanie, black hair, glasses, tattoos, and a simple band-aid near the lower jaw.

"Thank you for looking after him." He says politely, re-framing from bowing politely given their country while Rose nods while moving to stand near the reunion. "Just what did they do to your hair?" His King wonders as she recovers her composure while Millicas looks kind of sheepish.

"I picked the color and the style." Millicas explains. "Na... Jer is the one to do the work on my hair." Adding, "He also drew the temporary tattoo on Zack's cheek, he's pretty artistic."

Which means causes 'Zack' to smirk slightly and 'Jer' to sigh slightly while also bringing the two to Rias' attention. His King draws herself up and clearly evaluates the two, not that either of them seem concerned to be in her cross hairs. Then again, Millicas tugs on Rias only she's not in the mood, gently directing the kid to Rose's direction and Millicas turns pleading eyes on him as his aunt gracefully stalk towards the two with clear intent to 'discus' the situation with them.

Their current location is away from crowds and off the 'beaten' path, so they do have some privacy. "I can't believe you thought it a good

idea to bring him somewhere this crowded! Never mind those cloths!" Rias snaps and Millicas groans which causes Rose and himself to share a look.

"You ever thought they'd snatch him from you in this crowd?" She continues and there's a frosty look in 'Zack's' eyes with 'Jer' studying Rose and him before leaning back with hands in his pockets. There's a particular look in those sapphire eyes...

"Didn't you think about security at all? Or about he'd need time to recover from his captivity?" His King snaps and Yuuto glances at Millicas, who's looking highly embarrassed and a bit annoyed.

"Well, what do you have to say for yourselves?" Rias demands with a hint of a growl and in the tone of an order. "Ah... please go easy on her, Mister Lucifer." Millicas asks upon stepping forward to bow at the current pink haired...

He stiffens before snapping his head towards the glasses wearing being and yea, those sapphire eyes are alight with amusement plus a slight smile. "Mister..." Rose repeats with Rias finishes, "Lucifer."

"I will excuse her current manner given her clear worry for you, Millicas but I hope she remembers herself in the future." The White Dragon Emperor states in a cold tone. "After all, I might not be so lenient in the future."

And we are now two for two for Dragon Emperors. Yuuto thinks with a slight groan as the pair leave, although Naruto and Millicas do say their farewells, which include a hug on Millicas' part and a hair ruffle from Vali Lucifer. "I'm sure that if you apologize properly they'll accept it." The child assures Rias while Rose looks rather faint over their King's course of action verbally attacking the current White Dragon Emperor.

"How did Azazel even get them to agree to watch you?" He asks Millicas, who frown up at him. "Mister Lucifer rescued me while I was fleeing from the thugs trying to herd me back into the van. I didn't

see the Governor General until we arrived at the hotel room, who was talking with Naruto." He notes that the use of the Dragon's first name compared to the other two, then again, it's clear that something clearly happened for Millicas to feel comfortable with using the golden Dragon's first name.

"Well... You at least had fun about this convention?" He decides to switch topics and Millicas relaxes slightly, nodding, "Yea, I did, although we did take breaks from the crowds cause..."

"There is a lot of people here and they are pretty much strangers." He agrees and the usual red haired kid smiles at him, beaming up at him, which he returns.

"So, I'm going back home now?" Millicas asks and seeing as his King is dealing with her issues, says, "Well, not yet, you'll be having a bit of a sleep over with us but I'm sure your parents and grandparents will be visiting soon enough to check up on you."

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P10:DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

"The Governor General wants me to inform you that **it** been destroyed." Vali says upon arriving at the common room as he's walking Rou through the body reading phase of the magical VR helmet. "And... are you sure that's safe?"

"Safe is relative." Naruto remarks. "But, yes, my most recent animal test subjects recovered in under an hour of it being removed."

"Your previous test subjects had been chickens, goats, and cattle." Vali states while Rou chuckles weakly. "I think you should pick a pig or some primate instead of using Rou."

"I asked her, she said yes and she even supplied the game we're going to use." He states and the half Devil Dragon Emperor walks over to the open lap top to find this game called The First Tree title menu. "No chance of death, it's a simply enough game, if a tad sad. The only discomfort should be related to the body, given the player usually controls a vixen in game."

"He also used body paint to write a spell on my back to help me focus Twilight Healing on myself along with some bracelets to help pull my 'astral' body back into my actual body." Rou admits, reaching over with her left hand to tap the right's bracelet on the wrist. "And you have to admit, those two goats were pretty decently cooked, even if there wasn't any spices involved."

He sighs, yes, those goats did get cooked viva the magical VR head gear but their souls weren't in the bodies so, they didn't suffer. On a related note, he's managed to find a she goat and arranged so she'd get pregnant with twins of the correct gender before transferring the two goat souls into said respective embryos. So... the goats are

going to be alive again and they got a decent meal out of that experience, it all worked out in the end.

"Well then, by all means, good luck." Vali walks towards the fridge to grab something before heading to his portion of the Lair. Looking back at what he's doing, he just hopes that his translation filters won't cause any problems.

"We don't need to continue from here, after all, he's kind of right. I likely should try this on something with some problem solving skills." The Dragon admits as they are about to go onto the next step which will begin the phase where Rou's body will sleep while her mind interacts with the illusions that are going to filter this game at her. It's not dissimilar to astral projection in a way, at least that's what his experiences with his animal test subjects seem to give evidence of.

"It's design is meant for an intelligent being, not beasts." Rou gently counters and he chuckles, yes, he did remark that on more then one occasion. So, they begin the next phase which should be rather quick and he moves to sit before the computer, waiting for evidence of the third phase to begin.

Scratching Fenrir behind one of his ears, Vali is watching someone playing the first Dark Souls game on his TV screen as his computer is connected to said big flat screen TV. The two sons of Fenrir are dosing next to their father's left side, still in appearing as three month old wolf pups, then again, he's used Transformation Magic, with Fenrir's consent, to make the God Killer look more like a normal, if pony sized wolf. He reflects on the last two weeks since that run in with the two Gremory Devils and a pair of Rias' Peerage members.

While the encounter with the Heir of the Gremory House did sour the rest of that particular day, it didn't spoil the rest of their 'vacation'. Setting up an illusion ward to secure their hotel room, they put the matter behind them nor did they bother to try hunting down the Khaos Brigade faction that had abducted the son of the current Satan Sirzechs Lucifer, Millicas Gremory. After all, the number of

Devils and Fallen Angels among the forces of the Infinity Dragon God are likely far less these days since that ill conceived attack at the Peace Conference at Kuoh Academy, not that it's something he cares about, after all, his bastard of a grandfather had been and his pain in the ass father likely still is, members of said group.

Oh, he's received invites in the past from the so call Hero Faction of the Khaos Brigade and to be truthful, it had been tempting to join, if only to have sparring partners that weren't a Dragon of any kind, but, the bottom line was, how do you kill a dream? After all, Great Red is also known as the Dragon of Dreams and dreams, as *Golden* often remarks, are impossible to ultimately kill, never mind the idea that there's an S at the end of dreams which means there's more then one dream to kill. Which also means that even if Ophis manages to kill ever sentient being in the universe, it won't be enough as even the Ouroboros Dragon has a dream.

So, yea, there's no real benefit to joining said supernatural terrorist organization and frankly, it's clearly become a matter of Pride for the Khaos Brigade to kill Great Red, after all, even if they do get around to dealing a final blow, the Dragon of Dreams will just spawn back hale and healthy within seconds maybe, or minutes at most. And he's pretty sure that Ophis doesn't want Great Red chained up somewhere out of their way, nope, they want the Apocalypse Dragon dead and never able to respawn again, which is likely impossible when Ophis themselves couldn't put the True Dragon down for good. Plus, this whole thing kind of comes across as a private matter between the two top tier Dragons which means it will just end poorly for anyone caught in the crossfire between the pair.

Gods know if he'd have joined them if *Golden* wasn't in his life as the Dragon proved to be something of a reliable influence in his life and more then able to deal with his 'must cause others pain to ignore my own' phase, after all, when *Golden* did get around to doing more then tanking damage in their spars, he didn't exactly pull his punches, only made sure to limit the number that he dealt and do his best to have healing aids for when he ended up rather worse for

wear. So yes, Vali can admit that *Golden* did his best not to handle him with kiddie gloves when it came to helping him improve his skills in combat or in regards with life, even though the Dragon is clearly of an optimist mind set, then again, it seems to work for him, even after all the shit the former ninja current gold scaled Dragon had to deal with once upon a time as a living jail cell to some nine-tailed fox shaped energy being while being human at the time.

So... you think he got it working? Albion muses as the video recording comes to an end and there's a timer counting down to when the next 'episode' is about to play. He considers the question for a few seconds.

"I think we'd hear something if it didn't." He remarks out loud. Fenrir flicks the nearest ear and he withdraws his hand, which is when the God Killing wolf to rest his head upon his fore limbs.

Point. The entrapped white Dragon admits as he reaches over to grab his drink. **I wonder if he could get it to work to allow Ddraig and myself to have a go at it in digital space?**

"That kind of reminds me of something... How come neither of you have tried to break free? Recently, really, I mean, from what I've seen concerning the Biblical God's system during my hacks of it, it's in sharp need of an overhaul of security along with system repairs." He says as the commercial at the beginning of the video ends and the video's content begins to play, picking up from the previous save point.

Say we did, what would be the point? We use to range about the whole world, doing what we wanted when we wanted. The last few centuries have changed things and I doubt we'd be able to fully fit in with how things are currently, what with the supernatural world sticking to the shadows, hiding from the general population, encouraging them to regard magic and the like as non-sense. We come free and old habits will begin cropping up, suddenly, we'd cause the general population to

panic and take up arms in 'defense' of their 'world'. Albion explains calmly and rather logically.

So would end this current age and the false security of the general humans. Oh, they'd try, thinking that their technology would be enough to cover come our biology, never really believing that we would be more then just our biology or something engineered to wipe out humanity for some bizarre reasons. Hell, they'd likely try biological and chemical warfare but it wouldn't really affect us. The white Dragon continues and he admits that Albion is painting a rather believable picture.

Humans haven't really changed, only their tools and their population do. We've seen plenty of civilizations pull together to try and kill us, only to fall to ruin as their attempt fail. The morale of their citizen plummet and their civilization ends with the population creating cults to us in hopes by worshiping us, they appease us to fleeing as far from their native lands and hiding away, doing their best to forget they ever lived in that part of the world. Albion recalls. **Not that it was anything we noticed at the time, it's usually long afterwards we'd hear about it. Nor did we really care as that civilization should have known better.**

"That's not really covering the whole supernatural side of the issue." He observes and the original White Dragon Emperor chuckles. **The thing is, if we could be trapped once, it means we could be trapped again.** His eyes widen as he realizes that this reason might be the truer reason for why the two haven't.

"How many died to do it the first time? Never mind that the Biblical God created that world system to help him with entrapping you. I doubt anyone has managed to replicate that." *Yet* , hangs in the air.

Or that we are much more aware of how to counter something like this again. Albion agrees. **To quote a former Nara, too troublesome.**

"So... mostly just staying trapped to avoid those who will no doubt earn themselves a Darwin Award for their respective races." Of which there are plenty. "Well, I'm sure that once you mention the possibility he will either already considered it and have something for you to test or more then willing to help create something to allow the two of you to do so."

He's very good at that. Albion admits with fondness and he totally agrees with that sentiment. After all, it really helped when he was going through his teenage years, which he's rather amazed he survived given some of the shit he thought had been a good idea to try and pull, thinking himself invincible and in need of no help what so ever.

Drinking his almost forgotten drink that in his right hand, he puts it down and watches as the enchanted coaster summons more of his selected drink from the fridge without him needing to get up to get a refill. *Don't care if people would call that a waste of magic, it's proven its worth time and again.*

"So..." Issei trails off as he looks down at the kid Devil that followed him from school to Bova's place. "Well... I kind... of..." Rias' nephew and Sirzechs' son, Millicas trails off, clearly knowing he's not suppose to leave whatever apartments he's been staying at, yet, clearly showing signs of going stir crazy.

"Yea, I get it, your in a new place but nobody thought to take you out and about for a tour of the town, never mind the place you're told to stick too is likely tiny compared to what you're use too." He notes and Millicas' eyes widen before shoulders and eyes clearly showing relief over someone realizing what he's going through.

"It, well, it also reminds me of those places too." The kid admits and he had heard about that from Azazel as Naruto and Vali had been on vacation. "I mean, Mister Lucifer was able to rescue me and Naruto helped disguise me for the game convention..."

"Ah..." He trails off, this is kind of the first he heard of it, but then, Naruto's been focusing back on his testing of something that cooked two goats and its not like he's asked Vali about what they've been up too during their vacation either when they've been playing recently switching between two games, which are Dead by Daylight or League of Legends. "That's an illusion, right?"

"Yip, I spent some time looking up Illusion Magic for..." Millicas trails off and he chuckles, resisting the urge to ruffle the kid's current brown hair, it's all the same color no matter how the light hits it or how it appears in the shadows. "Ah... You don't mind if I..."

"Best stick close but if you don't mind, I'll give you some pointers about what you likely need to work on when it comes to making Illusions look more real." Issei tells the younger. "But first, I just need to add a few things before we continue on."

It takes a few seconds to toy with the already cast Illusion until it looks like before directing the young Devil conjuring a mirror. "Oh! That... Oh, it didn't do that before!" The kid shifts his head this way and that, watching how the light seems to cause changes to the way the brown looks.

"Yea, it's the little things that can break an illusion, like the way the light hits it or the way its shadow or shadows are cast." He explains, rather glad for the chance to play teacher. He's sure to cast a privacy ward on his uniform so they can continue their discussion of magic without breaking the rules. "There's others but given you are just using it on your hair, we'll keep to that."

He's sure to keep the kid walking next to him as they walk, as its the best way to keep an eye on the young Devil and allowing the kid do the same.

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Bova hadn't been overly surprised at seeing Millicas in his company but then, that could be more due to being not really caring much as

long as he doesn't mind having the kid around. His younger bother is doing something with his LARP cabal, a private tournament in the works or maybe it's starting today, while Aisa got asked to go shopping with some girls from her class. So he's been working on using Boost on speeding up the growth of a coffee bean plant and then Boosting its production of beans.

He mentioned to the son of the former Dragon King that Millicas could use some help with the basics of Illusion Magic, to which the kid clearly been rather in awe at meeting another Dragon disguised as a member of a different race. Although hearing Millicas talk about his encounter with Naruto transformed in a smaller version of himself makes him wish someone took a picture of the two while Bova seem rather relieved and suggested Issei display his actual form and other then Millicas asking if it hurt having those spines grow out of his skin, the young Devil didn't seem overly freaked out or apprehensive over the fact that he's a Dragon Kin. It was kind of nice, actually, for someone he didn't know very well not make such a big deal over his now natural appearance.

Then again, getting called Mister Hyoudou kind of makes him want to look around for his dad but at least Millicas isn't saying the mouthful of a title of Red Dragon Emperor. So yes, he can deal with being called Mister Hyoudou, likely due to the more European influences of the Devil society showing in this regard. The reason why Sona and Rias likely know to use the Japanese additions is from research in the culture along with having members that are native to Japan.

Glancing back at the pot, he feels his Boost limit approaching after a good thirty minutes of waiting for it reach that limit before thinks, *Transfer* . The pressure leaves and he watches as the coffee plant sprouts from the soil, a slight red glow that dims as the plant rapidly grows, branches bud and spread away from the main stem while smaller twigs then sprout from them, leaves bloom from the fresh branches while the main stem tampers off after reaching a good four some feet in height, the red energy of the Boost now spent. He holds

his breath for a good minute and yes, some of it begins to decay, but by a good ten minutes have past, it seems as though the coffee plant is going to be alive for the next phase of this process.

This being his third attempt of the day as it's soon to be two hours since he arrived and will be soon time for him to figure out how to deal with Millicas when a White Dragon Gate appears and Naruto seemingly rushes out, making a bee line towards Bova. "Got it to work, Bova! Tested it with two single player games and finally with a MMORPG!" The Dragon disguised as a half-Devil exclaims before looking rather startled at realizing Millicas and then himself were in the room while Bova chuckles.

"Hey you two, hope you don't mind but I think I just cut your training session short." The blond admits with a sheepish grin. "Good to see you both are doing well." Millicas looks a tad shy suddenly while he snorts softly in acknowledgement.

"As expected of Naruto-senpai." The far older Dragon states once his chuckling dies down, it's not the first time he's heard Bova clearly respect the younger gold Dragon and he highly doubts that Bova knows that Naruto is a reincarnated ninja from another dimension, so it's all the more baffling why Bova Tannin considers Naruto to be his senior. "So, do you still plan to sell it to Azazel?"

Naruto's attention returns to Bova and the two slowly head out of the training room, leaving Millicas and himself alone, the Dragon Gate gone. "Dragons." He states with a shrug when Millicas glances questioningly at him before nodding, it kind of explains away a lot of strangeness when it comes to how Dragons act along with interact with others, including other Dragons.

"I almost thought that Mr Lucifer was going to come out, not Naruto." Millicas admits and yea, he gets where the confusion is coming from. "I think it was a reward or gift Albion gave to Naruto at some point, it's how he's capable of using Albion's Dragon Gate." Issei admits, admitting, "I'm working on figuring out a way for my twin to do the same with Ddraig's Dragon Gate. It's taking time, it's mostly the

materials that's slowing it down as Ddraig is more then happy to explain how to do it."

Getting up from his sitting position, he walks over to the kid and suggests, "Seeing as those two will likely be talking about that break through, likely for the whole of the night, want to go out for dinner? Before we figure out how to get you back to Rias' apartment building." He's pretty sure that is likely where Millicas has been staying, it's not like he's making it his business to know every little detail of either Rias or Sona's movements within Kuoh Town, just at the Academy.

"Your treat?" Issei nods, asking, "What kind of food dishes are you interested in for supper? Or are you feeling adventurous in wanting to try something local?"

"Can we get hamburgers? I've never had one before." Millicas says and moving to grip his hand, pulling him out of the room. He gives the kid a smile, it's pretty clear that Millicas is very much a sheltered kid and it's rather understandable as to why that is, after all, his parents are rather famous never mind who he's related too. Devil or not, Millicas' clearly is still dealing with having his world off kilter and dealing with the fact that he's not as safe as he thought he was.

It's rather startling that Millicas felt safe at all with him or in Bova's company, but then, maybe it's because of his previous encounter with Vali and Naruto? *Or maybe it's that Dragon now equals safe in his mind?* Issei muses as he Shifts back into a human body just as they are approaching the door, Millicas does let go upon realizing he's been 'dragging' the current Red Dragon Emperor through the house.

"So, did speaking with Bova-sensei help clear some things up?" He inquires as they finish getting on their respective out door shoes and walk out the door. After all, Kazu's the more experience magical expert between them by dent of having practice longer, never mind having been a ninja with powers that could be passed off as magic in a previous life.

"Yes, he did and I'll be sure to do the exercises he suggests." Millicas promises and he smiles, humming in acknowledgment as he heads for the nearest burger place to grab a few as Devils do eat more then humans, after all, they have a more powerful body.

It somehow didn't surprise him that Rias' nephew managed to find Issei, the current Red Dragon Emperor, no, what's surprising is Millicas' hair and cloths plus how much more relaxed the younger Devil is just being in the Dragon Kin's company along with the fact that Yuuto, and the others, had thought that Millicas was still in his apartment. Millicas' looking rather rebellious yet nervous, shades of guilt, and a bit sad upon sighting him about to enter the apartment, causing him to wince as it dawns on him that they've been keeping him pretty much imprisoned within that apartment, just expecting that the only son of Sirzechs Lucifer and Grayfia Lucifuge would be content to spend all his time away from the Underworld in said apartment.

Glancing at Issei, it's rather odd to see the older Hyoudou without his younger twin around yet it's clear that Issei's expression is... "You didn't realize he was missing, did you?" The Dragon Emperor before muses with a hint of disbelief and a touch of exasperation.

"We've done our best to ensure that his apartments couldn't be spied upon by magical means." He states adding, "He never expressed an interest in seeing Kuoh Town with myself."

Issei looks down at Millicas, asking, "Have you tried broaching the subject with your aunt?" The kid sighs, giving a nod before answering, "I tried but she just tended to buy me more various video games back when I tried. I just sort of given up by the fourth attempt."

"I see." *Damn is Rias.* The Knight thinks to himself. *You should have at least informed us about his desire so we'd be more alert to him leaving.*

"I will speak with Akeno about this." He promises. After all, the former half-Fallen Angel might be able to talk sense with Rias about Millicas' current situation and if not, come up with something concerning Millicas' desire to stretch his legs beyond the apartment building. Issei studies him for a second before moving to kneel down to Millicas' level.

"Ok, so, it does seem that it's your aunt's fault for this little outing given she's not been listening to you. But, next time, be sure to grab your that cell phone you were given so that if anything happens, you can call one of your aunt's Peerage members or even the other co-owner and her Peerage." And he kind of mentally groans but, well, it's clear that Issei's suggestion concerning the cell phone will be heeded given the nod that Millicas does. "And if it's out of juice, you know where Bova-sensei's house is and I'm sure he'll have the needed numbers for said calls."

"Will I see you again?" Millicas asks and Issei answers, "It's more then likely that you'll see me given we're both in Kuoh Town, heck, you might get to met my younger brother, Kazu."

"What about... Oh, sorry, it's just..." Millicas glances towards him and Issei sighs. "I can't make any promises but I'll pass it along." Millicas looks rather relieved.

"Thank you for the introduction to Bova Tannin and for taking me out for supper." Millicas says politely and the current Red Dragon Emperor, the source of many a head aches for his King as well as Sona nods. "See you, Millicas." The Japanese raised Dragon Kin reaches forward and ruffles Millicas' current brown hair before standing up.

"Knight Yuuto, I leave him in your care." He nods, noting the rather quick change. "My thanks on behalf of my King for watching over her nephew for these pass few hours." He bows respectfully which Issei gives a nod of acknowledgement for.

With that, he ushers Millicas into the building while the Dragon Kin walks off. "Just what did you have for supper?" He asks as he waits for the elevator to arrive, breaking the silence between them.

"Oh, burgers, it was that restaurant with the yellow arches. We order a lot of different ones along with some drinks, we took them back to Bova's house, and ended up sharing the burgers and drinks with him and his guest." Millicas tells him with a slight smile.

It feels like there's weight in his midsection at the fact that someone besides Issei and Bova knew about Millicas' ditching of the apartment. "Who was this guest?" He asks, doing his best to sound polite and semi-interested.

"Just someone who Bova called 'senpai'." Millicas admits with a slight frown. "I'm not sure I said that right..."

"No, you got it right, it generally means someone older in age." He admits. "It also could refer to someone with more experience in a certain field as well." Yuuto adds, not sure which he'd prefer, after all, it could just be one of Bova's older brothers or someone Bova that was more experienced in one of the many fields the Dragon has pursued in recent years.

"I didn't know that! Huh, that explains it..." The son of the current Satan Lucifer muses and he really wishes to know just what that explained but in the end, figures he'll leave it to the boy's parents and grandparents to interrogate the boy over this person and what happened to the boy's crimson hair.

Please, who ever is listening, please let Rias be reasonable about what happened... Yuuto prays to whatever deity that is willing to hear the prays of a Devil. They walk into the elevator and press the button for the floor, he then watches as the brunette coloring of Millicas' hair fade into his natural crimson. "Illusion Magic?" He ventures a guess and Millicas just gives a slight nod, the cloths didn't change but then, they might be Conjured.

"Do we need to stop by your apartment for some actual cloths?" He asks and Millicas touches the black hoodie with red flame design along the sleeves with a stylized fireball on the back, it's clear that the kid put a lot of thought into what he wanted the hoodie to look like. The pants were just black jeans as were the runners being primary black with red trim.

"I guess we should." The younger Devil admits and he is sure to press that button, although he's tempted to just forgo the elevator and use a Teleportation Circle to arrive at his room then use the stairs to get to Millicas' apartments as pretty much none of them ever use the stairs as it's either the elevators or Teleportation Circles. But it's too late, security likely already alerted Rias to the presence of Millicas in said elevator along with himself.

"How much blame do you think she's going to put on you, Knight Yuuto?" Millicas inquires as they exit onto the floor where they've been having his King's nephew stay. He doesn't know the answer to that but decides to to be honest by saying, "As much as she believes I deserve."

Millicas ducks his head for a few seconds, likely feeling rather guilty about that, but likely a small part of the younger Gremory might be rather pleased to hear it. After all, upon reflection, none of them have spent more then the token amount of time with Millicas and it seems that the boy is more then likely feeling left out and put out. Not that this will affect him in the long term, just in the next little while won't be pleasant for him concerning the shifting of the blame onto his shoulders but Rias being tenderhearted, which means that she'll likely feel guilty about her over reaction about this incident and make it up to him later, once she's calmed down and she's had time to reflect on everything.

Which might be once her older brother and sister-in-law calm down upon hearing about this, after all, I think their parents are already expecting something like this to happen... He admits. The current Duke Gremory and his wife had suggested that Rias and her Peerage take some time off of school and doing Contracts, go do the

tourist thing and visit some of the more famous sights of Japan. It was clear that they were hinting at something back then and it seems they perhaps should have listened to the older Devils but everyone wanted Millicas safe behind wards and hidden from public view.

"Hindsight is twenty twenty." He murmurs to himself as he waits for Millicas to change. He glances around the spacious living room, a fairly big flat screen TV with various game systems, a book shelf that's filled with games for said systems. There's a few movies on the two lower shelves, generally filled with Devil made movies and some Rias approved anime movies with at least two TV shows on DVD.

The decor is one he'd expect to find at one of the Gremory manors or castles, which makes the more modern items to stand out. There is a dinning room between the entertainment/living room and the kitchen. There is a small guest rest room that's between the front pouch area and the living room. There's no other guest room nor any servant quarters, the kitchen is mostly houses pre-made food that are preserved under a stasis spell and he doubts that the dinning room has seen much use as nobody's to host.

It's clear that Millicas spent most of the time either in his room which also serves as a study as it has a number of books his tutors want him to go through and to do his homework assignments, or in the entertainment/living room. The coffee table shows a lot wear, meaning that it's usually where the kid eats his meals. Yuuto studies the carpet and takes him a bit to notice the discoloration, it's not that surprising that accidents have happened. Given the color the carpet, the stains are hidden fairly well if you didn't know what to look for.

It's clear that they really haven't been there for Millicas and they should be. There's no maids or tutors here to keep the boy company, to distract him while the rest of his family was off doing their business. They left a child who's use to be around others, even if it was just servants, all on his own.

Perhaps the question isn't why he did it, it should be why he didn't do it earlier... He admits to himself as Millicas comes out of his room. The cloths Millicas is wearing, they are so very different from the Conjured cloths and in someways, it reminds him of those rare visits to Rias' parents home.

"Ready?" He asks and Millicas nods. "I am ready." Millicas Gremory states with resolve and he can't help but be reminded that this boy is the son of a Satan and the Strongest Queen.

Millicas marches forward, head held high and shoulder square. There's determination in those eyes and Yuuto wonders if he's glimpsing a hint of what the younger will be once he's grown. After all, it's clear that Millicas is determined to be Heard and Listen too, how well it goes for him with his aunt...

He follows behind the son of Lucifer and wonders if Rias is ready to square off against her highly unamused and fed up nephew.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P11:DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

"How do you know they're goal is to release this thing? And... why not, I don't know, mention this to the Dragon God?" Naruto asks as he stares up at the Dragon of Dreams. He's fairly certain this is a dream, given that he's standing on a cliff that sports six faces, standing upon his former father's head.

"Oh, *she* knows, we were told at the same time after all, but I believe the term best suited for *her* current mindset is tunnel vision with a hint of desperation and anger given how easily I won our argument." Muses the giant of a human, the disguise of the Apocalypse Dragon. The disguise has to be nearly eight feet in height, the current attire isn't all that different then a member of a biker gang member would wear, complete with a bandana about the forehead which looks to be the US flag while the shirt worn under the leather jacket is a band logo.

"I don't need to be reminded of what form they've decided to take these past few decades." He murmurs as he runs a hand through his hair and glances off to the side, staring out at the village that he's pretty certain doesn't or didn't look like what he's seeing before him. It's hard to recall, given how long it's been since he last laid eyes upon Hidden Leaf Village. After all, he's pretty sure that the Hokage Tower wasn't built or recreated out of a dull red stone nor did it sport planters along it's walls or that the Hospital look like it's an Persian Temple with park like setting surrounding it. Never mind the Ninja Academy looking like a mixture of futuristic military barrack and maximum security prison made out of metal and concrete.

"Gender is rather optional." States Great Red with a soft snort and he cringes as he knows that's very true given the nature of how Dragons can Shape-shift. The few other Dragons he's meet who

does it regularly, they all tend to keep to their birth gender. "Something Issei figured out on his own and that his twin is busy mentally suppressing having caught the gender-bent Issei checking herself out in a bath mirror."

Ok, he can't help but react to that news by turning to stare at the currently disguised and visiting Great Red. "That... makes a disturbing amount of sense as to why he's calmed down so much on the issue." The former ninja admits before glaring. "Then again, it's information I didn't need to know as it is likely personal for the pair of them."

Then he realizes he's glaring at someone who could crush him like a bug, so adds a scowl as he states, "You changed the topic. Why do they even want to release this thing in the first place? I'm pretty sure there's quicker means to commit suicide then releasing this ultimate force of destruction."

Cause, seriously? Given how thin the Devils' powers have grown since the original founders of the Seventy-two Pillars, they can't think they have the means let alone power to control this being... "Of course they do... They're power hungry morons..." He mutters out loud as he rolls his eyes, using his right index finger and thumb to rub the bridge of his nose.

"The Seal is still holding... right? They haven't weakened it enough yet, right?" The former ninja lowers his hand after a few seconds to stare at the far more powerful Dragon before him.

"Not yet, in I think you should have some weeks yet..." Given how time is flexible for the long lived, he'd figure in about three months time at the most. "Mind supplying the names I need to put out of the world's misery? And a listing of their numerous hideouts will help." Cause when he begins his chain of assassinating these idiots, they'll go to ground quickly so it's best to booby trap their get away places when they get spooked.

"You'll attract *her* attention. They are suppose to be serving *her* organization, advancing *her* agenda." States the older Dragon and he gives the other a flat look as he states, "I'll deal with that when it comes up but I doubt they don't have plans to distract *her* when it comes to this plan of theirs. Or that I can't shift the evidence towards another Faction in said organization of *her's* ."

Because from what little he's been able to tease out of a certain Stray Kitty Cat Devil, the Hero Faction is trying to stage something concerning the Youkai of Japan and soon. "After all, it's not like I am the only former ninja around at this point either." He muses a bit to himself. "So, those names and locations should be more then enough."

"Well, I'll be sure to e-mail the information once I've got their names and get the... it is addresses, right? Or is it GPS now these days?" His visitor muses before shimmering away, leaving him alone in his Dream for a few minutes, allowing him to study the dream village below before he wakes up.

With a sigh, he grumpily blinks before he stretches his neck with his wings being next and yawns widely. Getting to his feet, the gold Dragon sits up from his comfortable bed and glances at a wall as he does his best to commit the dream to his memory before it fully fades away.

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Leaning up a wall in the room, he waits for people to arrive for the meeting where he'll be asking for help concerning the booby trapping the last few hide-a-ways at least, he doesn't want to pressure any of them into helping him assassinate the chain of command concerning the morons who think they have what it takes to put a collar and leash on the entity he's mentally nicknamed Triple Six, also known as Trihexa or the series of numbers 666. Vali and Issei seem to be occupied with a board that's been Enchanted with Illusion Magic so it projects monsters that are based upon a card either of them put

down onto said board, they seem to be playing a collectible card game, it's one that Issei picked for them to try given their Rivalry.

Kazu is with Goten, Kenta, and Rou, the four of them are ensuring that the carting food arrives at the ordered location before they'll Teleport it here. They arrived a good three hours before the meeting is to take place, preparing the room, which took over an hour given they had to pick a room to hold it and then begin to move things around, taking out the unneeded while bringing in more tables and chairs. Preparing a place for where the good will go along with setting up various drink machines as the security wards will snap into place when everyone is here, keeping people who leave from returning to the room until the time the meeting is over and done with.

Which is why Kazu and Issei brought a pair of Enchanted portable toilet cabinets that are larger on the inside and sporting at least five washroom stalls within them plus two sinks and a trash bin. One for men and the other for women, they tested it and they are warded to keep the correct gender from trying to enter into them. Then they added at least three universal symbols showing which is for which gender.

About forty minutes until the meeting begins, people start showing up, the Dragon is more then happy to play greeter as he hasn't spent a whole lot of time with his reincarnated friends but then, they all got their own lives to live. Iris Andrealphus and Faust Dantalion arrive in each other's company and once they get the greetings out of the way, they make small talk, which is when Kevin Smith, Kimberly MacDonald, Garth Williams, and Fredrick Vargson, who is a werewolf and the reincarnation of Rou's, AKA Hinata's, old teammate, Kiba.

The Devil and half-Devil move more into the room after a nod, likely going to find spot while leaving him to exchange small talk with the reincarnations of Konohamaru Sarutobi, Meogi Kazamatsuri, Udon Ise, and Kiba Inuzuka. After about five minutes, Kazu's group arrives with the good and it's not long before Fred, short for Fredrick, to

volunteer to help bring in the food while the other three decide to go find seats. Closer it gets to the time to start, the more people start to arrive and in clumps with one another, it's unsurprising that Elena Spade, AKA Sakura, came with her boyfriend, although the Devil doesn't enter into the room, being more then happy to give her a hug and kiss before heading off to occupy himself, he really should make an effort to learn the Devil's name, both of them.

Then again, she still seems to be angry at me for something. Naruto notes as Elena is quick to greet him and go sit down. *I doubt it's because of the magical VR helmet as Goten, Kazu, Kenta, and Rou all seem more then happy to keep mum on the item, after all, they kind of have to share the same game experience... I really got to figure out how to untangle that sync connection going on with all the helmets that ensure they access only a single game. At least they end up in the same 'world' and can interact with one another or hire a team of programmers to create a game they are ok playing with one another.*

Issei and Vali both don't care much about what game they end up in, recently, he's got an attachment meant for Albion and Ddraig that did disrupt the sync connection, so the four now end up in whatever game they pick. Which pleases the two original Dragon Emperors as they can now complete against one another in a more direct fashion. Given the two attachments are new, it's something he'll have to investigate more in the future but for now...

"First things first." Which means that the safety of this world is something they need to secure first and foremost. It's now a question of whether the others are willing to step up to help, he's pretty certain that Kazu will along with Goten and Kenta, those three are close friends in this incarnation, which likely helps that they knew one another before their memories began to filter into their current lives. Vali and Rou will, simply because he'll go through with this without anyone's aid. The Dragon isn't as close to his old incarnations of his friends as the old him likely would have liked but, again, he's recalls a life between his existence as Naruto Uzumaki and the Dragon

Sapphire, when he peace with that fact he won't be able to find them or fully reconnect with them.

The finally, the time to begin arrives and he closes the door, it Seals shut, meaning that for the next two hours, people may leave but they won't be able to return. Naruto walks towards the Host Position of the table and takes a minute to study those gathered. Taking a calming breath, he sits down at the table, meeting the eyes of any who glance his way.

"Thank you all for coming to this meeting," a common enough start, "I hope what we are to be discussing will warrant your attendance as well." That did grab their attention once more.

"About two weeks ago, I received a visit from a certain Dragon of Dreams that thought I wanted to know of a threat to this world that some beings are trying to unseal with the stupid belief they can harness this entity's power." Even Vali sits a little straighter at the mention of the Great Red. "This entity is often called 666 or Trihexa."

"Wait, isn't that the number of the Beast? As in, the Devil?" Elena remarks and there's a few minutes of people adding their own two cents.

He waits, after all, there's not that much information about this entity and is rather amazed that the Devil Faction of the Khaos Brigade even learnt of it. Then again, Ophis does know of it and they likely managed to tease information out of the current young girl looking Dragon. "How did these... morons manage to find information about this entity?" Asks one Vick Donson, a former Genin of Hidden Leaf by the name of Hayato.

"Likely from Ophis as the two were told at the 'same' time by the Biblical God, which is another reason for that system he created." He explains and more then a few likely shocked at the idea that Ophis would let any hints of this kind of entity being known as he kind of implied that there's a reason for the two getting told. "The Dragon

God likely never thought that they'd think to pursue the lead or delude themselves that they could control it."

"Well... can it be controlled?" Another former Ninja asks and he replies, "It's pure destruction given form and lacks a 'mind' that can be reasoned with or influenced. It's Titles are the Apocalyptic Beast and Emperor Beast of Apocalypse, at full power, it's on par with Great Red and Ophis, and we all know how easy it is to kill either of them or control them."

"Talk about Darwin Award winners..." Murmurs Elena and most sitting at the table murmur their agreements. "It's not about to be released soon, is it?" Another asks and he shakes his head.

"No, they are entering into preparations to begin the unsealing progress and it seems to involve Evil Dragons along with a Vampire Faction." Naruto explains. "Given that Valerie Tepes, the holder of the Sacred Gear known as The Sephiroth Graal, AKA the Holy Grail of the Secluded World, which is known to be something of the ultimate bio-engineering device along with allowing the user to bring back the dead at a cost, of course."

"Which is why, I plan to finish booby trapping various Devil Fraction boltholes before proceeding to assassinate their chain of command. And I need help to speed it along as the Hero Faction of the Khaos Brigade is about to start some ritual at Kyoto, which is going to rile up the Youkai of Japan, which is going to be a political hot bed given the spread of Heros in said faction." He admits and the others look rather surprised by the news, whether that he's talking about assassinating Devils or that he's got a back up plan for when they become alarmed by what's happening to their fellow high ranking Devils, bolting for safe havens.

"Aren't the remaining Devils confirmed members of the Seventy-two pillars?" Ventures Iris in a slow manner and he hums in agreement. "If they find out..."

"Then they should have kept better track of what these Pure-Blooded Devils have been up too." He states firmly. "Along with funneling a bunch of Fertility foods and drinks into their collective food to boost the odd of them siring a few kids in hopes of forcing them to settle down."

Faust snorts while Iris gets a thoughtful look, but one of the others pipe in, "You'll have a price on your head. A steep one at that."

"I've always had a price on my head simply because of my association with the White Dragon Emperor of the Morning Star, never mind the whole issue of Dragon Slayer wannabes willing to pay for my Lair location." The Dragon remarks in a matter of fact tone and it's clear that not many really considered that he's already got strangers out for his head, the difference will be that he'll have an actual list of powerful Devils known to be killed by him instead of attributed to some one-shot disguise or under the service of *Golden* , agent of Tannin. "Or even Vali's father putting a bounty for my being brought to him alive." He recalls, he's pretty sure that one is still active, just hasn't been updated or spoken of since he got revealed to be a Dragon.

"Is that one still active?" Vali wonders and he glances towards the half-Devil. "Hey, isn't there one for 'rescuing' Vali from Naruto by his old man?" Issei wonders out loud about the same time as Vali's question.

Discussions begin and he sits back to listen to the various topics, a few did circle around the idea concerning if Fertility items could boost a Devil's couples chances at having kids while others did keep to the main point concerning preventing Trihexa from getting unsealed. A few get up and grab something to drink along with a snack, he soon joins them a few minutes later.

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"..." Ophis looks down at him and it takes him a few seconds to realize that, yip, he's not in his shared Lair and that the usually

transformed Infinity Dragon God is not in their usual form but that of a very human looking Dragon. The look in those eyes seem to be very blank but then, given what happened just a month back, he highly doubts that the Ouroboros Dragon is very pleased with him, being the central figure and the fact that he's been in recent contact with Great Red, who, well, he owed his current incarnation too.

So many emotions swirl within, so much so that he seems to be frozen up even though there's that whole host of Flee or start sprouting excuses along with promises of doing 'anything' just to live a bit longer. Then, well, there's an old reflex that finally kicks in and he states, "Old Hag."

The Dragon God actually blinks at being called that and, well... "I so don't regret it, just so you know! Either start on the whole killing me or torturing of me but I stand by the fact they were too stupid to be allowed to continue living if they thought unsealing Trihexa was a Good Idea! Or toying around with the Sephiroth Graal!" He had uncurled as he'd been speaking moving to stands up, trying to keep from shaking cause there's this PRESENCE going on, being sure to keep eye contact with the Ancient Dragon. He wanted to say more but the words get caught in his throat.

All his survival instincts are screaming that he's being DUMB and he's already feeling guilt over dying, he can only imagine what kind of reactions his disappearance will cause those he cares about and who care for him in turn. Naruto can't help the shaking of his limbs and the whole urge to try begging for his life or bringing up mention of his loved ones. It takes everything he has to stay standing and his jaws clamped shut.

There's PRESSURE on his being, he struggles to remain standing, even though it's impossible to keep his head from bowing under the weight. Calling on his own magic, he manages to keep from having his belly hitting the floor and wheezes as he fights against this. He's not sure when, but at some point, he must have acted on the Fight urge as there's this tingle in his throat that means he used his breath

attack... Used it on who he felt threaten by... Which had been... The Infinity Dragon God...

He's sent flying through the 'air' and it seems that it's not by magic but by causing the Ouroboros Dragon to actually physically strike him. There's a look of something upon the Ancient's face while staring at their own raised forelimb. Naruto lands roughly, moving to roll onto his side, still facing the larger Dragon, he's doing his best to catch his breath and he finds himself bitterly bemused that he's the cause of this odd mood along with odd reaction from the normally stoic and emotionless Dragon.

Then the Ouroboros Dragon's attention returns to him and, well, he watches as magical energy takes the form of snakes... He bellows in pain but after all while, it's becomes something akin to a Dragon's screams.

There is no satisfaction, in fact, there's a hint of something aimed at themselves actually at the sight of the child's bleeding and broken body, for one of their age, he had barely live. The matter of the alien nature of the Soul... They did recall some incident in the past but due to the fact that it didn't disturb them, ignored it. Yet, it seems that the annoyance colored in red did not ignore it and had meddled, arranging for this one Soul to be born a Dragon.

Ophis did not move to deal the final blow but stares, watching passively as this child's body slowly rebuilds itself, it's clearly a gift the red annoyance placed within the body, to be active when they are the one dealing the damage. Blood, muscle, skin, scales, claws, bone, organs, horns, spines, and teeth return to their proper place. The change of unconscious to sleeping is hard to pin point, yet, it happens and they don't know what they honestly want from this child that is known as Sapphire among their lesser relations and Naruto Uzumaki among the other races.

They had much to think about, though. The accusation concerning Trihexa's release by those Devils... They admitted that, perhaps they

should have been a bit more careful concerning the knowledge they dole out to their collection of younger Races, particularly given the... recklessness and how easily their emotions have sway over their decision making. The incident at Kyoto by the subsection of their collection going by Heroes comes to mind, after all, they were over confident and now the younger Races are taking a harder look at her collection.

Perhaps... I need to take a more active role in how they go about it? Or a closer look at how they operate? Yes, they had much to ponder and perhaps the lost of some of those Devils will cause their collection to review their own methods and to move to ensure their own security.

Within seconds, their form shimmers and shrinks into their current preferred form, a young seemingly human girl wearing black dress. As the now female Ouroboros Dragon turns her back upon the Dragon child, she ensures that the now resting gold child is sent back to where she Summoned him from. As she leaves this pocket dimension, Ophis is sure to land somewhere she can get some ice cream along with Conjuring the needed paper to exchange for said treat.

"Naruto!" Rou cries out in relief as she finds the gold Dragon laying in his sleeping quarters. It's been a good day since they realized nobody could get a hold of the Dragon, worried enough that they spoke with Tannin after a good eight hours to trying to use Divination Magic to try and find him. After explaining their failure...

Tannin arrived and after running a Scan... Albion's out rage at Ophis' Summoning Naruto had been... Tannin didn't look happy either, looking rather regretful and mournful.

After trying to use her Sacred Gear, there's nothing to heal, she races for the common room. "He's back! He's alive! And... doesn't look like he's been hurt..." It's not long before Vali is running past her and she follows after.

He's alive, thank deities, he's alive. Albion states, relief fully evident while Vali's got tears running down his face while hugging Naruto's long neck. Naruto growls something and Vali murmurs, "We're here, *Golden* , we're here."

One of Naruto's eyes open slightly and tension seems to lift from the young Dragon's body, soft growls with a hiss or two come from the newly appeared Dragon. The eye focuses on her before Vali moves towards the head, keeping Naruto from moving. "Maybe a day, Rou. Tannin did a Magic Scan... We thought..." She approaches the head to stand near Vali, after all, it's clear that Naruto's disappearance hit both Albion and Vali far harder.

She's only able to follow one half of the conversation as she doesn't have the right vocal range or hearing range to learn the language very well. **THAT BITCH WANNABE DID WHAT?!** Roars Albion after a particular string of sounds, even Naruto winces while she catches Vali's own look of fury but also hopelessness. A bit of a soft hiss and a cooing sound, but Albion replies, **I don't care if your still alive! Your still a CHILD! They should KNOW Better!**

She's not sure what kind of look is now on Naruto's face as the gold Dragon manages to turn to look at Vali, both eyes looking at the current White Dragon Emperor but it causes Vali to groan while Albion sends a huff. **Go back to sleep, we'll inform the others you've been found and ensure you get something to eat.**

Naruto blinks but turns his head to yawn before pulling himself up off the floor, they move as Naruto sways towards the bed that's clearly custom bed that's resting in the center of the room and a few feet into the ground so that the nest is level with the floor, it's at least three sizes bigger then the gold's current size. Once on the mattress, Naruto falls back asleep once more, looking far more comfortable and peaceful then when she found him.

They both stand there for a while, just staring at the sleeping Dragon. Moving to stand next to Vali, she says, "I'll text Kazu and Issei that he's back. Did you want to speak with Tannin or should I?"

"I'll go visit Tannin and get us all something to eat, mind putting in a drink order?" Vali asks and she nods while promising, "I'll take inventory to be sure what needs to be ordered."

Yes, she's the first to leave but then, in some regards, it makes sense as it's not just Vali's own need for reassurance that Naruto's safe but Albion's own. She stops by her room to use the bathroom within, washing her face and doing her best to keep from tearing up once again. She sniffles a bit and then blows her nose at least thrice before she's ready to go about said tasks, all the while reminding herself that he's safe now and alive, whatever happened, it's likely that Naruto will recover from it, given time.

"For someone who got on the wrong side of Ophis... you are looking pretty healthy." He hears Tannin remark and he more fully wakes to find the former Dragon King standing near his right side of his snout. His body sports phantom aches and it feels like it's been days since he's eaten.

"Could be a reward for dealing with a problem before it became a Big Problem... From the Great Red." He admits, thankfully, they were discreet when they began that operation, Vali had been the one to end his father's life, but not until the elder Lucifer informed Vali of a younger half-sibling viva his actual marriage to a second cousin of the head of the Shax House. It seemed that the Devil had actually used his connections within the Khaos Brigade to acquire a few divine produces to help in conceiving another child.

His mind returns from its wanders to focus on the elder, asking softly, "How beaten up were they?" The disguised former Dragon King sighs with a hint of exasperation along with fondness.

"I'd say Albion was more broken up over your vanishing between the two but not by much, then again, he could only vocalize instead of demonstrating." Tannin admits and he winces. "Vali, well, Bova bought the twins over and Vali expressed his feelings in a very brutal

fashion, thankfully the twins managed to wear him out. I think they'll be upping their own training because of it."

He huffs, yea, he recalls how much of a battle junkie Vali had almost developed into due to the influences of his grandfather and the lack of spine in Vali's father when it came to defying the older Devil. Only reason it didn't stick had to do with him being, well, himself. That doesn't mean that Vali doesn't enjoy the kind of chemical reaction that being in a fight brings out and it seems that the twins had learnt that while Vali wasn't in complete control over his emotions. Likely helping Issei get why Vali's more then happy to give other means of engaging in their 'legendary' and 'destined' Rivalry a try. The twins got years to go to be able to give Vali a decent battle.

"Mess with Ophis' Khaos Brigade, the Devils." He admits after sometime. "Ophis... was careless with a secret in trusted in them, Great Red knew it too, only, he took his duty seriously and once he realized what the morons were planning..."

"Don't regret it." The Dragon states simply. "Needed help to ensure that those who knew took it to their grave given the timing they planned to move."

"Vali..." Tannin trails off, only he gets a sense there's more to this particular question. "... I guess he could cover for me as *Golden* ... He'll need someone to do the spell on him though as he still doesn't know how to Shape Shift."

"Once you've recovered enough, the two of you can switch." Tannin states with a slight sigh. "Likely for a week, maybe two to be safe."

"Also, try not to poke another sleeping dragon any time soon. I swear, I lost a few decades of my life when I realized who Summoned you away." Tannin remarks after a period of comfortable silence where his mind was beginning to wander over the matter of how well Vali will be when it comes to the cloak and dagger missions he's gone on when disguised as *Golden* .

"Well, at least we know that Great Red seems to like me enough to ensure my survival after using me to provoke the Ouroboros Dragon." Naruto admits in a dry tone and Tannin snorts, moving up and patting him on his eye brow before giving the scales there a bit of a rub. With that, Tannin heads out of his section of the Lair, he'll have to redo the wards given they must be barely hanging in there after the forced Summoning.

Yawning widely and after getting up to get into a different position, he does his best to doze once more.

How can he stand wearing this robe? Vali can't help but wonder while he's doing his best to listen to the other supernatural beings as they are playing an odd gambling game involving a die being tossed and the result deciding the tools they'll be using in regard to the strange board, which is happening in a special section of Las Vegas, the owner is a demi-God belonging to the Mayan Pantheon. A few were actually supernatural mutts, as in, they've got more supernatural beings in their family tree then human or it's the human blood that's acting as a cushion to keep the various natures from fully mixing.

Tannin had been the one to cast the Transformation Spell on him so he, for all intents and purposes, has been physically transformed into *Golden* 's Dragon Kin disguised. The robes and the magically charged crystals were ones that *Golden* use to wear before he got skilled enough with Conjuration Magic to recreate said items out of his own magic, Tannin had found them in an old chest that *Golden* once used to store them in along with a bracer that is Enchanted to help focus raw magic into Ice Magic, likely before *Golden* got the idea to store Elemental Magic charge in the crystals he'd worn as decorations and likely subtle taunts about how good he is when it comes to stealth. That even wearing softly glowing crystals, the disguised Dragon was still leagues better then anyone else.

Nobody seemed to care that his hood is lowered but then, he's hardly the only Dragon Kin about this casino section. There's a pair

of young waitresses, likely born Dragon Kin, working and he spied a poster for another Dragon Kin who does an animal act. All three show to be at the first 'step' of being Dragon Kin, same as the Hyoudou Twins and it's also clear that the information about Issei being a Dragon Kin is still considered hearsay in America, likely in the respective regions of North, Central, and South. He had spied a grizzled burnt orange third 'step' Dragon Kin nursing a drink before one of the few slot machines as well.

"Winner, Caspian!" Declares the Indian Rakshasa host of the table and the strange canine supernatural mutt gives a slight howl of excitement while collecting his winnings. He's pretty sure Werewolf is in there but some of the looks remind him of one of the native canines of this continent, a coyote never mind the human form sports a few Asian features so there might be some Youkai thrown in for good measure. A few around the table congratulate the winner, a few collect their tokens and drinks, heading off to try their luck else where.

Not that he blames them but then again, only reason he joined this table as to do with being waved over by the Rakshasa, who might actually know *Golden* 's disguise. "Got a break coming up." States the table's host before a fresh number of faces join the table and, well, he might as well take the invite for a private discussion at face value. Once more, introductions are made about the table and once the starting bets have been collected, the die is tossed.

It lands on two and having been at this table for nearly an hour, he's got some idea of what each game is associated with what number. With the right two tools selected, he watches as the board features a familiar situation along with the correct number of players at the table. They each can take two actions, one of which is, of course, moving 'yourself' about the board, allowing you to go up or down along with the other directions up to two spaces and the second is a testing action of the space 'you' stop at. The point seems to find a key, a certain safe that matches your color, and get 'you' to the safe. The others could block this by moving into the 'safe' but they would

need to move out of it next turn, so at minimum, you need at least two people willing to cooperate with one another to keep this block going but at the cost of no find a key and then finding your safe.

Then again, there's no rule saying you can't buy the loyalty of another player or two to do this blocking for you. It's to the point, it's how he's been able to get some of his money back by allowing himself to be hired out for this blocking maneuver. Vali's not sure how *Golden* usually plays this game, as he's never even knew it existed until he arrived at this table, so he's making it up as he goes along. Given what he's spied concerning some of the other tables, he's fairly sure that bore Magicians and Deities likely created more then a few of them that he's seen as Enchanted items seem to be the norm for this casino's section.

Finding his safe within the fifth round, he now just needs to find a key. It's near the ninth round when he finds one but the Vampire at the table is the one how won as there had been a key within a two spaces of her safe. "Winner, Jeanette." And he is among those to congratulate her.

By the beginnings of the four toss of the die that a young Wereleopard woman arrive, chiming in, "Break, Earnest!" He is gathering up his tokens and finishing his drink before he leaves the table, murmuring his good byes a minute after the Rakshasa leaves.

"Kind of hard to believe, isn't it? A bunch of high and mighty Devils all got killed." Earnest remarks standing at the fire exit with a special kind of smoke.

"All members of the Khaos Brigade." He remarks in a dry tone. "Such a shame that they were so easily lead astray." He remarks with fake sad tone.

"Pillars must be in such an uproar over the death of so many upstanding members of their nobility." Earnest's eyes seem to dance while the tone is full of fake sympathy. "Just how worried are they?"

"Why worry about a bunch of so call Heroes being able to invade, subdue, and then Summon the Apocalypse Dragon when so many important Head of Houses are dead? It's not like it's any of their business, it's not like, oh, I don't know, Devils were involved." His voice oozes with venom.

"Except that it all comes down to the Khaos Brigade, in the end." Earnest notes. "Got no solid leads?"

"Enough to rule out that it wasn't Angels or Fallen." Vali admits truthfully, after all, the Devils pursued those leads viva their new, nice, and shiny Peace Treaty. "To be honest, I wouldn't be surprise if it weren't an inner organization thing as I was there for when a number of Devils and Fallen attacked Kuoh Academy, those two group almost made it a point to do friendly fire at one another even when fighting off the defenders."

He can tell that Earnest files that bit of information away for the future. "Well... you might want to check out the two Vampire Sects." Earnest muses and he mentally makes a note of that, which means it a connection not many knew about.

"I believe I will." He muses and he does realize there did seem to be an unusual number of Vampires out. Vali takes out a few tokens and as they shake hands, the tokens are not in his hands, he heads back inside.

It looks like he's going to have to actual do something until *Golden* 's ready to switch with them. *Not that the Vampire lead is a new information.* He mentally admits.

It likely is to Agent *Golden* though and it's likely that people are watching you, reporting on you. Albion remarks. **After all, Agent *Golden* likely is known among this cloak and dagger game as someone connected to the Devil Faction through Tannin.**

So, I'm kind of playing out a spy movie or novel, in a fashion? He mentally remarks as he takes a moment to study the room from the

bar, putting in an other drink order. Albion chuckles as the Dragon knew what he feels about those kind of movies, shows, or books.

Indeed. I'm sure you recall Rou's bewilderment at the concept of him assuming such a role. The Vanishing Dragon muses and yes, he did. Then again, just because *Golden* can play the spy doesn't mean it's his preferred method, after all, Agent *Golden* might get two missions a year on average. That's likely because he's already spent the time to get this well establish along with the fact that Devils likely rely on others first and foremost instead of always hiring *Golden* through Tannin.

Then again, he isn't sure what kind of price tag Agent *Golden* sports as he's never really cared about this part time job of *Golden* 's. It's rather startling to find that there is still a few things he doesn't know about his older brother figure but then, it's also concerning a part of *Golden* 's own affairs and his lack of interest in this particular job. If he'd shown interest, it's more then likely *Golden* would share stories about his experiences but the Dragon knew his preferences well enough to know that he's not a big fan of complicated and cliche bread trail of clues that could be solved with some blunt words and quick dose of violence.

Well, this should be simple enough, right? It's not like anything bad could happen concerning the Holy Grail now that the Devils expressing interest are out of the picture, right? Vali muses as he spies a Vampire he was gambling with not long ago.

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I think you cursed yourself. Albion remarks as he's doing his best to slice the Enchanted leather that's mixed in with the iron chains keeping him tied up. Thankfully, he decided to wear that bracer and he's used it to freeze the chain portion, now it's just a matter of using a talon to slice through the leather before someone actual goes through with making a hybrid between a Dragon Kin and a Vampire using the Sacred Gear Valerie Tepes is in possession of, who's

currently drugged but had been tricked into participating in this course of action viva a use of Illusion Magic and hostage use.

More lookout less commentary. He tells the Dragon within his Divine Dividing Sacred Gear. Vali is very glad for the usual villain cliche of gloating going on as it means he'll be able to you know, escape and put an end to Bran Tepes' insane vision of an Empire of Vampires upon the surface world with the use of an army of hybrid slave soldiers.

There's at least a hundred captive Dragon Kin of varying 'steps' slowly coming too from their drugged induced slumber. Given he's actually a half-Devil, the drug didn't effect him as strongly as the others, even though he's converted few parts of his body into that of a Dragon. It's a drug meant to subdue Dragon Kin not actual Dragons.

The leather gives way and he's quick to start creating a hail of ice shards in the air above Bran, they fall and he's already moving to attack the nearest guard. "Get him!" Bran cries out and he has to resist rolling his eyes at the cliche nature of this whole adventure has taken.

It's not long that a few of those who went through one of the rituals begin to stir enough to realize what's what and he's quick to use the leather bracer to freeze the metal chains while they use their own claws or talons to slice through the remaining leather. They are quick to take up arms and get their own pound of flesh from the various guards, a few free a captive, charging them with freeing the others.

He manages to get to where Valerie Tepes is laying and creates a barrier between Bran and Valerie as he's closer now, allowing for a stronger barrier to be created. "You miserable excuse of a half breed!" Snaps Bran, unknowing hitting the mark in regards to his actual parentage.

"Oh, you are so dead." He growls and charging to engage the crazy Vampire with the intent of ripping the head off and seeing if the skull

is a worth while trophy for him. **You do recall that your suppose to be a range fighter, right?** He hears Albion remark.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P12:DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

"Do I want to know?" He hears Rou ask, likely Vali. Naruto looks up from his cell phone to find Tannin and Vali.

"He busted a Dragon Kin capturing ring that wanted to transform said Dragon Kin into Vampire hybrids using the Holy Grail Sacred Gear." Tannin explains, clearly amused while Vali walks over to the counter, placing a Vampire Skull onto the counter top. "Which lead to information concerning one Marius Tepes involvement with what could have gotten those Devils killed."

"All that happened in three days?" Rou asks in a hint of bewilderment, which, to be honest, is rather strange given it's usually his brand of Luck. "And... from Las Vegas?"

He got caught in Las Vegas and transported to the Underworld. They had a special drug meant for Dragon Kin, so he was able to recover faster then you would have if you'd gone on the mission. Albion remarks.

Yea, that sounds about right. "So, spoke with...?" He asks and Vali replies, "Earnest the Rakshasa."

"Oh, yea, he's a good source." The Dragon states. "How much did you lose at the *six chance* game?"

"That's what it's called? *Six chance* ? Six chance the game?" The half-Devil states with a slight glare.

"I didn't name it and yea, they roll a die, which determines the gamble. The dice is actually blank, Earnest picks the gamble game in actuality." He muses. "If you slip him a token, he'll pick the game

your better at but other wise, it's just him deciding on the game nobody wanted or didn't bring up."

All three look at him and he shrugs, "It's a casino, expect the games to be rigged, magical ones were created to need a living anchor to work." Continuing, "Cheat subtly but as long as you only double what you spent, they won't ask you to leave or expose you as a cheater."

"That..." Vali is at a lost for words it seems. "Just to confirm, I was suppose to tip him for the info, right?"

"Yea, tokens will work in a pinch but Earnest prefers an actual coin rupee as payment, any domination really, it doesn't matter to him." He explains. "Hate's banknotes though."

"Ok, well... Here's hoping there won't be a next time." Vali states before walking to the fridge, leaving the Vampire skull on the counter while he glances over to the transformed Tannin. "So, there's no need for more investigation from Agent *Golden* ?"

"Looks that way, after all, the Devils had plans to resurrect Evil Dragons while also forcefully transforming Vampires into Evil Dragons." Tannin muses and Rou asks, "How's an Evil Dragon different from an actual Dragon?"

"It's... kind of..." He doesn't know how to explain it and Tannin also looks frowns. **Generally they are far more brutal and vicious then normal Dragons, not really caring about damages they cause to not just others but also themselves. They are also typically more powerful, even more powerful then the Dragon Kings and are able to fall under the sway of Evil Deities. Very savage, though some might use the term 'broken' in regards to them.** Albion explains. **I believe there is one by the name of Crom Cruach that many beings think can match Ddraig or myself.**

"Can he?" Rou asks and it looks like Vali's also curious, he wouldn't know given this Dragon was growing up during the time he'd spent

with Albion. "Who can say, it's not like either of the two Heavenly Dragons have their own bodies to test the claim." Tannin remarks.

"Never mind that even if they got their bodies back tomorrow that they'd be in any condition for a fight." He pipes in. "After all, it's been a pretty long time since either of them actually had bodies never mind the need to get reacquainted with the idea of having a body."

Ouch, way to hit a sore spot. Albion complains and it takes him a few seconds to realize that had been a private comment from the sealed Dragon. As Tannin remarks in agreement with his observation, "Never mind we don't have any idea of where Crom Cruach is or what he's been up too, only that he had been one of the Evil Dragons they approached."

"So, we're going to spin this as them approaching an Evil Dragon who took offense, played along before striking them down?" He muses and Tannin hums. "It's not like any will believe any of the currently active ones if they protested. The name says it all." The former Dragon King points out.

They change the topic to what's been going on with the helmets and his efforts to concerning the Sync Connection. "I might as well just gather up a team of game designers and create some massive monster of a game that has multiple play styles." He admits after giving an over view of the problem with the 'typical' helmets, never mind the way the special Sacred Gear attachments only seem to keep the holder and the sealed being in contact with others of the same connection type.

"Still having trouble with getting the body conditioning to work?" Tannin inquires after they discuss the current design of the helmet for a few minutes. Vali had migrated towards a chair while Rou, Tannin, and himself move to stand about the kitchen counter with drinks.

"It's not that big of a deal in my books, honestly." He admits to that question. "It seems that if the body isn't being affected by the game,

then no risk of death or show signs of the same injuries that the person received while within the game. It's seems to be you have to take the good with the bad at this point in time." Naruto admits. "After all, I've only been going at this for under three years and that's without reaching out to others beyond my current social circle."

After all, the reason why the helmet's original creation is something that is still highly appealing as it was meant to condition both the body and the mind of the one wearing it into either a body guard or a solider, into someone who follows orders. There are still people out there who'd excuse such immortal practice of taking someone unwilling or just a child and putting a more improved version of the helmet onto their heads, saying it's for the 'Greater Good'. Which, again, is why he's hesitant about approaching others who's insights would be very helpful in this project as those people likely have untrustworthy underlings or staff who'd be able to nab copies of said plans and work for other parties who would be looking for such interesting and profitable projects to begin with.

Tannin hums while Rou lets out a soft sigh, each look down at their respective drink or just the counter top. "I'd almost shelf the helmet if I didn't think I'd have a mutiny on my hands in regards to people actually handing over their demo helmets." He admits after a period of silence and Rou looks a tad sheepish while Tannin snorts before silently chuckling, yes, the odds of him getting said helmets back or keeping them from those who have grown to enjoy the experience it offers, even if they all end up in the same game regardless of what game they 'loaded' onto the helmet.

"How is the scheduling going by the way when it comes to which game happens which day?" He innocently inquires Tannin and Rou, he's usually a bit occupied with untangling the connections as it just bugs him that he can't untangle it when he's using the enchanted VR helmet himself and thus, he's often unable to fully appreciate the experience. *At least people are enjoying it.* He thinks as he listens to Rou and the former Dragon King 'talk', AKA complain, about some of the choices of games.

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"Naruto!" Millicas cries out, it's been about some months since Vali rescued the young kid from his kidnappers. The crimson haired boy comes walking quickly over to where he's sitting on the couch at Bova's house in Kuoh Town once he's switched from out door footwear to indoor slippers, he grins at the kid.

"How are things back with your grandparents?" He asks after Millicas gives him a hug, which he returns before ruffling the kid's hair. Millicas moves to sit down on the couch, while giving a glance at some of the books upon the coffee table.

"It's a little strange to be living back with them and going back to my old routine again." The kid admits and he nods slightly. "It's so... so odd, having people wait on me again, cleaning up after me."

"Been feeling overly paranoid concerning the staff?" He muses, he's pretty sure that Kazu and Issei have headed off to go use the training room with Bova, leaving him alone with the kid. Millicas looks away from the books for a few seconds before nodding slightly, clearly feeling a bit of shame.

"It's to be expected, you know mentally that they've gone through the staff to weed out disloyalty or blackmail victims but it doesn't matter to your emotions." Naruto muses with a soft sigh. "Anyway, you want to know what's up with these books?" He asks after a minute of silence, deciding to change the subject.

Millicas perks up and leans over to look at the open book, he places a finger before closing the book, the title is Earthdawn with a green mask face with the words Player's Guide near the bottom of the cover. "Earthdawn? Player's Guide?" There's a questioning undertone to Millicas' inquiring.

"Table top role playing games book." The Dragon admits to the young Devil. "I'm pursuing an idea and, well, it's result is here. Most of these had been in sever disrepair so I got them pretty cheap but a

repair spell has them pretty much good as new, although I did have to have some paper and ink at the ready to recreate missing pages." Opening the Earthdawn book to the beginning of the Discipline chapter.

"Earthdawn and Shadowrun, are set in the same world, just at different time periods and concerning different magical climates." He explains as he nods at the questioning look the kid gives, who then picks up the Player's Companion for Earthdawn. "In Shadowrun, magic is coming back which causes the hidden races among humans to regain their true appearance and abilities plus magic can now become something to use, which causes the humans to freak out. Same happens among nature too, the hidden magic beasts and plants return to their full potential."

"Earthdawn has magic in decline only after reaching its climax which weaken the barriers of the world allowing alien entities they dubbed Horrors to enter into the world. Although, it seems that the story plot of the game has to do with something causing magic to come to a plateau level along with dealing with the remains of the Horrors." The gold Dragon explains from his reading from various reviews when looking online for cheap but still readable books. "Dragons are scary in both settings although nobody really knows how they survived the era where magic was at zero level. The civilized races are collectively known as Namegivers."

"Can you play as a Dragon?" Millicas asks and he shakes his head with a simple, "Nope, but you can play a Drake, which is a Namegiver who can transform into a dracoform. I can't recall if it's only an option for Shadowrun or if you can do so in Earthdawn, then again, I've only begun reading the actual third edition books and most of what I know of the two games come from doing searches viva the internet."

"So... how do you play a table top game?" The kid asks and it really shouldn't be that surprising. "Well, a pencil, sheets of lined paper, at least a player book, and dice tend to be all one needs. Although, most of the games have their own designed character sheet, not

unlike you'd find in a video game concerning a character menu. Some of the older table top games character sheets do look pretty intimidating."

"What is the dice used for?" Millicas asks and he answers, "The dice are rolled to see if your character succeeds in their task, like landing a blow with a sword or managing to lie successfully." Then remembers something, going on to explain, "There's also different kinds of dice types beyond the six sided kind you've seen or a d6, it's a short term for it and it's how most of the die types are usually called. The lowest die is a four sided one typically called a d4, then there's a eight sided one which is a d8, the twelve side is a d12, a d20 is a twenty sided... Oh, there's also a ten sided one as well. Most games do use the d4 through d20 but there are some that stick to a single type but uses a lot of them like Shadowrun with the d6 and Exalted keeping to d10."

"Wow..." Clearly, the idea that there is so many different kind of dice existing is a new concept but then, he'd been surprised by that fact as well, never mind the fact that people will pay good money on dice made out of rare metals or with gemstones if they are rich enough. *Never mind various superstitions going on concerning dice among players of table top games.* Naruto mentally admits to himself.

"Earthdawn third edition uses the range of d6 to d12 and if you roll the max number on the die, you get to reroll the die while adding to result to the previous number. You can also roll multiple die types or multiple of the same die type." The Dragon continues. "The one who decides if your roll is sufficient to succeeding at said task is person who's given the role of Game Master."

"The player who's role is to come up with a story, act out the roles of various NPCs, and role for the enemies you encounter, they often have a different title depending on the game you are playing too. And while they are suppose to be neutral element, they are people and, well, all that entails which means that they have their limits and can have their own goals when it comes to the game." He recalls, there's

plenty of stories about Game Masters or whatever title the game gives them.

"That sounds like a lot of work." Millicas admits and he nods his head in agreement. "Yea, it takes a certain type of person to enjoy always being a group's Game Master, someone who enjoys organization, having numerous backup plans to deal with players going off the 'beaten' path, and can memorize the rules."

Sona Sitri suddenly feels like there's something... interesting to investigate, that there's a role that she's more then suitable for in regards to her skills and interests.

"So... Game Masters are kind of a person version of a video game software?" Millicas muses after thinking it over and he gets thoughtful. "Well, in someways." He allows.

"I think I know someone who might like being a Game Master." The kid admits before musing, "So... all this happens around a table? With other people?"

"That's the classic experience but they also have a few sites or download games that allow you to met people online and play viva the computer." Naruto explains. "I hear that some people meet as strangers at a local hobby or comic story, the owners have a space where they can play said game, often times once a week."

"Strangers just... show up and they play the game?" The kid asks with a hint of bewilderment and he chuckles slightly. "Got to remember that most of them are likely young adults and they can bond over their interest in the game. If they keep coming back, week after week, month after month... Friendships develop."

"That..." He sighs softly, yea, he can empathize with that sentiment. "Yea." Naruto states softly. "It's kind of why I mentioned the computer option, although I think your parents will likely do background checks

on anyone you end up contacting. Most of what you need when it comes to the computer approach is an email address, headset, and copy of a book from said game, either physical or digital one. Having a video camera is optional."

Millicas nods, clearly looking a bit more happy. "Dice?" The kid asks and he replies, "Most sites have a digital dice roller."

"We can give Bova's Xbox a work out." He muses and Millicas looks more then happy with that suggestion. "You want to set it up while I get us some drinks or you get the drinks and I set it up?"

"I'll get the drinks!" With that, Millicas gets up and heads for the kitchen. He glances around for a book mark before closing the book. With that, he gets up to retrieve the remote from the stand along with the controllers.

He then clears the coffee table of books, putting the lot into the Conjured backpack that was created with a Spacial Enchantment. A few buttons pressed later, he's got the Xbox's home screen on the big screen TV while Millicas comes back with not just drinks but a big bowl of chips.

Handing over one of the controllers, he leaves picking the game to the kid as he puts down the controller to pick up the can, tapping the top for a few taps before opening it and taking a sip. The kid picks a Gears of War game and before setting the drink down, he takes another long sip. Once the can is on the coffee table, he's picking up the controller with his other hand.

Coming out of the training room, Kazu glancing into the living room to find the coffee table clear of the role playing books Naruto seemed to be pouring over upon their arrival. There's a few cans of pop and a bowl of chips, the pair are playing Bova's Xbox. The two seem to be playing Killer Instinct, it's kind of amusing, watching the two using their respective fighters to kill the other fighter.

Given the stunt of leaving the apartment without informing anyone, Millicas had been grounded upon returning to living with his grandparents and it's come to an end just two weeks ago, at which point, he managed to schedule sometime to visit Bova. Something came up for Rias and her Peerage so, knowing they were heading to Bova's anyway, the co-owner asked them to escort Millicas here. If he didn't know Naruto was well as he does, he'd almost wager that the Dragon caused 'something' to come up.

Continuing on through, he opens the fridge and grabs a pair of water bottles. Placing one down on the counter, he then unscrews the cap of the water bottle he's claiming as his, he gulps a few mouthfuls of water before sighing in relief. Leaving the bottle next to the unopen one, he heads to take care of some business before coming back to reclaim the two bottles.

"What did you guys want for supper?" Naruto asks before he leaves the kitchen, the Dragon bringing in the empty cans within the empty chip bowl. "Vali? Rou?" He asks.

"Vali's gone hunting with Fenrir and the pups in Alaska for the weekend and there's that women only weekend." The former ninja turn Dragon states. "I'll be spending the weekend here and Bova doesn't mind me sparring with the two of you either." The golden Dragon states with a toothy grin and memories of Sasuke's spars and fights with Naruto flash in his mind's eye.

"Why does this suddenly feel like we're about to have our asses handed to us?" He blurts out and Naruto blinks in surprise. "Might be because I'm a Dragon?" The current blond half-Devil appearing Dragon suggests and for some reason, the memory of Naruto and Sasuke's fight at the Valley of End plays out and shivers slightly at remembering the feeling of thrusting a ball of lightning into the former human's chest.

"No... I highly doubt that's the full cause at this point." He remarks. "Spells?"

"I won't use any but feel free to use them as you see fit." Naruto states and that does help settle something within him. "So, suggestions? Millicas doesn't care what it is."

"It's been a while since I had a good American pizza." He admits and Naruto looks bemused. "What?"

"Well then, I've a phone call to make." The Dragon says and he watches as a smart phone gets Conjured in Naruto's left hand, as he watches, the blond goes through a list of Contacts. Naruto then turns to give him a Look and he sighs, saying, "An All Dressed one at least."

"Understood." The blond states and he heads for the training room, wondering for a moment about the change in the cell phone before realizing that it might be due to the blond having done some work for Bova's father, the former Dragon King Tannin. It's likely that in doing some work for Tannin that Naruto earned a few favors from Tannin.

Issei can't help but wonder if they might have displeased Bova at some point in the last few months as he does his best to not collapse onto the ground and give up or gingerly rubbing his likely broken nose. Naruto's sticking to his half-Devil form and no spell use or using magic to argument his body yet... The Dragon doesn't look all that winded nor did it seem that the blows they landed on the golden scaled Dragon seem to hamper him much.

He's been sticking to hand to hand and human form, even though they're allowed to use whatever they had, including their natural forms and his Sacred Gear. He's coming to regret it as his younger brother didn't bother with limiting himself, so he's welding his two Enchanted weapons, both are one handed, the axe is in the right while a short sword is in the left. So far, neither weapon has managed to actually land a hit on the defending Dragon, he has to conclude that Naruto is very good when it comes to evading their team ups as well.

Oh, they've managed to land a few hits, it's just that, all the blows came from his own fists and as he's been keeping to human level of strength, they haven't really hurt the Shape-shifted Dragon. He's done his best to go for the usual weak spots while the Dragon dodges his brother's weapons. It's clear that Naruto's focusing a bit more on his twin's movements then his own, meaning that the Dragon dubs Kazu the greater threat between them. And he can't help but realize that it's warranted.

I was foolish, thinking I could fight someone with decades worth of experience with such restrictions. He mentally admits. With the index finger of his left hand, he gingerly runs the tip of his finger over the swollen flesh.

Indeed. Naruto likely has been sparring with Vali for years and you've only started training in a combat style for a handful of years. Ddraig states. Never mind that even a half-Devil's physical more powerful then a normal human.

He's also someone I haven't fought against before. The young Red Dragon Emperor admits to the ancient Dragon. *Friend or not, I should have taken him seriously from the start. With Asia here, at least we'll be back on our feet sooner then relying on Healing spells.*

Lowering his hand, he turns his head just so, getting a look at the worrying look Asia is wearing. Feeling guilt flare up within him but also a bit of anger at not just aimed at himself. There's a bit aimed at Naruto for a couple of reasons. He couldn't find it within himself to be angry at his younger brother for taking this fight seriously nor at Bova, as the much older Dragon seemed to think this was a learning experience for them, which, in the end, was one that he needed it seems.

"Oi, Issei! You wake yet?" Naruto calls out to him, snapping him from his thought and glaring at the current half-Devil, he allows his body to flow into his natural form and mentally recalling one of the Healing Spells he's memorized to fix his nose.

With the spell taking hold, he dodges the current half-Devil's in coming kick and is mentally going through the prep work for an attack spell. Kazu's following in Naruto's wake, moving to get between himself and the Dragon, giving him time to cast it. Naruto just grins widely while moving to attempt to get around his brother to get at him. Sapphire eyes clearly homing in on him, there's no doubt that Naruto's not going to be ignoring him that much from here on out.

Let's see how well you do against the Red Emperor. He thinks at Naruto as the current blond just manages to evade a thrust from Kazu's left hand while he manages to fire off a simple fireball, managing to hit the current half-Devil in his right forearm.

To Be Continued . . .

Author's Note: Sorry for the wait, I hadn't finished writing this chapter until the evening of Monday. Also, thank you for your continued interest in my Random Thoughts.

The Dance Between Death and Life P13:DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

"So, how was the weekend at Bova's?" Rou asks as he's in the front portion of the Lair, the area that's dominated by his collection, the lone vampire skull being Vali only real trophy. He's got the various RPG books around the area while he's working on creating something that might be able to filter the information within the books into rules for an illusion world.

Pausing in his project, he glances up at the newly arrived Rou, the local Dragons have grown use of Rou's presence in the Dragon Lands. More then a few Dragons wonder if Vali's courting her as he's of Age compared to him. "You..." Naruto trails off, not sure if he really wants to continue to commit on her current appearance or about the fact that she's been gone for an extra three days, meaning she's been gone for almost a week and it looks like the women only weekend proved to be... adventurous.

Rou flushes, which brightens the contrast of the... body paint? *Gods above and below, I hope that's body paint.* He can't help but think to himself. Then the paint color seems to change to another bright color, which had been a bright red is now a bright yellow. Then the shape of the body paint begins to alter from the modern tribal into a more pixel style while moving from a sun into a cloud. "Had an eventful time." He finishes and Rou nods her head, looking a tad more relax now.

"On another note... Are you acquainted with a Far darrig by the name of Haste by chance?" Rou inquires and he blinks, it's been a while since he's really had much reason to seek out a Fae being of any sort.

"I recall a young rattling that went by the name of Dasher, skinny specimen and albino as well." Naruto admits. "It was, oh, I a few years before the first World War that I spent time seeing what answers I could get from the remaining Fae about where their Nobles went." Dasher had been coined as bad luck by the various Fae communities.

"Albino?" Rou inquires and he shrugs, replying, "An off white with surprisingly dark red eyes, plus very skinny, even in his truest form."

There's a thoughtful look now on her face while he's kind of curious as to how they ended up in Europe as he thought they picked a tropical island to spend their weekend at. Much like the Asian Youkai, Fae don't wander beyond their usual haunting grounds, at one point, he actually mused over the idea that certain supernatural races might actually have evolved from a single race. Youkai, Fae, American Native Spirits...

It's been decades since he revisited that train of thought though. The former ninja begins to walk, her mind still lost in her own thoughts, so he takes time to regard the likely Conjured cloths and is rather surprised to note that the shoes look to be Gnome made, which, again, causes him to wonder how they ended up in Europe of all places never mind managing to get a hold of a Gnome made anything as Gnomes were one of the Fae types that seem to be... fading. The dress is a solid color that is a flattering color given Rou's complexion and hair, with what appears to be a matching jacket only there's some actual embroidery along the neck and the buttons looking like they were made from a light green jade shaped in a lotus flower.

"Haste, huh?" The Dragon muses with a thoughtful look, recalling the last words he spoke to Dasher. *"Haste makes waste." He murmurs out loud to himself once they finish watching a Dual between a Barghest and a Brag that ended with the Barghest growing impatient and charging the current donkey shaped Brag. The Brag was quick to move and kick the Barghest in the head with her hind legs,*

winning the Dual. "Really? Good to know, Bright, good to know." Dasher says then darts off before he could say good bye properly.

Shaking his head, he dismisses the subject from his mind, after all, it's clear that whatever happened, they solved it as they did make it home in pretty much one piece. Even if they still had something hanging over their heads, it's really up to them to ask for help. As far as he is aware, he didn't leave any loose ends among the Fair Folk and he's knowledgeable enough to know how to check for that sort of thing and has done so once a decade.

"So..." He stares at the rather odd looking box, almost crate, item that *Golden* had been working on since he returned from Bova's place and having sparred with the Hyoudou twins. Needless to say, Issei had a LOT to say during a shared game in MVR, which had been the second Disgaea game. Both Albion and himself had been bemused while Ddraig seemed rather exasperated, likely due to this not being the first time the elder Hyoudou twin has expressed these thoughts.

"It's an experimental magic reader meant to take the information from physical books placed within to generate a digital world based on said world information." The Dragon explains and given he helped *Golden* look into purchasing cheap RPG books, he does have an idea of what game settings could be created. "If the results work, I might see if I can't do something similar concerning TV shows."

Kind of like a server then? Holding onto the game date? "Is it ready for testing?" He inquires as he pauses the TV show to give *Golden* his full attention. Rou went back to sleep after grabbing something to eat. He's fairly interested in just what happened to the women of that LARP Cabal that caused them to all be missing for five days, after all, a few of them were not human or fully human, but decides to wait for them to share the story.

"I'm hoping to use the TV screen, I'll be using my laptop to filter the information into a world... Ah, maybe you can take a look at the

computer to see if it'll be able to handle it." Golden suggests and he smirks a tad before turning the receiver box off while leaving the TV screen on.

"Sounds good." He says and the half-Devil gets up off the couch to retrieve said laptop from the desk. *Golden* heads for his part of the Lair once he put the Enchanted crate onto the table to get the books.

Once he's got the laptop booted up, he uses the Enchanted connection cables, the ends easily connect with the magic that's been Enchanted during the creation of said crate. With that done, *Golden* arrives with the Conjured backpack that's likely holding said RPG books as he's running a scan to see if the MVR program could get readings from the Enchanted crate. The next step he does concerning the results is duplicating the program so he can start modifying the new one for what's needed concerning *Golden* 's new idea concerning the using game books in place of video games.

"Going to keep it simple?" He asks as *Golden* begins to pull out a few core books. "Might as well." The former ninja muses and studies some of the titles before beginning to put the more complicated books away, which were the original Rifts books and D&D.

"Well, which World of Darkness did you prefer?" *Golden* inquires upon setting a refilled drink on the coffee table for him. The current White Dragon Emperor blinks over towards the Dragon's face before looking at the selection of books still on the table.

"Werewolf sounded fun." He admits and *Golden* snorts but nods. "The latest edition work?"

"Yea." And boy did that book see a lot of use, some of the pages got loose along with the corners seen wear and the cover got some scratches. It had gotten dropped in a pond at one point, the pack that had been holding it got sent flying further then intended, the shear weight of it causing it to fly so far. It had been easy to repair the combination of damage done to said book including the water damage.

"Tell me when you think it's ready to read the book." *Golden* states before heading off to the kitchen. "Will do." He murmurs, at least whatever gaps in the information can be easily filled in viva the computer accessing only a small portion of the internet for modern day events and such.

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"So..." Issei trails off and he glances towards the younger Emperor, with a raised eyebrow up in a questioning manner. "Has Rou mentioned anything about that weekend? I mean, Kazu's kind of worried given how distracted a lot of the women are even after it's been two weeks."

"Rou inquired about a Far darrig going by Haste to Naruto. So they ended up in Europe as that's where the remaining Fae communities are." Vali tells the elder Hyoudou twin while their respective trapped Dragon partners are busy flying about the ruined sky, the two seem to 'dance' about one another, neither attacking the other, it's almost a game of chicken, the first to actually touch the other loses.

"Damn, so that's why they are so..." Issei admits and he nods in agreement, even as under powered as the current remaining Fae are, their specialty is mind games, viva using illusions, word play, and tempting deals. "Is there anyway to... you know, check to see if there's still... strings?"

Their conversation takes a pause as they spy more zombies racing towards their vantage point and they then begin picking them off with their respective sniper rifles. The few shots that miss, he tsks while doing his best to line up for the next shot. His crimson counter part tends to huff the first few times he misses his target before growling angrily. It takes a good few minutes to pick off the last of the zombie swarm, the ones that managed to get to the bottom of their sniper tower are a bit harder as the zombies do move around and some of the more fleshy zombies can take a few more hits from their pistols, then again, pistols are for more mid range then the current range they are using.

"Ok, so, back on the previous topic, is there?" It takes Vali a few seconds to recall what Issei is talking about. "Yes, there's a spell meant to magical connections with an individual. I've seen Naruto preform it on himself once, says he does it about once a decade on average." He shares as it takes him some minutes to recall that memory while reloading the sniper rifle before checking the time.

Then an alert sounds and the world pauses, he feels a 'weight' on his back that signalling that Albion has returned to his Divine Dividing. "Looks like you have school. I'll get Naruto to sent out the spell or ritual needed to check for said connections on that forum or viva the LARP Message Group." He promises while the score board displays who killed the most zombies by shooting which part of the body. The Red Dragon Emperor got the most kills but he killed the most viva a single head shot, which means victory for marksmanship goes to him as that was the goal of this session.

"Right, see ya." They then both log out and he moves the helmet off his head. As he waits for the verge of logging out fades, he mentally reviews what his plans are for today, talking with *Golden* will be easy to do and he will be more then willing to help as most of today is likely the same as the day before, which seems to be making improvements to the magical server concerning the ability to, you know, delete the stored world that is Werewolf the Apocalypse, it doesn't help that they've only managed to delete the pdfs concerning the other game line but it keeps trying to re-download said pdfs as well.

The server reading of the physical copies seem to become hardware for the setting world, which is now good to know but at the same time, *Golden* had already had the server box 'scan' the latest physical copies of other source books, which have been incorporated into said generated world. It's to the point that *Golden* thinks they actually have to play out the Apocalypse of the game's meta-story, which means they need to enter into the game setting world and the Dragon doesn't know how doing so will affect them.

We might be able to have Fenrir and his sons join us in said world as Lupus Werewolves.

Feeling gravity settle down, Vali takes the helmet off and then sits up carefully to find that Hati is on his chest, he gently holds onto said pup looking magic wolf as he fully sits up. Hati yawns and stretches, ears flickering around while the dark furred son of Fenrir decides to snuggle against his chest. "I swear, you two prefer to act your apparent age then your actual ones." He murmurs which only earns him a soft snort from said ancient wolf, who really shouldn't be content to appear as a three month old pup.

Moving off of his bed, he heads for the general rooms that are shared. As Vali gets to said shared space, he finds *Golden* laying on the floor, napping with Skoll on *Golden* 's upper body, it's a bit more toward the lower region, the so call stomach region. Fenrir seems to be content watching a Garou Moot on the TV screen, the language coming from the speakers is not one he understands, then again, it's not really a human language. The time period is hard to pin point just by looking at the scenery, cloths, and weapons, but a glance to the top of the video window, the date seems to be early nineteenth century and the location is in Ireland.

"Go bug your brother, Hati." He murmurs before crouching down to place the pup looking wolf onto the ground. Hati huffs at him before giving him the puppy eyes to get picked up once more. "Not falling for it. So, shoo." He states as he stands up, heading for the kitchen to make some coffee as it looks like someone could use a pick me up.

As he fills to mugs, he finds that Hati on one of the chairs, watching the TV screen like his father. The smell of coffee getting within a few feet of him causes *Golden* stirs, which causes Skoll to begin stretching and waking enough to give him a slight unimpressed look. "Spoke with Issei, you should message instructions on that spell or ritual concerning magical connections." He states once the Dragon is fully awake and going for the mug of coffee he brought over.

Humming, *Golden* scratches Skoll behind an ear once the pup moves to settle on the Dragon's lap. "Yea, I can do that. Although I don't think there's anything left concerning their adventure given how Fae powers have waned and the amount of time that has eclipsed." The other admits. "Then again, it would give them peace of mind that it's over."

"Any luck with..." He glances at the Enchanted cable. "No nor in eliminating the world's support pillars. I've managed to get rid of them in concerned with the computer though but... It's like something else is... Supporting it. The behavior of the Weaver, Wyld, and Wyrm, I almost suspected them developing into actual AIs but nope as they keep repeating the so call historical actions, with the Weaver 'waking' to the fact that it's creations are always getting destroyed by the Wyrm and creating the perfect Wyrm trap and it goes from there."

"I've managed to influence things within the setting though, yet the Wyrm always falls into said trap and even if I manage to weaken the trap within a few years for it to escape, it always starts a war between the Weaver and the Wyrm, it just means that the Wyrm isn't insane or develop multiple personality disorder save that it's then hell bent to destroy the Weaver's new Self Awareness of its actions, developing a certain level of self Awareness itself." Golden continues. "The Wyld's self preservation instincts is what actually seems to the reason for it's retreating influence and the few times I've seen the either try and reach the 'core' of the Wyld... It doesn't end well for them as the Wyld seems to cause a hard reboot, making the two lose their Self Aware nature, which is a massive blow for those sentient beings that look towards the Weaver and the Wyrm."

"How does that even work?" He can't help but ask. "It's like them reaching out with a hand into a hurricane, they likely assume that the Wyld would be weak and thought they didn't need to actually do anything in regards to the Wyld, which, might be the very reason for the seemingly instinctive, coward like behavior."

"And the two are always locking heads with one another that they don't dare take their 'eyes' off one another, always looking for weakness." He realizes. "The Wyld never gave them any reason to pay it any mind as it doesn't fight..."

"Seems clever but I've checked, the Wyld never developed Self Awareness like the other two." *Golden* explains. "Which means that it's done a few trail and errors of its own on a smaller scale before settling on this one. Which I've found minor examples of once I used a filter to observe only the Wyld's energies and highlighting the opposing energies 'harvesting' its energy for its own purposes."

"Regardless, it's a successful tactic for it to use." The White Dragon Emperor admits and then recalling what he spoke with Issei about, says, "You mind sharing that spell or ritual concerning magical connections with Rou and the others? You know, to help them get over their adventure in Europe."

The disguised Dragon blinks cocking his head slightly as while a look of puzzlement turns into understanding in under a minute. "Ah, yea, eh, should have thought of sharing it before now..." *Golden* looks rather embarrassed, going so far as to rub the back of his neck. "I'll start on that after I've eaten something and... taken a shower." *Golden* admits after taking a sniff at his current set of Conjured cloths.

Nodding, he drinks from his mug as he turns to regard the Moot on display, it looks like they're doing challenges given there's a wrestling match going on in their respective Glabro forms and without any kind of weapons save for their own fists and feet.

To Be Continued . . .

The Dance Between Death and Life P14:DxD

I do not own High School DxD and Naruto!

The world hitches to a very sudden and sharp stop and he finds himself flung forward, his vision slow to clear up enough for him to realize he's staring down into the grass and dirt that makes up the ground. It takes minutes before he's got an idea of just what's going on concerning his position along with the pounding of his brain seem to subside. It takes him seconds to realize that he's got tears flowing from his eyes and Naruto uses the back of his hand to clear the tears from his eyes.

Exhaustion seems to settle on him and things just feel so... different, particularly his midsection. Sniffling, the blond gets some help getting to his feet and for some reason, he just stares at the mask upon the ANBU's face. It's then that he realizes he's not the only one who's getting help getting off the ground, again, tears well up in his eyes and he turns to regard the Hokage Monument. Everything just seems to surreal for some reason yet, there's no reason why it should be, after all, all that Jutsu did was cause a smoke screen and maybe kicked up the dirt.

Though he tries to pull away from the ANBU with the mask of a bear but the other keeps a firm hold on him. In the end, he just allows himself to be manhandled away, all the while, he's taking note of everyone around him and finding it hard to stop himself from crying. Some of the others being escorted away are also crying, although, most of those seem to be tears of joy or happiness then sorrow.

And that's the emotion he's feeling, it's sorrow. But over what? There doesn't seem to be any answer to that question in the end.

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"So, how's thing between, well, you know? Your team?" He asks Hinata after they talked about their latest series of missions. "Is there still that..."

"Kiba's partnership with Akamaru is getting better." His girlfriend admits after taking a sip of the tea. "It's... still strange, but we're adapting and doing our best to close the gap that seems to have come between us."

"Lucky you." Naruto admits to Hinata, it's hard not to relax when he's in her company, it's strange how before that Jutsu Incident, he'd be at his most nervous around her when they were on a date. Yet now, it seems only natural for him to feel secure and comfortable in her company. "Sasuke still works better with Sai and Shikamaru then with Sakura while doing his best to not engage in close quarter combat with me."

Which is bizarre, then again, it just feels so right as well. "I still don't have any troubles working with Sasuke, then again, it seems kind of..." *Like we're missing someone or someones.*

"Are you still trying to prefect your ability to transform into a bird?" Hinata asks after a bit. "Looking up at the sky... It just feels... Like I belong up there." He confesses but not for the first time.

Hinata smiles slightly at him and reaches forward to give him a comforting squeeze, he returns the smile and moves to hold her hand for a few seconds. They both flush and pull their respective hands from touching one another. A comfortable silence hangs between them for a bit, their conversation picks up as they refill their respective cups of tea, gossiping about a number of minor rumors floating about who's dating who.

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"I have to re-sign the contract?" Naruto asks in slight bewilderment, it had taken him nearly a year to find the emergency Toad Contract among the Hokage Library that his godfather, Jiraiya, left behind

years ago for Old Man Third. The moment Gamakichi saw him, the Toad started to cry and pretty much bear hugged him, from what little he's gathered, it seems that the Toads thought him dead.

"Yea!" Gamatatsu states, Gamakichi had been quick to Reverse Summon himself, carrying the blond ninja along for the ride. It hadn't been long before the other Toads realized that, yes, he's alive, and yes, he's actually Uzumaki Naruto. "Just need to redo the hand print!"

Glancing at the red Toad, Gamakichi merely shrugs, remarking, "If it doesn't work, then you can go through with putting your name back on it." He doesn't get a chance to reply before he's pretty much in picked up and they brothers are leaping to where the Summon Contract is.

And so, with a bit of Wind Chakra, he dabs his finger tips in his own blood after taking a few seconds to admire the scroll. Then, as his now larger hand touches the section, the scroll glows and then, his hand is recorded in a blank space only the name... "What language is that?" He can't help but wonder in bewilderment and feeling rather concerned.

"Was that suppose to happen?" Gamatatsu asks and in the end, nobody seems to know the answer. "Maybe we should speak with Gamamaru?" Gamatatsu wonders once they asked to see if anyone knew the language and none of the other Toads did, although Naruto did get a lot of warm welcomes and introductions to the latest Toads to put their names on the Summoning Registry.

"Well, maybe we should see if Naruto can Summon us? I mean, if he's able to, then does it matter if we understand the writing his name is in?" Gamakichi muses.

"Are we even sure that the name even means Naruto?" He can't help but wonder yet, in the end, he kind of has to agree that they likely shouldn't worry Gamamaru about it as long as the re-signing takes effect. They head off to one of the training grounds and then wait a

few minutes before trying to Summon a Toad, which, he succeeds at, although he's going to need to practice so he can Summon the siblings with ease again.

Gamakichi returns him home and, well, he figures he might as well speak with Sasuke to give the Uchiha a heads up that he'd need to re-sign the Summon Contracts to Summon from said Summon Clan.

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"Brat, we need to talk." Kurama states upon, pulling him from a dream. The gigantic fox... doesn't seem to be all that big.

"About?" He asks before blinking at the 'sound' of his voice and the crimson looking being just smirks at him as he feels his eyes widen. Then the bastard laughs outright as he freaks out concerning his 'body' being some kind of lizard with bat like wings plus gold in color.

"When did this happen?!" He can't help but exclaim once he stopped trying to dispel the 'body' he finds himself in. **"Well, given what happened with the Summon Contract, I started giving you a look over, lo and behold, I began to catch glimpse of... this when I was looking for you. This just confirms my suspicions that the Jutsu Incident wasn't what you all thought it was."**

Naruto feels a slight shiver go down his spine. **"Oh, your body is human, it's just that you view of yourself is that of this."** Kurama states with a tail twitch. **"On a sub-conscious level."**

He doesn't know what to make of that bit of information. So, he just sits and can't help but try to figure out just why he'd imagine himself as a golden scaled lizard with bat wings. Kurama lays down and seems content to watch him.

Ah... Oh, huh, yea, that explains how I finally managed to reach you. A much more booming voice remarks and he stiffens while turning his head in the direction to find a far bigger red scaled lizard

with bat wings standing behind him. The whole area changes size to allow the other to fit.

"Who are you?" He asks while feeling rather intimidated by the new individual. Naruto senses Kurama's shock and hears the fox pad to stand next to him, it's a surprising show of comfort yet...

Don't remember me, huh? Then again, given how you all got ejected from those bodies, it shouldn't be that surprising. The crimson scaled being remarks. **Not sure if I should take offense of that or not, ah well, that's easy to rectify.** A fangy grin accompanies that particular declaration.

The eyes flash and suddenly... Suddenly the 'body' doesn't feel so... alien and he also remembers just who the other is while Kurama bristles in a threatening manner. "Great Red, Kurama. Kurama, met Great Red also known as the Dragon of Dreams, Dragon of Dragons, the Apocalypse Dragon, and the True Red Dragon God Emperor." He feels Kurama's jaw drop and he ducks his head. "Yea, I know, but those are actually his titles and what he generally answers to."

"Dragon?" Kurama remarks and he sighs, it's not like he doesn't get why either. "Yes, in the world that usually graced with Great Red, Dragons get divided up into a lot of ways but the most general distinction is Western and Eastern in appearance, though generally, Eastern Dragons are generally fall under the Youkai Faction as they prefer to have close ties with said group."

"So yes, I am classified as a Dragon, a Western styled one but still a Dragon." He admits. "As for why, well, we got our souls ripped out of us and then sent to another world along with shoved into bodies that weren't right."

"He," Naruto gestures to the towering Apocalypse Dragon, "collected our souls, many of which were damaged by the travel into said world." Taking a moment to stretch his wings before repositioning them, he continues, "Anyway, in the name of entertainment, he gave

me the choice of picking the race for my body, one that would be properly attuned to my soul."

"I don't see you picking something like Dragon for power, brat." Kurama remarks and Great Red snorts softly. **He picked Dragon due to his friendship with one of the two Heavenly Dragon Emperors, Albion, the Vanishing Dragon, the White Dragon Emperor, and Dragon Gwiber.**

"Of course he just had to befriend somebody that powerful." The crimson fox remarks, moving to sit down while he ducks his head, feeling rather embarrassed. **Oh, it's better! He almost died attacking a disguised Albion while he was in the body of a magical creature called a Griffin. If not for Albion being bored, he would have died from his injuries.**

"Just what kind of luck do you actually possess, you baka Brat? To keep escaping death like that..." Murmurs Kurama, who glares at him for his foolishness.

"To be fair, I kind of feel a great deal more sympathy for you and your siblings for having to put up with idiot humans trying to kill you in the name of becoming famous." He admits. "If not for the whole able to use magic to disguise myself as a so called 'lesser' being, I think I would have offed my share of armies."

"Idiot." Kurama states and he notices the way the nine-tail Chakra being looks off to the side, perhaps in embarrassment? Then again, it just might be to glare off at some random spot, it's hard to tell to be honest as he's not able to see the other's eyes very well.

"So... how did our souls end up back here? I mean, I'm pretty sure you had plans to only send us back here after we died in that world." He states as he moves to fully give the humongous Dragon his full attention, looking up at the Great Red.

That Enchanted memory box got hacked by Azazel and Satan Ajuka Beelzebub due to them wanting to figure out how such a

'complete' world got 'created' and had been trying to create a space to 'investigate' it using their pocket dimension technology. Which in turn resonated with something the Biblical God created and thus, the whole of that world save for the Biblical Faction are currently 'sleeping'. Great Red informs him. **Ophis keeps trying to end it only causing events to loop around again, which means that entrapped Angels, Devils, and Fallen also fall prey to this Temporal Loop. I've managed to help Awaken three members to the Loop but they are running into trouble concerning Ophis trying to make them Sleep.**

"How long as this been going on?" He asks with a hint of dread, after all, Vali technology counts as a member of the Devil race simply being a half-Devil. *Is Vali ok?*

As if reading his mind, Great Red assures him by saying, **You adopted sibling slumbers half the time with the rest of the world and only lives one life as a Garou.** Which implied that the various members are getting Reincarnated after dying. **As for time... Hard to say, but this is on its nine hundredth and something Temporal Loop. It usual begins at the so called Zero AD and restarts at some month in the year Nineteen Ninety-nine AD.**

That's... a very long time to experience a Time Loop. He mentally admits. After all, it's been about three years since that Jutsu Incident. "How do you expect me to help? I doubt I'm capable of, you know, harming Ophis."

There are two things you need to access from within that 'world' and with Vali, he'll be able to help you 'hack' two of them. I'll deal with Ophis so that this Apocalypse that this 'world' is heading for can happen, which will clear it from your Enchanted memory box. Great Red states and he nods, guessing what the two systems that need to be hack being.

"And what happens afterwards?" Kurama asks and he glances towards the fox, then the inquiry registers properly. "Will you return him?" *Will he return?* Seems to be what Kurama is really asking.

Of course he'll be returned. Great Red states calmly. "Right away?"

To this point in time? Yes. Right after he does this? That, it up to him. After all, he does still have a life to finish in that world. Great Red states as the Dragon of Dragons looking down at Kurama.

"Rou... Hinata..." *Kazu...* He feels his stomach flip. "The others? Are you going to retrieve them as well?"

I will visit each and give them the choice to decide that for themselves. States Great Red and he nods. "Sounds reasonable." He admits.

"Idiot... I'm coming with you." Declares Kurama and he blinks as he turns to regard the other with a bit of surprise. "I will see for myself just what it is you see in this adopted brother of yours."

Oh? Well then, you want to keep your current state as a kitsune or try for something different? Great Red asks and there's a fangy smirk there.

Needless to say, he got pulled into explaining what races there are along with general weaknesses and strengths, which includes explaining why Youkai generally had to stick to Asia along with explaining that yes, Deities actually do exist and then about the various cultures of the world. Youkai are firmly connected with the Asia Pantheons and that trying to move away from Asia permanently never works out for the Youkai involved as something always calls them to return to some part of Asia. After all, it's the same as to why Fae never migrated to America or into either Africa and Asia, something ties them to Europe.

He lays down as the pair hash out in a verbal manner. Personally, he just wants to get on with meeting up with Vali in order to put an end to this reality overwrite that's happening because he didn't just destroy the damn fucking thing the moment it wouldn't let him delete the information it 'read' from the physical books.

The End of The Dance Between Death and Life

Readers:

Well, here's an ending to The Dance Between Death and Life, perhaps I'll continue in this universe perhaps I won't. Either way, I want to thank you all for reading this story, which likely could have had its own actual title instead of falling under my Random Thoughts of a Chaotic Mind.

Taken Child: KHR!

I don't own Katekyou Hitman Reborn!

He woke with no memory of a name nor can he recall his own life from before he woke. Having woken up, he'd searched around the small grove, all he'd been wearing is some necklace made out of tarnish looking metal sporting a large gemstone that's five centimeters wide at the top part then its side goes down about a centimeter down before it ends at a point. The gem is clear in color and he's able to see fairly clearly through the flat sides of it upon toying around with it, he also found he couldn't find the clasp for the necklace nor could he slide the necklace off over his head, even though it looks like he should as the gem pendant hangs pretty easily at his chest bone.

Another thing he notices is the lack of hair on his body, including head hair but also eyebrows and even the fine hair that's suppose to be on his arms. His skin is fairly pale and he's unsure as to the ultimate cause as he can only guess at this point as to why its so. Then he examines his skin, doing his best to become familiar with the sight and maybe find something, anything, that stands out, yet there's nothing. No scars, no bruises, no freckles, and no skin moles marring the parts of his body that he can examine.

The soles of his feet feel soft and gently running his finger nails along the bottoms of his soles... It kind of tickles slightly. It's not just the soles of his feet that are soft but also the skin of his palms. There's no really much more he can examine without aid now yet, he doesn't really know if it's safe to leave. After all, he Knows it's safe in this small grove, that there's nothing to harm him here plus it's currently the only place he Knows, that's Familiar.

"Can I... This is... Was I always... So confused..." He murmurs and his left hand gently glides over his bald head before that causes

confusion within him as well. Then he uses his tongue to check the back of his teeth before using his right index finger to check the front, which feels wet, warm, and odd.

Wrinkling his nose, he studies the now semi-wet finger tip and then looks down, the sight of his nakeness causes him to hum while he tilts his head before wiping it on the grass he's been sitting on. Letting out a long sigh, he pushes himself up off the grass and is quick to use the tree trunk to catch his balance. "Just how weak am I?"

Nothing answers him and it takes him some time to walk in a straight line without wobbling off course. Once he's able to walk from one side of the grove to the other without using the various trees to help him, he takes a moment to look about the area before heading off in a random direction, after all, one direction is as good as another, right?

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"Your a Statikling." The Gnome farmer states upon recovering from looking at the clear pendant that's on display. "But you don't recall a Name? Or anything?"

Nodding, he isn't sure what to make of the look the Gnome gives him and the vibrant blue haired Gnome sighs. "Usually you'd be at one of the Courts but it seems you've been found wanting so you've been abandoned." The Gnome stats.

"That pendant hanging about your neck? It's not suppose to be clear like that." The Gnome explains to him. "Which means you can't enter into any Contracts or be held to Favors."

"So... I am without worth cause Contracts and Favors are the life blood of Fae." He muses as this shakes loose some information within his head. "Yet, as a Statikling, I should have round ears."

"Huh, your right, that's certainly odd, too." Muses the Gnome. "You know, if you hide the pendant, you might be able to pass yourself off as some kind of Elf."

"You are being rather helpful." He admits as more information begins to descend into his mind with a slight frown. He'd like to ask a question but knows now how that can be taken.

"Perhaps I am feeling generous or perhaps I've got some kind of designs concerning someone who can lie in my stead." The Gnome's got a toothy grin and, yea, he can lie, can't he?

"I... find it interesting you'd trust me given..." He flushes and the Gnome hums.

"Oh, your young and not that jaded by life yet." The Gnome states and, well, he kind of concludes that the Gnome's got a point. "Ok, Ao-san, but I would like some cloths to help sell myself as an elf plus more detail about what's what."

"Ao-san... Oh, I like it, it's rather foreign sounding." The newly nicknamed Ao-san says. "It just means blue..." He admits, cocking his head to the side but it's clear that Ao-san didn't care what it translates into.

Ao-san doesn't seem to really reply while beginning to walk towards the small house, he follows after a few seconds later, after all, he wouldn't mind having something to wear. Even as he walks, he mentally reaches for more information about the usual expectations of being a Statikling, after all, it means that there's a Fae Changeling child living with his family, having been given his True Name and place in the human world.

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Time moves in odd ways in the Country of Neverever and thus, years seem to pass without him aging one bit, then he'd fall asleep only to wake seemingly a year older with his body having undergone

growth spurt that means he's not as graceful as he is use to and his off white hair is always longer then it had been as well, which means he needs to get it cut shorter. His few, trusted contacts, Ao-san still among them, always tease him during his adjustment period with a few of the more feminine ones teasing him about how he is beginning to stop being cute far too soon for their tastes. Which is just bewildering as he's pretty sure as a Statikling, he's not really as cute or adorable as they say compared to most Fae, but, it's likely that he is indeed cute or adorable compared to other Statiklings that are part of the Courts.

He's met a few other Statiklings that exist are all part of the Courts and it's enough for him to be thankful that he was abandoned as worthless given how the Fae of the Courts just don't seem to grasp how to raise human kids, never mind how casually those same Fae are about enslaved them once they develop a new Name and get it from said young Statikling with ease. One of the very first orders a Court Statikling is ever given is that they are forbidden to lie, period. Which, of course, is what always causes them to be punished as they need to learn how to bend the truth but the Fae of the Courts just don't seem to grasp how a Statikling can't automatically grasp the concept after a time or two.

So yea, typical Statiklings become jaded rather early in their life and clearly have issues. Not that it matters as by the time a Statikling is near the age of ten, they are returned to the human world and left to fend for themselves. Most Statiklings find their way back to the World of Elsewhere, maybe even returning to the Country of Neverever, in their late teens or early adulthood, not able to feel at home among the humans, not even if they find the Changeling that replaced them and killed them to try to reclaim their rightful Name and place in the human world. It's a pitiful situation and he's just thankful that whatever is happening in the human world, it's caused a sharp decline in the Changeling and Statikling exchange, so now the mix blooded Fae are being raised in other parts of Elsewhere, even if they aren't allowed to grow up living in Neverever.

"Oh look at you, Shimo-kohai! You're now so tall!" Tanoshisa coos at him as the Dullahan ruffles his newly grown white hair. Her head is resting on her shoulders right now.

"Well, yea, I think I'm in my teenage years, Tanoshisa-senpai." Shimo is suppose to mean frost, it's not his Name but then, he's called that due to his hair. "Isn't it time for me to..." Trailing off, it's been a question he's brought up since he grown into a nine years old.

"I don't care if you are entering your teenage years, Shimo-kohai, I rather you here in Neverever then in the human world." States the Winter Court born Fae. "It's not like you even recall your Changeling or your old Name."

"And by staying, Shimo-san, nobody will think you anything other then a mix blooded elf." States Chishiki-san, he's a strange goblin who's not just an immigrant but a self taught scholar and enchanter. Most goblins tend to be members of the Summer Court, either through birth or upon immigration from other parts of Elsewhere for the sole purpose of pledging themselves to the Summer Court.

He's pretty sure that Chishiki-san was not raised by other goblins given that Chishiki-san's temperament seems to be rather non-violent compared to most examples of his race. Shimo's kind of interested in learning more about the other Lands of Elsewhere as the Country of Neverever is the primary lands of the Fae, which is why immigrants all end up loosing the ability to lie along with the need to be careful concerning their Names and they gain the ability to enter into Contracts and call in Favors in exchange of the hindrances. The goblin had admitted to that to him some time after they started to meet more regularly and is rather curious about how it is he's able to survive in Neverever given he's incapable of entering into Contracts or calling upon and offering Favors, never mind the clearly physical changes he's undergone upon arriving in Elsewhere.

"Even Chishiki doesn't want you to return to the human world, Shimo-kohai." Tanoshisa remarks while giving him a simple pat on

the head before turning to walk to the table to eat breakfast. Following behind her, he does his best to watch his step, he takes a seat before the plate filled with breakfast foods.

Elf I might appear, it doesn't make me one. I'm a Statikling, a human stolen by a member of one of the Fae Courts. I don't really belong in Elsewhere naturally. Shimo thinks to himself. His current appearance is definitely that of a teenage human, this is the fourth time he's brought the matter up and it is the fourth time he's been assured that he's not going to be sent back to the human world, it's likely due to Tanoshisa figuring that it's the human world that 'breaks' the Statikling and thus if he never returns then he won't become like those returned Statiklings.

Still, the chain about his neck is looking rather worse for wear compared to it looked yesterday and Shimo knows that the older Statiklings don't have either the necklace or the pendant. Given the dead, frozen look Tanoshisa sports upon the sight of the chain... Before digging in, he moves the pendant and the necklace under his shirt, out of sight of his two contacts and associates, he knows better then to call them his friends, it's rather impossible to have friends in the Country of Neverever given the nature of the Fae.

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Sawada Tsunayoshi, the Name is like a rush upon him, it's a Name that should be his Name very much isn't. Tsuna or, more fully, Dame-Tsuna, the nickname is the soothing balm upon the rush of being called Tsunayoshi or Sawada. He avoids introducing himself as Sawada Tsunayoshi, using Tsuna instead as even he knows that Dame-Tsuna is a nickname of derision.

Then again, it's not like I am much of a Changeling with that Seal keeping my natural form and powers from me. The teenage Changeling muses as he rests under a tree with his lunch bento resting to his right. He should be at school but, well, he can't bring himself to care as today is the Birthday of both himself and the taken

Tsunayoshi, it's likely why his birth parents decided on the old practice of child swapping.

It's impossible for him to call Sawada Iemitsu his father as the human is never around and it's clear that the man barely cares for the woman, Sawada Nana, given how the man seems to think money is an acceptable substitute for his presence at the house. *Nor does he really try to lie convincingly.*

Like Iemitsu, Nana doesn't really qualify for the title of mother. A care taker, yes, a nanny? *Sure but a mother she is not.* He's fond of her but at the same time, there's cause for concern about her mental health as the woman just seems to lack a will of her own. Or perhaps it's more like she refuses to acknowledge the reality of her marriage?

For all intent and purpose, he might as well be human with the Seal on him and it's of a mix blessing as it means he's actually able to lie outright without it feeling like he sliced his throat and tasting ash in his mouth. Holding up his left hand, he calls upon the orange fire and it pools about the palm of his left hand, it's not that bright and it's very dark shade of orange yet, it's what he has to work with. There's an unease when using it but it's nothing compared to being called Tsunayoshi or Sawada. The boy he replaced, he was one of those able to call upon energies of their Soul and yet, this flame is here with him in the human world instead of with the taken child.

It's puzzling, honestly, he's not really sure how to shape this fire beyond calling it up to manifest it and dismissing it upon parts of his body. It makes him wonder if his birth parents guessed that Seal would enable him to call upon the pool of Soul energy that had been stored behind the Seal by switching them. *Perhaps it explains why I am so human...* He muses.

The dark orange flames fade as he slowly fists his left hand. Taking a deep, calming breath, he leans back on the tree trunk and stares blankly up at the sky. Tsuna's mind if rather blank as he just decides to live in the moment, after all, it's likely that Nana has forgotten what's special about this day, which isn't anything new, really.

I wonder what life would have been like for the actual Tsunayoshi if we hadn't been switched... He wonders to himself.

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Something slams into his head and his vision blacks out.

Standing before him is a teen sporting off white hair and pointed ears. His eyes are drawn towards the chest and lands upon the clear pendant that sports a tarnish chain necklace. "Who...?" The language is both foreign and yet familiar.

Jerking his gaze from the pendant, the eyes are the same as he's seen in the mirror each day. "Tsunayoshi." The Name causes the white haired teen's body to jerk and they take a step back, eyes wide.

"Shimo." And it's his turn to take a step back, taking a sharp breath as he feels a Name settle on him. *Frost.* He smiles, it's a good Name.

Then... what once was a dark orange fire roars about him while a different glow erupts about the other teen. Then the two leap between the space between them, the two energies meet and swirl around, the orange shifts into a brighter color while the teal energy that seems far too light, to transparent, darkens before the teal energy surges to the Changeling and the orange to the Statikling.

Then it's like he's no longer... hindered and he can't help but smile widely as he Feels Whole. His vision goes dark as he's been pulled somewhere else...

Groaning, he pushes himself off the side walk, Bunkatsu Shimo, moves to stand. For once, everything is Right with him while he hears Reborn, a fake Name, a wishful Name, takes a sharp intake of breath. Glancing towards the tiny adult, he gives the man a toothy grin before turning from the man killer with a chuckle, being sure to grab his book bag, he heads off to school.

He wonders if the Vongola Famiglia's reach stretches into the other world, for he's pretty sure that Tsunayoshi isn't in the human one. It's just a feeling he has, after all, it didn't Feel like the Statikling's location was that of the same world as him. Spying one of his usual bullies by the school's gate, well, Shimo can't wait to return in kind the treatment Mochida Kensuke had been giving him throughout the years.

His collection of True Names is vast and it's time to pay like back with like. *To be at the mercy of a wronged Fae, I wonder if Namimori will survive?* He mentally notes to see about returning the favor Reborn had accidentally done him, after all, if not for the killer's course of action, the Seal would still exist and it would still be keeping his true nature separate from him.

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"That's a Changeling." The defeated Lackey states with a particularly stressful tone and a hint of fear upon getting a better look at his student. "A what?" Colonnello questions while his troublesome student's eyes light up.

"I like you already, Skull." Declares said brat and the Lackey says in a very sarcastic voice, "Joy, it's that what every Statikling wants to hear from one of the Fair Folk."

"They call me Tsuna." The brat informs the Lackey, who counters, "And I fashioned the persona of Skull de Mort, taken by a member of the Autumn Court."

"What the hell are you going on about Lackey?" He growls and Leon waiting near his right hand to transform. He feels the Lackey's eyes dismiss him while the brat's send him a look of disapproval, then again, he's been getting those kind of looks since that day.

"Renato Sinclair." The Lackey says that Name in such a way that causes something to flip within him and the hairs to raise up, all the while he wonders how the Lackey learnt that name or of his

connection to it. "Be silent and listen. Whether you learn anything, well, that's up to you."

"You know his actual name yet, I could not hear you speak it." His student says, glancing away from him and gazing upon Skull with clear interest. "I believe I need to learn to do that."

"I am not surprised, not many of Fair Folk wander the human world as they once had." The Lackey states simply. "A mix blessing that."

"Ah, you do have a point, although given the process involved with the boy and myself, I might not have had to worry about the usual situation." Admits Useless Tsuna and he can feel the Lackey's gaze sharpen.

"Kora! What the hell? What are you two talking about?!" Colonnello demands and he's gets the feeling that this is very much above his pay grade.

"Fine, you want to know? A member of one of the Fair Folk Seasonal Courts arrived in the human world with this young Changeling boy and swapped him for Iemitsu's son, returning to the Country of Neverever to be raised as a servant of said Court and is what is termed a Statikling, who then gets new Name, which the Courtiers use to enslave the Statikling before they know about the need to guard their Name." The Lackey says and Useless Tsuna clearly alarmed by that.

"Yea, figured you didn't know his fate, no Changelings do know what really happens to us when we're taken." The Lackey admits in an apologetic tone while glancing towards his student, who seems rather taken back by that revelation. "Took my Changeling a good month to convince me of that."

"He went his way and I ended up in show biz, up until that invite and well, ended up like this along with an alien blooded Seer and five others, two of whom are here with us now." The Lackey concludes. "I've got a way out of this curse that ends with me being, you know,

alive but the six others don't. Kind of fond of them, a few more then the others."

"I do owe Reborn a favor for getting rid of that human Seal." His student admits and he blinks. "Perhaps ensuring he doesn't die from the stone about his neck will clear it." Muses the teenager.

"Which means lessons for you." The Lackey remarks and his student hums in agreement. "I can not say for certain if my Changeling will be interested in hearing from me but I suppose I can pass along an offer as I kind of heard from another member of this group of cursed humans that there is already a Cloud drifting near you."

"Please do, I have years of practice to catch up on." And that seems to be that, even with Colonnello getting frustrated and attempts to take it out on the Lackey, the Cloud just seems to have the devil's luck as the Sniper just keeps no landing any kind of blow.

The conversation is worrying to an extent, after all, if any of that is true then the actual heir he is meant to train has long since been taken years ago. He's going to have Shamal do some blood work to be sure, but, well, given the recent happenings that center around Useless Tsuna and certain residence, incidents that show no signs of Sky Flames being used and yet, it's clear that something seems to compel those people into acting in such matters.

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Tsunayoshi blinks as he glances around, there's something in the air and a shimmering energy that moves like fire, it's color is a blue-purple. Picking himself up off the floor, there's whispering and turns to find an older Fae of mix blood, a Changeling most likely standing with a familiar looking teenager, who's Name he knows as well as his own, after all, he received his Name back from that shared dream state. "I shall answer to Yugure." He states as he glances between the two Fae Changelings, there's others but his focus is on them, as even lacking any real might in magic like their kin in Neverever, the true magics of Fae have always been centered around Names.

His enchanted bronze gauntlets make it hard for him to wipe away the sweat from his forehead. "Fair enough." The elder Changeling states. "I answer to Brent and this young one will answer to Hyo."

Tilting his head in such a way as to show he understands, the energy barrier seems to die down like a dying fire before fading into flakes of crumbling ashes into nothingness. He slowly approaches the fairly large group while feeling many eyes upon him. He gets within six feet and notices how scrawny and short his Changeling replacement is in real life while it's clear that, in turn, Hyo, seems rather bland about his appearance although those still hazel eyes flicker down towards his gauntlets.

"Summoning seems a bit much." He remarks in a dry tone. One of the members of the group, a tiny man sporting a glowing yellow stone, speaks as he stares down at the almost Gnome tall man.

Still, he can't help but wonder what twist this will cause in his life. After all, there's a Feel of Something in the air now and for once, it seems like at the Center of it, which, is a Novelty to Feel. The tiny man continues to do so and he's pretty sure that both Brent and Hyo are aware that of the funny sight it must be, that whatever self important speech is being said is wasted on him.

"I have no clue what you said, tiny man." Tsunayoshi chirps a few seconds after the tiny man gives the impression of expecting him to say something. Hyo snickers while Brent speak to the self important tiny man in what might be a dry tone, it's hard to say given the language isn't one of Elsewhere and sounds rather harsh on his ears.

His eyes flicker about the collection of humans, most of them are male and are so Young. There's a woman sporting some kind of covering over her eyes that is not dissimilar to glasses only covers far more and seems press close to her head, there's a look of hostile intent and smug sense of superiority. Tsunayoshi already pangs her as a source of amusement. Though, to be honest, he's pretty sure

that she isn't the only one who'll be fun to toy with, his eyes move to settle upon the tiny man, he couldn't help but grin with a hint of teeth.

Never mind when the others, well other then Ao-san, decide to travel here after me. He muses while this tiny lizard transforms into something similar to what he's seen during a tour that Chishiki-san gave him of High Realm Chapel. It seems that his grin didn't agree with the tiny man.

The Chaos Ends Here

Stealing the Sky: KHR! Warning SexChange

I do not own Katekyou Hitman Reborn!

Vincent studies... Ah, herself, in the tall mirror with her back to the mirror. Long dark brown hair that trails down to her lower back, it's hard to pry her eyes from her current ass. The woman being reflected back, she's in her mid twenties while Vincent is seventeen years of age and has never... Turning away with a blush, the previous teenager's face reddens at the sight of her bare breasts even more.

Slowly, almost hasting, faces the mirror and arms move to cover them. "It's not too late to back out, right?" The now she wonders, noting the change to her voice, but, well, yes, yes it is and she knows it so she looks up and into the mirror, taking in the sight of her naked front.

"This is ridiculous, its not like I haven't seen porno." Vincent remarks to herself and steels herself, lowering her arms and get a better look at the B cup breasts, also noting how chilly her front now feels. There's twisting in her guts at the fact that, well, Vincent is still a seventeen year old teen, even if he's been out on the streets for the pass three months trying to make sense of the yellow fire he can call up after...

"Fucking damn it, why did I think this was a good idea?" Vincent wonders while her right hand moves to cup the sagging left breast. The feeling of the hand upon her skin along with pushing it up... Vincent is blushing, yet again, while trying to ignore the reality of the fact that, for now, this is still Vincent's body, some how...

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"Are you ready for the next part?" The man, one Yaprak Arshi, inquires after they exchange pleasantries. It's been a week since the item that caused Vincent's gender switch to be delivered and, well, Vincent has kind of come to terms with her current body. It helps that there hasn't been much of a difference in height.

"Just what to make sure but, as long as the... target, no longer has the... package, even if I'm not the receiver, I'll still get the agreed upon amount along with the reversing... agent." Vincent asks after drinking from the glass of water and Yaprak hums in agreement. "Ok, then, yes."

She's pretty sure Yaprak's smile is rather predatory and wonders, yet again, at which point will the line be drawn but then, recalls that with the money, she'll be able to finish high school and attend university, hoping to find something to do with her life that didn't involve crime or magical, bullshit fire that comes in the colors of the rainbow. Yaprak pulls out an envelop and sets it on the table between them, beginning to inform her of what the second part entails. It sums up as, taking a plane to Japan and upon arrival, Vincent is to pick up a package from the gift shop that will have further instructions.

"I hate to tell you think but, well, I don't speak Japanese or know anything of... Japan." Vincent admits, shifting in her seat, there's a touch of a sour taste in her mouth at admitting this yet, it's something that she feels needs to be said.

"I expected that." Yaprak says with a hint of amusement and Vincent feels a touch relieved. "Which is why the transformation included a language download."

Is there anything these bullshit flames can't do? Vincent wonders to herself. "Any other mental additions I should be aware of?" She finally asks after taking a few seconds to curse out this fucking magic fire that screws with reality.

"Your new name, for the duration of your assignment, is Tasogare Momo." Yaprak informs her and she knows that Momo is the first

name with Tasogare is the last name, she also knows that Momo translates into peaches while Tasogare translates into twilight. "Your passport and other important items are in the envelop."

Not finding the ability to speak, she just nods in understanding and the mood of Yaprak changes. "For what it's worth, I am sorry for the inconvenience of this job but the clock is ticking and you were the best I could find for this." Which causes her to shift uncomfortable at the apology and the reminder that if she succeeds, well, that's going to lead into a much longer assignment that Vincent isn't sure she wants to be apart of.

Pulling the envelop over, she opens it and finds that the flight is leaving tomorrow at ten am, putting the ticket back in, Vincent gets up and escorts the man to the door of the apartment that Yaprak secured for her to stay in while adjusting to her new gender and reality of the situation she agreed to take.

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Momo is sharing a house with five women and have for the past month and is having a hard time of it, not only is she the most 'green' of the six of them, but she's suspecting her situation with her body is more extreme then their's given her actual birth gender and age, thankfully, no monthly visitor for her! Well, yet at any rate.

Also, it seems that the yellow magic fire that she can call up at will but is taxing as hell? It means she's a 'Sun' and her magic is best for healing for they can Activate it in people. For some reason, the others seem rather impressed that she's able to call a tiny flame of it without a special kind of jewellery called a Flame Ring to aid in 'sparking' it, which is bizarre in her mind as the magic fire comes from the person and not the ring, so, wouldn't the ring just act as training wheels for learning to call it up? Or that, apparently, those who are 'Mists' and 'Skies' can call upon their magic fire far more easily then the other Flame Users.

Most of the others don't really answer to their current Alias in the privacy of the house, most seem content to just answer to their fire types. Beyond Sun, Mist, and Sky, the other names are Cloud, Rain, Storm, and Lightning. Given the six of them and yet there's seven fires, Momo had asked if they were waiting on a Sky to join them, only for the five others to snort yet nobody really explained why they were going to be lacking a Sky, just mention that she's clearly 'green' and that's that.

"Hey, isn't that her?" She asks Rain, who's hair is a dark navy blue and purple eyes. The woman in question looks like the photo of one Sawada Nana and she's the one who has the 'package'.

They'd been sitting across of the local subway station, Rain seems to be almost thirty but that could just be due to some 'Mist' alteration to make her appear younger then she actually is as the woman in question seems to give her the impression of lived and seen things. "Good eye. That is her." The purple eyed woman says with ease.

"I'll call it in." Rain says pulling out the portable phone and she just keeps her eyes on Nana. It's not long before they catch sight of Nana meeting up with a pair of old friends, Lightning and Mist had been the ones to do a background check on the people Nana knows.

Without a word, Rain raises gracefully and leaves some Yen to cover her drink, smoothly following behind the trio. A number of minutes later, Storm arrives and with a slight nod, Momo pays for her own drink before following after the twenty something year old blond with gray eyes. It's in minutes that they get close to where Rain is, yet they don't approach. "We'll try today." Storm informs her and Momo shrugs, it's not like she's got much pull in the group and, to be honest, so looks forward to begin a guy once again as even as a woman, she really doesn't get women.

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"Well, fuck." Lightning murmurs while Mist and herself are doing their best to keep Nana from dying on them. Which is mostly Momo

'pouring' yellow fire into the structure Mist created to use her fire to cause regeneration of the heart while using the almost blue and almost purple fire to trick the damaged heart that it's not damaged.

Lightning is securing the room using green fire to reinforce the walls. "I don't they we'll be able to save her." Momo admits softly and Mist seems to sigh.

"The bullet's been Altered." Agrees Mist as the auburn haired woman with surprising green eyes. "Not the best conditions to work this transfer."

"So, who's going to be the receiver?" Lightning asks and Mist takes a moment to study both of them for a few seconds before focusing in on Momo, which she just knows she doesn't like. "Sun, she's young and resilient. I almost think it was her along, given the quality of her body Alteration."

Fuck. Is all Momo could think and she swallows hard to keep the creeping burning sensation from coming up. "Best begin then." Lightning states and Momo looks down at the dying woman.

"What do I need to do?" She asks while her stomach curds while looking at the midsection, to where the not yet a babe is. Momo looks up and, well, it's like the world falls away for a while.

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"Tsunayoshi." She raises a slight eyebrow at the name of the newborn boy that she'd just given birth to. Yaprak is holding said babe while Momo is trying to recover from just giving birth to a baby.

"Tasogare Tsunayoshi?" Momo inquires curiously and the man seems to get a thoughtful look upon his face. "Don't give me that look, I am looking forward to being male again and, you know, pissing standing up. God I miss pissing standing up... I miss having to not go pee every hour too..." Ok, so, yea, she's not in the right kind of mind state but she did just give birth to a tiny human being.

"Sure you can't be persuaded?" Yaprak asks and she can't help but give the man a flat look, cause even as tired as she currently is, she wasn't born for this responsibility of bringing another life into the world. "You best rest for now, once you've recovered, we'll hand over the reversing 'agent' as you put it."

Nodding, Momo sighs and sinks more into the bed, the group decided it was better they did a home delivery then doing this at a Japanese hospital. It also makes it easier for her to disappear without any real record.

Fon rocks Tsunayoshi gently as the two week old is just being adorable while the young, pretty much civilian Sun is getting re-familiar with his body. He wonders how well the Sun will take the fact that he's going to be a teenage dad as their time in this world is going. With a sigh, he takes out the necklace and holds the pendant so it's above the babe's heart, with a soft coo, orange flames sprout around the pendant and it sinks into the tiny baby's body, orange flames flare about Tsunayoshi's tiny body.

As the fire dies down, he looks up to find the teen staring rather bewildered at the two of them. "Tsuna here is a Sky." He explains simply and the young Sun blinks, it's clear that there's a number of questions there and he smiles as the former woman asks, "Why wasn't there a Sky with us? Seven fires but only six was part of the group."

"Skies are rare and if they do not get the correct protection, they will be either used as puppet figures or killed out right." He explains. "Sky Flames are orange in color and Harmony is their property."

It's clear by the young Sun's frown that he doesn't get it. "So, he's, like, support?" And Fon smiles while wondering how the soon to be teenage father came to that conclusion.

"Why not a leader?" He asks curious. "Well, Harmony is like blending stuff together, you know, not having any one thing stand out, really.

Kind of seems like they're more into being in-tune with things and maybe a drive to be part of a group..."

The Storm blinks a bit as he slowly examines that statement and makes a note to speak with Skull about what the Cloud thought Harmony meant when the concept of Skies and Harmony was given. "Most think Skies as the perfect leaders for groups due to their ability to draw people to them." He explains.

The young Sun just looks rather bemused and shakes his head, it's clear the Sun doesn't buy into that, well, not yet. "The pendant is going to serve as an anchor so that nobody will question whether he's your son or not."

And now the Sun stiffens, there's a touch of betrayal and 'Are you kidding me?!' in those hazel green eyes while the face on the whole looks like he's bitten something sour. "Neither myself or the other can raise him, our time here is coming to an end, as is the time of those who wanted to kill Tsuna before he was even known to exist." He explains. "Which means, the remaining funds we've pulled together is now held in trust for Tsunayoshi. You will be receiving monthly allowances to be spent on taking care of the babe."

"Why not one of the others?" The teenage Sun asks. "I'm... I'm barely managing myself, let alone knowing what I want out of life... I don't really care for this magical fire or for the criminal underbelly of the world. Shouldn't he be raise by someone capable and, you know, interested in these rainbow flames?"

He couldn't help it but find it amusing and fitting that Tsuna ends up being raised by this Sun, after all, the necklace chain is made up of memories the Neo-Primo wanted to gift the Tsunayoshi who is going to be raised in this world. "The others have moved on and have already forgotten the details of the mission. It would have been the same for you, if you hadn't ended up with the package." He states, the others hadn't needed to be Altered that much, mostly it had been in age and in appearance, not like the body Altercation that the teenage Sun needed or that Viper had already decided on the

mother to be, thus slipping a certain extra to ensure that there was no chance that Tsuna would not be safely transferred into the Sun's heavily Altered body.

"So... whoever gave birth was going to end up raising him?" The teen asks and he frowns. "No, we had alternative plans on the off chance that the mother went into Discord or began to realize the prize they were carrying." Fon explains.

"To be honest, your lack of interest in Dying Will Flames and the culture we've scratched out in the criminal underbelly just... tipped the balance in your favor for raising Tsuna here." The Storm explains. "Usually, most don't get to escape the reach of the Mafia Flame culture but given how... green you were before taking this job, most have likely concluded you are dead and we've... helped with that, along with clouding their memories of your appearance."

"I'm getting a new name, aren't I?" The teen asks and Fon smiles at the conclusion the Sun reached. "Yes, your first name is still the same, it's your middle and last that have been changed."

"Which is?" The young Sun asks curiously. "Vincent Liam Azarola." He says and the teen just sighs.

He spends the next few hours going over the various contact information and then touched on what kind of career the Sun is thinking of pursuing. He smiles upon hearing the Sun admit wanting to pursue something concerning computers. Given his own personal experience and how important computers will become, he's sure that the others will be happy to take some time to speak with the soon to be teenage father about advice concerning what to focus on when it comes to computers.

"Daddy..." He rolls to make room and raises the sheet for his five year old son to join him in the bed. "Same nightmare?" Vincent asks softly as he lowers the sheet and pulls his son to his side.

Sun, which is a decent enough nickname given they live in the US, hums and he feels his son's arms move to hug him like he's a stuff animal. "Loud doggie or was it the one where that stranger almost didn't catch you?" He asks softly as he rubs his son's back.

"Scary toddler with a gun." Sun admits softly. "The one with the glowing yellow stone?" And he can Feel his son pull on his Sun Flames, pulling and then wrapping himself in them. That answers that, as it's usual the reason for why his son would reach for his Flames like this.

Feeling Sun relax once he's wrapped up in his Flames, he allows himself to start drifting off to sleep. Vincent controls his breathing as best as he can, he's got some work to do come tomorrow and Sun also has school. It's not long before he's fast asleep once more, although he does feel like his bed is a touch to warm but not enough to keep him awake.

Ending it here

The Fish Bowl Agreement: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter or High School DxD!

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Dear Brandon L. Graves

I know this letter seems to be rather startling, what with it being delivered by an owl of all things.

The Dragonkin Magician and Wizard's gaze flickers towards the rather white feathers of the clearly female snowy owl. Li, as he's more commonly known to answer to, Master Li to his students and apprentices, former or current surprisingly enough, and while it's *Little* Grave to Grief, who is the Dragon he dueled back when he was in his early thirties to collect some blood to be used in a modified Absorption Ritual. "Right, like you are the strangest thing to happen to me in my long life." Li murmurs and the owl puffs her feathers before deciding to take a nap before continuing with reading the letter, curious as to how this young Wizard managed to get pass the centuries old agreement drawn up between those humans born with natural, inner channels of magic and, well, the rest of the supernatural world.

Hedwig is a very intelligent owl and she's to stick around to receive a reply, even if you it's just a rejection.

My name is Harry James Potter and am thirteen years old, I will be fourteen come this July 31st. I am also an orphan and attending Hogwarts, which is a school for magic, since I was eleven. I'm a Wizard.

"No kidding." Li murmurs, taking a second to grab his mug of hot chocolate, he disliked coffee and tea, both are not something he grew to enjoy drinking so he uses of Transfiguration to transform

either hot liquids into hot chocolate, it doesn't change the contents of either drink but it sure makes it easier for him to drink the two. "I really don't like the course of this letter already." He adds with a sigh and he's no opinion about whether Hogwarts is a good school or not, given it was likely built after the now 'Fish Bowl' Agreement was put into place.

I can guess what you are thinking and yes, magic does in fact exist.

"Great job at keeping magic a secret." Yet, he's uneasy with the fact that this teen doesn't have any crisis of conscious about revealing that bit of information. The wording kind of suggests it's a very minor detail, he can tell more thought went into the introduction of who the teen is then into deciding whether or not to reveal that magic exists. That doesn't bode well for the likely reason the teen is reaching out to him, not one bit as he's very much a stranger and its clear that the teen doesn't know a thing about him besides his name.

Ok, by now you are likely wondering, why I sent you this letter and that reason is simple, according to two sources of magical tests, you are listed as my great grandfather on my mother's side of the family. You had a daughter with one Iris Holden, who, well, yea, grew up to have a kid or kids which over time lead to the birth of my own mother, one Lily Evans who married my father James Potter.

Li blinks and then groans while rubbing the side of his left face as he does remember that two month long fling. *Well, that explains some of the how but not all of it.* He thinks to himself.

This is a very slim chance, I mean, you must be fairly old and for all I know, you won't be around for very long.

He snorts and chuckles at reading that. "I was fifty when Witches and Wizards decided to split from the rest of the supernatural world, brat and was still kicking when they finally ironed out that contract at eighty." He mutters out loud to a semi-empty office.

Merlin, this is hard... Look, I am just looking to spend time with family who isn't my Aunt and her family.

From, Harry Potter

And that confirms the theory that something happen to cause the some kind of incident between the infamous Magician and the UK Witches and Wizards. "Then again, Albion and Ddraig were a thing at that point, so of course, something happened." He recalls.

He didn't like the tone the letter pretty much ends in. Taking a deep breath, he slowly releases it. It's clear that the teen somehow managed to succeed in by passing the enchantments, the fact Harry lives in the UK likely the reason as if there's going to be a weak point, it would be where those two Heavenly Emperors were killed and sealed away.

Drinking the remains of his transfigured hot drink, Li considers how to deal with this. It's clear it's best he sees for himself what's what and, well, it's a question of how to go about doing that just. He studies the snowy owl for a few seconds before moving to get up, sensing his attention, Hedwig wakes and is quick to focus in on him. He gently reaches out and waits until Hedwig ruffles her feathers but that's it, so he strokes the breast feathers.

An idea slowly taking root.

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The train is about to leave when Hedwig comes flying through the window along with... "A miniature dragon?" Harry wonders with a touch of awe while watching as the glossy black scales of the miniature dragon, who sports navy blue eyes along with smoky gray spines and ivory claws. The tiny dragon gives the impression of being an adult, even though it's just big enough to enter through the window and moves to land on the free seat across from him.

Hegwig nibbles on his ear, reminding him that she's here. Flushing, he forces himself to look away from the awe inspiring beast, well, he's only got his experiences with Norbert to compare the miniature with, then again, the miniature dragon looks like the muggle pictures of what a dragon is suppose to look like, with four limbs and a set of wings. "Hey girl, I hope you've been well." He says as he strokes her feathers before opening the letter that she dropped onto his lap.

He's pretty sure that whatever the reply is, it won't be one to lift his spirits, not after the events concerning his Godfather and the escaped Wormtail. As he finishes, he hears the door of the compartment about to open and he's quick to hide the letter. Harry doesn't want either Ron or Hermione to know about his attempt to contact his Great Grandfather, who's still alive but must be pretty old by now, given the man is likely a muggle and likely on his death bed too.

"Blimey! Where did that come from?!" Ron exclaims upon the door opening and staring at the miniature dragon, who seems to be content with laying on the seat, giving the impression of a large, regal cat with eyes sporting half lidded. "Looks kind of like a dragon, by Merlin's beard!"

"Oh, Harry, are you alright?" Hermione asks as he feels her eyes on him. "Why is it here?"

"Came in after Hedwig entered. Doesn't seem to be hostile." He admits and he's not really sure himself, although Hedwig seems to have puffed up. He reaches up to try and calm her down while Ron attempts to shoo the miniature dragon off the seat across from him.

Clearly unconcern and not feeling the slight bit threatened by Ron or Hermione, the small dragon uncurls its tail and moves to lay its head down, clearly claiming the seat as its. Ron isn't pleased while Hermione slips pass the red head to sit next to Harry. It's clear that the miniature dragon isn't going to move until it wants to and he finds himself staring at the miniature dragon, finding it hard to not admire it.

"It's rather stunning looking dragon, isn't it?" Hermione admits and he nods while Ron huffs while steadying himself as the train begins to move, glaring at the magical beast. Clearly different then Norbert.

And then, he gets a letter from his Godfather viva a small owl, and the matter of his Great Grandfather along with the miniature dragon is put aside.

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As they get in sight of the Platform, he recalls his letter and manages to talk his friends into leaving him, that he'll follow after. "I might as well try and talk it into leaving now that we're here, you know?" Harry tells them, it's kind of the truth and they do leave.

The miniature dragon now moves to sit on the seat once Hermione and Ron have left. Taking the letter out, he murmurs, "Sorry, but I want to read this, then we'll figure something out about you."

To My Great Grandson, Harry J. Potter

I am rather disappointed by how casually you revealed the existence of magic, though I have settled on blaming your instructors for not empathizing why you should keep its existence a secret.

That, wasn't want he expected but, it also made him rather hopeful at the same time. He continues reading.

Your owl should have arrived with tag along and he should be sitting across from you. Fine looking specimen, isn't he? I know that's my private opinion. He will be lead you to a place where we can met face to face and I expect honesty in said conversation, after all, there are reasons why you should not have been able to contact me, regardless of our shared blood and given what I know of news from the UK, I doubt you have been taught about the Great Magic Divide Contract or it's more

commonly used, and very fitting name, the Fish Bowl Agreement.

Depending on our discussion, I may be able to ensure you do achieve your task of not returning to your Aunt's care.

From Your Great Grandfather, Brandon L. Graves

He can't help but re-read that and can't help but have questions about where the miniature dragon came from, if there are more of them, how come he shouldn't have been able to contact the man, and just what is this Fish Bowl Agreement? In the end, he's folding the letter and does his best to breath as panic sets in at the thought of meeting this man along with what kind of questions he's going to be asking. What should I do?! And how important is this supposed Agreement?

It's Hedwig who manages to snap him out of his panic attack and he turns to look at the miniature dragon, suddenly feeling like his life hangs in the balance. "I, I guess it's now or never?" He asks the dragon and realizing the sheer intelligence lurking in the supposed beast's eyes.

The dark blue eyes turn up and he sighs but does move to get his trunk. He hears the dragon move from the seat and once Hedwig is in her cage, the dragon leads the way out of the train compartment. He can't shake the feeling that this meeting is going to go badly for him.

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Li isn't happy, not one bit and he's pretty sure he won't be able to do anything about it either, as he's only here concerning the issue of whether he'll be able to take in the supposed teen, which he has his own doubts about given how short and thin he was. Never mind the reaction to the letter, although which part that caused the attack in the first place, he's unsure, yet he's more then likely going to find out. Whoever this aunt of Harry's, the teen won't be returning to her

'care', he'd rather help the teen become emancipated then legally allow this aunt to keep custody for clearly, Harry should be more then capable of finding some means to house and feed himself with some creative use of magic.

Once off the train, he gets his first look at the train platform and a few families are still around, so he gets gawked at while he's moving more properly away from the train. Honestly, he didn't know what irked him more, the fact that the murmurs suddenly switched to focusing on the topic of the Boy-Who-Lived and 'relief' over the fact that the 'poor' boy is alive after having that 'dreadful' Sirius Black attempt to 'finish' what 'He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named' started. He's pretty sure that he Doesn't want to Know yet, he's going to end up Knowing anyway.

Unfurling his wings, he moves into a crouch and then leaps into the air, wings flapping as he takes to the air. For a few seconds, he enjoys the sensation of flight before recalling why he's circling around. Spying a private spot that's a tunnel, he does his best gracefully land before Harry. Ignoring the Witches and Wizards, he leads the teen to the spot and the teen follows suit.

Once they are a touch deeper into the tunnel, he lets out a sigh and transforms back into his modified human appearance. "Well then, let's get this conversation going, shall we?" He says after casting a few layered security Wards around along with calling up a ball of light to light up the tunnel.

"Your an Animagus?!" Harry asks, eyes wide and he frowns at the title, it sounds like a title. "So there's a breed of miniature, non-magical dragons?"

"I do not know what that is and Dragons, by their very nature, are the most magical beings in existence." He informs the teen. "I am what is commonly referred to as a Dragonkin. I earned that titled by having collected blood from a Dragon during a fight and went through a self-modified Ritual of Absorption, which is how I could transform into a miniature version of a Dragon."

"Norbert didn't look like that nor did he seem..." Harry trails off and Li sighs, deciding to explain, "Yea, I wouldn't be surprised if it wasn't a modified breed of wyvern. No Dragon wanted anything to do with the 'Fish Bowl' Agreement."

"Any way, I'm Brandon Little Graves, your Great Grandfather." And it's clear that Harry hadn't expected for him to be the man he was going to be meeting. "Most tend to call me Li."

"Ah, oh, I am Harry James Potter, sir." The teen returns. "Most call me Harry."

"Are you ready to be honest? I already collected an opinion about reasons why you do not wish to return to your aunts." He asks.

Harry swallows and the body language kind of tuckers in. "As ready as I'll ever be, sir." The emerald eyed teen admits and he feels like he's dealing with an abused kitten or puppy. *Abused is right.*

"How long since you visited an eye doctor?" He asks as it's clear that the glasses are the wrong prescription and this seems to earn him an owlish look, which means that it's been far too long or at all. "I ask as I noticed your squinting upon reading those respective letters."

"Ah, my aunt was told I needed glasses and then we went to a second hand store, found ones that worked, sir." Harry shuffles and he hums, confirming a number of things. "Was I suppose to see an eye doctor, sir?"

"Well yes, for you see, eye glass prescription changes a lot when kids are growing up." He explains with a soft sigh. "As for wearing the wrong prescription... Well, I'm sure that an optometrist will be more then happy to explain the importance of why it's bad."

It's clear Harry is a touch surprise by his admission of ignorance but then, it's not like he needs glasses to see. "Next question." He muses. "Why were you not placed with a relative of your father?"

"Ah, well, Sirius... He got thrown into Azkaban without a trail and then Wormtail escaped..." Harry trails off and that's nothing he hadn't heard before.

"Nobody else stepped up to take custody?" Li asks and Harry shifts his weight. "Dumbledore put me with my aunt due to blood wards as my mom died protecting me."

His eyes harden and he is sure to glare off at the way they came. "Blood Wards, huh? Is your aunt a Witch per chance?" He asks after taking a few minutes to control his raging emotions.

"No, neither is Dudley, a Wizard I mean." Harry admits and it's clear the teen is uneasy by his anger. The teen worries his lower lip, clearly wanting to ask something.

"Is... is that important?" Harry finally asks after some time of silence. "Yes." He states as calmly as he can.

"Blood Wards are bad enough when all those involved are able to use magic, no matter a beings race." He says slowly. "The Norse Pantheon and their followers are really the only ones who still go around creating any kind of Ward using Blood as a focus and even they don't keep them up for longer then a week."

"I dread to think of what kind of effects you've developed growing up with said Blood Wards, never mind the effects on your aunt and her family." Then a thought crossed his mind and he asks, "They do live at a farmstead, right?"

Harry looks away and shuffles his feet before shaking his head. Li gives in and groans into his hands at the situation that he's not even going to be able to do anything about beyond ensure that Harry gets a through check over by pretty much any healing specialist he can hire or offer favors with, starting with finding someone with good, strong connections to the Norse Pantheon.

"We'll have to start dealing with this once problem as soon as we get this particular situation over and done with." He admits to Harry, he's already emotionally exhausted and he didn't even ask the teen half a dozen questions. Taking out what likely looks to be a pad of paper, he takes out a pen knife and slices the tip of his left pinkie.

The blood transforms into a tiny light before reaching the first 'page' of the pad. The papers glow bright colors and the pad now hovers while he uses a simple Wizard spell to clean the pen knife. "Left pinkie please." He says, handing the pen knife over and Harry takes it, takes a moment to stare at him before straightening and stabbing himself with the pen knife, making sure his hand is over the pad of paper.

As Harry's blood transforms into a tiny ball of light, a serpent hissing and fire-bird song fill the air until the pad of paper scatters around the two of them, the various written spells soon do their work. As the various spells finish, they have been teleported to his apartment in Vancouver. The papers break apart and then the bits flash as they vanish from sight. As his eyes adjust, he finds himself staring at Harry, finding himself at a loss of words at the sight.

"I, I do... don't feeeeel ssso go, goood..." Harry admits with a slight wavering tone. "Yea, I expect you aren't." He admits as he moves to steady the now Dragonkin Wizard, he's kind of curious as to where the purple coloring for some of the scales came from as his own are glossy black.

"I apologize, I shouldn't have gone through with this upon hearing you had Blood Wards upon yourself." Li says and Harry blinks while he leads now regressed Wizard towards the room he'd prepared on the off chance he'd end up taking the teen. "And no, I am to blame for this transformation of yours and yes, you have transformed along with the fact that your body seems to be regressing in age."

"Oh." Seems to be all the now ten year old Dragonkin Wizard says. Once he's gotten his new charge into bed, the now five or maybe six year old is sleeping. He hangs around for the next fifteen minutes but

it seems that the regression has stopped and he kind of wonders if there's a reason it stopped at that age.

Great, just... Great. And what was up with the serpent hissing and fire-bird song? Damn it all... Li thinks to himself as he glares at the wall before heading back to the living room slash kitchen area for Harry's belongings and to release Hedwig.

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"Well, it could have been worst, all things considered." Manuel tells the two of them, for some reason, Harry seems rather content to sit on his lap and slightly curled against his chest while he gently rubs the now child's back in a comforting fashion.

It turned out that Harry is currently rather... raw concerning magic being used on him right now, a condition that he'll be keeping in mind for the next three months before following through with other consultants. After the first basic scan, they put a halt on it, despite Harry's protests of 'I'm fine' and 'Let's get this over with', Manuel decided to see if using Harry's blood in the examines would be less aggravating as they can control the sympathetic connection between Harry and his blood. It still caused some discomfort to Harry but not the silent shredding of tears and body shakes that they concluded were a clear indication of his inner channels being raw enough that such simple magics as skin scans was causing unbearable levels of pain.

"Undiluted tears from a hybrid fire-bird, potent venom from a Basilisk, who spent centuries under a hibernation spell, thank Odin, and then you willingly shedding your own Dragon enhance blood... The changes to your Great Grandson could have been much worst from the start." Manuel says. "Currently, he's state of being is fragile and all I can really offer you is a list of what kind of produce to avoid."

The accepts the envelop with the information concerning the examination along with whatever else his former student thought to add. "My thanks, Ritual Master." He tucks the envelop away,

mentally working out how to return to his apartment without the use of magic.

"It's been a pleasure seeing you again, Master Li sir." The almost fifty year old, former student tells him with a warm smile. "I hope you'll come back when his magic has settled."

"I wish I could give you the location of the Blood Ward or the name of the previous family." He tells Manuel and Harry pulls a bit more on his shirt at the mention of either topic. He gives the boy a gentle hug with one arm while Manuel nods in understanding of why he's unable to get the name or location.

"Still, something like that in the UK? I believe I know a few bored people looking for something to do in the lull between seasonal work." Manuel muses and then moves to stand, he adjusts his arms so he's able to stand while Harry is clutching his shirt.

"Be careful though, the idiot who likely set it up was a Wizard." He cautions. "They might stick someone to keep watch over the family, particularly in case young Padraig here, decides to return to that house."

"That group, huh?" Manuel muses, it's clear that the man is reconsidering what information and rumors there have been coming out of the UK. The Magician and a known Norse Seidr then leads them to the door of the clinic. "Good day, Master Li. Padraig."

"Good day, Master Rask." He says and Harry murmurs, "Bye."

With that, he walks out of the building, mentally reviewing his opinion of how to travel back to Vancouver viva non-magical means. "So... Want to do some sight seeing as we travel back to my apartment in Vancouver?" He inquires as he smiles as an idea blooms, after all, it'll prove a distraction for his Great Grandson and he's pretty sure that Harry's far to use to being caged in both a physically, emotionally, and mentally.

He catches glimpses of Harry looking up at him, clearly not sure how to react. Which, he hopes, won't cause a great deal of stress in the former teen. "Now then, what color of car should we get?" He wonders, he's pretty sure that he's more then capable of figuring out how to drive the horseless carriage that is a car.

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"Ok, so... I will be creating a driver from now on." Li admits as he gets the car back in its original parked location and after fixing the damages done to the other vehicles in the parking lot.

"How does that even work?" Harry asks curiously from the back of the car. He's not sure what make or model this car is, only that it is a nice blue color and the previous owner had been more then willing to sell it for two thousand American dollars. Yea, the condition of the seats and motor wasn't the best but, well, that was easily fixed with various spell meant to restore metals and reforging the metal to it's previous shape, same for the interior.

"It's kind of a chimera spell, honestly, one that has been used by those who owned ships and turned them into something more. They didn't want to hire a crew to do the work the ship needed so they all figured out how to create something to do the work or operate the ship." He explains as he climbs out of the driver seat.

"And you know how to create something like that?" The boy asks curiously and he hums as he Summons the note book of his version of that spell. Paging through it, he replies, "I've never really needed a spell like that before. After my enchanted Yurt got destroyed, I invested in a decent size wagon and used various Enchantments and Wards to enlarge the space to suit my needs, and later, added a private garden to grow rare plants. Which became the source of my income for a number of centuries until I found myself being hounded for Magician training and demonstration of how Wizarding Magic works."

"How come you weren't..." Harry trails off and pausing in reviewing his notes, follows that train of thought. "Ah, well, I was born with damage to my inner magical channels so I wasn't able to preform Wizarding Magic as well as I should so I left my Birth Country looking for a different path towards spell casting then what was being offered when I was twelve. Bartered with a Selkie for help crossing the ocean to arrive at what is now called France and came to study under a hermit Magician with a Mastery of Elemental Magic."

"She'd been having trouble with the local Fair Folk of the near by lands and I, having grown up with learning how best to be mindful of our Good Neighbors, was more then capable of smoothing over their respective bruised egos." He explains and it's clear that Harry is rather bewildered by certain bits of information. "It was a different time and different world, child." He tells the boy in a soft yet calming tone.

"So, being a Magician doesn't make one a Wizard then?" Harry muses and he hums a positive. "Magicians tradition is not one born to humans but taught to them by various magical beings, be they Deities or a member of a magical race. Hence why even those who lack the inner channels can learn to make use of magic and can match those born a Wizard or succeed them with enough creativity and research."

"How long do Magicians live?" The former teen asks curiously. "As long as they keep the right spells up and empowered... Centuries, but it is not uncommon for them to grow tired of life and decide the time of their death." He admits.

"I haven't reached that point, as of yet, but it's not fully do to my own mental fortitude." Li admits simply and the younger Dragonkin clearly wants to know the cause, yet likely doesn't know if it's a sour point with him. He takes a few seconds to study the current child before returning to his notes.

As he gets the basic formula memorized, he's sure to keep the Illusion that everything is normal near the care and encouraging any

on lookers to forget seeing him along with mind their own business. Illusions are easy as they don't change the world, just the perceptions of onlookers. The elder Dragonkin re-reads and rechecks the notes a much younger self wrote out and toyed with but never used it upon successfully completing the spell and testing it to be sure it worked as intended. Given the test had been on driving his wagon home, he figured that the driver he'll be Conjuring up will have no trouble with the car.

And triple checking to ensure he memorized the spell formula, he closes the book and tucks it under his left arm as he stares at a sport near the car. Slowly his magic begins to write itself upon the ground and then more of the formula begins to appear as it layers in the air at least one inch between each layer until it's a good four feet thick. With a single world in his native tongue, "Execute!" The glowing magical formula hovering in the air and written upon the ground glows and condenses into a humanoid shape sporting simple appeal and a fired clay mask sporting the features of a small bird beck.

Nodding, he moves around the car and as he enters into the passenger, the Conjured drive enters into the car. Within seconds, they are riding upon the street with the driver clearly proving itself capable of doing its job. Satisfied with himself, he Banishes the notebook back to his office library. "Ah, won't we be stopped because his face is covered?" Asks Harry.

"An Illusion about the car should ensure nobody cares about the mask." He assures the former teen. Now it's just figuring how the stops along the trip back to Vancouver from Washington, DC.

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It's hard for him to believe that just a month ago, he'd been a teenager. *Then again, I never thought there could be any form of magic besides what the Wizarding world offers or that someone could learn to use magic.* Harry, or to use the alias his Great Grandfather gave him, Padraig Graves.

Never mind that he'd end up regressing to the age of five going on six years of age. *Or that ending up on a road trip that spans across the US and Canada boarder.* He admits to himself, not that he isn't enjoying himself.

It's like a new, fresh start. A reset. He muses as he stares up at the tourist attraction or what's nicknamed a tourist trap. There's been a few bumps along their trip in the form of stray Magicians trying to kidnap him to use him against his Great Grandfather or trying to subdue his Great Grandfather to viva use of Mind Control Magic, which is rather chancy given that if the target possesses a stronger will then the caster... He winces at the memory of more then a few exploding heads and the singular example of someone's brain just liquefying.

Not that it seemed to overly bother his Great Grandfather much, the man merely sighs in a disappointed kind of way but still removed the evidence of what happened from being discovered. Sometimes they'd end up encountering a local member of a Magician Cabal about claiming a bounty, if there is one, concerning any particular stray Magician or in general. A few of the younger Magicians clearly didn't know who his Great Grandfather is and tended to act far more important then they actually are, only to be forced into apologizing before they leave the Cabal's 'territory' by their senior members. Not that his Great Grandfather seemed to mind over much as he's more known for possessing Wizarding Magic then any notable, magical accomplishment.

Although that's not true as it once was. He reflects as he glances towards where his Great Grandfather is talking with a couple with a map out. *After all, I'm still capable of causing my wand to react to me, thus I am a Wizard still, even though I am also a Dragonkin now.*

Not that anyone besides his Great Grandfather and Master Rask are aware of that. *Which means that Master Rask is a trustworthy man.* He concludes. Then again, the Ritual Master, as his Great Grandfather called him, is a former student of his Great Grandfather. He wonders if that means that the man is some kind of religious

figure too, given the man is an expert on Blood Magic and the Runes used were Norse in origin.

Looking back at the famous landmark that draws people to the town and wonders if this is what it's like, to be content. After all, he's not stuck doing chores under the glare of the sun nor is he getting fed scraps of food, plus, he's actually getting to see the new places, staying up late watching movies, or picking a restaurant for them to eat at. With his Great Grandfather, he's just Harry, or rather, Padraig and that's... freeing in some indescribable way which is why he's found it easier to smile far more honestly these days then the forced one for his friends and class-mates.

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"Master Li, I presume?" A stranger is waiting in their current hotel room, black hair with dirty blond bangs. He feels his Great Grandfather's hand tighten slightly on his shirt, which is puzzling as the man never seemed to be overly concerned about anyone new approaching them before.

"Governor General." And that sounds like an important title. "I was unaware I rated a personal meeting."

The man gracefully moves from sitting in the chair by the small table to approach with a rather lazy air, it's one that his Great Grandfather usual has whenever they deal with stray Magicians, which means that this man is powerful and knows it. "And this is Padraig Graves? Your Great Grandson I take it?"

"Yes, viva his mother." And he's not sure what to make of any of this, so he bites his lower lip, moving to stand next to his Great Grandfather, who's hand moves to rest for a few seconds on his head before moving onto his left shoulder. Surprisingly violet eyes are moving over his features, clearly able to see the black and purple scales of his forehead and along his hairline.

"I wonder how he ended up inheriting your Dragon blood enhancement..." Muses the Governor General and he swallows as thoughts of ending up on a lab table dance through his mind. "I'm more interested in learning of how I managed to warrant your attention, Governor General Azazel of the Grigori." His Great Grandfather states in a soft and warning tone, which seems to cause the other to smile slightly.

"There's an interesting missing child report that's spiraling out of the UK for a teen by the name of Harry James Potter as well as a stir caused by the discovery of Blood Wards found in a mundane neighborhood where the teen's family lives." And now it looks like he's going to be forced back to Hogwarts and away from the only blood relative who genuine cares about him. "A teen who's appearance kind of matches your young charge."

His Great Grandfather sighs and he looks up to find the man running a hand through his own black hair with purse lips. "Ritual Master Rask didn't bulge on releasing the details of the examine, so, you came here for my copy." And, surprisingly, the other looks a touch sheepish but clearly not denying it, which is how the tension in the air is released.

"Ah, what's the Grigori?" He asks in curiosity and the two look down at him. "It's an organization of Fallen Angels and a number of those who possess Sacred Gears. Part of the Biblical Faction."

"Aren't Fallen Angels just Devils?" He asks and his Great Grandfather winces, sending a quick glance toward Azazel. "No, Devils are a different race of beings and yes, the original Lucifer did end up taking charge of them."

"He wasn't taught about the Agreement and given what he mentioned about his history teacher, I can't help but wonder if they ever put it on the lesson plan." Admits his Great Grandfather, looking right at the Fallen Angel.

"Oh ho? How interesting." And he notices Azazel's eyes glinting with interest. "Not much contact has been had since the Magic Divide Contract was written up and set in motion."

His Great Grandfather ruffles his hair before walking towards his pack. He watches as an envelop is Summon and then magical formula appears around the letter before the creation of another envelop appears upon the pack. The original one gets Banished away and then his Great Grandfather picks up the newly created envelop, walking over and handing it over. "Due to the magics involved, we hadn't gotten a full examination of what effects the Blood Wards caused him nor do we understand why he regressed in age."

Azazel takes the envelop and hums thoughtfully. "Waiting for his magic to settle then?" The Fallen Angel asks and his Great Grandfather nods.

"I see and I would like to speak with him later to get an idea of the state of the Wizard and Witch side of things." The other being smiles slightly. "After all, if this situation proved anything, it's that the Contract isn't as strong as it once was."

"Nice meeting the both of you, Master Li. Padraig Graves." And with that, the Fallen Angel teleports away.

He doesn't know what to feel about this, only that it seems they have a breather of some sort. "He's one of the oldest leaders of the Biblical Faction and he's the one that sued for a truce once the four original Satans were killed in battle with God." Explains his Great Grandfather.

"He's also has a finger in every porn company that exists and has bedded multiple women, and maybe some men, over his life. He's likely had his share of kids born out of wedlock." And yea, his jaw drops a touch upon hearing that.

"And this is common knowledge?!" He can't help but ask and his Great Grandfather remarks, "Well, let me put it this way, he's more honest then most human politicians when it comes to matters of sex but then, he doesn't need to worry about public opinion to stay in power as he isn't voted into office."

"So, is good? Evil?" He asks.

"He is who he is and his reasons for his actions are his own." Explains his Great Grandfather and, well, that's likely the most honest answer the older Dragonkin can give him.

The End?

Beyond Shattered Skyline: KHR!

I do not own Katakyou Hitman Reborn!

Tsuna isn't happy, not one bit yet his fear out weighs his hot anger. He's long since lost track of what the group of middle school students wanted from him and after begin kicked in the stomach from trying to ask, well, the eleven year old figures it's just another 'Let's humiliate Dame-Tsuna' sessions. Not that it stops him from feeling anger over his situation yet, well, it's not like being angry ever did anything for him and, well, like usual, it fades into self loathing and knowing he deserves whatever is about to happen to him. His mind feels so sluggish now although he doesn't feel the bruises he knows litter his body.

The teens are talking and laughing, Tsuna realizes as he's being carried over somebody's shoulder now. He isn't even aware of when that happened. After all, hadn't he been stumbling within the center of the group just a second ago?

I am so useless, aren't? I can't even recall what they have in store for me... The preteen mentally tells himself.

The next thing he registers is he's naked, no clue when that happened, and now he's being held down as they paint his body. There's a fur belt that's kind of interesting, it's clearly old and for some reason there's fur on the one side. As it sways from the branch, Tsuna swears that his eyes are playing tricks on him, after all, why would rainbow fire dance among what remaining fur the belt has?

"Full Moon tonight, Dame-Tsuna! Let's see if stupid ritual works, huh?" His attention is on the one with a bruise under his jaw, likely from a run in with Hibari-senpai.

They don't bother with his reply as they put the old leather belt about his scrawny waist, tying a knot instead of using the belt buckle and the holes. He's dumped in the middle and pictures are being taken, he tries to cover what he can but, well, he's naked save for that belt. Then as the sun goes down, one of them takes out their phone and out of the speaker is a chant.

The eleven year old jerks his body and head back from how he was curling in on himself, his stomach muscles start aching as a warmth attempts to sink into his body. It's uncomfortable and, well, everything become sluggish once more. Then, then there's more chanting and the words are like hot needles being driven into his brain. He begins to scream...

Tsuna studies his tail, he woke to find it out and he's done his best to pull it back into his body yet, it refuses to listen. His boxers are low in the back because of this, the fur color matching his hair, which isn't that unusual. Before his eyes, his tail moves from side to side. Hearing the knock on his current bedroom door, he groans as he says, "Its my tail."

The door opens and his host looks rather annoyed, glaring at said tail. His tail moves to curl about his boxers, it's not long enough to really reach his belly and he bites down on his lower lip. In Tsuna's mind's eye, he can see the spot where he sank his fangs into his host's throat, although it's been three months since then and the injury healed without even a scar to show of that encounter, he can't help but feel guilty of almost causing the teen's death.

His host rolls his eyes and Hibari walks out of the room. He continues to get ready by putting on his school uniform top. Hibari arrives with a pair of boxers that, to Tsuna's eyes, shimmer indigo as they come flying towards him. With that, his host and unofficial legal guardian leaves him to put on the altered pair of boxers, likely something Hibari had to alter with his Mist secondary Flame and grabbed from his basket of clean laundry. Switching boxers, the Mist altered ones didn't restrict his tail as he stuffs it in. He can feel it

move and a few tries show that the tail can move up and down, although it can't curl towards his belly, which works.

He's quick to finish getting ready for his first day back to school and grabbing his book bag that contains his things for school. With it swung onto his shoulder, he heads for the table and sits down across from his host while the chief finishes placing their respective breakfasts down. Tsuna thanks the man while his host beginning eating, the food placed before them is different but then, that's to be expected, given what those teens accidentally triggered four, going to be five, months ago.

Just because his outside looks human doesn't fully make him human inside, not that they aren't working on that, it's just, he's just started to get the hang of willful transformation out of that other form. It's hard to call it a wolf as he is too large along with the fact that he's capable of naturally alter the upper body into a more human arrangement so he can have grasping hands while at the same time his bone structure will alter to allow for bipedal movement. Never mind how more talon like the claws then canine influenced. It's just a confusing mess made worse by some unknown factor.

So, the safest diet for him for now is raw meat and the occasional serving of 'safe' raw veggies, not at every meal though. The Hibari clan's private doctor had a pretty explosive reaction when he'd been force to describe his previous eating habits never mind how often he'd still attend school while heavily bruised before this whole thing. Nor did the woman like to hear how he mentioned his brain felt after his, brief, periods of extreme emotional distress or upon looking back it, how cold he'd felt compared to how he feels now.

Tsuna isn't sure if he wants to know what theory the Hibari clan have concerning the likely cause and, for some reason, it kind of seems that none of them have spoken to his host, Hibari Kyoya, about it. Likely knowing that there's not much the Misty Cloud could do beyond stew over the fact that he'd been suffering from a likely preventable condition and the people who should have caught it, weren't around for the young Misty Cloud to take it out on. He's very

much aware that he's caused a lot of trouble in those three months he'd been functioning off of panic, anger, and frustration. It's surprising how the the Hibari clan at large did not seem to resent him about his actions, particularly given that he almost tore out Hibari's throat and the teen almost died from it if not for the teen's Flames going Active.

He's done before his host but waits for him to finish as he looks down while his fingers curl into his pants as he recalls what few clear memories he has. "Calm." He jerks his head to look up at his host, blinking a bit, he's grown use to the permanent look of anger in his host's eyes.

Taking a deep breath, he relaxes his fingers and leads away from the table that he's started to hunch over. In through the nose, out through his mouth. It's then that he realizes how close he was to transforming and entering into a panic attack. His heart is no longer hammering within his chest as he continues to hold eye contact with his host. "Thank you." He tells the teen.

Hibari simply hums and he find some other point to stare at and does his best to no dwell on the past right now. After all, he's got school today and, well, that's not much better but then, he's kind of hoping that without his mind being affected by his previous condition that he'd be able to keep pace with the rest of the students. *Or at least know what I need to get caught up on.* Tsuna muses.

Soon enough, Hibari is done and he's sure to be polite as he follows after his host, not waiting to lose sight of the teen on the way to school. After all, at this point, Hibari is a familiar fixture in his life right now, one that he trusts to be able to deal with him if he gets caught up in a panic attack and transforms. Trusting that Hibari will be more then capable of ensuring he doesn't cause too much harm to anyone while suffering through it.

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Information can be wrong and thus, upon arriving in Namimori, the World's Greatest Hitman scoops out the Sawada residence to only find one Nana Sawada living within for what use to be a child's bedroom is rather bare of personal belongings while there's old cloths within the dresser that haven't seen use in the last few years. And so, for the next two days, Reborn does a stake out of the Sawada residence and the school. He's yet to spy his latest vic... sac... ah, student. Then again, the school is Warded with the use of Mist Flames, it's clear that the Wards are well maintained and he'd bet his fedora that there's layers of Wards along with extras, making it clear that there's an Active Mist that holds the school as something they value and belongs to them.

Which means he's unable to go through his planned operation concerning setting up secret stashes or personally map the building. It also means he needs to arrange a meeting with this Mist in hopes of getting them to at least not interfere with his plans for the future Decimo of the Vongola. Depending on how things pan out, the Mist can be slotted into the slot of the Decimo's Guardians, which makes things easier on him as it will be one less Element to rustle up.

And so, on the third morning, Reborn stands within the school's gate and waits for the Mist to arrive. A grunt and there's a rather displeased Kyoya Hibari glares down at him, which is rather odd as the teen had all the hallmarks of being a Classic Cloud and yet, the teen did seemingly appear out of nowhere nor did he notice the Demon Prefect's approach, which is from the school itself if he's any judge. "Chaos!" The cursed Sun says to the teen, his mind racing over what this could mean.

"Why are you here, cursed Carnivore." The teen demands with irritation coloring his voice. He tilts his head as he regards the teen who is either on good terms with the Mist or possesses Mist Flames himself.

"I'm Reborn, the World's Greatest Hitman and I'm here to tutor a student who attends this school." The teen merely huffs in an unimpressed way.

There's a period of silence and the teen demonstrates that he's not much of a talker, which, to be honest, is something he knows to expect. The teen's looks are familiar and yet, where he'd expect controlled calm there's an intense anger, which, ideally, makes him wonder if his associate had been like this during his own teen years. Those similar features etched in a puerperal frown and eyes burning with barely restrained anger.

It's rather surprising, in the end, that he's the one who breaks the silence. "The student in question is Sawada Tsunayoshi." And he just manages to jerk back in time as something tries to bash him in the fact with something. Reborn isn't the World's Greatest Hitman for nothing and yet, Kyoya's calls upon Mist Flames to keep him from leaving the Warded school's property while purple Cloud Flames cover a pair of metal tonfas, which seem to cause them to cause minor air pressure blows that cause his ears to ring.

Unable to flee out of the way he entered, Reborn has Leon transform and fires at the very pissed off teen. While he wonders what connection this Misty Cloud has to his student, he knows he needs to focus on the here and now as he hadn't expected this reaction nor this attempt at trapping him within the school. So he does his best to get around and to put some distance between them, after all, it's good that the teen is so eager to defend his possible Sky and it's just a matter of ensuring that the Cloud knew he didn't stand a chance of defeating him, Reborn. It's pleasing to see that the latent and Sealed Sky managed to ingrain himself so well to such an Element, particularly one of the hardest ones to ensnare into their sphere of influence.

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It's hard for him to not notice how distracted Tsuna is but then, nobody has seen Hibari this morning either. Ever since the reappearance of the brunet after a good four month absence, which they nobody seems to know the cause of, Hibari and Tsuna have become the odd set of companions, they just seem to drift towards one another whenever they can. Then again, Tsuna always seems

so much more calm and collected after a visit with or from the older teen and, well, that's rather important as Tsuna's return to school seemed to signify odd happening among the teachers and among some of the students.

After all, before Tsuna's return, the other had been Dame-Tsuna and such a bully magnet, not that Takeshi ever referred to the other by that nickname while the other had been within hearing. Everyone knew he couldn't do anything right, be it walk in a straight line without tripping over nothing to getting a good grade. At times, in his mind at least, it was like Dame-Tsuna was proof that someone somehow managed to take a rabbit and almost successfully to turn it into a human, at least in looks and enough to be able to speak and understand words.

The Tsuna that returned, he was still rather nervous and seemed at a loss when it came to interacting with anyone who wasn't Hibari. But, well, that changed and these days, Tsuna's not a bully magnet and none of the teachers seem eager to single the teen out. The brunet's grades steadily rose, he was finishing his homework on time, was able to answer questions if picked out to answer them, and could pay attention in class a lot better then he use to.

As for those odd things, well, he's never really recalls them very well, even when he's been able to witness them. Like, how was it those few time back when Tsuna had returned to school that the locker room got all wrecked and sporting claw indents? Or about how many times he's found chop marks along its length? Or evidence of something big trying to chew on it? Or the few times he's found coarse, black fur on his school uniform? Or his book bag? Never mind the guilt laden looks Tsuna sometimes sends to some people's way?

It's a mystery that he wishes to solve and yet, a tiny part of him feels he really doesn't want to solve it at the same time. There's this part of him, this fearful part that wants him to stay away from the brunet, that there's something WRONG and DANGEROUS. It's a rather small part, though, and it only feeds his fascination concerning

what's going on with Tsuna. About whatever happened to him in those four months he'd been absent that caused him to come back so different, so changed.

As of yet, Takeshi has yet to act upon his fascination to approach the brunet but acknowledges that might be do to a lot more factors then just because there's that small voice in his brain telling him to avoid the brunet and it kind of has to so with their classmates and his beloved sport. Well, Hibari is another but that's because the other is so possessive concerning the matter of Tsuna. After all, it's pretty much a fact at this point that Hibari is pretty much has Tsuna living at his place, refusing to let the previous boy, now teen live with his mother. Never mind that it's Hibari that is suppose to be contact in regards to Tsuna, like the teen somehow became the brunet's legal guardian and, well, maybe it's true as its clear that Tsuna is flourishing while living with Hibari where before, living with his mother, Tsuna had been withering under her care without her notice.

Takeshi can only guess the kind of things are being said about That and he's certain that it's something that does get talked about. After all, everyone always assumed it was a defect of the son and yet now? Now it's a question if it wasn't something concerning the mother. Whatever the truth of the matter actually is, Tsunayoshi is doing far better while under the care of the Demon Prefect and the evidence can be seen just by looking at the teen. Which just adds to the reason why so many of the female students have set their sights on ensnaring the frightening Demon Prefect, much to his private amusement as he's pretty sure that Hibari isn't into that as of yet or at all right now, perhaps they'd have better luck in the future.

Tsuna turns to look at him for a brief moment before his gaze goes down the window. He glances out but there's nothing there to see and so, he does his best to focus on taking notes once more. Takeshi knows that today isn't going to be the day but he kind of wishes it could be, as he really wants to know what's distracting the other so much that he's not taking any notes or is focus on what the teacher is teaching. So, he chalks it up under the list of future

questions to be asked at a later date and does his best to focus on the teacher's lesson.

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Reborn is getting tired, irritated, and thirsty as he continues to evade the murderous Misty Cloud. He's trapped on school grounds and it's clear that the teen knows this school like the back of his hand, never mind the fact that, well, Mist Flames. It's clear that the Wards surrounding the school are meant to keep people from leaving not from entering or else he'd found a bypass or a hole to use to get out.

He's on the top of the school's roof and Reborn swears that once he's gotten out of this, he's going to demonstrate to this teen just why he's the World's Greatest Hitman. "What?!" He snaps into his phone, it's the third time it's gone off and he's reaching his limit.

"Reborn, what's this I hear of you being in Namimori?" Fon's rather mild tone isn't what he's expecting. "Contract."

"Oh? Who is involved in this... contract." The Storm inquires in a way that he's pretty sure is his demanding of an answer. "How did you even know I'm in Namimori?" He counters, he's tired damn it and did he mention thirty?

"A Ward of the Hibari clan texted a message mentioning you being chased about Namimori Middle School by Kyoya-kun." Fon sounds rather amused over his situation and he growls before frowning. "Your turn to answer the question, Reborn."

"I am here to train one Tsunayoshi Sawada as future Decimo of the Vongola Famiglia." The Sun informs the Storm. It takes him a few seconds to realize he's hearing muffled laughter from the Storm.

"That... that is rather funny, all things considered. After all, Tsunayoshi isn't a Sky and if I recall my information correctly about the Vongola Famiglia, only those with Sky Flames can become their Don." Fon informs him and he frowns.

"The Ninth himself claimed that the boy is a latent Sky." He states. "Latent... Well, that's up for debate but no, the child is no Sky and to be flat with you, we don't know what his Flame type." His Storm counter point informs him.

"Then if the boy isn't a Sky, why is there a Misty Cloud so keen on protecting him?" He remarks and hears taking a rather deep breath, hold it and slowly let it go. Reborn realizes that the Ward and Tsunayoshi were likely one in the same person.

"The child is under Kyoya-kun's personal protection and has grown very fond of the younger teen." *And as such, the Cloud views the teen as part of his Territory.* Is left unsaid but pretty much implied.

"How sure are you that he isn't a Sky? The Ninth seemed certain that the boy possesses the Sky Flame back when he visited Iemitsu's family." Reborn presses, after all, the elderly Don seemed so certain.

"Reborn... Are you aware of what time it is?" Fon asks suddenly and he snorts, "Nearing eight am here, why?" He had decided on a quarter to seven to lure out the Mist this morning.

"It's actually two pm, in the afternoon there." And Reborn blinks, holds the phone from his face, checking the time and... Begins cursing out the god-damn fucking Misty Cloud for screwing around with his personal sense of time. No wonder he's so tired and thirsty, hungry now as well, the Demon Prefect's Wards have been screwing him up without him even realizing it. Which also means that school is in session.

"Nobody save for Kyoya-kun and the Ward are aware you've been hunted around the school." The Chinese Storm informs him after his verbal stream of abuse is said. "And yes, the child in question is no longer a Sky if that is what his previous Flame nature was." Then with a note of warning, "I strongly suggest you distance yourself from the Vongola Famiglia, Reborn, the sooner the better."

With that bit of advice and warning, the Storm ends the call without a farewell of any sort. Now, it's a question of what he wants to do next concerning not just figuring out a way to un-ruffle the 'feathers' of the Misty Cloud but also concerning the contract, after all, it sounds as though Tsunayoshi is Flame Active now, the question is, if he did Shatter did Reborn have the skills needed to heal a Shattered Sky? As for this 'unknown' flame type, it could be the teen's attempt at reassembling his sense of self and heal from the Shattering...

Stomach growls and he swallows drily in his mouth. *First things first* , though. He reminds himself. He needs to get out of the school and the Wards surrounding it, which means dealing with the likely smug Misty Cloud who's skills he under estimated. The question is, how to go about doing just that?

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Letting out a huff, Tsuna's body alters as he touches the ground with his kind of pawish hands, with them transforming into actual paws while his whole body's muscles and bones moving, shrinking, and reshaping so that he can move about on all fours. Kyoya grunts and begins to walking back for Namimori, he cocks his head slightly before quickly moving to trot next to the Misty Cloud's right side, curious as to why he doesn't need to resume his human shape as he's not suppose to be close to Namimori while in his current shape as far too many students, former students, and teachers have seen him in his other shape and it's best for everyone if they don't remember the various incidences that happened at school, be it from his own panic attacks to attempts at bullying him, verbally, emotionally, or physically. It's one of the reasons why Kyoya set the Wards up around the school in the first place along with why they are so focus on keeping people from leaving or contacting people outside of the school.

Takeshi's interest only seems to increase instead of decrease... He ignores that line of thought, the other teen's fascination with him isn't healthy and he knows that, on some level, Takeshi does as well. It worries him that the baseball player, star member of the club, and

considered the most popular kid of his age group is losing concern over his own safety, that he might be entering into a depression or suffering from it.

Doing his best to push the matter out of his mind, after all, Tsuna isn't someone who hangs out regularly with Takeshi, so maybe he's reading the situation wrong? After all, it might just be that the other teen could be a closet Furry, from what he's searched up on the internet, that's a thing, bizarrely enough. Again, he does not *know* much about Takeshi nor do they really talk to one another so he's just guessing about the other's teen's increasing fascination with him.

Surely someone closer to him would pick up the signs of depression? Perhaps his own father? He muses as he keeps pace with Kyoya as his mind chews on the subject, not for the first time and he's made mention of it to Kyoya before, who, has flatly told him that it's the herbivore's personal business until the herbivore breaks school rules or approaches Tsuna himself.

Still, his mind circles around Yamamoto Takeshi for some minutes yet as they continue to walk, which is odd given that Kyoya could easily use his Mist Flames to speed the travel time or ensure they get there without all this walking. Then again, it's the fact that there's no request of any sort, typically unspoken, to assume his human shape either. After all, his 'exercise' site is the old amusement park, he kind of recalls going to when he was little, called Kokuyo Land and it's got weaker Wards around it to keep people from visiting when he's within a mile of the location.

It's been a few days since the whole Kyoya running that almost toddler to the ground about the school, a toddler that sported a glowing stone of yellow which might make them someone Active with Sun Flames. It's not long that he notices some new scents, human. Tsuna's nostrils wide as he lifts his head up more and breaths deep to get more of the scents. *Males. Gun powder for two. Chemicals for two. Coffee drinker. Strong coffee drinker. Three of them total.*

Baffled, he lets out a questioning huff and look towards the Misty Cloud. Kyoya reaches over and gives the nearest ear a slight flick before there's changes going on with Kyoya's pose, scent, heart beat, and he feels the pin pricks of the teen's Flames rise to the surface. Which means, while this meeting is expected, the older teen isn't happy with the meeting itself or, maybe, the topic of the meeting? Looking forward once more, he feels his muscles tense, particularly his jaw muscles, he's suddenly wishing to be anywhere but here, after all, the trio are strangers and he's sure that he's never met any of them before, even in human shape.

"Calm." Kyoya states in a soft yet confident voice, snapping him out of his mental state. His breathing slows as he blinks to find that he'd stop walking at some point and with a soft whine, he is quick to retake his previous position of walking next to Kyoya. His heart is still beating rather fast within his chest and his ears more then likely showing his mental state and his tail is hanging limply behind him, not curling up towards his belly though.

Such a simple word. Tsuna admits as he gets to spy at leas two of the three. Yet it feels, at times, it's his only mental lifeline, the only thing keeping his head above the water when everything just overwhelms his ability to think and so much that he is pretty much operating on emotions and two different sets of instincts that don't always align properly.

Fear spikes the air for a few seconds before a soft snort, curse, and chuckle ring out. He's rather curious as to why they reacted like that but, well, Kyoya continues to get closer until there's barely ten feet between the two of them and the three, he spies the toddler on the ground between the two taller males. "Nice pet, Hibari-san." The tiny male smelling of strong coffee and gun powder remarks in a light tone.

He's fairly confused at this easily dismissal before it dawns on him that the tiny male likely shared the information of Kyoya being a Misty Cloud. Thus, they thought him to be a Mist Construct or maybe some animal that Kyoya used Cloud Flames to enlarge, after all, he's

standing at minimal at five feet at the shoulder when he's standing straight and in the right stance, never mind how much more height there is when his head is raised high and ears perked forward plus up. *So yea,* Tsuna reflects, *they likely don't realize that I'm 'real' in a flesh and bones kind of way or that this is actually 'natural' appearance.*

And wasn't that a oddly relaxing thought. While the silent stand off goes on, because of course it will, he notices the taller male, a man given the style of dress plus a professional of a kind, medical or science, given the lab coat. There's a kind of interest coming from the other but it's clear that the man is annoyed with being here and likely didn't see the point of being here.

Then teen sends a Look towards the professional, who's scent, briefly, spikes with a hint of regret and sadness, meaning that the two know each other but parted company. The seemingly only adult gives the teen a slight shrug and a look that reads 'what can I do?' Which only serves to make the chemical and gun powder teen more irritated, muttering something under his breath but that's about it while the teen looks away, padding his jean pocket for something but not finding it. There's a kind of fondness in the professional man's face for a few seconds while the man watches the teen's antics out of the corner of his before it vanishes and the mask of boredom fits in place.

"What is it?" The tiny male finally asks in clear frustration. "I don't sense any of your Flames on it."

"Tsuna." Kyoya states and with a snort, does the thing that shifts his current body so he possesses fingers tipped with talons and the ability to stand plus walk around comfortably on two legs. The teen's eyes widen while there's a look of unbridled interest on the professional's face as the shift causes soft pops to ring out as things rearrange themselves. "Not a Sky." The Misty Cloud states by the time it finishes and he begins to do some stretches and flexing muscles.

"Not a..." The teen snaps. "That's not *even* HUMAN!" Which causes him to flicker an ear back but nothing more.

After all, it's kind of hard to argue that he's human while in his current shape. "You're telling me that... that... That was a kid? Once?!" The professional asks while the tiny male's eyes clearly harden into icy black stone before tilting the fedora so he can't see the toddler's face.

"Was eleven." He manages to growl and hiss out. "Belt was something. Chanting activated it." It always so hard to speak, even with his throat altering just enough for him to make some of the proper sounds but, well, Kyoya wasn't going to explain and it's clear they can hear what he's saying even if it's heavily accented with odd empathizes on certain sounds.

There's this look of horror in the professional's eyes while the teen doesn't seem to Get It even though he understood what was said. Which means that the teen didn't know much about Flames while it's clear the professional does. With a sideways look, he shifts into his human form, it's faster then when his kind of wolf body rearranges itself and thankfully the Mist bound cloths didn't appear inside out and the teen just stares, mouth open wide and eyes clearly disbelieving just what he had witnessed and the professional clearly looks interested, though there's a touch of pity as he feels another Flame brush over him and Taste him for a few minutes, he's had this happen before with those who are Flame Users among the Hibari clan. "Beyond Shattered, Reborn."

The other Flame's touch recedes and he really doesn't get what that means, let alone why it deserves to have the world beyond before it. The teen just looks rather whelmed by everything and is muttering in some other language. Shattered Sky was something he's heard whispered before in regards to him. Yes, he's got all seven Flames on him, but none of them are his now, they just seem to be what he's made of since what happened when he was eleven happened but there's a Flame he can use though, not that anyone feels comfortable with the thought of him using it all that much. It's unlike

the seven Flames that everyone among the criminal underground knows about as well, yet it's clear that it's not some kind of chimera Flame type that some report or gossip about, like Wrath Flames, which the youngest son of an Italian Don possesses, or, the rumored, Snow Flame.

"Why did you think I was still a Sky? I mean, did you not speak with Hibari-senpai? Or thought of contacting the Hibari clan about verifying it? I'm sure it would have saved you the trouble of coming here to find this out for yourself." He inquires curiously while looking at Reborn, likely a fake name.

He's pretty sure Kyoya finds him asking that question to be amusing but he wasn't going to glance towards the older teen to confirm it. "They could be lying." Stated the professional, likely on Reborn's behalf, which means he's now looking towards the man. "Skies are... rare."

"Then why Seal a child Sky who just went Active? If it's so rare then surely it would have been better to take me in and start training me, make plans to ensure I wouldn't interfere with inheriting from the already picked and groomed Heir." Tsuna remarks and there's surprise then out rage at the information while Reborn hisses something under his breath.

There's a light snort and he glances towards Kyoya now. The older teen gives him a slow blink and he hums. "Well, it seems that our business is concluded. I hope you have a safe travel back to Italy." He tells them and then, Kyoya shifts them to the backyard of the house.

With that, Kyoya gives him an approving look and then heads for the back door. Tsuna turns his back on the house and reaches into himself for his Flame, it dances about as he feeds it his anger, bitterness, and resentment. He closes his eyes as he feels himself being lifted off the ground and then, after a while, his emotions are gone and his Flame releases its hold on him, it's not much of a fall but yet, it is still two feet off the ground. He's pretty sure the soles of

his runners are ruined but that's fine, Kyoya's got a decent size crate that's Enchanted to repair the damage his Flame does to his belongings.

Once he's out of the runners, he picks them up and heads for his room right away. After checking on the few other items within, he takes out what has been repaired which is three hoodies, four rings, eight bracelets or varying types, a dozen wallets, clip and chain, and half a dozen pairs of socks before adding in his runners, placing them next to a collection of almost two dozen Frisbee which is the dividing line between the other smaller items and the sports stuff, which is currently made up of eight baseballs, five catchers mitts, a basket ball, two volley balls, three metal bats, and two wooden bats. Closing the lid, Tsuna places everything save for the cloths on top of his study desk, he'll be sure to hand them over to Tetsuya before school begins so they can be returned to their owners.

Life isn't fair. Tsuna gently reminds himself. *At least I'm not going to be the focus of it this time around.* He muses to himself with a smile, knowing that some form of justice will be happening on his behalf in regards to what his dog of a father and his boss did to him, about the state they condemned him to suffer through without any kind of support.

He wonders about the name of the Italian Famiglia that his sperm donor put before his family. Then, well, he lets it got by the time he enters the kitchen, after all, it's never going to be his problem nor will they factor into his future. He might still be legally a Sawada but it isn't the Sawada clan that's been looking after him these pass few years. He's not sure why the Hibari clan have washed their hands at trying to help his mother with her mental state of being, only that whatever the reason or cause, it likely stemmed from Nana herself.

"Steak hamburger, Kyoya?" He asks and gets a simply hum while the Misty Cloud is doing his own cooking. Giving the other a half smile, he begins to make his own supper, being sure to mind where Kyoya is as he does so.

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"Whatever it is you are thinking, it's not going to work." Shamal states once they are alone in the hotel room. He proceeds to not reply to the Mist as he stalks over towards the mini bar.

"There's *seven* Flames *fortifying* his very *existence* ! Whatever the eighth Flame is, it's the *foundation* of his very Will now." The Mafioso Doctor continues.

"It won't take much to tip the balance and I'm sure that the Hibari clan have reports of what that means." He listens even though he's enraged and feels instincts screaming at him to FIX HIM. It's rather overwhelming as it causes him a migraine which does nothing for his already frayed temper.

"He's not human anymore, for all that he can assume one." He recalls color of Flame that engulfed the huge, black furred, and crimson eyed almost wolf. Yellow at the core with yellow 'bubbles' fading into shades of orange as it moves towards the edges of the Flame, at which point it's a red, calling to mind the pictures of magma before it begins to shrink in on itself, then as it shrinks the Flame turns into a red brown coloring like rocky earth which is quick to vanish to reveal a teenager that clearly inherited his mother's looks. Reborn can't really help but recall how dense they'd been, possessing a weight that none of the Dying Will Flames usually have.

"He's not *really* a being dependent of flesh, blood, and bone either." Shamal continues to rant. There's a string of curses the 'good' doctor uses, languages ranging from their native Italian dialects through English and French and ending with bits of Russian and a few select phrases in common Japanese.

It's clear that Shamal isn't just trying to convince Reborn but himself, that there's nothing that they can ultimately do for Tsunayoshi. After all, the Hibari clan have more experience dealing with the teenager and his state of being... Well, it's also likely that they're still going

over their options on how to treat it, never mind how to fix it. It's unlikely they'd risk causing Tsunayoshi any undue pain, given how attached Kyoya Hibari is to the altered teen.

"It was *implied* that he'd been Sealed *latent* ." He finally gets around to dulling his migraine with a few items from the mini bar. Curse it all, he'd *trusted* the Don on the matter, read the reports and thought the teen to be another Dino only who was civilian with civilian mind set and values.

Sure, he'd expected resistance to the idea of being a Mafia Don but once Active, there wouldn't be any choice for the supposed Sky to have a normal life outside of the Mafia or the criminal underworld for that matter. Yea, it wasn't going to be *fair* to do that a kid out of the blue but the world wasn't *fair* in the first place. A naive untested boy could, with Reborn and his skills, could grow to be a morally decent young man who'd be ready to be Don of the Vongola Famiglia by age eighteen and shake things up like the Ninth had wanted.

Well, looks like somebody's mistakes have come home to roost. Reborn muses darkly to himself. "I was expecting a civilian Dino, not... not..." He couldn't even find the right word to summarize how fucked up a Sky growing up Sealed. It wasn't just about getting rid of the Seal, it was figuring out the extent of damage done and whether or not the Sealed Sky could even Harmonize with another Flame...

Yea, he's getting in a talkative mood and doesn't see how else to deal with everything but to vent, like Shamal had upon entering the room. "Sealing an Active Flame..." Boy, wasn't that a mine field to walk through. "In a child no less!" What argument could Don Vongola put forth about Sealing an untrained, underage Sky that didn't make it sound like the Don wasn't threatened by a baby Sky? Of Primo's own bloodline?

Like the inhuman teen mentioned, they could have found ways to ensure Tsunayoshi didn't become a threat to Don Vongola's Heir and better to keep the boy close if only to keep a literal eye on him. "What was he thinking?! No, wait, he was thinking, he was thinking

about how much of a threat the boy could be! And it wasn't like he named an Heir at the time, he never got around to naming one of his sons, even when there had only been one son left!"

"Weren't all three of his oldest sons over the age of twenty or at least seventeen?" Shamal asks, he's not sure where the Mafia Doctor got the German beer from but then, the man is a Mist and likely smuggled it through customs with ease and it wasn't like he was looking beyond the mini bar for a drink... "It should have been easy enough, to fill whatever vacant spot in their Guardians once they got named."

"Don Vongola also never pushed for any of them to marry." He muses with a frown. "Yes, they went through their skirt chasing period, some returning to it after brief periods of courting one of the other Famiglia's daughters but none came forward claiming a kid to be any of theirs."

"Isn't Xanxus imprisoned? Would have thought the Don would arrange male guards." Shamal remarks and he chuckles. "Perhaps. Not like anyone's heard from the youngest." There's been rumors going around concern the Wrath and his Rain but then, given their ages, it wouldn't have mattered much as long as they both gave their consent.

"So, you got your work cut out for you if he decides to keep you as the tutor for the Decimo." He hums but knows that at least Xanxus isn't stupid and it should be shorter then the one where he tutored Dino. After all, Xanxus knows how to lead and his Rain, at least, will be more then helpful in picking up the slack of his Sky given how Varia is still going strong despite their Boss' absent from the chain of command.

"What?" Iemitsu looks rather dazed while Don Vongola clearly looks like he'd just bit into a lemon. "What happened to my Tuna-fishie?!" It hardly surprises him that Iemitsu Sawada, External Advisor and head of the CEDEF, doesn't know what has became of his son. There

hadn't been any protection surrounding the house nor did there seem to be much of a presence of the Vongola Famiglia's interest in Namimori either.

"Perhaps we should involve R&D and Medical for their opinion on the status of young Tsunayoshi." States the elderly Don and Reborn finds that to be a touch alarming, after all, for whatever bad blood is between the two, surely they can come to some agreement, it would be easier, nobody needed to know that Xanxus hadn't been about to be tapped, and they wouldn't be spending money and resources to fix the teen, who's still alive against all the odd, and under the protection of an unknown quality that is the Hibari, never mind the presence of a very touchy and possessive Misty Cloud in said Tsunayoshi's life and who's likely claimed the teen as part of their Territory.

"I believe if you were to get into contact with the Hibari clan, they'd be more then interested in sharing what notes they have concerning his state of being." Reborn remarks. "They have been greater experience concerning Tsunayoshi's state of being and are invested in ensuring he's as healthy and stable."

"The child is of Primo's blood, he belongs to the Vongola." Coyote, the Ninth's Storm Guardian, pipes in with a disapproving frown. Eyes flickering towards the elderly Storm but settling back on the Don Vongola while Iemitsu murmurs his complete agreement.

They weren't going to listen. Reborn, the World's Greatest Hitman, realizes. *They don't want to listen. They don't want to acknowledge that trying to wrestle the teen is a very bad idea.*

It's a dizzying thought. Even as he sits there silently, they discus their plans, as though it were a foregone conclusion that the Hibari clan will allow Tsunayoshi to leave. That Vongola R&D and Medical would be more then capable of *fixing* this *condition* , let alone that the resulting restored teen would want *anything* to do with them or even *return* to *being* a *Sky* in the first place.

In someways, he knew that it didn't really involve him. That this was Don Vongola digging himself a deeper grave, that these people didn't want to reconsider their current pick for Decimo, never mind the fact that nobody knows if Tsunayoshi could survive leaving Namimori in the first place to come to Italy. A child who was had his soul Sealed away, had been a bully magnet for years by both kids and adults, who never had the kind of support needed to over come that bullying, never given the clear help concerning school work, and then ended up being robbed of his humanity by some generic group of teenagers bullies, who paid the price of that act in many different ways, two almost paying the ultimate price.

Reborn has been called a lot of things in his life, he's also done lot of things as well but the thought of aiding these... idiots in their endeavor concerning said teen, it turned out to be a line he would no cross. It was one thing when the subject in question had been a latent Sealed civilian Sky but with Tsunayoshi as he is? There's parallels between Reborn and Tsunayoshi, it's so hard for him to not see the similarities as they both had something torn from them for the 'greater' good, nobody asked for their permission while doing so, and, really, the one(s) responsible aren't really sorry for what was done to them. Tsunayoshi might be able to assume the form of a human but he ultimately wasn't one any more and Reborn, while still human, ultimately will likely never return to his adult appearance.

So, he listens to their plotting and is sure to keep his mind blank. Soon enough, the meeting ends, but there's a underlining message that they aren't done with the subject of the meeting. Once he's out of the Iron Fortress and walking off the property is when Reborn allows himself to feel and to think again. There's a migraine pounding away within his skull and it's not long before he uses Leon to contact Viper in order to make arrangements about certain facts to be sold to Dons of the Alliance concerning the incident between two adult Skies and a recently Active baby Sky.

He's sure to phone Shamal to check on the status of Smoking Bomb Hayato, they couldn't have the kid doing anything rash but then,

given how rabid the runaway is, few have likely noticed that he's missing nor given the kid phone number to get in contact with. Both of them had hoped that by introducing the likely Storm Flame User to a Sky that the kid would start to settle down and put down some roots. Sadly, it wasn't meant to be, although now the kid is asking questions about Flames and posing questions concerning whether or not mythical creatures and beings could be stories about past Flame Users, wondering if a Flame type could cause such and such to happen. Which meant that the kid was looking for evidence of Flame Users from before Giotto's forming Vongola as a vigilante group, which, well, it kept the runaway occupied at least and who knows, the kid could be onto something.

After all, if humans always had Flames then surely people have been going Active long before the Mafia. *Then again, the Mafia wasn't into scholarly questions like that or even into much of the science behind how a Flame could affected by certain gemstone, how they are cut, and how dangerous could this gem be to this Flame type?* Reborn reflects as he gives Shamal the coded phrase that will inform the Mist the summary of Don Vongola's reaction to the status of Tsunayoshi.

As Leon crawls to his shoulder, Reborn reflects on the fact that he's actually going to put himself, willingly, between a powerful Famiglia and their goal for no real benefit beyond the fact that his conscious, something he thought beyond salvaging, couldn't stand the thought of some teen he just met suffering any more from the meddling of the Ninth generation of Vongola and the sperm donor of a father. It was foolish, it was idiotic, and so many other words that could translate into stupid with the right dictionary.

Then again, Reborn can feel his time in the living world coming to a close, so, why not go out on a high note?

Ending it here

The Sword that Smiths a Knife: FateStay

I do not own Fate/Stay Night!

The challenge, well, Shirou thought it sounded like one, then again, the one to spoke it could have done so jokingly as Zelretch the Wizard Marshall is a known troll but, well, the reward of 'winning' sounded promising and the elder Magus had even posted an announcement of a contest for said date, location, and time. Not that any of the actual students of the Clock Tower, Rin included, seem to take the whole thing seriously. The murmurs of 'impossible' and 'waste of time' whenever the challenge gets brought up in the halls and rooms of the Mage's Association over the next few days, even his Master, Rin, waves the matter off and assigns him readings.

By the end of the first month, the matter is rarely brought up and he's learnt not to bring it up with his associates among the students. The dead line for the submission is four months, meaning that if Shirou wants to pursue the project, he'd best begin. Which results in him seeking out text books concerning the legends, myths, and stories which include old tales of magical items, Mystic Codes. There's a few of them on display in different departments, all of which are mere shells of what they once were due to time, age, and taking of samples or attempts at recharging them.

Few seem to care about his interest in these pieces of history and the mysteries that surround them. Still, the Sword Incarnate concludes that while he can Analyze how they once worked, the materials needed to pursue the project would cost more then he could afford. Never mind that he knows that his limits when it comes to Magecraft, so it's more then likely the materials, even the more easily acquired likely would be wasted due to the narrow focus of his Origin and Element.

Yet, as the deadline approaches, Shirou finds himself doing some cleaning in the Wizard Marshall's Office at his Master's request, although the young man can't help but think it's suppose to be her chore assignment, not that Shirou minds doing is in her stead...

"Ah, Mr Emiya, I thought I assigned Rin for cleaning duty while I was away." Zelretch remarks and he couldn't help but remark, "You are back early, sir."

Then he mentally kicks himself while the Dead Apostle Magus gets a particular look in both his eyes and upon his face. Shirou will admit that he has trouble reading people, so he's rather unsure of what the expression and emotion glinting in those eyes likely mean. There's a reason why Rin is someone he feels comfortable with as her reactions tend to be far more expressive, voice often reflecting said emotions, and, with him, she's blunt and honest. There's rarely any subtly in their private interactions and he's spent so much time around her, that he can read her enough in public to pick up the clues concerning Rin's actual state of mind.

"Indeed, Mr Emiya, indeed." The Magician remarks while moving to sit at his desk, there's a package under the elder being's right arm. While curious, he knows that his best course of option is to only speak when being spoken to.

"Please, continue, don't let this old man halt you from finishing your Master's chore." Shirou gives a nod before continuing, doing his best to ignore his curiosity in regards to the package and yet, he finds himself asking a few minutes later, "The prize, do you intend to hold to it?"

"Oh? Prize..." Shirou does his best to listen but doesn't stop with his cleaning or turn to focus in on Zelretch as the other muses over various kind of prizes that the Clock Tower offered in the past along with concerning upcoming venues. "Ah, I do seem to recall offering a prize for a challenge, that was... Hmm, let's see it's..." The other rummages through some papers before pulling out the posted announcement. "Will be over in two weeks."

"Yes, that one." He states, after all, he's sure that Rin would like to have what the prize entails and given the few... incidences he's seen the end result of, he can't blame her or anyone, for that matter, for hoping that the prize would be followed through with. That it wasn't some trick of Zelretch's or a twisted prank, which, well, it could be.

This is the Clock Tower and it's a place where words are welded as both a weapon and a shield. It's a place of politics and playing with words, with them often chosen with care. There have been a few times when he had managed to deflect or match another in a battle of wits but it's rarely the ended there as wound pride seems to be something far more important then accepting a single loss in a verbal spar. Often, he regrets not knowing how to keep it from escalating into a matter that causes Rin to get involved.

"Yes." Zelretch states simply. "The moment I announce the winner, the prize is theirs from that moment forth."

"I take it you are lacking inspiration, Mr Emiya?" Zelretch muses. "Or is it that you just need a clear *concept* to approach the project from in order to *forge* ahead?"

Shirou pauses as he turn his head slightly to stare at the Magician as the turn of phrase seem to click into place. "That's... something to think about, sir. I shall keep your words in mind. Thank you for your words." It's clear that Zelretch's eyes glint once more while the Wizard Marshall pretty much lets their talk come to an end.

The words do echo into his mind and he's making plans to leave the Clock Tower, he needs to look things up on a computer and which he should be able to do at the nearest library outside of the Mage's Association. There's an inkling that he's capable of fulfilling the challenge but, he's not that confident that he's creative enough in order to do so. Hence, the need to make use of a resource that Magus decry as a waste of their time as no Magus worth their Magic Circuits would use it in pursuit of the Root, only, Shirou isn't pursing the Root, just a simple challenge issued by the in residence Magician.

"Well, congratulations are in order to Mr Emiya for his submission concerning my Challenge that was issued in May." Rin gives him a Look when Zelretch addresses the room. Shirou gets more then a few other eyes upon him, sizing him up while the Wizard Marshall continues with his portion concerning the addressing the school.

"Even though it was the only submission, I have tested it and then had a few of the other department heads give it a go." There's a few sour looks among the instructors and department heads. The Sword Incarnate assumes that they each experienced what the knife he created could do. *"An unusual approach given that in the past, most of said Mystic Codes were of a more organic nature."*

"So, the prize goes to Shirou Emiya for his ***Naifu Sukiningu Ningen*** *!"* Old Man of the Jewels says with a wide smile. There's a lot of eyes on him, the various instructors and department heads seem to be sizing him up while the students are glaring at him.

Soon enough, the speaking continues with another instructor moves to take center stage, speaking about the upcoming thirty-first and of those scheduling absences for the that day along with the days surrounding it. He knows Rin is impatient for this school announcement thing to be over and done with. It's clear they are only having it at Schweinorg-sama's request and, likely, amusement, but then, that's only natural given the character of the Magician in question.

Once in the privacy of their shared boarding house, which took a while as a lot of the students and members of the faculty of the Clock Tower wished to congratulate him on his win. The premature whitening young man is fairly sure that a few of those are rather backhanded in being given as well, clearly he ruffled more then a few feathers and some are smarting over this 'bruise' to their ego, even though none of them submitted anything and had just dismissed it as some kind of cruel intellectual exercise with an unreachable and likely poisoned prize of immunity from the Wizard Marshall's 'relieving his boredom' pranks or 'lessons' given to

random students if not concerning either of his apprentices, who are his Master, aka Rin, and one Luviagelita 'Luvia' Edelfelt, his part time employer.

"Well?" She demands in Japanese once they are in the kitchen as he begins to fill the kettle with water so they can have some tea. "I thought everyone was giving up too easily and after he returned two weeks ago, I asked if the prize was something he was going to hold to and he did seem keen to keep his word." He explains.

"I plan to speak with him about giving you the prize, so that you wouldn't be overly bothered by his antics." Shirou adds and he can feel Rin stare at his back. "You're such an idiot, Shirou. The Clock Tower's rules concerning any of Old Man Zelretch's putting forth a 'challenge' include no transfers concerning the 'prize'. It's to prevent incidents where someone was 'kind' enough to 'share' with a rival or as 'charity' to an underclassman."

"I... did not know there were rules about these kind of challenges." He admits as he waits for the water to fill on the kettle. "Obviously." Huffs Rin.

As he turns off the water, he places the kettle on the oven's element, Rin draws out a, "So... What does it do? And really? Human Skinning Knife is the best name you could think of?"

"Schweinorg-sama mentioned having a clear concept and forging when we spoke that time. It... clicked but I didn't know certain details concerning how to go about it and I then I did some searching online concerning concept ideas. It... came together within three days then it was a matter of figuring out the inserting part of the challenge. It... took some time but I decided to keep it simple, so an image of the animal needed to go into this sliding part of the hilt or a sample of said animal." He admits.

"A knife that cuts into the human, slicing the concept of human from the one being cut, and then inserting the concept of the animal into them." Rin summarizes. "Time limit is?"

"I... did not do a time limit, the image of who the person was gets placed on the picture instead or there's a swapping between the sample of the animal and the person." Feeling sheepish about not realizing how having a time limit should have been the route to take as it means that the transformed individual would not rely upon the knife to regain their human form. "But the knife won't open until the previous person is restored to their original form, so there's no risk of anyone going around and transforming crowds of people or multiple people."

"And knowing the old blood sucker, he's likely already made some 'improvements'." Rin groans as he ducks his head as he rubs the back of his head. "Maybe? But, well, don't you have some kind of protection because of me? I mean, your my Master so, in a round about way, you shouldn't be his first choice of target?"

"This is Zelretch of the Jewels we're talking about." His teacher in Magecraft states and he says, "Then I'll just need to create something for you to make you immune to it's effects."

Rin clearly doesn't think he can do that, yet, well, why couldn't he create a countering item to something he made? Even if creating armor was out of the question, perhaps a dirk or tiny sword that could be worn as jewelry would work? *Or maybe another knife that is meant to merge with her body? I could also see if it'll help her magic resistance concerning spells?*

It's something to think about and a new area to look into, after all, he knows he's capable of duplicating any weapon he sees, hence why Faker was the title Gilgamesh flung at him as though it were an insult, yet, well, he's capable of recalling how many of those were created, the creation process those blacksmiths used, and the list of materials plus the how they resonate with the concepts they were being enchanted to carry. This thought... it kind of causes a thrill of excitement while Rin is talking at him, which isn't new when he ends up attracting attention at the Clock Tower, so he is pretty sure that he could parrot it back, although the order of the rant can change along with word choice.

So, Shirou's mind is else where as he considers this new line of thought while not being that sure if a certain Counter Guardian hadn't done the same but, well, he feels rather certain that EMIYA never tried his hand at creating his own weapons beyond Altering copies from their Reality Marble using Projection for his purposes. He's a Sword Incarnate, but that might actually mean that he's far more suited at creating Mystic Codes in the form of weapons. Old memories about the Fire rise up and he wonders at the possibilities, after all, there had been an Anime that mentioned a sword that could resurrect the dead...

Ending it here!

Music Fitting the Type: DxD

I don't own High School DxD or minor element from both Cybersix and Ranma 1/2!

The water is cold, freezing and then the bucket hits the top of his head hard. The five year old's ears are ringing as his vision is fuzzy, out of focus. A man sporting black hair plus dark blond bangs comes into focus, the voice sounds off and he can't help but frown before following the gaze of said man, which falls onto a older boy sporting white yet dark grey hair plus blue eyes. It's the sunlight that causes the kid's hair to be so white and it seems that the kid looks kind of pale plus looks rather annoyed but is silent while the man continues to talk, he assumes the man is talking but, well, it's like the man is, well, singing only it's not like he's singing a song.

As he turns his head, even though his head still pounds and the 'singing' is so close, he can still make out the voices around him. Issei cocks his head slightly and fights the pounding of his head to listen into a group of kids that's some feet away, while their voices are soft, he can hear them as they talk about a plan concerning smuggling home a stray pup to Tamaki's place and hiding the pup in Tamik's room. Focusing some more on the group of five, he jolts a bit upon getting touched by the man, his eyes focusing on man and the stranger, again, lets loose a song note.

"I... don't... ah, get that?" The five year old admits while noting the dark hazel eyes peering down at him. Then there's a touch of a song but there's words can be heard, even if he doesn't understand them, turning he finds himself getting a minor glare from the white haired kid with clear annoyance in those gray blue eyes.

Then the man sings slowly at him, causing him to return to looking up at the man before looking away from the face. Issei still doesn't understand what the song means nor does he get why the man is

singing instead of, you know, talking. There's a long pause and, well, he looking back at the man, who's still got a hand on his left shoulder, lips pressed together as he wonders if he shouldn't be doing his best to get away, after all, he's pretty sure he can scream to get the attention of the other adults so he can get away, after all, the man's got to be crazy, right? Singing instead of talking, right? Right!

"He's just asking if your ok." The kid speaks in accented Japanese with undertone of music that doesn't sound the same as the man now that he's really listening. Giving the kid a bewildering look, like, how can the kid not Know?

"He's singing! You're kind of... humming? Maybe? While speaking words!" Issei snaps at the kid. "What's upon with that?"

The kid blinks at him, mouth slightly opens before snapping closed. The gray blue eyes flicker between the man and then at him. The man sings and the kid talks again, only it's not in accented Japanese but still got that undertone of low tune, humming is likely the best word for it, he guesses.

He glances between the two while the pair seem to have a discussion, only, how?! How can the kid understand the man? Is it because the kid kind of doing the same? Issei is just so confused, after all, the more he listens to the pair, the more he kind of picks up the differences between their respective tunes.

The sudden snapping of fingers snaps him out of his mental state and feels the hand withdrawing, the man is walking off towards the nearest drinking fountain. Hearing a grunt, he glances towards the older kid and gives him a questioning look, which the other boy notices then decides to ignore. Pouting as he straightening his cloths, he can't help but think, *Jerk.*

As he moves to stand, the man is back and with a mug that sports waving air. "Where'd he get the mug?" He wonders out loud as the

man approaches, then, yelps as warm water is dumped onto his head and his vision swims while he suddenly feels heavy on his feet.

"What gives?! What did I do to you?!" He cries out and the man chuckles, yes, chuckles. "Calm down kid, it's nothing personal, just... correcting the issue."

"Well, don't, cause I don't even know you! And people shouldn't be going around dumping water on others." Issei snaps as he does his best to move his bangs from his face.

"Seems that the problem got fixed." Says the man and he grunts, kind of guessing so. "Guess... I mean, you aren't singing any more or him humming." He shoots a look towards the older kid, who snorts while looking wholly unimpressed with him.

"Just what kind of song was I singing?" The man inquires and he shrugs while replying, "Kind of... light, airy, and... lonely sad? It didn't have words, just music."

"Lonely sad?" The man muses. "They just... went together? Linked? Don't know if there's a word that really fits." The five year old admits with a frown.

"And what about V... him? What kind of impression did you get from his... humming?" The man inquires and Issei glances again toward the older boy, face scrounged up while ignoring the minor look of interest in the eyes while the face is clear in showing disdain over this whole conversation.

"Heavy, hollow, sad, and pleading, there's pleading." He answers, the last was rather bone chilling a sound as it was a high pitch knell at the points. The older boy sporting white hair snaps something before turning and stalking off after recovering.

He watches the other stomp off and is just confused as to what the other could be pleading for. Feeling a hand ruffle his hair, he turns to find the man smiling every so tenderly. "My apologies for dumping

water on you twice." With that, the man fast walks after the other boy, leaving Issei wondering just what happened, but then shrugs it off, after all, he did get his apology about the water, so, he should forgive the man for it as it's not like any harm had been done to him, well, beyond getting hit by the bucket, which knocked him down.

It's hard for him to not stare in confusion at the white haired boy who's glaring at a man, the ten year old isn't sure as to why but, well, the man sporting dirty blond bangs looks rather sheepish. Yea, he kind of beat up a trio of hollow speaking people, plus none of the three seem to speak the same language either, yet it was clear that the trio wanted something from him and he didn't pay any attention to the, maybe teenager, now he's gotten a better look at the white haired boy upon finishing to tie the trio up, when the other arrived, not joining the fight so, he ignored him. The man only arrived after he finally knocked the final trio out.

The music coming from the man is easy on his ears compared to those other... 'singers' that he typically encountered about Kuoh Town and then there's the fact that the teen's is more echo like then hollow like his attackers. Issei tilts his head to the side while the man studies him for a second before opening his mouth and music rings out, he does his best to keep from reacting but, well, something must give him away and the man runs a hand through his own hair, looking rather defeated. Then warm water hits him and he yelps at the sudden appearance of it, it takes him second to glare at the teen.

"What the heck?!" He cries out before noticing the lack of... bucket or hose. "Where...? Huh?" Then his eyes light up as he realize that the teen must be like the hollow speakers and discord 'singers', thus sporting a power or a few.

"So... Ah, how come you aren't with them?" He asks the teen, glancing towards the nearest tied up hollow speaker. He's kind of worried if he's about to get into another fight. "I mean, you did just blast me with water..." He adds after a bit of silence with a few

glances towards the clearly pounding man, who pulls out a cell phone and might be talking to someone.

"I'm not canon fodder." The teen states simply. He waits for more but, well, yea, that's all the white haired teen shares.

"I guess so? You do sound different then these three." Issei admits and the teen seems to stiffen while arms move from their position of the jean's pockets to cross before the chest.

"..." He's not sure if he should continue on, after all, it's not like anyone believed him back when he was younger about the whole thing. So, the ten year old decides to keep his mouth shut and glance at each of the three tied up people, two men and a woman.

He takes a moment to study the woman, a familiar something tries to draw his gaze to her chest, so he pretty much look elsewhere. Taking a moment to study the man, who is now rubbing his temples with the cell gone, he finds himself frowning at the state of his cloths. The two men had been the ones get in close to attack him while the woman had been the one to fling mud and stone into combat, not caring if she hits either of the men, so he recalled some sage game advice that says 'Geek the Mage first', which he did, she had been far weaker of the two as well, so it had been easy.

Neither of the men tried very hard to stop him either, which likely had everything to do with her 'friendly' fire. The speedy one was the next to fall, it seems while quick and agile, the other lacked stamina and hadn't expect him to be equally as strong as he had been fast and agile. The long and thin sword had been hard to track in the air while the dagger in the off hand meant he couldn't just focus on the one hand of his fellow brunet.

The third was the tank of the group and used a two handed mace. While the two men did seem to know how to work together, they weren't use to facing a single target together, the only real way he did manage to get speedy out of combat had been having the two flank him on opposite sides before leaping out of the way as the

mace user charged forward, swing the weapon. They'd wise up for a bit but, well, he'd only allow them close when they were trying to flank him, which they knew they shouldn't do yet, it they did seem to be in the gambling mood while he's sure to leap in different directions instead of in the same one each time.

So yea, Issei won by managing to land the knock out punch but his cloths... He's also a bit sore and he's pretty sure he's going to be crashing soon from exhaustion as there's no reason for the adrenaline to be continually fed into his system. Moving towards the nearest wall, he finds it hard to focus and, well, as he leans to steady him, he jerks a bit at someone touching him. Glancing, Issei finds the teen, who sports gray blue eyes, looking a touch worried.

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Calm down, he's fine. It was just exhaustion. Albion informs him as the brunet kid faints.

"Wasn't worried." He snaps at the ancient Dragon as he lifts the boy up more, moving it so that the head is on his left shoulder before walking back to Azazel. He ignores the relief as he waits for Azazel to pull himself out of his guilt over the incident that happened almost six years ago.

"Kid's out." Vali states in a bland tone after a few seconds, which causes the Governor to jerk. Then glances at the canon fodder Devils of some minor Pureblood Devil before giving the older supernatural being a questioning raised eyebrow.

"Leave them." Azazel states. "Kuoh Town isn't under my authority thus it isn't my responsibility to deal with these trespassers."

"Not the first time he's fought Devils." He notes calmly as he watches as Azazel begins to set up a very secure ward meant to cover their use of magic concerning arrival and departing. *Won't be the last time.* Is left unsaid but implied.

"Well, we knew when he was transformed, he doesn't hear language from me." Comments Azazel. "I wonder..."

He snorts, it's clear where the old man's thoughts were headed and he's a touch curious as to the thought as well, after all, Reincarnated Devils weren't born Devils, majority of them were originally humans. "No training." He notes once they were safe in Azazel's lab, which lowers his already low opinion of the trio of Reincarnated Devils, for all that the kid's reflects and physical limits were in the reaches of inhuman, he was just a child and one who's never taken any classes in self-defense.

"The Knight likely stopped pushing himself to improve his rapier skills." Albion pipes in while he lays the kid, kind of worryingly light, onto the table that Azazel gestured to him. It's clear that the Governor is going to be a through examination of the kid. "The Rook just figured he didn't need to learn how to fight with that mace either." He points out.

There's a slight bemuse look on the now science mode Azazel's face and he feels defensive, "Kid's got some decent instincts and likely picked up a few things but he hasn't gone out of his way to learn how to actually defend himself." Then again, it's likely that the local Owner would be keeping track of who's learning what and where.

Red hazel eyes glint in amusement but doesn't point out the obvious flaw of doing that. Which means that the kid had a functioning brain to realize that at his age. **Or played to many video games.** Remarks his partner.

Finding a spot out of the way, Vali watches as the examine begins.

Yes, he choked, how could he not? He's pretty sure Albion is a touch dumbfounded at hearing what Sacred Gear the kid, one Issei Hyoudou was born with. "He's my destine rival? Him?"

Yip, it's hard for him to see it, honestly given a few things. One of which is how underweight Issei is due to nature of the water based transformation magic, it turns out that that cold base form as an alien chemical requirement that a human body doesn't create or need, then again, the form seems to be a type of Artificial Human. Which means that what magic the kid natural possesses is working to transmute resources within the body into that chemical upon the onset of the transformation and then doing it in reverse to get the chemical out of the body as it's not healthy for a normal human to have in their bodies. Which means that the kid needs to eat more then he actually has been while in his birth form, which he hasn't or it might be more to do with his parents not noticing how underweight the kid is. It's hard to say as his parents likely weren't in the know concerning the supernatural world existing side by side so they don't have any supernatural protection or means to notice magic interfering with their lives.

Then there's just the fact that the kid is growing up in a placed owned by Devils and thus, it gets visits from Devils. Issei ran into a prankster who thought it a hoot to use a minor compulsion spell causing people listening to develop a compulsion or hyper focus on something. Which means that the transformation magic had been helping the kid to develop a resistance to compulsion magic, then there's actually a good chance that he is on his way to becoming immune to similar spells at some point in the future. It had still there but had been rather weak along with not as tangled up in the kid's mind as it should be which allowed Azazel to easily break it without any mental back lash.

Another issue of growing up there is the subtle wards that Issei likely kept triggering each time he transformed, although, that was just plain amusing but it's likely a reason why the Owner has been allowing Peerages of other Devils to patrol the area along with their own. *Must be vexing.* Vali muses with a smirk. *To not catch the Magician or Sacred Gear user who's always appearing and disappearing without a care.*

Which also lead to more active measure to 'flush' out the 'trespasser' as well then just patrolling Devils but also employing magical means to entrap the offender. It's kind of bewildering the Owner hadn't started investigating the local kids but then, such advance magic does tend to take years to work up to and it's likely that there had been a simple check over those kid possessing Sacred Gears to see if any of them activated them before being dismissed from speculation. It's a question of whether a Devil's pride is the reason why Issei still hasn't been captured or if there's something more at work to disguise the kid's identity.

If not for the simple fact that the kid hosts Ddraig's Sacred Gear, Vali would have been more then happy to take the kid under his wing, training him to be a future sparring partner and subordinate. It would be very amusing to have someone the Devils are driving themselves crazy trying to find to be found to be his student/minion/sparring partner only to learn that they can't touch him simply because he's under the banner of the current White Dragon Emperor. *How is this fair?* He wonders to himself.

"I finally found him and he's a brat. A snort nose brat." He comments out loud, he's not whining, he's does not whine.

"Yes, I have to admit, this is the first I've heard of the current Dragon Emperors meeting under the age of ten." Azazel remarks and Albion hums in agreement. He is so tempted to say that it hadn't counted or that this shouldn't count, but knows it doesn't change the fact that yes they had and it's because of that what the then brat had said that had caused changes between Azazel and himself, for the Governor did end up spending a lot more time with him after that little encounter and did his best to be involved more in Vali's interests, training, and studies.

Both of them healed something in them as they began to grow closer, Azazel wasn't just his care taker or just someone giving him a roof over his head, cloths on his back, and food in his belly. He became a teacher and friend, then earned the title of dad. More then a few Fallen Angels that are members of the Grigori were jealous of

the relationship between them and they weren't as subtle as they think they were when it comes to expressing it, then again, there's a reason why Azazel has stopped dating or even sleeping around, there have been more then a few cases of dead humans because they were jealous of the attention Azazel gave those people, not all of them had been women surprisingly enough, which lead to him secreting himself away in his lab more and more, trying to distract himself from, well, a lot of things. There have been a few 'accidents' but nothing he couldn't handle, even if he had been requested to leave the so called 'innocent' offenders alive and able to recover from similar 'accidents'.

So yea, if not for that minor meeting with the maybe four year old, five year old at most, Issei, they wouldn't have the same father-son relationship they have today. Still though... "Music?" He inquires.

"I actually surprised myself by summoning a blood sample from outside our universe and used it as an ingredient of my version of instant powder." The old man admits. "The spell identified it as close to human, I thought it meant that it got damaged during the summoning."

Oh yes, it had been him who sent that bucket flying, hadn't it? "It works as it should on Fallen and Devils, both kinds." The old man admits and given his participation in a few of those instances, yea, it does.

"Worked fine on me, too." He admits and Azazel gives him a slight look. "It was that thing with the cruise ship, you know, with the huge storm getting called up by the end... Did a shark with a timed release of ten hours." Meaning that if he didn't transform before ten hours were up, a spell would ensure that the water he's in or hit with next would heat up enough to cause him to transform back.

"So, it could be the blood I included or it might be because he's human." Muses Azazel. He's more then willing to put money on a bit of both. "Might need to round up some human volunteers."

"Stray Magicians? Or actual volunteers from among the Grigori's Sacred Gear holders?" The teen asks curious. "Well, the former first then the latter."

Then he glances back the brunet, who's got something a kin to an IV only with diluted potion being feed into the blood stream then the usual formula. Issei is still sleeping, there had been a few minutes where it looked like he'd wake but, well, it was pretty clear the kid was just too exhausted to wake himself up, so went on sleeping, not even stirring when they put in the needle to feed the potion into him. Azazel Conjured up a pillow and sheets, a bit of magic and the kid is resting more comfortably and more restful as well. And that's another reason for why he rather not dwell on the fact that the kid is his rival, because the kid looks so pitiable right now and it's clear Issei needs help, the sooner the better.

Still... This could be entertaining, if you think of it from a different perspective. His partner informs him. *"How so?"*

Think of the heart attack Ddairg will have once he wakes and realizes who he owes his current partner's life to and has been mentoring him. Albion muses and he stills as he considers that. *"How about taking it a step further? Can you imagine the reactions of the supernatural world would have if the current Dragon Emperors have a truce?"* He proposes in turn after a bit of thinking.

Albion laughter says volumes of how entertaining his idea was to the ancient Dragon, which causes him to smirk. "I think it's best that Issei and I think about signing a truce agreement to cease hostilities for either a certain amount of time or for this current generation." He informs the old man and Azazel snorts before thinking on it for a bit and then he's chuckling at the kind of chaos that would cause.

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Issei isn't sure how it was that Ray, he's sure that's her name or it's close to it, hasn't been routed out of Kuoh Academy by one of the Peerage members of the two 'Owners' of Kuoh Town but he knows

that they really shouldn't be allowing her to speak with him for as long as they were. Oh, he knows why the Fallen Angel didn't recognize him, he's talented when it comes to self Transformation given his exposure to that water based transformation magic that he's now in complete control of. Her not making the connection between him and his alias was kind of simple as he generally has a different appearance when he's among the Grigori, plus he answers to the name Rave. The most notable features of his alternate looks as Rave is dark purple eyes with bright, blond hair, which generally gets him written off as half Fallen, or half Devil given his association to Vali, due to the purple eyes.

As for why the two 'Owners' should interfere, it's because they should have been informed that he was born with a Sacred Gear. He's not sure what kind beyond it being a Dragon, he's pretty sure it's a Dragon simply because some of the comments and tips Albion and Vali offer up during their lessons or when they're just enjoying the odd quiet moment. It's kind of off putting that both Uncle and Vali plus Albion know what Sacred Gear he has but figures it's a kind of long term prank that he won't get until it's active.

Still, Gremory should be trying to put a stop to this. The brunet muses to himself as he does his best to evade whatever topic Ray is trying to get to. Even coming across as more dense then he does or naturally is at times, it's rarer now but he still has his moments it seems.

There's a bit of a crowd now and a quick scan shows that Rais' Knight and Sona's Knight watching but not looking like they are going to interfere. Which mentally causes him to frown but kind of lets up on the evading at this point. Which has Ray giving him a fake name, confessing to having a crush on him, and even going so far as to asking him on a date for this coming Sunday, which he declines as polite as he can, countering that he's busy and that it's kind of sudden for him to changes his plans. He's sure to admit he's not sure he feels the same way as this is the first time he's met her.

Oh, she does try to pull some emotional blackmail to get her way concerning this Sunday but, well, he's got something with Uncle happening that day and so he stands firm. Yea, a few girls among the crowd murmur darkly about his refusal while a pair of boy are bemourning the fact that such a beauty fell for such a creep. Yea, elements of the crowd are swaying to her side but there's a few mature individuals that sound like they get where he's coming from and seems to agree that he's in the right to decline the offer for this date, particularly given he does have something scheduled.

It's clear Ray isn't pleased with how things are going but, then, she catches sight of Yuuto and Tomeo. It takes the wind out of Ray's sails and she does one last plea before 'fleeing' from him with 'tears' in her eyes, heading straight out of the gate of their school. He stares kind of dumbly after her, before shaking his head and running a hand through his hair. Yea, he's making a note of how the two 'Owners' reacted and instead of waiting until Sunday to mention this, he'll phone Uncle tonight as he notes the slight hostility among the crowd of teens milling around.

It's not long before he's heading home with more then a few girls sending dark looks his way for 'upsetting' Ray. Issei does wonder if he's been used as bait to learn why Ray is here and isn't impressed as the 'rightful' 'Owners' of Kuoh Town, the pair should have the balls to confront Ray as Ray is the trespasser and thus they are 'owed' a reason for her visit in their supposed territory. Then again, it's a continuation of failings of the Heiresses of the two Pillar Houses, House Gremory and House Sitri, to monitor the greater going ons of Kuoh Town and set up wards to deter uninvited pests nesting in Kuoh Town, yes, the two get around to finding the more violent Stray Devils that arrive but they don't seem aware of the more subtle Strays Devils and others that seem to be finding things to their liking.

Or do they think that because of their Houses and who their older siblings are that nobody would sneak in to settle in their territory? Or sneak spies into the place? He wonders. "Do they... Have they been..." *Checking the area Wards of Kuoh Town? Maintaining them?*

There's a lot for him to think about. Then again, Issei has done his best to avoid thinking about it, after all, it wasn't his problem and he's been able to continue on with his life as usual since Vali decided to mentor him. He's a member of the Grigori and the only student of Lucifer Vali, the current White Dragon Emperor, and he's not looking to change to a different Faction let alone become a Reincarnated Devil. His life is pretty much his own to live as he sees fit as a member of the Grigori then if he'd be recruited into a Devil's Peerage as a Reincarnated Devil and the supposed honor of serving a King, who'd most likely be a Pureblood Devil or if he'd dedicate himself to the Church, its teachings, and figuring out the mine field that is their politics.

With Azazel transformed as an actual crow and is following him as he arrives for said 'date' with Raynare, that's her actual name it seems. He takes the offered Devil Contract and shoves it into his pants pocket. In coming into contact with the enchanted stone, it'll be destroyed, it's why he even has it, really, to destroy any of those contracts that end up in his possession. He's been carrying one since school begun as he's paranoid about the Devils offering them at school or stuffing them into people's belongings.

He's got a special app on his cell phone to be used when Raynare finally gets around to displaying why she wanted this 'date'. Which is around evening and she 'lures' him away from the busy streets. Then she does her villain bit and transformation, but he manages to ask her for one simple request.

"Which is?" Raynare asks, clearly confident and feeling like she's in total control of the situation. He does his best to not roll his eyes as he requests, "Can I take your picture with my cell?"

"Sure, go right ahead, it's not like I won't destroy it once I'm through killing you though." Remarks his 'date' of the afternoon. She even does a pose as he focuses the cell on her.

The cell flashes and Raynare is ensnared in the spell that the app carried, it's gone now that it's been used. He shifts into his Rave alias while his Uncle lands on the ground, triggering the reversal of the transformation. He's a touch busy altering his cloth as well as taking out a earring stud to put in his right eyebrow, the hole is easy for him to create for it. Once in, his Uncle is done setting up a privacy Ward and has already did a bit of mental editing with Raynare, he's not sure in what way, only that she won't wonder where Issei vanished off to, then again, with the Governor General before her, it's unlikely the grunt will think to demand answers or even put forth questions of any kind.

Holding his cell phone up, he begins recording this Q&A, a live feed of it directed for certain members of the Grigori to watch. He notices Uncle adjusting a blue tooth device in his ear, looking like a hearing aid or ear plug. "Can you hear me?" Uncle asks softly as Raynare begin to recover from the out of it state. "Let us proceed then." And now Raynare stiffens just as the oldest standing leader of one of the Biblical Faction focuses on her, paling some more at the sight of Azazel in his Governor General mode after eyes flickering his way.

He does his best to keep his expression neutral as the questioning begins, he's pretty sure that Raynare will mostly live after this, after all, grunts aren't well known for their disobeying their chain of command, which means that someone higher up the rank told her to target him. There's likely going to be some time imprisoned some place or time spent in the form of some creature, but it's unlikely she'll be killed, even though she does try to dance around the questions but it doesn't last for long and it wasn't doing her any favors, which likely means she'll find herself along with any others who might be around in Kuoh Town spending time as animals of some kind, the longer it takes, the more humiliating the form, like ensuring if they become chickens they'll be egg layers for the duration of being such or cows and producing milk on a regular basis.

It's kind of a surprise to learn that it's Kokabiel who approached Raynare's group directly and then they also get some info about the destination of the former Holy Maiden of the Church, which is kind of a bonus and yet, there's the bit about them getting a Sacred Gear extractor to remove Twilight Healing from Argento Asia before handing her body off to a Devil. Given there's only one Devil who enjoys and is forever interested in reincarnating former members of the fairer sex of the Church... The sad part is that they couldn't kill said Pureblood Devil but, well, maybe there's still some measure of punishment that can be done, after all, Uncle can be devious and it won't kill the younger brother at all, just make his life interesting for a time.

Once done with Raynare, the other falls fast asleep and Azazel speaks with those watching about something. In the end, Raynare is levitated and then follows them as they head for the abandoned church to speak with the rest of the group. It's clear that Uncle has been over ruled about administering suitable punishment on Raynare, for the time being at least. Then the Fallen at the location are torn between fleeing and pleading while the former Church executioners look rather baffled at why the Fallen are reacting like that.

He can't really follow what's being said, it's all music to his ears. Although when the former executioners speak, there's this very faint sound of wind chimes, which is interesting as he's never hear any instruments with the two types of Devils, half human children that call Grigori home, and Fallen Angels. Then again, he hasn't met an Angel as of yet and it takes him a bit to recall about a Church practice which allows humans to speak and understand any human spoken language. Which might explain how odd sounding their Japanese sounds, it's clear that they haven't spent much time among the local population, speaking with them enough to subconsciously learn the language to the point that they won't need to rely on the ritual to forever translate Japanese into whatever their native language was or for it to translate their words into Japanese.

Issei watches the body language of the Fallen involved, noting those who shoot him dark looks on the sly, which isn't that surprising, jealousy seems to be a common trait among the Fallen as is spite. It's hardy a surprise that Uncle began to feel isolated among the Grigori's Fallen Angel population, not when so many of the grunts seem so content to remain childish and short sighted in their quest of impressing the higher ranked members of the Grigori's Fallen Angel leadership. The sad fact is, those who had could mature and get over themselves have long since done so, achieving higher ranks, like centuries ago.

There's a reason why there's two separate command structures within the Grigori, one for Fallen and another for Sacred Gear holders. Typically, those members sporting half human heritage are slotted into the Sacred Gear holders. As for the former Church executioners, well, given they also 'fell' from the grace of Heaven, they seem to default to the Fallen command structure, but then they do tend to be a blood thirsty lot, it's likely why they fled from their fellows as they got to the point that their effectiveness wasn't worth how they began loose themselves to the need to see blood, any blood really, is spill by their respective weapons. Which suit many Fallen indeed as there's always a faction within the Grigori pushing for the war to heat up again, although for different reasons.

Personally, he doesn't like Pureblood Devils, their very music grind on his ears and the emotions invoked, that was before he learnt more about the Peerage system and the farce that is the Ranking Games. He hates those that don't think of asking a person if they would like to be reincarnated as a Devil after explaining what that even means for them once the deed is done or engineer situations where they could 'gain' the loyalty of the human, be it by them dying and being brought back or arranging their fall from grace among their peers and social circles. Issei honestly would love to see the destruction of the Reincarnation aspect of the Peerage system, after all, there is such a thing as non-Pillar Pureblood Devils, so why are the Pillar Pureblood Devils so keen on finding a human when they have plenty of these so called common Devils who would jump at the

chance to change their station in life, no matter the level of danger or what duties are expected of them.

Then again, there's plenty of examples of that kind of thinking among humans. He mentally admits as he recalls how interested the USA is over matters of Third World countries, spending millions of their own money improving the life of those living there when they still have homeless people among their cities and in need of medicine or basic shelter, never mind food. And Reincarnated Devils are bewildered by their treatment by the general 'common' Devil population.

With a soft sigh, he takes note that yea, it looks like they are nearly done here.

Ending it here!

(Not sure if I'll continue this)

Insert Villain Conditioning Here Ch 1: M

I don't own My Hero Academia!

It was just suppose to be a Game! Thinks one thirteen year old Midoriya Izuku as he stares at his reflection, at the name hovering over his head. Gentleman Draven Ose, it isn't the name he put down as his Avatar, then again, he's Avatar's race or looks weren't want he picked out for himself either.

Skin is dark gray with leopard spots of dark brown with hints of light darker gray can be noted on his forehead plus the edge of his eyes and casting his eyes down a bit, Izuku notices upon his neck. Looking down, he's got them on his currently bare arms and shoulders. His Avatar's eyes are a dark purple that sport a gemstone shine to them and are slit like some predators with black sclera. Those eyes send shivers down his spine while he feels his heart race up.

It takes a while before he finds himself able to continue examining his hair, which is off white and noting the pointed ears on either side of his head. Opening his mouth, his teeth are all pointed and sharp looking and his tongue sports a tiny fork at the tip of it but that's it. His teeth are white and his tongue is its normal red. Sticking his tongue out, he curls it and it responses, pulling his tongue back in and closing his mouth, he notices his lips are now black and thin.

Then there's the age of the Avatar, which seems to be early to mid twenties in age. It was far too aged up then is allowed for Players, which is aging up by five years or down by the same. It's clear that some kind of glitch happened to cause him to end up as he is.

He's dimly aware that he should be reacting far more strongly then he is, but he's just emotionally numb. Logically, he should be suffering a panic attack, this is far beyond what he's able to handle.

So it's clear that it's something going on with his helmet's interface and it's doing something to his brain chemistry.

Finally leaving the bathroom, he walks around the room and looking for clues before pausing to access his Menu and smiles bitterly at the lack of Log Out or a Feedback option. Then he brings up his Character Menu and the first page shows his Avatar in all his 'glory' which also includes what he's wearing, which is a simple tunic and cotton pants. Rotating it, Izuku notices the placement of the leopard spots on the body along with how long his hair is.

There's a Bio Tab that he ignores, he'll read it later, and then goes to his Basic Stats Tab. He's Level is 5 and he's stats are already done, there's no spare points to spend. His race is the NPC only one, a Devil and the Noble House he is belongs to is House Ose, which is listed among the Seventy-two Pillars of the Underworld and the House Noble Ranking is that of President. His personal Title is Gentleman and it's the lowest Noble Title that a Devil born among the Noble Houses can possess.

And yes, he can advance within House Ose's own ranks, trying for the coveted Title of President of House Ose. From what he recalls upon researching the game, the set up of the Devils of the game are based off of some old religious book called Ars Goetia and Devils aren't the only Faction within the game. A lot of things were borrowed from old books and mythology concepts, examples of which range from Asian Oni and European Goblins to Greek Minotaurs and Indian Rakshasa.

A chime rings out and his Character Menu closes as he was reading his Magic and Skills Tabs. He's suddenly teleporting away from the room and, as his vision clears, Draven's head is pounding and rubbing his forehead. There's a number of voice groaning and cursing. He... feels like he's forgetting something, but, well, for now, it's best he focus on the meeting. A glance around shows there's at least eight others to be summoned for this meeting, an Oni, Hobgoblin, Orc, Minotaur, Rakshasa, Werewolf, Tengu, and Ogre.

He doesn't see the point in learning their names as of yet as he focuses on Ultimate Doom with a crimson Crown. The almost skeleton looking Elf's smile is very wide, so very wide and it's clear the Elf is rather gleefully studying each of them. "Well, nine Quirkless Players, more then I thought I'd get." Remarks the Elf and something about the word 'Quirkless' makes him want to grind his teeth as he gives the Elf a glare.

"Fuck off!" Snaps the Werewolf with a snarl and there's growling. The Elf chuckles in delight at the reaction that remarked caused.

"Well, the game's begun and I now have you nine as my Boss Monsters." Continues the Elf and he's a touch confused by what the Elf is talking about. The insane Elf's eyes land on him and he does his best to keep a neutral expression along with a polite pose as he files this away, it could be of use later.

"Some more impressive then others." Comments the Elf after a few seconds and glancing away, he can feel a few stare at him, likely already not liking that statement or what it implies. He's a member of House Ose, of course he knows how to keep a mask of neutral interest and how to ignore the urge to fret needlessly. He knows his place in his House and this promises to be a way for him to advance his standing within his House, perhaps even earn him a chance for marriage if he can prove he can provide for said wife and any child they might be able to conceive in such a union, he's young by his Race's standards but it matters not if he manages to prove himself in this regard.

"Now then, your Quest Log will give you the details you need for your respective tasks and be sure to terrorize any Players you happen to encounter, Adventurers or Laborers both." The Elf says and a book forms before him, a simple tab with his index finger sees the book fading while he gets a mental note that it has been added to his Character Menu. "Now, off you go kill, maim or torture and be sure to recruit!"

With that, Draven finds himself teleported back to his rooms at his Great Grandparents' estate. "At least he's not going to micro manage my course of action." He remarks out loud in the privacy of his empty room.

It's not long for him to change out of his current attire and into more formal cloths, he's sure to pack up every personal belong into his Dimensional Pocket. He's in possession of one hundred gold, a four hundred silver, and eight hundred copper. He's confident that he'll be able to recruit Devils from the labor force, there should be plenty who'd join his venture for a silver a month or less. The money should also allow him to purchase armor for them along with supplies.

It's now a question of where does he want to start with this venture, after all, while he's likely higher in levels of power to the current wave of Heroes and their Supports, it shouldn't take them long for their power to grow.

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"Temper, temper, little Hero." Draven remarks with a smirk which only serves to cause the already fire based caster to snarls and try to pull away from the wall that he's chained to. "Fuck you pansy ass kitty cat!"

Attempts are casting quick spells cause the shackles about the wrist to glow, interrupting the casting of spells. "So this is your Dungeon." Draven mentally sighs as he turns to regard Ultimate Doom, who struts through the door to regard the current prisoner.

"If I had known you were interested in a tour of my abode and would be honored to ensure you receive a proper look." He informs the insane Elf in a polite and respectable tone. "Who the fuck is this skeleton nut job?"

"He's got quite the mouth on him." Remarks Ultimate Doom, it's clear that the Hero's foul and curse language just amuses the other as the

Elf walks lazily to stand before the Hero. "I'll blast your skull to bits before shoving that fucking Devil's intestines down his shitty throat!"

He's so tempted to roll his eyes but instead he casts a paralyze spell at the prisoner, noting how the other is beginning to tense his legs. "Ruin my fun why don't you?" The Elf says in a sulking tone.

"Forgive me but he was getting ready to try something stupid in regards to yourself and thought it prudent to prevent from happening." He explains politely and the Elf takes a moment to study the prisoner before grinning in pleasure. "And this is why your my favorite Boss Monster, always eager to protect your Master."

I rather not have you throwing a temper tantrum at my base of operations. I rather not rebuild them. Draven is tempted to say but instead remarks, "Is there anything you wish for me to do in concerns of this prisoner, sir?"

"Hmm...? Oh, perhaps, why, are you offering him to me?" Inquires the insane Elf possessing insane amount of power.

"If you wish to claim him, then please tell me so that I can ensure he is properly packaged with his belongs." He had this one captured simply to see how long it would take for a Hero to die of starvation, he could always capture another, there are plenty of foul tempered Heroes and Supports to pick from after all. The Elf grins widely and glances towards the prisoner, speaking to the Hero, "Hear that? I can claim you as a private play thing right now."

The Elf reaches out with his left hand while the right index taps his chin. The prisoner's head moves right and then left before the insane Elf steps to the side just a second before the paralyze spell wears off. A leg kicks forward and then the prisoner turns and tries to kick the Elf once more, it does hit as Ultimate Doom is already a few steps to the side while the Hero hurls out a limited vocabulary of curses, generally repeating the same ones in an unimaginative way.

"Well, this is boring, why don't we head for the kitchen? I'm sure you have something good to drink, you are a member of a Pillar House after all." Remarks the Elf, glancing at him with a smirk.

"Is there a particular favorite you wish to sample?" He inquires as he falls into step behind the Elf, the feeling of the heated glare at his back seems... nauseatingly familiar. It's hardly the first time the feel wells up within him and there's also a smug feeling of turn about and feeling guilty.

It fades once the door of the cell is closed, locked, and they walk for the stairs. Listening politely as the insane Elf doesn't really answer his inquiry but begins chatting about how pleased he is with how this game is going and chatting about the exploits of the other eight 'Bosses'. Clearly happy with how much of a brute so and so had been at this settlement, it's always been clear that the Elf has a preference for violence, finding it anything they did as amusing and very self satisfied, like he personally had a hand in helping them achieve such course of action or planning.

It's rather unsettling and it makes him feel uneasy, along with a sense of something important that's just out of his reach, like it this a critical detail that will make everything fall into place. *It'll be a year since I started working for him.* Draven mentally notes in a matter of fact way.

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"You ever fucked a tiger before? Or is it you're the one who prefers to take it up the ass?" He ignores the prisoner, who's still very much alive even though it's been a month since Ultimate Doom's visit and after not receiving any drinks for the pass six days. Draven casually uses a paralyze spell and regards the Healer he brought.

Wordlessly, the Healer approaches with a certain glint in their eye and begins to examine the Hero. Then moves on to examine the space about the Hero. A questioning look and the he gives a slight

nod, the other Devil of common lineage begins to unlock the shackles of the Hero once the Healer applies the knock out drug.

"Fascinating." Healer Bina remarks as the two guards enter now, carrying the Hero out of the cell to take the foul tempered Human Hero to the prepared examination area that the Healer will be using. "And no food at all, for the pass thirty-two days? Or water for the last six?"

"No waste what so ever about his space either. No stench of an unwashed body." The typical red skinned common Devil muses as the Healer walks before him once the guards have carried the Hero out.

There's no point in commenting as it was something he had already covered with the Healer, he rather speak more after the examination. Healer Bina will only be with him for a week as she's on loan to him from a Great Uncle of his for not just two favors but also having paid in gold. He's got two weedy common Devils assigned to her and hope that they'll pick up a few things about the profession, both know how to treat creature aliments and it would save him money if they can learn to do the same for beings, or at least pick up the basics of the Healer writings and self study the profession, it's not like he can't raid Order settlements or buy from wandering Merchants said scrolls and books.

Escorting the Healer to the prepared room, Draven takes a moment to regard the set up, the Hero's always worn attire is now gone leaving underwear covering the privates. Satisfied with leaving the trio of common Devils to their appointed task concerning the Hero, he walks away. He tours the smelters and the forges before checking on the work of the carpenters and the lumber yard.

His newest expansions are coming along well while the masons and quarry-men are still off on the mission of mining suitable stone from the previously abandoned quarry. Yes, he did need to clear out a nest of Kobolds and their tamed ridge crested monitor lizards. He's not happy that he's had to build an out post there and keep it

manned with a score of his fighters and support staff at all times as if he leaves it unoccupied for a minimum of three days, Kobolds would once more have made themselves at home within the quarry, which is unacceptable in his mind, given he rooted them out already.

His coffers are still filled decently enough and with the smelters now turning what ore they mine along with the stone into ingots, they can now make better metal armors and weapons that weren't bronze or copper as copper and tin ore are far cheaper to buy then iron. Some of the uncut gems that also get found are being sold as he doesn't have any use for them at this point in time. With better armed and protected forces under his command, he'll be able to target stronger settlements and pursue Ultimate Doom's plans of terrorizing Heroes and Supports.

The thought of the insane Elf causes him to frown as he stares off at the distance. Given the power the Elf possesses, he finds it hard to believe that the Elf needs him or the others. Given the 'subtle' plays of power, which weren't subtle at all in regards to Horde Lord Wrath the Orc or Pack King Ruthless the Werewolf, it's clear that the Elf should have no problem destroying one of the cities of the Order and yet, the Elf seems more content to spur them into doing so instead, with giddy glee and cruel amusement in his eyes.

Draven is a Devil, born to House Ose of the Seventy-two Pillars and he does not like being regarded as the Elf's play thing, a tool meant to amuse its 'owner'. Like the other eight members, he has no love nor hold true loyalty to the Elf but unlike the others, he's yet to make an effort into working against the insane Elf as well. There was nothing to be gained as of yet to rebelling to the Elf's twisted requests or trying to defend himself from the sweeping moods, which seems to be reason why he's regarded as the 'favorite' as he 'knows' his 'place'. Not that Ultimate Doom hasn't attempted to push him pass his limits in hopes of causing him to react in such a way as to be in need of 'correction' and thus has suffered humiliation upon humiliation, most often when the others are presence as well.

Even with his training in manners and in self control, he should have snapped at the Elf at least once this past year, if only because of his pride in his Noble House. Nor is there this... festering negativity focused on the insane Elf or at the others for witnessing such things. Just this bizarre, passively focus emotion of self loathing and this continuous sense of him being useless... of him not being of any worth.

He's done a lot of self reflection and can't, for the life of him, pin point what experience he has that could cause such emotions and self image issues to crop up! Draven knows that his House's standing isn't that high among the Pillars but that doesn't mean he was not any less of a Noble as those born to Houses in stations above his own. Like all children born to House Ose, he'd been groomed and educated to pursue goals that would align with benefiting his House and his standing within it. He's still far too young to be considered an actual contender for advancement within the House as he's not yet a century old and thus is allowed to do as he pleases as long as he doesn't do it in the Underworld or provoke open conflict with another House of the same standing.

Draven isn't the only Devil who's active upon the core plane of The Expanse nor is he the only one leading an army or in the process of laying claim to portions of land. The common Devils tend towards mercenary work of any kind while a greater of his fellow Noble Devils tend towards leading plundering armies or mercenary companies. And then there are a few others seek to secure resources for their future projects among the Underworld or set up profitable operations that could generate money, which is kind of what building this wooden fort which is slowly turning into a stone keep generally means. Yes, he's not above using the fort as a launching pad for raiding the Order settlements or for hunting down the odd Hero bounty, but his ultimate aim is for generating income so that he will have money to pursue a mastery or two in magical subjects once back in the Underworld, which can be expensive given the need for spell components and paying a teacher for lessons.

Yes, within a week of having met Ultimate Doom, he realized that it's doubtful that the insane Elf could help him cheat in climbing the social ladder of his House and feeling a touch foolish plus annoyed, he revisited his options. Sadly, he can't seem to cut ties with the insane Elf or he would have done so a long time ago. It's seems far too late for him to escape the Elf's clutches and this 'game' he is playing with the current generation of Order Chosen Heroes and Support.

He's done his best to escape his death multiple times and is highly motivated plus interested in continuing to do so as there has to be a price for the Resurrection that Ultimate Doom uses to bring the others back from their final rest. Which means he's in need of homing his skills and seeing to improving his forces. After all, while he may be able to win against a single Hero in single combat, the odd increase against him the more Heroes he faces as a couple of his common Devil recruits can kill a Support they would not hold long against a Hero.

His thoughts are interrupted by his Quest Log appearing before him and then flipping to a page, signalling that this Quest is new and that Ultimate Doom wish it to be completed as soon as possible. "White-Out, hmmm?" It's just as strange a name as all the other Heroes and Support that he schools his expression as he reads the details instead of skimming them once again.

Tapping the portrait of this White-Out, he can't help but wonder to himself, *Why would he not retrieve you himself?* After all, there have been other Quests of this nature had them creating distractions so that Ultimate Doom could collect some Hero or Support, even steal something from some Guild's vaults. The image is another Elf who sports spiky dark grey hair, gemstone blue eyes, and who's cloths are made out of leather. There is a simple long dagger on the belt and then there's a special belt that goes from left to right that possesses more knives, likely off of which are mean for throwing. Everything leading him to conclude that this White-Out is a range fighter and might be more into being a stealthy kind of Hero.

The type of Hero that is going to be hard to flush out.

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Ok, so maybe not so hard to flush out. Draven mentally amends as White-Out glares at the trio who just tossed the Hero down before him upon him dismounting from the Strider, a breed of horse that magic was used to alter their stamina to be hardier then a normal one. Taking out a pouch, he puts twelve thousand gold into it from his Dimensional Pocket and flings it to the feet of the leader of the three.

The Dwarf member of the trio walks over and picks up the leather pouch, without even counting it, the pouch vanishes with a nod from said Dwarf. "Pleasure doing business with you." The leader states and the trio are quick to use Teleportation Stones to leave the area.

Looking down, he notices a stick in the mouth with leather straps ensuring White-Out couldn't spit it out. A quick sleep sleep and the Hero is out, with that, he bends down and easily lifts the Hero onto the back of his Strider before getting back into it. With that, he and his escort of four leave, heading back the way they came.

It's only been a week since he crafted those flyers concerning a bounty on White-Out and how to contact him, Gentleman Draven Ose, in order to collect it. He decided not to really put much effort into the Quest after thinking about it for a day. Oh, Draven knew that the Heroes and Support have been having trouble managing their funds but didn't think they'd actually betray one of their own for a mere twelve thousand gold coins. After all, Support can build things and sell said things to the Temples or even to the Order merchants while Heroes gain money from 'mob' bounties never mind the money gained from raiding abandon ruins or non-Order settlements. It was a simple matter of fiances and knowing how to barter in the end yet, it seems that it's something that this generation of Heroes and Support lack.

He follows behind his two guards as they carry White-Out down the stairs into his prison cells. There's half a dozen dug out and out of them, only one is in use. The foul mouth and tempered Hero curses at them as they pass his cell, although there's beginning to be a lack of real heat in those words, then again, it seems that the Hero is starting to become effected by his surroundings and the lack of rescue attempts. After all, it's for that very reason he decided to capture him to begin with as the Human hadn't endured himself to his fellow party members and he figured that if that were true, then it's likely that the Hero hadn't endured himself at all among his fellow Heroes or among the Support.

It could also be the change in cloths as well. Draven muses thoughtfully as well as one of the guards holds White-Out while the other shackles the wrists and ankles. In the end, it matters not, Healer Bina could only suggest that it's some kind of Gods' Blessing upon the Hero, she had been unsure if all the Heroes and Support have it or if it's only granted when they are captured. Either way, it means that he doesn't have to order that the cell is to be added to the cleaning duty nor does he have to order the 'washing' of the Hero.

"There should be a special collar in my office, fetch it for me please." He state upon opening his Quest Log and checking the Quest for an update. Soon enough, it's just the single guard alone with the prisoner and himself.

Yes, he wants that stick gone from the mouth but he isn't going to chance anything just yet, given that the Quest did warn against allowing White-Out the use of his voice. Plus, the latest prisoner stirs and then jerks wide awake, then begins to glance around the cell. Teeth bite down more forcefully at the sight of him and those gemstone blue eyes glare at him.

White-Out tests his shackles and then glances down at his legs. The other guard returns and he, personally, clamps the collar about White-Out's check, even thought the Hero tries to fight against him by trying to sway to the sides. With it on, he takes one of the

throwing knives and slices the leather. The stick gets spat at him but falls harmlessly to the ground as he puts the knife back.

"Let me go." He raises a simple eyebrow at the Hero. "Damn, it wasn't even fair! You just made those flyers and didn't even have the guts to track me down! Or even engage me in a fight! How's that not the actions of a coward?!"

"Who the fucking hell is that, you shitty excuse for a leopard?!" Bellows the other and with that, he decides to leave as the two Heroes are now yelling at each other. It seems his original prisoner's fire is back and one of the guards shuts and locks the door, then with a guard ahead of him and behind, they leave the prison area, heading up the stairs.

Closing the door and the yelling from below fades into nothingness. They part company as he heads for his office and the two head to the kitchen area to grab something to eat and drink. As he sits at his desk, Draven wonders when he can expect a visit from the insane Elf.

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It takes him a second to realize where to find the insane Elf and lets out a sigh as he gets out of his nice, warm, and comfortable bed. Draven manages to put something on, it was a quick pick really, and does a little to tame his hair before being forcefully Summoned to his own prison area. The Elf takes a moment to study him with what could only be, for Ultimate Doom at least, look in his eyes before turning back to said captured Elf Hero. "He is one of mine." There's a smug tone in announcing that.

Yea, the first prisoner is cursing and sniping, it seems that neither are really paying attention. It seems that the first prisoner isn't aware that he's here now. So, he turns a deaf ear to the ravings of the other Hero, being sure to focus on the two in the cell with him.

White-Out's expression darkens and regards him with a bit more interest their previous interactions. "So that makes nine then?" Inquires the Hero and there isn't a reply from the insane Elf, just a smirk.

"Some how, I find myself rather disappointed with this one." Remarks White-Out and he mentally sighs as Ultimate Doom's all defensive and offended over that causal remark. "Come now, he didn't capture me, he didn't do any of the hard work, just played off of the greed of the Players."

"I find it rather bemusing that your... Players would even consider twelve thousand gold to be a good amount to betray one of their own." He comments before Ultimate Doom could fall for the ploy the Hero is aiming for in a rather smooth tone. "In my mind, it's a rather insulting amount but then, I guess what I've heard about the current generation of Walking Legends and Wonder Makers concerning their mismanaging of their own funds and seemingly lacking the skills to barter are very true."

Ultimate Doom chuckles, clearly pleased with how he defused the Hero's comment. "That's one of the reasons why he's my favorite." States Ultimate Doom and White-Out is eyeing the two of them with a surprisingly good blank look.

"Give our previous discussion, I would have thought your... preferences would be towards the more... volatile temperament, particularly towards that Werewolf Boss of yours." White-Out comments in a dry and matter of fact tone. He doesn't need to glance at Ultimate Doom to know that the other Elf's mood has swiftly altered.

"Oh, I do just so *love* the others but at the same time, there's just something to be said for someone who knows their proper place in my organization and prove themselves capable of long term planning." Ultimate Doom remarks and he doesn't like how true that comment was as he keeps his thoughts from showing. The insane Elf approaches near White-Out and taps the collar. "We won't be

having that... conversation again, I can't have you or your Quirk around to spoil my plans."

"And just what are you so afraid of? Don't think I didn't notice how quick your anger turned to concern or would the better term be fright?" *Oh?*

Withdrawing the hand, Ultimate Doom turns sharply. "Bring him." The insane Elf states.

"Might I inquire as to his fate?" He asks as he casually uses a paralyze spell upon the Elf Hero. Already moving to unlock the shackles, curious if he'll get an answer while his mind races in how to keep the insane Elf from making off with the Hero.

"Hmm..." It's clear that Ultimate Doom isn't sure himself. He easily swings the now unshackled Hero over his shoulder and politely waits for the insane Elf to figure something out.

"Shackle him back up, I have something to research." And with that, the insane Elf vanishes in a whirl of shadows. He casts a spell of silence upon the cell and then gently puts the Elf Hero down, being sure the back is near the wall and moves to stand by the door, waiting for the Hero to recover as he mentally works on how to get some trust out of the Elf so that he can get a measure of the truth.

White-Out scowls and moves to get up, but there's interest there, in those eyes. "What is it that you want, Devil?" The Hero finally asks but makes no move to pull out a weapon.

"I'm a Devil, what do you think I want?" He muses with a hint of amusement. The Hero scowls and tugs on the collar but he can see through the mask of neutral blankness.

"To be betray him, I think." Finally White-Out states. "I want free of him, yes, but I'm more interested in what power your... Quirk is and whether it can help me get pass a mental block that I seem to possess."

"You see, there are... inconsistencies concerning between what life I know I lived and the emotions I seem to possess." Draven finally admits after taking a second to consider how to explain it. Eyes widen slightly but the other clamps down on the emotion.

"And how do I know that once I helped you that I won't find myself... Well, tossed aside." Remarks White-out. Both studying each other in a wary kind of way.

"You don't." He agrees before adding, "But, for some reason, I think you'll want to take me up on this offer."

"And how, do you plan to go about winning my trust?" White-Out inquires and he gives the Hero a thin smile. "Why, not being shackled to the wall."

"Which means you expect me to not try and leave this cell then." The Elf muses. "Well, trust has to be given in order to be earned." He informs the Hero.

"Devils are two face." Remarks the Elf Hero with a frown. "Hardly our fault that the Order don't like employing magically binding contracts or teaches how to properly use and read Fae Runic Language." Draven states with a simple shrug.

"... You mean those things are actual things?" White-Out asks in a tone of disbelief and he moves quickly and moves the Hero's wrist, feeding a bit of magic into the skin before White-Out pulls away, but he activates the Gods' Marking. Within seconds, the layers of the Seal, a total of twenty-four, is on display. "Why yes, they do exist." He says in a dry tone, White-Out doesn't really look away form the slowly rotating Seal that makes up the Gods' Marking which is a magical contract between the Hero or Support to the Pantheon of Gods that Order worship.

The Gods' Marking slowly withdraw back into the wrist and he waits for White-Out to speak. It's clear that none of the priesthood have done much to teach the current generation of Heroes and Support,

which really should be surprising yet, it doesn't. He's reviewed the previous generations of Walking Legends and Wonder Makers and it's clear that something more is going on among the Order's ranks, perhaps it's due to such a large gap of time between the previous and current generation, but there seems to be corruption among the Order, one that reaches into the priesthood it seems.

White-Out manages to spark the Gods' Marking and once more, the magical Seal appears but not in its total layers. "These markings are Fae Runes?" Asks White-Out as the Hero finally look up at him, there's excitement in those blue eyes.

"Yes, the Runes the Gods of Order use are called the Light set. The ones Orcs and the goblin breeds are the Blood set." He answers, not sure if he really should be sharing this but, being a source of likely needful information... Yes, White-Out won't be leaving, not now, the price of keeping him here is rather cheap all things considered.

"How many sets are there?" White-Out asks and he replies, "Hard to say, really, there's the Pure sets and then there's the Patchwork sets. It's hard to say what which sets are which, only the Gentry likely know and they left ages ago, heading into the black expanse instead of crafting a dimensional world of their own."

"Fine, I won't try to leave." White-Out states after frowning and running a hand through his hair. Now to figure out how to prevent Ultimate Doom from entering right into the cell without any warning. He thinks to himself as he gives a nod of acknowledgement.

He leaves and locks the door behind him, content that things were looking up.

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Shinsou allows himself to relax now that Gentleman Draven Ose is gone for a few minutes, the silence spell also fade and he can hear Lord_Murder|Exploder shouting out abuse. Yea, nobody really cared that the Adventurer Player had vanished and nobody has heard from

him for almost two months. He accesses his Inventory and pulls out his sleeping bag plus something to eat.

Calling up his Friend List, he selects ErasingError and begins to type out a report, namely how he got turned in, the names of those Players who let their greed overcome their common sense, and then mentioning about Gentleman Draven Ose, his relationship as serving under Ultimate Doom and it seems that the shackles of the cells interfere with use of his Character Menu. His gaze strays towards his wrist and sports that Gods' Marking, suddenly wondering if it the just something that's typical when it comes to any shackles, after all, the metal does cover the spot rather easily.

He puts that into the message along with the information the Devil mentioned concerning the Runic language along with mentioning that there is such a thing as a magical contract and it sounds like the Order doesn't employ them. Then he explains how to bring up the Gods' Marking, questioning why none of the NPCs of the Order bothered to demonstrate how to call up the magical Seal that makes up the Gods' Marking. He also mentions that it seems that the Devil is going to try and win his trust, as he's not shackled to the wall but he's been asked not to try and leave his cell.

Shinsou mentions that his Quirk is being canceled due to a collar and that, there's hope that he could get the Devil to remove it. He doesn't trust this Devil but, well, he doesn't have to trust the Devil, just trust that he'll uphold his bargain. He does mention Lord_Murder|Exploder being held here, it's more of an after thought.

He sends the message and then eats some jerky to get rid of his hunger condition, along with the phantom pangs of hunger. With that, he moves into the sleeping bag and for the first time since his capture, he actually gets a restful sleep.

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Sitting on the chair and across from Draven, the leopard themed Devil is studying the game board upon the table. It's been two weeks

going on three since that visit from Ultimate Doom and the Devil has visited him four days after, their discussion had been short but he get a few questions answered and put in a request for a book, due to him being bored. A guard delivered a book in the afternoon, it was different then the books he's usually found within the Order's Libraries, for one, the author was a Minotaur and for another, the tale's tone was different, likely due to the influence of what culture the Minotaur race came from if he were forced to guess.

It also somehow was suitable for his mood, even if sported too much drama for his taste and the tragedies within could be avoided if they just talked with one another or by employing common sense, well, what he thinks is common sense. Still, the next day, Draven arrives and inquires if he wished for another book or if he's still not done reading the first. Which led to him criticizing the book and it's clear that the Devil finds his thoughts of the book to be amusing.

Returning the book, the Devil left and that afternoon, he gets another book, this time, it's a collection of short stories. The collector being a Hobgoblin. Each story was clearly from different races, including a few from Order belonging races. There's at least two stories from each race, some are what you'd expect and others... not so much. Which might be why the Hobgoblin put which story came from what race at the back of the book.

And now, he's out of the cell for the second time, the previous time had been so he could use the bathing pool. That had been two days previously and now, since he is following ErasingError's order concerning learning the basics of the Fae Runic Language, he's being taught a game that's not unlike scramble only with a more magical bend. The game is that of a child's and he's not sure about which race created it, after all, the Devil doesn't fully know the rules that well himself, he's only got an edge due to being more familiar with the Runic language.

"Devil made?" He finally asks curiously. "Rakshasa." His foe states while focus totally on his titles with a look of concentration.

Huh. He kind of felt that Draven is telling the truth. "You... look different then your... underlings." He notes and the Devil sitting across from him snorts.

"Of course I do, I'm born to the House Ose." The leopard themed Devil states as if it explained everything, but, it kind of doesn't, to him. Draven turns a few tiles before sighing, taking a blue gem, he places it on the board, signaling he's passing his turn.

"So all members of House Ose look similar to you?" He asks curious as he lays out two of his tiles, completing a Seal, which earns him all the gems that's on the board. The Devil discards all four of his tiles and draws from the blank pile, they light up with a bit of magic on the side the gray skinned Devil holds up at himself.

"No, there are some who's other House parentage shine through a touch more strongly then the House they are born in." Explains the Devil. "And if they prove they have more in common with that other House, then the Head of House, in the case of my own, it will be the President of House Ose, either approaches or is approached by either the other Head of House or, if the House is of higher standing, by a representative of that House concerning the transference of said Devil to the other House."

"These Houses are Nobility for Devils." He muses. Which explains the differences in appearances.

"We Devils have Seventy-two Pillar Houses, President tier is the lowest among the Nobility with King tier being the highest." Draven informs him, taking a moment to study him. "And yes, all the Devils I have hired are what we term common Devils."

"Can't afford to hire another Noble or is it more due to fear of being over thrown?" Draven chuckles and he blinks, kind of taken back by the sudden expression of emotion. "While old enough to be out on our own, to survive by out own devices, we are not yet considered adults by our Races standards. The life span of a Pillar Devil are far greater then that of a non-Pillar Devil."

"Simply put, we each get some funds and are allowed to leave the Underworld in pursuit of our personal desires or indulging in baser instincts." He blinks while the Devil continues. "As long as we do so outside of the Underworld, we are allowed a great deal of freedom until we either die before our times due to our ill thought out choice of life style or we manage to live to be a century of age, returning to our respective House much wiser and ready to settle into productive roles within our House, all the while seeking opportunities to advance ourselves within our Houses social ladder."

"So... your pretty much a teenager in your race's eyes." Shinsou summarizes and Draven clearly doesn't see the point in commenting for or against that assumption. He finds it kind of interesting and on some level making him a touch more confident in regards to dealing with the Devil, after all, it's clear that the Devil is young and still starting out concerning this stage of life as an independent teenager. Then again, it's clear that, as a Noble, the other has received training in social skills meant to allow him to command over those lower then his own social standing, both the positive and negative.

And yet he makes better company then most that I can name off the top of my head. He mentally admits with a touch of sourness. It's tiring dealing with the swears and empty threats of his fellow captive.

A few rounds and he finally asks, "Why haven't you killed him?" The Devil raises a slight eyebrow and he expands, "Lord_Murder|Exploder."

There's a slight look of confusion in those purple eyes before the other gets it. "Ah, that one. There's no point in killing him, he'll just revive at an Order Graveyard or Temple and given his character, likely try hunting me down after recruiting others." *Ok, point to you.* "After all, he can't escape nor cause harm beyond that to ones ears from the volume of his voice these days. His cussing isn't very creative nor does he seem to thrive very well without an audience who is overly responsive, in either regard of positivity or negativity."

Huh. That's something to think about. He mentally admits. It's times like this that he feels like he's talking to an actual person and not some well crafted AI meant to act out a NPC.

"And until I arrived, you and your underlings can easily just avoid the cells, so there wasn't any point in investing in a permanent silencing spell on his cell." He remarks and Draven hums in agreement. "So, why did you capture him in the first place?"

"I was curious if I could hold one of you indefinitely without needing to feed him or provide drink." Remarks the Devil. "It has been... an interesting endeavor and rather enlightening."

He's not sure how he feels about that, then again, it's true that it's not like they actually need to eat or drink, it's just simple phantom sensations that can be ignored. "You haven't been... You know, doing anything else?" He asks.

"Brought in a Healer to ensure that he wasn't suffering any harm from lack of food and drink." The other finally admits after studying him for a minute. "What we found most interesting as to do with the lack of waste and ill body odor. It was rather puzzling, I thought I'd at least have to move him from cell to cell in order to clean up any messes."

It's clear that it baffles the Devil every so slightly and he guesses he could maybe see where the NPC is coming from. "No torturing him?" And Draven sighs softly, "No point, he's not someone who possess much in the way of empathy and is rather self centered. We're all 'data' trash this one day, the next fucking bits of shitty 'coding' mob that, etc, etc."

"And if your not careful, he'd die from said torture." He notes and Draven's lips turn up every so slightly but doesn't reply. Then again, that's telling enough and, well, yea, it seems that until somebody decides to rally a large enough raiding party of Players to storm this fort, Lord_Murder|Exploder is safe and not bullying anyone verbally or otherwise.

Looking down at his tiles, he does his best to remind himself that this Devil will be turning him over to Ultimate Doom, after all said and done. And yet, he can't help but find himself growing rather fond of the Devil simply due to the fact that the guy hasn't gone back on his word.

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A guard knocks on the door, waking him. "Put the stuff away, we're about to get a visit from that Elf. Gentleman Ose says to tell you if you put the shackles on yourself, you'll be able to get out of them as well." With that, the Devil heads off and it takes him a few seconds to mutter a curse.

Shinsou does put the sleeping bag away and frowns as he studies the shackles, not sure if he should trust whatever it is that Draven had planned. In the end, he moves and testing the shackles around his feet, he can close and open them, he bites his lower lip but does shackle himself to the wall, wondering just what the Devil's plan is concerning Ultimate Doom. Being nervous, it feels like time is passing by far too slowly.

Then the door opens, slamming slightly against the wall, which wakes the other prisoner, who does what he typically does and spews repeating insults and curse words. Then he jerks at the sight of the insane Elf looking at him through the barred window of the door. "Still haven't relieved him of his weapons or armor?"

"The Human's manners might improve if he was wearing the appropriate attire." Response Draven in a rather neutral tone. There's more cursing coming from Lord_Murder|Exploder.

"And you didn't see fit to do the same for this one?" Even he knows that's a trap and yet, it seems that the Devil seems to know how to disarm it. "I apology for not thinking to dress your prisoner up as my own prisoner."

Oh... Good one. He couldn't help but think. "He is mine." Muses Ultimate Doom and the Elf moves back, he watches as Draven stands before the door, then opens it, moving to the side like a well mannered butler, allowing the unstable Player into the cell. "It's good to see you once again, aren't you happy to see me? I'm sure your stay here isn't what it could have been."

"I've been well enough and are you who I file complaints with concerning my stay? I mean, I kind of have this major one but your pet Devil didn't see fit to fulfill it." He remarks drily.

"Oh, and what request was that?" And the guy just walks right into that one. "My freedom." Is the easy reply and emotions flicker about before the insane Player choices to laugh.

He keeps his eyes on Ultimate Doom given that he's pretty sure that Draven is exercising his social training in this little encounter. "Well, yes, that issue. Oh, don't worry, you'll have your freedom... from this cell." He does his best to not flinch at the reminder of why the Elf is here.

"Oh yes, I have something planned for you." There's a wide, predatory smirk with eyes glinting with dark amusement. "I'm sure it wouldn't hurt... much."

"So, time spent behind another set of bars and still no room service? I think I'll pass as I have enough of that here." He remarks. "I might not have visited your establishment as of yet, but I think I know I have a better thing going on here, with your pet." He kind of expects a glare but a lazy look sent the Devil's way shows very little in the way of emotion nor does the pose seem to give anything away.

"Maybe after I'm done with you, I'll return you to my favorite's possession." Remarks the Player. "Unshackle him, I'll be taking him."

"Of course." And he's hit with a paralyzing spell before Draven approaches, and like before, the Devil asks the all important

question, "I hope your previous testing went well in preparation for this one's fate."

"Testing! Who needs... I mean, it should..." He's on the Devil's shoulder now as Ultimate Doom muddles with worry and personal pride.

"Perhaps we should take my other prisoner along to ensure that your course of action will result in what it is you aim for." Suggests the Devil, he'd relax if he could when it looks like the Player considers the suggestion. "You know, this is the second time you've offered that one to me." Muses the most likely real life Villain.

"If he is not to your liking then perhaps I should fetch you another? After all, if he dies then all this work in retrieving him goes to waste." *Like you actually worked to get me in the first place.* He thinks sourly at the Devil.

"Damn it, you're right! And I really wanted to turn him into a huge, blood thirsty monster!" Whines Ultimate Doom like a child and he's not sure if he should be thrilled at the stalling tactic or guilty because it could lead to other Players getting targeted. Then again, this is Lord_Murder|Exploder that's being offered and that guy... nobody likes him.

"We can take both and if everything works out, then you will have two huge, blood thirsty monsters." Reasons Draven. He's amazed at how much like a spoiled brat the Player is that the suggestion seems to brighten up Ultimate Doom's face, like it didn't occur to him before that he could have two in rapid succession.

Wouldn't take much for the blood thirsty part with that one. He mentally muses as said prisoner continues to hurl curses and threats about without even realizing he's subject of a discussion, that his fate is being decided. The irony is, if the other would shut up for a few seconds, he might have been able to realize the danger he's in.

"Well, if he's unneeded..." Ultimate Doom remarks. "He's served his purpose some time ago." Assures Draven. "Then I accept."

The Devil waits for the other Elf Player to exit out of the door. "We will be entering negotiations after this, Hero." Murmurs the Devil before following after the Player.

He would have stiffen if he could, jerk his head and looked at the Devil. After all, nobody ever called any of the Players that, although they mention them being heroic, but that could be switched out with brave. In fact, there's no linkage between an Adventurer or Laborer sporting the title of Hero. In fact, most NPCs act like the word doesn't even exist nor do they seem to register the word if one asked them for a random tale concerning a local Hero, you'd just be asked about 'what kind of story are you interested in again?'

So, how can he know of that word? Never mind think to call me one?

To be continued . . .

Halloween Episode, My Style Part 10

I don't own **ANYTHING** !

Author Note: Just a little something for 2018 Halloween.

October 31st

"Beware the former knight, for he has become greatest of foes!

For there is a dragon heart beating where a man's should!"

The world spins and there's hints of rainbow flaring at the edge of his vision. It reminds him of something yet, as Sieg tries to focus on the information, it evades him and yet, the world suddenly comes into sharp focus as tiny... beings are racing around, chasing children around. Sounds roar to his ears and the former Master of Rider of Black tries to understand the hows and whys of his location.

A look at the back of both of his hands are clean, no Command Seals nor discolored skin or the beginnings of scales. It's the weight of a familiar belt and the sheath plus sword causes him to regard his clothing, which is odd as last he recalled, he had been transformed into a dragon, a clone of the great dragon Fafnir, and had journeyed to the Reverse Side of the World with the Greater Grail. He can not fully recall if he reached the end of that journey yet...

"Am I dreaming?" The Homunculus wonders in English. Then there's a cry for help and he surges forward in the direction, pushing the matter to the side as he moves to defend the elderly woman being clawed at by the tiny beings. "Begone!" He cries out as he kicks one off of her and then throwing another off.

"Hurry! Get in the house and lock the door!" He orders as he helps pull the woman up, she is clearly shaken yet is quick to do as he says. With that, he glances around and is already on the move,

there's other people who need him as he's pretty sure that there are far deadlier beings roaming this night then just these short monstrosities.

After all, it's the right thing to do and that's all the reason for Sieg to act.

"No Slayer wander this night, for in her place a Crimson-Haired Princess reigns this night.

She is but one of a Heavenly Emperor's loves."

Rias is fairly sure that she doesn't want to know how she went from trying on wedding dresses with her Peerage and members of Issei's own Peerage to being here, on her own. The illusion upon her hair is gone, her crimson color once more on display and she'd been on the move, after all, she is Heir to her House, the younger sister of the current Lucifer, and the King of the current Red Dragon Emperor. While she could deal with the strange beings that are rampaging upon the street, the Crimson-Hair Ruin Princess needed to find a secure location and hope that she can summon or contact her Queen or her Rook, Rossweisse.

It takes her sometime to find a place to duck into, she's fortunate that there's a few people trying to manage the horde of short terrors by knocking them out or tying them up. Feeling a touch calmer, the Pure Blood Devil finally notices that there's something... She frowns as she tries to pin point what it is about this place that excites her so, that causes her to feel like she should just...

Let go... For a second, the lure of calling upon her inherit powers and taking to the air... There's insane chuckling and it breaks her out of that lull, she blinks as she finds herself ready to leap into the air, feeling her wings primed to come out.

Looking up at the sky, the source is some odd human that sports a long pony tail that... "Is that moving on its own?" There's a sound of

metal clanking against one another.

The opponent is a swordsman in old Japanese attire. Light red hair and a cross scar upon a cheek... Her eyes widen as she realizes who it is fighting against the odd, maybe human with a stinger in the point tail. After all, she's an otaku and there's only one character who fights with a sword like that while fitting that description of a crimson hair swordsman with a cross scar upon that side of the fact.

Rurouni Kenshin... Kenshin Himura! Rias thinks as she finds herself holding her hands as if in prayer. She sighs in disappointment as she pats her self down to see if she has one of her Evil Pieces but there's none on her and the fighting has already changed locations.

Sighing, Rias Gremory leaves the alleyway and begins to search for said swordsman to see if she can't talk him into escorting her for a time. After all, there shouldn't be any harm in at least asking, right?

"The spirit of a child of Loki's familia waits for the dawn to set all things right.

She's who should be the boldest of the three is not but the watcher for this weary night."

This place is... troubling. Ais admits to herself. There's no familiar stone walls of the Dungeon nor does it appear to be any ceiling above.

The monsters are not ones she's familiar with, never mind the streets or the strange wagons. It does not help that she is unable to interact with this place in anyway as well. There's a body by her feet that's covered in a white sheet.

She does not venture far from the body and none of the odd monsters seem incline to test her skills with Desperate, which she is wearing. *Perhaps it has to do with the look upon my face?* The War

Princess of Loki Familia muses. She is reminded of Bell and his reactions at times.

"Oh hey, what's with that look on your face?" Blinking, Ais Wallenstein finds that there's a young woman wearing a white dress with blue eyes plus crimson hair on the wooden steps, looking at her with interest if she were to judge the look upon the other young woman's face. "You... didn't kill... whoever that is, did you?" There's a hint of something in the other woman's voice.

"No, I had not. When I felt the world snap into focus, it was there." She answers. "There does not seem to be any obvious signs of injury."

The blue eyes move from her to the body and with surprising boldness, the other approaches and they both seem to pause when the other moves through her. She's unable to make sense of it, taking her first real steps away from the spot that she had been observing the flow of happenings around her. There's a look in those blue eyes that she is slightly familiar with and a slightly sad smile upon the other's face. "Your a ghost of some kind."

"Perhaps." The Adventurer allows while pressing her lips together afterwards. "There are strange happenings this night."

The pity and sadness fades as clear agreement flickers upon the other's face. "True. There is something about this place that..." There's something flickering, trying to take hold within the other woman's face and eyes, the eyes bleed crimson for a few seconds before the other woman recovers her bearings.

"Well, let's see if we can solve this mystery at least." And with that, the white sheet moves to uncover someone wearing her equipment only the young woman clearly doesn't look a thing like Ais herself. The woman glances from the dead girl that seems to dressed up as her and at Ais herself.

"I'm Rias Gremory." The other introduces herself and Ais replies in kind, "Ais Wallenstein." She isn't sure if she should include her status of Adventurer or membership to the Loki Familia, after all, it doesn't look like either would mean much.

"I'd ask you to help but I think you can't do much in your state." Rias states with a soft sigh and she tilts her head just so to show that is true. Ais watches as the crimson haired woman picks up the body after recovering it at least.

"There can be things that can do horrible things with the dead." Ais gets the feeling that she means other then eating the corpse. She merely gives a sharp nod before moving down the steps, it is obvious that Rias has some experience with said 'horrible' things.

"Well! Which direction did you want to venture towards first?" Asks Rias as they come near the end of the lawn of the house. She isn't sure herself, yet thankfully, someone marches right up to her, another woman wearing rather scandalous clothing in black with a headband sporting cloth 'ears' and a stuffed tail.

The woman opens her mouth only for it to close and actually study her face, much to Ais' confusion. "Great, just great..." The latest arrival muses in clear exasperation.

"Excuse me but what seems to be the matter?" Inquires Rias and the scandalous young woman's head snaps towards the crimson haired woman. Who then blinks before eyes dropping down onto... Ah yes, the cloth covered body.

"Willow? Is that... Willow in your arms?" There's a hint of some emotion in the other woman's voice.

"Willow?" Muses Rias in a curious tone. "The teen did have red hair, although she had been dressed as my associate here." There's a slight incline towards Ais.

There's a sound of acknowledgement from the other and she glances between Rias and her, there's a look of puzzlement and clear studying going on concerning the crimson haired woman. "Your dress..." The woman moves to circle Rias twice before a look of complete disbelief settles on her face, Rias tries to share a look of puzzlement yet she's a touch more focus on studying the other woman, realizing that they could get some information from her.

"You recognize the dress but not the one wearing it." Ais states in her calm and confident matter of fact tone. "This Willow had been wearing cloths similar to my own under that sheet."

"Willow always dresses as a ghost on Halloween." The stranger states in a dismissive tone but Rias' does a sharp in take of breath within seconds of hearing that. "Ghost... But she was also dressed up like you Ais and you are fairly ghostly..."

She isn't sure what to make of that but, it sounds about right. "You think that is why I am as I am, that I am that young woman under some kind of enchantment." Ais states.

"And that explains the various fictional people I've run into! But that means..." And here, Rias' eyes wide as she comes to the same conclusion as she did. "You are enchanted as well." One of the executives of the Loki Familia reasons.

There's a narrowing of Rias eyes, it's clear that this news is very unwelcome. "Well then, first, let's get this Willow some place safe and then, hunt out the source of the magic." It's clear that Rias is not human, not, whatever she is, the crimson haired woman is willing to see to the safety of the magically induced unconscious young woman in her arms before hunting down the source.

"Buffy's place isn't far from here." States the still unnamed young woman and with a sigh, the other leads them to said house.

Xander isn't sure what to make of, well, everything. As Sieg, former Master of Astolfo, leaves him along with whoever else had been inhabiting the foes that Sieg, Ichigo, Ranma, and Kagome had been teamed up to fight also leave, he isn't sure what to make of, well, himself. There had been other people Sieg had fought along side and against in saving people, it feels like days have passed only it's likely been a good seven hours.

The sword in his hand is once more plastic and it feels odd in his hand. With a sigh, he puts it into the sheath that's hanging from his sword belt. Glancing at those who'd been possessed by his allies, it seems that they, too, seem to find themselves also feeling surreal about their previous situation and, perhaps, their current one.

"Are you guys...?" His voice isn't the same as it should be and he does his best to push pass the rising emotions. The other three all jerk before turning to look at him, giving him a better look at each of them.

Each of the three no longer look like the people they had been just minutes ago and yet, he can spy the lingering traits from the possession of those people. The now taller woman sports Kagome's blue eyes and when she speaks, there's a slight look of surprise and panic in her eyes. "That... that happened, right?"

"Yea, yea it did." The now ten year old who'd been possessed by Ranma agrees. The voice doesn't have any hints of Ranma in it but, watching the kid take in his body and the way the cloths seem to droop, looking to be two sizes to big... There's streaks of navy blue hair in hair that is a honey brown.

"Fuck!" Curses the more then likely university student. The orange hair has darken but it's the sword that gets all of their attention as it's not the meat cleaver that Ichigo's had been. It's a katana sword, there's an etched design upon the flat surface of the sword that is of a cat sporting twin tails with fire wisps. "Damn it!"

"What?" Asks the kid and the almost twenty year old puts the sword away. "Ichigo. He was... leaking a lot of Reiryoku, he never got around to trying to dim the flow so..."

"So..." The woman trails off. "It effects... What was the range?" He asks in a voice that is now his own.

"It could have spread thinly throughout Sunnydale but it would have pooled in locations where he'd been fighting, hanging in the air more densely." Explains the now orange haired swordsman. "Fuck! Just what happened?! Since I mean, this is some kind of fucked up shit! We became our costumes."

"No, we invited the spirits of people from other realities to borrow our bodies for a time." He corrects them all and all three look at him. "Sieg... He was a magic user. When he checked himself over, he realized he was possessing me and though he tried to talk with me... Something prevented that and decided to call the condition of everyone involved, Demi-Servants."

"Demi-Servants?" It's clear where they are getting lost. "Servants are a kind of Familiar that are called upon during a Heaven's Feel. They are the copies of dead Heroes from a place called the Throne of Heroes and are summoned under a certain Class."

"Oh..." There's clear relief in all of their voice and there's also a few more voices. Glancing around, it seems their foes are coming closer, clearly wary but, well, also spooked by their own changes.

"Sieg ended up a Master in a Heaven's Feel, making a pact with Rider of Black." Xander explains. "The Ruler of that war had been Joan of Arc, who had ended up asking permission to posses a young teen by the name of Laeticia."

"We each dressed up in costumes for various reasons and someone... They made it into a kind of contract, that by wearing the cloths and such, we were willing to be possessed by that someone we dressed up as." He continues. "Sieg... He just didn't know how it

was possible for so many people from so many different worlds could end up being Summoned though."

Xander bites his lip as he turns his head, looking towards his high school. "Sieg didn't have time to investigate that but, I knew the how it was possible." *Ironic, that.*

"How?" The woman who had been possessed by someone named Lust asks, there's a hint of anger there. "Sunnydale was built on a Hell Mouth. It's a dimensional weak spot and while it's likely more incline to access... hellish dimensions, it doesn't mean it can't reach beyond them." Xander is just so tired and wants to leave, either go home to get some sleep or search throughout Sunnydale for Buffy and Willow.

"Things have cross into our dimension." There's a finality in the formerly possessed Ichigo's voice. "Blood Demons needing human corpses as meat suits to survive in our dimension called Vampires. Demons of various... breeds with various needs, some needing to feed on humans while others just try to co-exist."

"Magic is... Real?" Inquires the kid who'd been possessed by Ranma. "Kind of? It's hard to say, given that this world use to be a hell itself, once upon a time." He admits and it's clear everyone has different thoughts concerning that idea.

"Look, there's a Watcher at Sunnydale High School and he's good at telling that story along with sporting book about that kind of hidden society." He really is tried and feels someone place a comforting hand on his left shoulder. "Just tired." He explains to the former archer.

"He's not the only one... Tired that is..." Yawns the kid, who looks sheepish.

"Yea, it's been..." The former leader, who'd been possessed by a Lord Mao, who had been a Demon, who is a preteen boy sporting white hair but the eyes and ears had returned to normal. "I mean, we

have a location to meet up for answers and, well, the police should be starting to make their rounds..."

There's a questioning look from the former Demon Lord. "Maybe, now that the fighting is done but it also means that the actual Demons and Vampires will also be coming out to check out what's what." He admits and they all still.

"Fuck..." As the realization that they can't just leave hits them. "If any of them..." He realizes how bad an idea that is, after all, if they have even a minor sliver of the powers of those who possessed them, then it's a bad idea to not ensure that the others aren't made aware and escorted home or brought to a safe location.

Feeling a second wind fill him, they are quick to pick a buddy and begin to search for others who are likely at a loss of what happened to them and might have some changes to them from being possessed.

The changes caused due to Halloween sits ill at ease upon Buffy's mind. What trait she received from being possessed by the Devil named Rias Gremory wasn't much besides red highlights in her hair. Then again, she hadn't encountered the person who got possessed by one Ichigo Kurosaki, who's spiritual energy spilled over during fighting to 'drench' those within said area and also lingered at those sites. It's been the cause of how people kept so much from those who possessed them as the energy help leave deep impressions within the hosts.

And because of that... The Slayer glances towards drugged bodies of kids who are casualties of that night as they dressed up as 'generic' monsters and now, now those traits and more importantly instincts easily overwhelmed the kids they had been. It likely doesn't help that all the demons of this world actually have human blood in them, it also means that there are humans out there with blood of demons within them, dormant but could get triggered in the right circumstances...

They have people looking up ways to seal or weaken the demonic influence on those kids and the few teens. It's rather bemusing to know that the group includes Xander these days. Then again, his magical abilities give him an upper hand on making sure they aren't over or under dosing the kids and teens. *Structure Analysis, how is that not a cheat?* She wonders, what little she recalls about magic from Rias' world, it doesn't involve the ability to just look at something and get an info dump about the make up of said something.

As she continues to make the rounds through the make shift med ward, Buffy's thoughts turn toward's the changes within Willow. While Wills' body hadn't been overly affected, her friend's mentality and magic have been. Upon Wills has some kind of tattoo on her back thought, it's suppose to be a Blessing of Loki and yes, they did get a visitation from said deity and the Norse God seem to imply that he'll be visiting again in the future, if only to 'update' the Blessing, which didn't seem to disturb Wills one bit, she merely nodded as if that's to be expected.

Then again, she's won each of our spars... In fact, she doesn't seem to break much of a sweat in our spars... Which is annoying as Buffy is the Slayer and thus, she should be able to win without a lot of effort, after all, Willow never used a sword before. Yet, her red head friend seems to always win. It's slowly frustrating her and Wills has tried to explain what the Blessing was and how it's help anchor Ais' combat skills but, well, she finds it hard to swallow as Wills body hasn't really changed, she doesn't suddenly have more muscles nor does she seem overly concerned about her figure either. Then there's how emotionless Wills is during their spars and yet, how it seems that without the kind of passion a fight stirs up, Wills seems to win and there's something almost galling about her manner in winning.

And then the others have tried to get her to spar with them some more. Which is a hassle, after all, she's sparred with some of the others and have beaten, so she there's no reason to spar with them.

"So, when will you spar with Xander?" She blinks and turns to look at one Gerald, the kid who ended up possessed by Ranma Saotome. "Actually, when will we have a go at it?"

"Why would I want to do that? Your just a kid." She asks. "As for Xander, he's a mojo guy now, I doubt he'd be that good with a sword." Buffy states and Gerald just stares at her before snorting, turning on his heel, the kid walks away while chuckling.

Honestly, she's the Slayer and they, in the end, are still the same people they were from before. Yea, they got some new quirks and slight power boosts but they will never match her. Turning from watching Gerald walk out of the room, Buffy wonders if she should visit the Bronze, after all, Angel might be there and she hasn't seen him as much as she'd like this last month.

"She won't because she thinks I'm only just a kid." Gerald states and Willow sighs but it's to be expected, really. Buffy's no longer the only power house in Sunnydale and is clinging firmly on the past, refusing to acknowledge that the past is just that, the past.

"Has her head always been up her ass?" Gerald asks and Beatrice, or Rice, gives the kid a look about his language but doesn't say a world. "He's not wrong, she's firmly sticking her head in the sand and doing her best to ignore how much more effort she needed to win in those spars." She admits and the pair look at her.

"Or how much we could have improved." Rice muses, she'd dressed as Lust on Halloween. Her ability is altering her nails into actual claws, claws that grow to cover her finger tips, encasing them in the nail.

"And we are, aren't we?" Gerald asks, looking towards her. "Yes, you all have and will continue to improve as you find your limits then figure out ways to go beyond them." And she knows that to be true.

Gerald and Rice both seem to relax along with smile slightly in pleasure to hear such praise. With Ais' knowledge of how a Familia operates, she's done her best to set up a bare bones structured frame work, the others seem to find it easy enough to follow. Of course, it's altered as needed but it works for now. They are doing their best to support one another along with finding ways to ease money problems as they have plans concerning how to address the problem that is the Hell Mouth and how it attracts so many demons, namely the ones commonly called vampires.

"You plan to follow her?" She asks Rice as Buffy leaves the med ward. "It's more then likely she'll head for the Bronze."

"In search of that cursed vampire." Rice agrees. "She's rather predictable." The other woman says with a sigh.

"She doesn't patrol all that much, does she?" Gerald remarks. "I mean, yea, there's a lot of ground to cover but Sunnydale kind of shuts down at night, well, unless they cater to the night life. So she could do some roof hopping without worrying about anyone questioning her."

"Buffy isn't one for out of the box thinking outside of combat." Loki's Blessed Child admits. "I think it's a lingering issue of her still wanting a normal life, of being normal."

"Any idea about who Rias Gremory was? Maybe it's also something that's lingering from the crimson haired woman?" Rice asks and she gives it some thought.

"Rias wasn't human." She feels confident in that assessment. "She also was obsessed with various Japanese anime and manga."

"Obessed... Oh..." Gerald then snorts. "She's an otaku! Rias was an otaku!"

"Otaku?" Rice voices the question that crossed her mind. "Yes, I wouldn't be surprised if she also was someone interested in cos-

playing too along with Japanese games."

The budding martial artist pipes in.

"Which means that obsession could be altered into something Buffy already slightly obsessed with, which is being normal." Willow muses and that means that when this obsession of a normal life finally shatters, Buffy isn't going to be in a good place. *Which means, should we be the ones to break it or should we leave it for someone else to do it?*

There's no good answer to that and both were going to break Buffy. "She's going to hate us." Muses Rice softly and she can only nods with a slightly sad smile.

"Either way, yes, she will, either for doing so in a controlled manner or for preventing an enemy from doing so." *We'd be reminders that she'd been lying to herself, that we were stronger then her when it came to dealing with the aftermath of Halloween.* Loki's Blessed Child acknowledges.

Her relationship with Buffy isn't what it once was and until Buffy accepts the changes, there's not going to be any healthy friendship between them. *Damn it, Xander was right.* The red head admits. Neither Ais nor she herself were good at understanding people but Xander does and he's only gotten more keen along with confident in that regards.

They've talked about not just their friendship, past and current but their friendship with Buffy. Xander's the one who tried to get her to realize that Buffy isn't really dealing with the events of Halloween. That she was doing her best to ignore certain elements of reality that didn't fit in her mental world view. That Buffy's going to break before she can face the fully situation going on around her. *And I owe him an apology.* She thinks with a hint of guilt. She had said a number of things meant to hurt him before she left.

"Going to be speaking to Xander soon?" Rice muses and she gives the observant woman a slight nod. "Yes, I will be."

"Good, cause he misses talking with you." Gerald states and she gives the kid a nod in acknowledgement. Yes, they've conversed with one another about official matters but she never really moved to talk with him about other matters once those meetings were done.

"Well, looks like I'm off." Rice says and with that, the other woman leaves. "Kitchen?" Asks Gerald and she gives the kid a slight smile before leading him to the kitchen they set up within the warehouse.

They find a rice cooker and a pair of dishes simmering on the stove, there's a stack of plates near the stove plus forks and serving spoons. It's not long Gerald piles his plate with both types of curry over the rice. She picks the one labeled mango curry chicken over the one labeled aigake curry. They aren't the only ones to be seated in the kitchen, sampling the curry. They nod to one another as they move to sit down, Gerald asks about what they are discussing and Virgil, formerly possessed by one Honoka Takamiya, is quick to give them both a summary while Emily, formerly possessed by one Tokiko Tsumura, takes the time to eat a few forkfuls of her curry.

Both are preteens with Emily being twelve and Virgil being thirteen. Both only have one physical feature from Halloween but they both received skills from being the hosts of said people. Emily is doing her best to get into shape and practicing with various weapons, trying to find one that feels fight while Virgil's learning how to use magic along while dealing with the sudden surge in growth in physical and mental department because of his magic helping to fuel said growth as a safe outlet.

She finds herself sympathizing strongly with Virgil's situation as it's akin to the same thing she's learning to deal with concerning her Falna, which possesses Ais' stats, skills, and level. She'd have wanted for Loki to do an actual update of it in hopes of correcting the issue but a few of the others, with Buffy and Giles being the most steady in keeping them from spending any time alone, as they didn't

trust Loki's intentions concerning her. Willow is hoping the next visit will see the issue addressed and that people will be a bit more willing to listen to why Loki wouldn't do anything to harm her, after all, the Falna is... *Really hard to put into words.* Neither Ais or Willow were good with using words to express emotion.

It's not long before she joins the conversation, putting any issues aside and just enjoy talking with new people, getting to know more about them and they getting to know her.

Ending it here!

Misplaced Pair of Souls: Naruto

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation or Naruto!

Warm... So warm... Then he squeaks as something presses down on his body. "-Hey!-"

Then that something seems to twist and something clamps down on some part of him. "-Naruto?-" He twists his head and the pressure gives.

"-Naruto?-" The baby kit parrots back and tries to open his eyes, only... they don't open! That something, no, someone again bumps into him and tries to clamp down on him.

"-Well, guess not any more... Huh, how'd this even happen?-" The other muses, clearly content to keep a hold on him.

There's no more words coming from the other and he's growing tired. Then there's something is moving over his body and the tiny fox kit is lulled to sleep.

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"-Xing.-" The black fox sporting two tails turns to regard his red furred brother. "-I'm naming you Sheng Xing.-"

"-Ok?-" Sapphire blue eyes meet golden eyes of his nine tailed litter brother and fellow stray soul, after all, the former Shinobi had expected to end up in the Pure Lands not... not reborn as a fox kit, let alone in a world that doesn't have Chakra. Not that the newly named Sheng Xing really cares about his previous incarnation much, his life is infinitely more peaceful then when he'd been Naruto. "-So... this means you have a name too?-"

"-Sheng Feng.-" His brother states looking rather pleased with himself before pretty much coming over and nudging him. "-Now then, let's see how much you've progressed in this last decade.-"

Even as the black furred Xing move to get up, the two tailed fox whines about how much of a bully his brother is, forcing him to train in pulling in the nature energy of this world into his body and figuring out ways to use it to improve his body, let alone work at growing another tail. After all, one tail was just fine, as far as he'd been concerned, it's not like having more then one really means much besides vanity proposes! Golden eyes continue to bore into him as the red furred nine tailed Feng waits for him to fully pick himself up from the ground.

A gentle bite on his neck from his brother and he quiets down with the complaining. "-Honestly, I'm beginning to wonder if all of your drive died with your body.-" Feng states, not for the first time.

Laughing, he remarks, "-Give me a break, brother, this world is a hell of a lot more peaceful then the other one! Why can't I enjoy this vacation?-" Xing's tails moving up and down as he pulls his neck away before the other fox could bite into it again, jaws snapping a half an inch from Xing's neck.

"-Wrong! There's plenty of trouble in this world, you're just not encountering any up here, on this peak.-" His surviving sibling snaps and his ears go back, knowing that the other would know better then he.

As the nine tailed fox moves away, the black fox watches as the prisoner and, later, friend of his previous life's form shimmers and there's a fox headed man sporting a single red tail on display. The cloths are fairly traditional and in colors that are flattering with the red fur. His brother continues forward and he follows after. He suspects that the other could take on a fully human form but doesn't feel the need to do a complete transformation when it's just the two of them.

Soon enough, they arrive at a cliff space and it's not long before Feng begins to give him orders, the language spoken is more then likely the one that the humans of this world uses, knowing what would happen if he doesn't begin going through the exercises or if he begins to complain about how 'mean' his brother is.

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"So, this is your baby brother, huh, Sheng FanGuo?" The elderly looking man muses and he sends Feng a questioning look, after all, his brother said his name is Sheng Feng, not Sheng FanGou. "Nice to meet you, Sheng AnKun, I'm Su LeiShun!"

Huh?! What the... AnKun? FanGuo? Xing can't help but find himself at a loss at the names Feng and himself have been called. "AnKun-Didi is still getting use to having a courtesy name." His brother explains and he blinks before nodding in agreement, it's rather true, after all, it's the first time he's been called AnKun let alone has been expected to reply to said name.

So, tranquil plus earth? That's the best he could come up with? Xing muses as Su LeiShun begins to address his brother. Looking around the area, it's a small farm village not that far from this road sided restaurant.

The people he spies, all sport black hair, which explains why Feng's complete human form sports black hair instead of red. It's becoming clear that having odd colored hair is unusual, which makes him wonder if it's a mark of supernatural heritage or signifies something else. *Which means... this is going to bug me until I get an answer.* The transformed four tailed fox muses to himself.

His current appearance is that of a young human, in their mid teens, sporting sapphire blue eyes and semi-long hair. His cloths are simple ones and he's got a sword plus various pouches. The attire is to mark him as a 'Cultivator', which seems to be some profession that's kind of like a priest and samurai, well, that's the conclusion he's drawn from his brother's explanation concerning what a 'Cultivator's'

duties or the image of the general public. *And why do they create a 'Golden Core' to use nature energy? What's wrong with an internal spiritual vessels?*

This whole trip is about getting him off of his mountain peak and learning more about this world along with mingling with the humans of this world, which isn't something he'd been incline to do. After all, in his previous life he didn't have any option to Not associate with humans, having been one himself and in possession of all that entails. *Never mind missing...* Xing shies his thoughts away from his previous incarnation's memories, it's a bit more difficult given that he's transformed into a human.

Soon enough, he's jarred out of his observations of his surroundings as the conversation winds down. With a quick nod of farewell towards Su LeiShun, the former Shinobi falls into step behind his brother. It seems they got the information about something that's been worrying the local villagers and travelers. "No transforming." Feng states and he sighs before nodding, he gets the message loud and clear, fight as a human, not as a fox.

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'-Hey, wow, so many tails!-' An ear flickers back before Xing turns his head to find a very fade soul weaving about his nine tails as they twitch and move. '-Oh! Those eyes!-'

Suddenly the barely there soul darts forward to float before his nose, both of his ears display his confusion. "-How... did you get here?-" The black furred fox inquires as he watches as the soul seem to brighten.

The soul back away as it's light flickers and it's remaining energies shimmer about the air about it. '-You talked?! Oh! Great! You can Talk!-' And the soul begins to circle about him, moving up and down while it seems as though the soul is pulling itself more together, becoming more then what it was as it, formerly a he, the voice is taking a more masculine tone and way of speaking. The soul asks

questions and talks, chatting about anything under the sun except concerning himself.

It brings to mind his life as Uzumaki Naruto, doing anything to fill the unbearable silence that filled his previous childhood. Which is why he decides to do something to interrupt the flow of chatter and questions coming from this dead young man. In seconds, where he'd been standing as a fox, there is now a young human sporting short spiked black hair along with simple blue with silver trimming cloths with no fox tail or ears.

"Perhaps we should introduce each other? This one's brother has graced this one with the name of Sheng Xing, courtesy name Sheng AnKun." It's been at least a century since he's spent time among the humans.

The soul pulses with a rainbow of color, it's almost shaking in place. '-Amazing! You have a brother too? And that's kind of an old way of speaking! Just how old are you, Sheng Xing-gege?!-'

"This one's brother was born in the same litter as this one and how may this one address this younger brother?" He inquires and the soul seems to flush before doing so in a soft, almost hasting manner, '-Wei Ying, courtesy name Wei Wuxian...-'

"Ying-didi." The former Shinobi muses, rather surprised that the clearly drained and worn Wei Ying even gave him his birthday on top of his courtesy name. "This older brother will do his best to take care of his new younger brother." He states, after all, entertaining Wei Ying until the other is ready to move on shouldn't take so long, after all, it's not like Wei Ying is able to lead any Cultivators to his chosen territory and home, right?

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He never expected to ever encounter an actual immortal fox nor for said fox, Sheng Xing, to not only understand him, after all, even he can tell that he barely exists, he's so weak from using... Wei Ying's

memory fails him on remembering the reason, then again, he knows that even when he'd been alive, he'd have trouble with his memory so, being dead just makes it more of a problem. Still, the home of the nine tail fox is so easy for him to see, like, he can actually, some how, see it!

Well, not see see, but he clearly could sense the walls and the door and stairs... Even the furniture! Sure, there's no color, heck, he's not even sure what Sheng Xing's fur color is!

Hovering near Sheng Xing, he grows rather bored and the few times he's tried to talk with the still transformed fox, he got no reply. Moving in close, he bumps into the shoulder and is flat out astonish at how he encounters with something keeping him from... Ying begins experimenting and figures out how to move the hair before just stroking the skin.

Then he's caught under a hand and Sheng Xing seems to stir. "... What are you doing, Ying-didi?" It's not said all at once and the transformed fox is now sitting up, moving him so he floats over the male's lap.

'-I can touch you, Xing-gege! And you were ignoring me, so I had got bored, so when I realize I could, I did!-' He tells his host, very pleased with his discovery and the hand moves from him.

"... You do realize I sleep, right? That this is my bedroom?" And he stills as it dawns on him that he likely is being rather impolite along with the fact that sleeping is something that the still living do. "How damaged are you, little brother?" That sounds a great deal softer, perhaps it's something that Sheng Xing hadn't meant to say out loud?

Feelings of pleasure and guilt flow through him, Ying is happy that Sheng Xing does care but he feels bad that he's causing his inhuman host worry. After all, he's not worth it, being worried and fussed over. A man like him who died the way he did, having caused the problems to his...

Jerking out of his thoughts, he finds his host, Sheng Xing, feeding him spiritual energy and gently stroking him, the energy he's soaking in is comfort that's flavoring the energy. Ying feels his negative emotions slowly disperse. The former Cultivator would be purring if he could as he feels so... so... safe and would love if this would go on forever.

Sadly, it does come to an end and he wishes he could pout at the other male, maybe cross his arms when he does it too. '-Ah, why'd you stop?-' Ying whines.

"I would like to get back to sleep." There's a pause and he notices how Sheng Xing stretches his arms, there's a shake in the body before the other continues, "Then there's the whole, not wanting to bind you to me, Ying-didi. You were getting to the point where you'd give me your everything and I don't have any use of a ghost familiar."

'-Aren't you a god though?-' *How else could you explain the house, furniture, and just being able to touch you?* '-Shouldn't you have spirit servants waiting on you? Your an immortal fox...-' Why wouldn't a powerful entity that is Sheng Xing want to do his own chores? Make his own food? Not be pampered like some high ranking lord?

There's a chuckle from Sheng Xing, watching as the transformed fox lowers his body back onto the bed. "I may not die of old age but that doesn't mean there aren't means to kill me, Ying-didi." He finds himself bobbing up and down in understanding of that point. "As for the servants thing, does this look to be a palace your senses, little brother? Does it seem like I have a parade of visitors coming and going that need to be housed and entertained?"

'-Don't you get... lonely?-' He asks curiously and softly. "My life here is very satisfying, Ying-didi. Much more peaceful then my previous incarnation."

Ying considers that bit of information concerning his host and finds that by the time he wishes to inquire more about said previous incarnation, Sheng Xing is once more sleeping. He moves, floating

towards the slightly open door and exits out of the bedroom. There's a lot for him to muse upon, concerning mending his soul and working out what's holding him here, in this world along with trying to figure out a way to pay back the kindness that his host, Sheng Ying, has done to in allowing him to hang around in the immortal's home.

Coming to the study of the house that also doubles as the library, Ying moves about the shelves, curious if he can pull a scroll or book from it. Perhaps if he focuses just so, he might be able to read what's written upon either? After all, he doesn't seem to need to sleep like Sheng Xing and he refuses to answer the summons that are always pestering him, so he needs something to busy himself with.

The slowly mending soul of Wei Ying, more commonly known as Wei Wuxian, remains in the library until Sheng Xing comes to visit him and he's more then happy to abandon his efforts to spend time with the immortal fox.

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With Wei Ying gone, Xing finds himself feeling rather lonely as he'd grown use to having the soul around his home that he crafted out of the stone of the mountain and the hot spring he called forth in the basement of said home. *Hopefully* , the former Shinobi thinks to himself, *that he's gone to whatever afterlife this world has.* The black nine tailed immortal fox is sorting through the notes that his former guest had written up during his stay.

He'd waited until the turning of the season to begin packing away the few belongings of the soul on the off chance that Ying had decided to venture off his mountain to spend time observing the nearest locals or maybe he'd gone to answer one of the many Soul Summoning that had been aimed at the lively soul. Whatever the case, Ying has been gone long enough that Xing is certain that the soul either left this world or something truly bizarre happened and Ying is caught in the middle of it. If he'd have to pick which was more likely... Xing would have to go with the bizarre option, as Ying kind of reminded

him of his previous incarnation a little too much when it comes to getting into trouble.

Still, Xing is confident that of the soul's ability to survive whatever trouble he's in as Ying proved that death didn't hamper the former cultivator's ability to make use of spiritual energy. Yes, the soul had to reconcile his view of the world and his interactions with it but Ying proved he'd been more then up for the task. It's clear that Ying is in possession of a brilliant mind and while lacking in the common sense department, given what the soul was striding for, possessing common sense would have been a hindrance as it would mean that Ying never would have tried anything new. *Nothing ventured, nothing gained.*

He'd been around to help ensure that any problems got contained and then talked Ying into how to undo said contained problem. Yes, the soul had given off the feeling of pouting over the task but it proved to be a learning experience that Ying had needed and also gave the soul an idea of what he should work on to improve on the next attempt. In time, Ying refined his control over not just his techniques but also his own manipulation of spiritual energy, learning to be more precise with the amount spiritual energy needed to ensure that the technique will do what it needs without wasting more then he had to.

With the last of the collection of scrolls now put away in a safe spot on the shelf, the reincarnated Hokage gives the library once last look about before leaving the room, heading for the basement and a soak in the hot spring housed within.

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Finding the tree that the local humans had Sealed Feng in had been frustrating! It doesn't help that there had been nine off shot trees about this region that echo with Feng's spiritual signature. Xing's also not amused at the fact that the locals possessing the tiniest faction of spiritual energy that seems to be geared into increasing

their youth, which only gives, like, an extra decade to their natural life span, that is if they live to reach said age.

Gods damn it, can't believe it took me two fucking years to pin point this freaking temple and then a shitty year to get pass the various defensive arrays! The black furred nine tail fox thinks as he glares off in the direction of the nearest settlement. *You'd think being blood siblings would mean they'd want me to get into the place instead of keeping me out!*

Leaves are falling from the withering tree, the enchanted ropes and spirit charged beads have fallen from their placement upon the trunk. The paper spells long since burnt up, leaving ash, which in turn has been swept away by the wind that's slowly brewing up a storm, a massive one that suits his current foul mood. It'll take sometime for it to fully realize but it will be region wide and forcing the locals to remain inside if they have any common sense, which he, at this particular moment, doubts they possess given the actions of their great grandparents had enacted upon his red furred sibling.

'-Good riddance.-' He grumbles upon casting his currently glowing gaze upon the remains of the now dead tree. Xing gently uses his tails to help get his much reduce sibling onto his back and begins to carefully walk away from this former temple, he wants to get his brother far from this fucking spot as possible, the storm will take at least a full day to finish gathering itself, so he need not worry about it as if yet.

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They arrive at the breached temple just as the storm begins. Wei Wuxian comes to a stop before the withered dead tree that sports an assortment of formerly charged spiritual tools in the form of beads and ropes. Lips press together, the cultivator looks about but it's clear that they are too late to revive the Source Tree that is tied with the nine Sacred Trees.

His mood fouls further at the sight, even the comforting hand his husband places upon his right shoulder doesn't help him. Lan Wangji then gives him a pat and heads for the temple, to get a roof over his head. As the rain slowly soaks him, the infamous Yiling Patriarch, just stews and closes his eyes. *Here... He set the storm in motion...*

Whatever thoughts that follow after that are lost and Wei Wuxian lets out a long, deep sigh. He doesn't know what to think, not just is his mind a mess but so are his emotions over this... him. Wei Wuxian's divided in his desire to find this mysterious person and yet, he dreads it.

Giving the dead tree another look, he turns and walks towards the temple where Lan Wangji is waiting with their guide, one Yu Han. "Is there... Really?" The young man inquires, clearly clinging to hope that they could do something, anything, to restore the Source Tree.

"We'd need to fully investigate the tree but... it's not looking good." He admits, doing his best to give Yu Han a sympathetic look, which is rather hard to do. *And it's not just Yu Han either...* Wei Wuxian mentally admits. There's just something about the locals'... presence that just bothers him. It's been bothering him more and more the longer he spends time among the locals.

Yu Han can't do much besides accept his answer, he's quick to excuse himself from the young man's company before the other could try pry some other answer from him. Wei Wuxian finds a nice spot and tries to meditate, to center himself. Maybe remember something about who it is we're dealing with.

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They find a clearly ill immortal fox, even with them so close, the spirit beast remains fast asleep but he shares a Look with Lan Wangji. The spiritual energy that's coming from the red furred spirit fox is simply the more potent spirit energy that locals of this region possesses tiny wisps of. *And it couldn't have been the one to free itself from the Source Tree...*

"So, what are the odds that we're dealing with this one's mate?" Wei Wuxian wonders out loud and Yu Han startles then pales at the thought. Yu Han takes a few steps back while he crouches down to get a different angle of the red furred immortal fox.

'-Mate? That's my brother! As in, litter brother.-' The voice is faint, the words ghosting across his mind and Yu Han gives a startled yelp.

There's tension in the air and Lan Wangji simply calls his name, "Wei Ying." Turning to look behind the Yiling Patriarch can't help but feel like he's facing an old friend.

'-Wei Ying?-' The black furred immortal fox tilts his head slightly, he's not sure why he knows that this one is most definitely male, with sapphire blue eyes seem to be studying him. One ear flickers back and then it's the other's turn, then there's a sniff.

"Sheng Xing-gege..." The name plus title come out of his mouth without him even realizing it. Sheng Xing raises his head and then, second later, there stands a human.

"Ying-didi." Wei Wuxian blinks and then Lan Wangji is between them. He would coo at how protective his husband is of him... If not for the fact that he knows that Sheng Xing isn't someone either of them could fend off if they did get into a fight.

"So... this is Uncle then?" Wei Wuxian asks, most of what comes to the forefront is impressions and, well, strange 'images' but that should be expected, really, he'd been a soul during his time with Sheng Xing. Slowly getting up and giving the red furred immortal fox a more considering look.

"This is my litter brother, Sheng Feng. I doubt there's a courtesy names I can give for you to use." Shang Xing states. "I'm not sure why the locals decided they had the right to seal him away and siphon off his power to add to their own spiritual reserves but it was clearly for selfish reasons or them just wanting to boost their spiritual foundation."

He gets the feeling that Yu Han got a dirty look from Sheng Xing, given the way the young man yelped. "Either way, my brother found a way to send a request for my aid and I answered it." Wei Wuxian meets Sheng Xing's gaze.

"And what about us?! Besides, why should anyone believe you or your claims! Your just a spirit beast!" Yu Han snaps angrily, pretty much standing to Lan Wangji's left, clearly feeling bolder being near the imposing Second Jade of Lan, who's likely got his hand upon his sword.

Wei Wuxian can't help but feel offended on Sheng Xing's behalf, after all, the black furred immortal fox had the right of it in regards to Sheng Feng's situation. The unhealthy look of the crimson spirit beast is plain to see and then there's the matter of the various defensive arrays that had once surrounded the Source Tree. Even the purpose of the bindings that had once been wrapped about the Source Tree gave truth to the fact that Sheng Feng had not want to be a part of whatever it is that had happened to him.

And people will do their best to make things easy for themselves. Wei Wuxian mentally admits. Siphoning away spirit power from a sealed up spiritual being likely does sound very appealing.

Sheng Xing turns his gaze from his and he moves to get a better look at the transform fox's pose. There's a brittle smile on the fox's face, he's seen similar and sported similar as Sheng Xing addresses Yu Han. "And what makes humans so special that they can set themselves above all, hm?"

"Possessing thumbs, generally seems to be the most defining character trait that humans have." Sheng Xing cuts Yu Han off before the other could give a biting reply. "Thumbs are great, you know? But then, you likely don't recall ever lacking them, so sad really, but it happens, you know? People taking things for granted without *really* **thinking** about it." There's a sharp tone by the end there.

Sheng Xing is begins to walk towards the still sleeping red furred immortal fox, moving to the other side, away from Yu Han. His gaze follows Sheng Xing as he does so, it's not long before Lan Wangji moves to stand at his side, also keeping a fix gaze upon the transformed fox. Wei Wuxian isn't sure how to explain the emotions that are whirling within his chest.

"Ah, just to clarify things, but, well, how is it we... met?" Wei Wuxian inquires. Even he can tell it's a rather weak tone.

"Given you were just a soul at the time, I'm not surprised you have memory trouble." Remarks Sheng Xing and he is gently run his fingers through the crimson fur of his brother. "I'd expect it's difficult to fully recall them as well, given that your view of the world at the time doesn't mesh well with how a body remembers memories."

"Your in league with him?! With *them* ?!" Yu Han snaps before gulping at the glares that earned him. The man stumbles a few steps away from them, looking rather pale while his eyes flicker between Lan Wangji and Sheng Xing, who likely are very good at sporting said look.

"Would Xing-gege mind giving a time frame of when we met?" Wei Wuxian asks sweetly upon turning to look back at Sheng Xing, clamping his hands behind his back. Lan Wangji gives a slight nod that he notices out of the corner of his eye.

"Let's see, it's been, well, close to four years since you left, so about fourteen years when you arrived at my mountain top home." Recalls Sheng Xing and he blinks in surprise, which means that for almost ten years out of the thirteen years he spent dead, he'd been in Sheng Xing's company. "I recall how weak you'd been, heck you didn't even recall what sleep was." There's a fond smile upon Sheng Xing's face.

"Still recall how you woke me up that first time..." Wei Wuxian finds himself flushing from embarrassment, even if he doesn't recall the

event in question. "You found other things to do while I slept, pretty much claimed my library."

"Which reminds me, Ying-didi, I have collected and stored your notes and your drawings." Wei Wuxian is rather surprised on hear that. "I'm willing to give them to you and would like to know where it is I should deliver them to, once I have done what I can to make my brother comfortable back at my home." He's unsure just what to make of the offer but a glance at Lan Wangji shows that he's also interest in whatever it was he'd been able to write down, it also sounds like he hadn't been conscripted into serving Sheng Xing, after all, the immortal fox is likely something of a minor God.

"The Cloud Recesses as I'm living with with my husband's sect, Gusu Lan!" Then it dawns on him that he hadn't introduce Lan Wangji to Sheng Xing. "This is him, Lan Zhan, courtesy name Lan Wangji."

The immortal fox glances between them with a look of being a touch stunned, sapphire eyes switching between Lan Wangji and Wei Wuxian before recovering and acceptance with a minor shrug. "I'll be sure to include something suitable as a wedding gift then, Ying-didi." And then Sheng Xing is once more a nine tailed black furred fox about the size of a donkey.

Sheng Feng leans on his brother and they watch as the pair vanish in a swirl of white and gold. Staring at the spot, Wei Wuxian feels a surge of affection and fondness towards Sheng Xing. "Looks like I ended up with another relative." Who's an immortal fox.

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Eight months later since their encounter with Sheng Xing and his brother, Sheng Feng, is when a package arrives viva a spectral fox, who's body is far too thin and long to be an actual fox. Upon placing the package into his hands, the spectral fox bows before fading from existence. While Wei Wuxian would have loved to open it up right then and there, they didn't.

Taking the package into the Cloud Recessess, heading for a certain tower, Wei Wuxian is the one to place it in an array so that they can check it over. After a few hours, of which Wei Wuxian does his best to find someway to be productive, does the Elder of the Lan Sect announce they can't find anything wrong with the package or its contents. With a grin, he is next to the package, more then eager to open it and begin reading the notes and looking over the drawings he'd done while living under Sheng Xing's roof.

With Lan Wangji and their adopted son, Lan Sizhui near, Wei Wuxian pulls the ribbon and if unravels. With ease, the wrapping falls away to reveal a beautiful chest that's not only carved but painted. There's only a simple plain circle at the front of the chest and it only unlocks when Wei Wuxian places a finger upon the surface, it glows white then green before opening the lid slightly. Within are neatly stack books along with stacks of pages with individual strings about each, the writing does resemble his own and skimming over the top pages only makes him all the more eager to untie them so he can read them.

The books are what interest both Lan Wangji and their son, getting a look at the covers, he suspects that the books were ones he's used to reference in the past and likely why he's got them, so he can continue on with his research. Then he comes upon the drawings bundle and realize that they are fairly strange. *Or perhaps they only look strange, when viewed with eyes of a body.* Wei Wuxian muses to himself.

Once everything is out does that leave another package at the bottom with a letter. Taking the letter, Wei Wuxian reads out loud, "Ying-didi, I hope this package finds both yourself and your husband in good health! I went through your various notes and realizing which among my books you clearly been using as references, I decided to include copies of said books so you may continue forward with your projects."

That drew interest from the remaining Sect Elders within the chamber. "As for the gift, well, I had trouble thinking of the perfect

one, particularly given how you are both men." Wei Wuxian finds it rather odd Sheng Xing would bring it up, after all, foxes are commonly known for taking the form of women...

"So, my brother snapped at me while I'd been mopping about the subject and reminded me of a few things, which lead to me doing some research and after testing this out on various same sex pairing. All the offspring turned out healthy and as long as you follow the instructions contained with in, you will have a health kid or two as a result." He stiffens, looking at Lan Wangji, not sure if he can believe what it is that Sheng Xing is implying but feeling his heart racing all the same. "I've included already prepared spiritually charge items that are ready to begin the process, it just needs to be set up and for the two of you to decided on who's to be the father and who's to be the mother. Hard to explain why this is important but, well, context would help, I guess."

"When I run two females through this, the resulting offspring or offsprings is always female but when run with two males, the offspring or offsprings can be either gender." Wei Wuxian kind of wonders why that is but figures that it's hardly important, not when compared to what Sheng Xing's gift actually means for both his husband and himself. It's clear that from the way Lan Wangji is gripping the table that he's not the only one effected while there's a strangled sound coming from at least one of the Elders who are still within the chamber.

"I'll be an older brother sooner then later?" Lan Sizhui murmurs with a slightly stunned expression and he's certain that his ear tips are red. "Seems like." He manages to say and Lan Wangji looks up then straight at him, eyes slightly wide, he gives his husband a smile.

"Human babies take roughly ten months before coming into the world, so, the resulting large seed will take about the same amount of time. Again, caring instructions are within the actual package and I hope the two of you will use this when you feel that you are ready to be parents." Wei Wuxian reads out. "From your Older Brother, Sheng Xing."

Lan Qiren stalks over and Wei Wuxian offers the letter to his Uncle-in-law while more of the Elders approach the table. Not that Wei Wuxian is in the right state of mind to care, after all, what Sheng Xing's gift means, implies, it's rather overwhelming. After all, it's clear that somehow, in some way, Sheng Xing honestly does care about him, even if having known him for such a short amount of time, after all, the black furred fox is an immortal fox. So much so that he'd created, from scratch, a way for same sex couples can have a kid or two.

Epilogue

Carrying Lan Lim on his back, she's so tired from having walked for a bit, Wei Wuxian look towards the strange stone house. He could have flown all the way to it but his daughter had far too much energy and wanted to walk for a bit. So, Lan Wangji carried onto the house with their sons, Lan Ling and Lan Ming.

Raising three five year olds isn't easy, particularly when their daughter takes after Wei Wuxian. Still, they had planned to visit Sheng Xing, to personally thank him for his gift and just to pay the immortal fox a visit. Bringing their kids along, well, they did want to meet their Uncle Xing, who's an immortal fox in possession of nine tails.

Drawing near, Wei Wuxian spies a horse size black fox laying on the ground. Once he's close enough, Wei Wuxian smiles at the sight of both A-Ling and A-Ming nestled among the mass of tails. "Your husband is inside." Sheng Xing informs him with clear amusement glinting in those sapphire blue eyes.

"Xing-gege." Wei Wuxian says as a greeting before he gently begins to rousing his daughter. It takes her a minute to wake and then she freezes at the sight of Sheng Xing.

Chuckling, he crouches and lets her slide down his back before standing once more. Lan Lim moves and grips his cloths as she is now very shy in the presence of her Uncle Xing. "And who might you

be, little one?" Sheng Xing gently inquires, doing his best to look non-threatening.

"Lan Lim." His daughter says shyly and he ruffles her hair gently, finding it adorable that she's so shy all of a sudden. "Your dad's elder brother? Sheng Xing?"

"Ying-didi, really? I'm so hurt! I thought you wanted me as your older brother?!" Sheng Xing remarks in a clear exaggerated manner and he plays along.

"Maybe you should change your clan name, Xing-gege, so nobody would make that mistake." Wei Wuxian remarks, acting as though about nine years haven't passed since they met face to face. "Wei Xing has a nice ring to it, right, daughter?"

This works in helping to sooth whatever nerves his daughter has about being confronted with a powerful spirit beast that he likely ranks as a minor god. "Or maybe dad should be Sheng Wuxian." His daughter exclaims and as he acts out raged, she runs up and gives Sheng Xing a hug about the neck before proceeding to petting Sheng Xing's black coat of fur.

They mock verbal spar for Lan Lim's entertainment for a bit before Wei Wuxian heads into the house to find his husband. The place seems to be familiar and as he moves about the main floor, finds his husband in the kitchen, looking a touch lost. It takes him a few seconds to remember how things worked in the kitchen and reassures Lan Wangji, "It's all powered by spirit arrays, watch and sense how I do it."

It's easy, turning on the oven, adjusting how hot the one element will be. Wei Wuxian talks about the kitchen as memories of his time here as a soul begin to line up within his head. Wei Wuxian relates various stories of kitchen mishaps along with recalling details about the various arrays. He pauses to ask what it is that Lan Wangji wants to make and once he hears, he helps collect the various ingredients from where they are kept, timeless arrays preserving their freshness

the moment they are place within them along with showing how to use the sink to get water along with which knob will give cold water and which does hot, along with mixing them to get warm water to wash their hands with.

Soon enough, they have various pots on the oven with each sporting their own temperatures. Giving the kitchen a look, he grabs his husband by the hand and grab their various packs, leading him up the stairs. It doesn't take long to place their things in the room that Shen Xing created for him to use, not that he had much use of it as he doesn't sleep and most of what he'd been working on remained in the library. "One more place I want to show you before we head back to the kitchen."

With a grin, he leads Lan Wangji down the stairs once more and then towards the basement stairs, being sure to activate the lighting arrays he dimly recalls Sheng Xing using. With soft light, Wei Wuxian walks down the steps and grins at the sight of the hot spring. "It's got different levels to it, so we can bring the kids down as well, we just need to keep them in the more shallow part of the pool, which is easy to see, given how clear the water is."

"Towels should be in that room over there and there's a... he calls them, showers, that way, which can spray cold water or warm." Wei Wuxian gestures to each. "Down that hallway is the laundry room, there's a washer and a drier plus cloth lines." Again, he dimly recalls what a washer and a drier are but then, he hadn't needed to wear cloths.

He hears Lan Wangji hum and watches as his husband walks over to the hot spring, crouching, checks the temperature. Wei Wuxian admires his husband as he does so and can already imagine what they can do alone down here as long as Sheng Xing is willing to watch their kids for a bit. "Shameless."

Chuckling, it's clear his husband caught sight of his intentions upon his face but merely grins widely at his now approaching husband. They head back up stairs and he is sure to turn off the light array of

the basement. They return to the kitchen after making a detour to check on their kids, it seems that their daughter is sitting next to Sheng Xing's head and scratching behind the immortal fox's ear.

His only regret is that Lan Sizhui couldn't be with them for this visit but is determined to bring him along on their next visit.

The End

Cultivators OnLine: Grandmaster

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation!

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The sights and sounds are rather jarring never mind the feeling of the gentle wind across his face along with him feeling so... Closing his eyes, the man retraces his memories that lead to this. *Arrived home, turned on the computer, started the prep for Ascending Immortal Dragons, changed cloths, was still debating between signing in as Wei Wuxian or Shu Ting . . .*

Looking down at his cloths, he finds the general shades of grey robes that sport trims of bright red with hints of black, meaning that he must have picked his third game account, Wei Wuxian, also the infamous **[Yiling Patriarch]** . It's been nearly thirteen years since he's played Ascending Immortal Dragons using Wei Wuxian, he'd played an additional two years on his fourth account, a woman avatar he'd named Shu Ting and her build was an Alchemist , he'd had some fun with that character but he'd found himself getting far too pressed with real life and feeling a need to recharge from the game, he quit playing it along with putting his various note books on the shelf and putting his digital documents onto a flash drive before deleting it all off of his computer to make room for more memory.

Wei Wuxian again takes a look around and notices the banners of on display and winces, after all, he expected to log on at his purchase property that's nestled in the **[Burial Mounds]** . He'd bought huge stretches of it for dirt cheap and even had everything needed to begin building a Settlement that can be surrounded by farms, heck, he even had the blue prints to build a **[Silk Worm Barn]** ! A simple house that sported a kitchen, a bedroom, a dinner/living room, and a study/library. In the back of the house had been the where he'd put the chest filled to the brim with everything needed to begin building a Settlement , even enough to advance it a good five stages . . .

So, yes, he is rather shocked at the sight of purple banners of the **[Yunmeng Jiang Sect]** . It's the major sect that he'd join before giving Wei Wuxian his Courtesy Name, the character's name at the time had been Wei Ying. He'd even participated in the Sect War under the purple banner, which is usually called the **[Sunshot Campaign]** , it was during that war that he managed the trick of using **[Resentful Energy]** to mimic a Zombie Apocalypse in game. Sure, he quit the sect afterwards, Wei Wuxian's popularity among both the Players and the NPCs was at a low point, few if any NPCs could stand to be around his character, not that he'd let that stop him from . . .

"You have some nerve." Startling slightly, Wei Wuxian finds a trio of Cultivators of the Jiang Sect before him. It seems while he'd been trying to organize his thoughts and disbelieving his current situation, he's getting arrested. "'Blessed of Heaven' *Wei Wuxian* ." Spats the man who's likely very important and the clear leader of the trio.

He chuckles in embarrassment while a hand goes to settle on his waist and the other to his head. "Yes, I guess it seems like that, doesn't it?" His voice is both alien and familiar, he does his best to ignore that sensation of a headache and the feeling of *Knowing* who this person is.

The seemingly twenty year old glowers at him before gesturing for the pair to move. "You're under arrest, you demon." The man snaps. "Blessed of Heaven or not, you're got some nerve appearing before here."

There's a crowd of people around, he notices the Player marker above various people's heads seemingly fading in and out of existence. As he is man handled, Wei Wuxian doesn't fight against them, after all, he's got a migraine and spending time in a cell should give him a chance to think without all these bright distractions.

C (o _ o) D

In the end, napping in hopes of fending off his migraine only led to dreams, dreams of things he's done with his character in the first person perspective. Just laying on the crappy pile of hay covered in a thin sheet of cloth, Wei Wuxian finally bites the bullet and speaks a few commands to bring up something, his Character Menu or his Inventory, only to find neither working, although he does get an error prompt, so, he's kind of on the right track. Without any more ideas, he finds himself humming while his hands are settled on his midsection, a finger tapping away impatiently.

His brain pounds but he does his best to recall information concerning Wei Wuxian's Spiritual Abilities, trying to figure out if he can use any of it. Sitting up, he sits cross legged and tries to recall old text information that he'd read years before, during his decision of 'playing' like an actual young Cultivator, which entailed reading various books and treaties concerning how to cultivate a Gold Core. Which also led to him creating actual notes in game that he'd been able to copy the data of and store on his computer to review out of the game, which ended up on that flash drive . . .

Which means that I should be able to read those notes, once I am out of here and make my way back to that house. The currently displaced Player, who's now his character, Wei Wuxian. In the end, the day ends and his migraine is still pounding in his brain, there's no delivery of food or drink but there's also nobody demanding answers to question concerning his motives of being in Yunmeng either.

Sighing, Wei Wuxian returns to settling down on the straw bed and does his best to fall asleep. Hoping that tomorrow will allow him to access his Character Menu or, at the very least, the Settings.

Birth Name: Wei Ying

Courtesy Name: Wei Wuxian

Title: **[Yiling Patriarch]**

Gender: Man

Physical Age: 19

Character Traits: Fear of Dogs, Bisexual, Enjoys employing a public persona of reckless, shameless, and disrespectful individual, Curious in regards of Resentful and Spiritual power use in any complicity, and Kind.

Status: **[Imprisoned]**

C (o _ o) D

"Get up!" A feminine voice hisses, which startles Wei Wuxian awake. "Wei Wuxian."

It's been a good four days since he found himself inserted into Wei Wuxian's skin along into the game of Ascending Immortal Dragons. Since then, the most pointed change he's experienced is accessing a slim downed Character Menu, it seems being **[Imprisoned]** is blocking the rest of his information. Oh, and his migraine has tamed down, although he's dreaming dream from first person perspective.

"Do I know you?" He asks, eyes flickering above the two's head for a Player mark but both are bare. *What was up with it flickering like that anyway?* Wei Wuxian wonders in an off handed manner as he walks over to the door.

Once he's standing before the bars of the cell, the woman scowls as she studies him. "Young Master Wei Wuxian..." A masculine voice stammers out as the other cloaked Cultivator bows low at him. "Blessed Wei Wuxian." There's a hint of awe and unease in the tone of the second.

"The hinges." The woman snaps and it startles the man, who's quick to use a brush that gleams in what little light there is on said hinges. He hums in approval, given that this seems to be a rescue slash escape.

Soon enough, the woman unlocks the lock on the door and swings the door towards her, the oil does its job. Stepping out, a sword is thrust at his chest along with a folded cloak that *Feels* familiar, looking at the two cloaks that his rescuers are wearing, they have a similar *Feel* . As quick as he can, he puts on the cloak and puts the sword into his belt, managing to keep silent, which seems to earn him the approval of the woman of the pair.

"Later." Is all she states in such a way that demands that Wei Wuxian to obey. Giving her a nod, after all, he's rather hungry and thirsty along with bore. The displayed man falls into step behind her as she takes the lead, the man waits for him to walk before him before falling into step behind him.

It's the middle of the night as they exit out of the underground prison and it takes them a few minutes to slip pass the courtyard of the prison. Once they are outside of the walls of the above ground guard post, the woman takes out three **[Disposable Recall Talisman]** . Without any reason not to trust the woman, Wei Wuxian takes the offered one and waits for the signal to activate it. Thankfully, something clicks when it comes to activating the talisman, teleporting him away from **[Yunmeng Jiang Sect]** .

The arrival point is *Feels* so *Familiar* and yet, Wei Wuxian **Knows** it isn't, after all, he's only arrived in this world roughly five days ago. *Five days ago, I was nearly forty year old, US civilian working the standard nine to five job five days a week.* He reminds himself as he takes a look around.

It's a village, a village that's been built upon the land of the Burial Mound. *No, this is a Settlement .* Wei Wuxian realizes, after all, hadn't he bought large track of land at said location? Hadn't he expected to build a Settlement there? "How?" *This house... It's gotten bigger, hasn't it?*

"You left the plans and the building material, what, you didn't expect us to use them?" Snaps the woman, causing him to stiffen as it

dawns on him just who might be the builders of this Settlement . "Come, I want to examine you after this disappearing stunt of yours."

"Might I have your names at the very least?" Wei Wuxian inquires politely, although his stomach clenches as he can't help but have an inkling of what their last names will likely be. The young man fidgets and stammers as an introduction, "Young Master Wei... I'm Wen Ning, Courtesy Name Wen Qionglin."

Called it. The displaced man think while doing his best to give the nervous Wen Qionglin an encouraging smile. "Nice to meet you, Wen Qionglin."

"And I'm Wen Qing. Now, into the house." Snaps the now named woman, Wen Qing. Wen Qionglin seems a touch mortified by Wen Qing's manner but he does as instructed.

The cloaks come off once within the house, as they move further into the house, Wen Qing taking the lead, a young voice calls out, "Auntie?" Wen Qing pauses and turns to the youth that's standing by the kitchen's archway. "A-Yuan... You should be in bed." Wen Qing states in a far gentler voice then Wei Wuxian has heard her in their short association.

"A-Xian?" The youth startles at catching sight of him and he can't help but blink at the nickname that Wen Yuan blurts out, as if it's normal for it to be spoken. Giving the youth a gentle yet warm smile and wonder how it is that the teen seems to know him on sight, it's just another question he files away. "Hello, A-Yuan." He returns and this causes Wen Yuan to blink before coming in close, then giving him a hug. "A-Xian's awake!"

Not being a heartless monster, Wei Wuxian returns the hug, he mentally moves this question up on the list, after all, this is rather bizarre kind of welcome, strange, but not unwelcome, really. Something about the youth seems very familiar, so very familiar and gives him a sense of home that he finds he likes. *Actually, they both*

seem kind of familiar as well . . . He glances at Wen Qing as that thought crosses his mind.

"Bed, A-Yuan." Wen Qing states in a firmer voice and can tell that she is sporting a fond expression. "Best listen to your aunt, A-Yuan." He adds after a few seconds.

"Ok..." Murmurs Wen Yuan and Wei Wuxian gives the teen once last back pat before releasing him. Wen Yuan studies his face, eyes shimmering with tears upon letting go. "Night Auntie. A-Ning."

With that, Wen Yuan pulls away and heads for the stair, likely heading for his room that he assumes is on the second level of the house. Wen Qing studies him, it's clear she's not sure of how to ask. "He seems... familiar? Both of you do too, honestly, now that I give it some thought." He is sure to look at them both.

A look flashes across Wen Qing's face and some of her tension seems to loosen from her pose. "Well, I have been your personal doctor these pass thirteen years." Then ushers them onward, into a rather large room that kind of gives off the Aura of a Shrine with a rather large bed sporting soft pillows and blankets. He notices Chenqing resting upon a fancy black bamboo holder and there's a space under the dizi that likely held his sword, Suibian, which is likely the sword that he'd been given now that he recalls it's on his person.

"So... How is it that I had a doctor for nearly fourteen years? I am Blessed of Heaven, our bodies vanish when we are hibernating." Wei Wuxian inquires upon settling on the bed and offering Wen Qing his wrist so she can take a look at his Meridians.

"It is an interesting case, but then, your practice of Cultivating Resentful Energy seems to keep your mortal shell upon this plane of existence during your hibernation." *Well, damn.* He thinks upon hearing Wen Qing state that. "You can only imagine the reaction it caused us when we learnt that our Revered Benefactor's mortal shell continues to dwell upon this Mortal Realm while his Spirit was away

and concern over how we can repay you for what you've done for us."

Oh yea, I did pretty much went around collecting remnants of the Wens back then, huh? It had caused a lot of debate about what happened to the remaining members of the Wen clan. Then again, what conditions he found at those work camps . . . Well, none of the NPCs tried very hard to stop him and he hadn't a plan concerning them besides send them to the site of his future Settlement .

"The plans for your Settlement along with the materials... Well, is it any wonder we set about building it?" Wen Qing remarks, likely reading his thoughts upon his face.

"No, I suppose not." Wei Wuxian admits, feeling very much an idiot, never mind that he'd caused the disappearance of the surviving Wen clan. "I had not thought much about my actions in regards to you and your clan mates these pass thirteen years." There's really no lie he can think to tell and he feels guilty that he'd pretty much conscripted a group of actual people to live at such a hard place.

Guilt settles in his midsection and then Wen Qionglin exclaims, "Your actions saved us from the Jin Sect and their Work Camps! You guided us to a place where we can build a new home! You even supplied us with all we needed to do so!" Wei Wuxian stares at the man with wide eyes. "You didn't ask for anything in return, either! Young Master Wei did not need to go so far for the kin of his former enemies!"

He's taken back by Wen Qionglin's statement and Wen Qing snorts softly. "You save us when you had your own interests to look out for." She remarks while Wen Qionglin seems to realize what he'd said and withered into a state of embarrassment.

In the end, Wei Wuxian doesn't really know how to continue the discussion concerning the Wen clan and his own relationship over these pass thirteen years. It's clear, just by the state of his room, that he's become a rather important figure to the Wen who not only

settled at his Settlement but seem to view it as him giving them a chance at life. And, looking at it like that, remembering world history he'd learnt growing up, it's likely his actions very well likely saved them from the 'tender' mercies of the Great Sects, who'd been recovering from the **[Sunshot Campaign]** .

The thoughts of what happened in the wake of the first World War . . . Yes, there had been plenty of people who'd had a bone to pick with the surviving 'Wen-Dogs'. People were still people after all.

C (o _ o) D

"So, what do you think so far, A-Yuan?" Wei Wuxian inquires to Wen Sizhui, he'd been the one to pick the Courtesy Name for Wen Yuan, but for now, well, he's agreed to answer to Wei Sizhui. It's been decided to keep the secret concerning the fact that the Wen clan and them living at Luanzang Wei Settlement.

It's been over three months since he'd arrive in this world as Wei Wuxian and dealing with the fact that it's looking like there's no way to reverse what's been done to him along with dealing with the changes within himself, which went beyond just possessing a Golden Core and ability to use Resentful Energy, but to changes to his personality and his memories of the world of Ascending Immortal Dragons. He's been able to distract himself with re-reading his library of book and old notes, familiarizing new abilities and skills, getting introduced to the rest of the Wen clan, and just enjoying the company of Granny Wen, Qing, Ning, and Yuan, who share his home.

"It's so different, Senior Wei!" The teen states, his grip on his Yat-sen, which is a bamboo fan turned into a spiritual tool and weapon if used right. Given the scarcity of metal at Luanzang Wei Settlement , those Wens who are learning to be Cultivators have been forced to make do with unconventional weapons, fans are very common among them. "There's so many different people . . ."

"Yes, there are . . ." Wei Wuxian agrees and sighs at the sight of the very faint Player marks that hover over certain members among the throngs of people. His heart sinks at the sight of them, so faint and see through, it makes him feel dreadful at the very thought of asking any of them any pointed questions concerning what happened that day, over three months ago that landed him in Wei Wuxian's body and in this former world that he'd thought of as an online game.

The few people they encountered on the road have made mention of the strange behavior of the Blessed of Heaven, there's much gossip about the reasons for why they're more tied in the Mortal Realm then before and given what little he recalls from before this became all too real, Wei Wuxian recalls that there had been a free massive expansion to Ascending Immortal Dragons and centered around access to a whole new world with new monsters and resources. It's hard for him to remember the details, honestly, as he gets a headache trying to think about the End of an Era expansion and he's pretty sure there's some detail that's evading him or, perhaps more accurate, he's not allowed to recall.

It's from various travelers that they learnt about a **[Night Hunt]** that's located at Dafan Mountain. The number of Cultivators milling the village is slight cause of concern given it took them a week to arrive and Wei Wuxian frowns slightly, after all, he'd expected to arrive at the tail end of a **[Night Hunt]** not in the mist of an active investigation! "How are you feeling, A-Yuan?" He asks the teen, suddenly aware that the youth might be feeling overwhelmed by all of these people about.

"I'm ok." Assures Wen Sizhui and Wei Wuxian studies the teenager for a few seconds, wanting to be sure of the truth of that statement. Wen Sizhui does seem like he's not overly whelmed as of yet, so, in the end, Wei Wuxian decides to trust the young Cultivator to know his limits along with voicing them.

"Just be sure to inform me when you aren't, A-Yuan." Wei Wuxian informs the youth in a gentle and firm tone. The teen gives him a smile and it's clear that the youth is touched by his concern, which is

how Wei Wuxian's expression morphs into a fond smile before sobering up to regard the crowds about them, he spies a group of white wearing Cultivators, the forehead ribbons gracing their heads mark them as coming from the **[Gusu Lan Sect]** .

"It's the infamous Hanguang-Jun!" The gossip gets swept into focusing on Hanguang-Jun while the crowds turn to look at the leader of the group of Lan Cultivators, Wei Wuxian's own gaze lands on said infamous Hanguang-Jun. "Lan Wangji! The Second Jade!"

Various sentences get swapped as the group led by Lan Wangji moves towards the local blacksmith shop, the topic of the gossip ignoring the attention he has attracted. *Second Jade huh? That, kind of sounds familiar . . . Ah well, best get on with gathering information about the situation.* Wei Wuxian thinks to himself.

"Time to do some fact checking, Sizhui!" He states as he takes a moment to center himself. After all, something is off concerning this **[Night Hunt]** if it's been going on for over a week now, perhaps they'll be the ones to solve this puzzle, which will be good start to Wen Sizhui's involvement in the wider world.

C (o _ o) D

So, it turns out that the thing consuming souls wasn't some monster or spirit but a natural statue that'd been worshiped as a deity, a Goddess. Joy. Wei Wuxian thinks as he continues to play Chenqing, directing the various ghosts and raised corpses to attack the moving and empowered statue.

I wish there had been some 'natural occurring' Ferocious Corpses milling about instead of post-burial bodies and listless ghosts. The statue deity bats the few corpses he'd raised away while ignoring the ghosts trying to herd the statue away from its intended prey, who happens to be a teen younger then Wen Sizhui by a few years and a member of the Lin Sect, given the attire.

Fucking rock for brains bitch! Wei Wuxian gives up on feeding the ghosts and raised corpses energy, switching to a sound attack that's to be fueled using **[Resentful Energy]** instead of **[Spiritual Energy]** , after all, given the nature of the target, the typical energy won't deal much in the way of damage, not unless the Cultivator is at a higher stage in pursuit of ascension. There's a good chance it won't work, he's only become comfortable with having said powers at his command but he refuses to let the kid die without him trying something!

Feeling the heaviness that is filled with resentment and regret pool at the back of his throat, Wei Wuxian blows it out as he breaths out, Chenqing sounds out while his fingers dance about the holes along its body. Two of the statue's left side arms get shattered into shards and into dust, the sudden vanishing of the weight causes the rock deity to tip onto the right. "Run, god damn it, RUN!" Wei Wuxian bellows at the kid, who comes out of his shock to obey.

Wei Wuxian can't help but thank god as the kid vanishes into the surrounding forest as the statue fueled by faith and wishes focuses on him with something that might be akin to fear and anger. It's hard to say, given it's face is hard to see given their distance between them. That attack is something he's recovering from but that doesn't keep Wei Wuxian from smirks darkly at the statue, he can feel **[Resentful Energy]** emanating from his body and his eye sight being more keen, which likely means that they are glowing red. It's effects are more for intimidation then anything, he's not sure if the statue will call his bluff but at the very least, Wei Wuxian will be the focus on its attention and next attack.

"Bring it, you stone bitch." Wei Wuxian states as he brings Chenqing back to his lips, feeling his ability to use **[Resentful Energy]** returning. The statue's crimson eyes widen then narrow and its mouth opens wide, no sound comes from the statue as it raises itself up. As it charges at him, it gets attack by another sound attack, only this time, the energy fueling it is spiritual in nature instead of resentful.

This attack shatters the waist and the legs of the statue become segmented blocks and the upper body falls forward as the arms move to catch it from falling flat on the ground. With a feral grin that is filled with teeth, Wei Wuxian focuses on the head and once more, lets loose a sound attack, this time, it's far more focus and with lower amount of energy empowering it. The head breaks into shards and the rest of its body break apart.

Taking a moment to savor this victory, Wei Wuxian begins to control the shroud of energy that's emanating from himself as he turns to see who it is that stopped the charge. Golden eyes are the first thing that Wei Wuxian notices and then the forehead ribbon. *Ah, a Lan... It's, what did they call him?* Wei Wuxian does his best to remember the title. *Hanguang-Jun.*

"Many thanks, Hanguang-Jun!" Wei Wuxian chirps in a light way upon the other turning to look his way. Turning his gaze away from the Lan Cultivator, he walks over to the statue, curious if there's anything for him to collect from the remains of the deity statue, putting Chenqing onto his belt as he does so.

Feeling the weight of the Lan's eyes upon his back, Wei Wuxian finds that nothing pops up once he reaches the remains. *So, that's gone as well.* The transmigrated Player thinks to himself.

"Hanguang-Jun?" He turns his head at hearing Wen Sizhui's voice and is glad that the teen is alright. "Senior Wei!" There's clear happiness and relief in the youth's tone, so much so that he can't help but smile softly in Wen Sizhui's direction.

"Sizhui! I'm glad that you found some companions to watch your back." There seems to be another teen in Wen Sizhui's company, another Lan it seems.

The younger Lan seems to be blinking owlishly at him while Wen Sizhui is already making his way to Wei Wuxian's side. It's clear that both teens are well and unharmed since the revealing of the culprit at that cave temple. Which brought out thoughts concerning what

became of those other, former Players, fellow Blessed of Heaven, who'd died confronting the stone deity, wondering if they'd died for good but found himself doubting they had.

Yes, he's being very rude in ignoring Hanguang-Jun and not exchanging introductions with either of them, but it's something he couldn't care about right now besides checking Wen Sizhui is alright, after all, he rather not have Wen Qing angry with him over the statue of her young 'nephew'. *Never mind how Wen Ning would fuss over the situation.* Wei Wuxian muses to himself.

"This is Lan Jingyi," Wen Sizhui says only to look back to find that the other teen hadn't approached with him. "Ah..." It's clear that Wen Sizhui is puzzled about the lack of the other following after him.

"He must be skittish about meeting me." He says soothingly and that seems to ruffle the kid's feathers enough to startle him out of his mood. Lan Jingyi marches over with his features set in a determination cast and tension in his pose.

"I'm not skittish!" The kid says in a mulish and childish way, although the Lan youth does come to a stop about a foot behind Wen Sizhui. It's clear that his companion isn't sure what to make of the change within Lan Jingyi.

Most of the Wens don't react much to the aftermath of my shroud or lingering eye effect. Wei Wuxian muses and feels like something, a link, is there about that reaction but puts it away for now. "I'm Wei Wuxian, yes, that Wei Wuxian and yes, I'm the Blessed of Heaven's infamous **[Yiling Patriarch]** ."

The eyes go wide and the teen goes a touch more pale before taking a step back, looking widely around until his eyes land on Hanguang-Jun. Wei Wuxian's own gaze also lands on the man a few seconds after Lan Jingyi's own gaze. The older Lan Cultivator's gaze is hard to pick apart never mind the face being could be pass as having been carved stone then mere flesh and blood.

"And you're his student?" Lan Jingyi asks Wen Sizhui, clearly not sure what to make of this development. His gaze returns to the pair of teens before him.

"He's my traveling companion, Lan Jingyi. His teachers trusted him to my care." He states as he reaches over to ruffle the youth's hair, Wen Sizhui ducks his head slightly in embarrassment, cheeks tinted red.

Then the Lan youth's face grows confused and takes a moment to study Wei Wuxian before doing the same to Wen Sizhui. "Wei... Didn't you say your name is Wei Sizhui?" And then it's like a look of dawning understanding of something chases away Lan Jingyi's confusion.

Wen Sizhui looks at him in hopes of clarifying this realization that the young Cultivator seems to have while Wei Wuxian begins to figure out just what kind of conclusion the other teen has drawn concerning Wen Sizhui and his relationship. After all, he did speak the truth about having Wen Sizhui's teachers entrusting the youth's safety to him. It's not that he gets very far in narrowing down the conclusion of Lan Jingyi's thoughts though, not with the sound of crackling lightning and Hanguang-Jun beginning to walk closer, the man's eyes fixated at something.

Nope, someone. Wei Wuxian realizes as he turns to notice a vaguely familiar man in purple robes of the **[Yunmeng Jiang Sect]** and holding a whip that sports purple lightning. Then he notices that boy, who's a member of the **[Lanling Lin Sect]** and the kid he'd saved earlier, the one he shouted at to run away. "That whip..."

"Hanguang-Jun, I see you found my escaped prisoner." Remarks the Cultivator with the whip and Wei Wuxian actually rolls his eyes at the comment. *Oh yea, like that's something to brag about.*

"Oh yes, what a crime I committed, just standing in a middle of a crowded market place. Why, I must have breathed in the wrong direction to earn that arrest." Wei Wuxian shanks with a sneer as he

crosses his arms over his chest, not at all impressed with the man's weight throwing.

He feels everyone's gazes upon him, the Jiang Cultivator's face gets such an angry cast while the Lin youth looks rather startled at Wei Wuxian's disrespectful tone. "You just said your the **[Yiling Patriarch]** ! The man who can command ghosts and wandering corpses! The man who made off with the remainder of the Wen clan for his own use!" Lan Jingyi exclaims.

"And I wasn't doing anything when I was arrested." Wei Wuxian states simply. "Getting arrested for things I've done years ago... It's like someone deciding to punish you five years after you broke one of those thousand rule of your Sect."

"I mean, what crime have I done in recent years?" He asks curiously, glancing between the grown men. "It's been, what, over thirteen years since my last appearance? Are you telling me that there haven't been others who has done far greater crimes, who can be granted the role of villain during these recent years?"

Wei Wuxian wonders what Wen Sizhui makes of all of this, not that it matters as something seems to ripple through the air. His hands rests on Chenqing while settling his gaze upon a pouch that is on Hanguang-Jun's person. Something within it is moving, straining to get out. "Is that the..."

"Ah, yea. I guess it is." Lan Jingyi replies to Wen Sizhui's question. "Uncle?" A younger voice inquires, uncertainty coloring the youngest boy's tone.

"What's in that **[Qiankun Bag]** , Lan Wangji?" Demands the Cultivator holding the whip. *Ah . . .*

"Where'd you get it?" Wei Wuxian inquires curiously as he notices how filled with resentment the contained item is. "What's its form?" Taking a few steps towards the dignified Lan.

The man is already beginning to play a song upon his guqin, it takes him a few seconds to realize that it's **[Rest]** . *It's not really working though . . .* Wei Wuxian realizes and he begins to wonder at what could be the cause of the agitation.

It couldn't have been due to me from then or it would have started acting up back then. Wei Wuxian reason. "What kind of mischief did it cause?" He inquires to Lan Jingyi, noticing how pale the teen has grown and having moved to put Wei Wuxian between himself and Lan Wangji.

"Just devoured the arm of the person before killing them." The young Cultivator admits and that causes him to glance at the remains of the deity statue. Humming, he brings Chenqing up to his lips and calls upon his own **[Spiritual Energy]** and plays **[Rest]** as well.

It doesn't work at first but when he played off key to Lan Wangji, he Felt something, a very slight something but a something all the same. So, Wei Wuxian played **[Rest]** off key to Lan Wangji. The arm within the bag calms down with their combined efforts after a good five minutes of playing their almost duet and in those minutes, more people started to arrive.

"You best get back from the remains, Hanguang-Jun! The energy hanging around the remains must have rousted it!" Wei Wuxian chirps once he's lowered Chenqing from his lips.

He's awarded with a thoughtful hum before graced with a look of appraisal. There's whispers and Wei Wuxian glances around, it seems that the Jiang Cultivator no longer has that whip out and sports a sour look. Among those gathered, none sport that ghost of a Player's mark, not that it's that surprising, given his few attempts at interacting with other Players wasn't what he'd expected. *In fact, it wasn't unlike dealing with NPCs . . . Back when I was playing the game at least.*

It's clear that some kind of mental fuckery happened to them and that's kind of troubling, yet it also explains why people are so worried

about the Blessed of Heaven. *It might also explain why few of them really think of me as being the **[Yiling Patriarch]** as well.* Wei Wuxian muses to himself.

"So, the **[Night Hunt]** is over with, right? What with the mystery solved and the Goddess pretty much shattered into ruin." He muses and few seem willing to dispute his statement. "So! We best be off then, Sizhui!"

"Yes Senior Wei." Wen Sizhui agrees and none seem incline to stop them, as they walk away from the remains of the statue. Murmurs break out at their backs but Wei Wuxian keeps on walking no matter what's said behind his back.

Once they are away, Wei Wuxian turns and speaks with Wen Sizhui. "You did great, A-Yuan." He informs the youth in a firm yet gentle tone.

Wen Sizhui worries his bottom lip, clearly looking unconvinced with his statement. "People... A-Xian, the Goddess just..." Wei Wuxian takes a few steps and then pulls the teen into a hug, gently rubbing his back.

"It's the risk we face on **[Night Hunt]** s, A-Yuan." *I promised to do my best to be there for you.* "If we don't gamble with our lives to stop such tragedies that such beings can cause, then only more will lose their lives when they don't have to."

C (o _ o) D

"So, you are the lunatic cut-sleeve, huh?" Wei Wuxian inquires upon coming face to face with the solo survivor of the Mo Family, one Mo Xuanyu, former member of the **[Lanling Lin Sect]** and bastard son of the previous Sect Leader . What none could explain is the *Feel* of **[Resentful Energy]** that he's been picking up from the young man, it clings to him like wet cloths but it's not a part of him like it is with Wei Wuxian.

There's a look of resentment but also fear that crosses about Mo Xuanyu's face before apathy settles in the young man's eyes and a bitter, broken smile upon the face. "Yea, I guess I am. Why? Come to gawk at me for a bit?" The tone is rather bitter and angry.

"Actually, I'm curious about the arm that the Lan Sect picked up here." Wei Wuxian explains. "And then I noticed the energy clinging to you, which only brought up another set of questions to put before you." He adds lightly and the shorter man stiffens, eyes widening.

"Wei Wuxian, a Blessed of Heaven, and commonly known as the **[Yiling Patriarch]** ." Wei Wuxian introduces himself and Mo Xuanyu's mouth opens up wide with muscles tensing, it's clear that the flight or fight response is fighting for dominance within the young man's mind. "And this is my traveling companion, Wei Sizhui."

That startles Mo Xuanyu slightly that the man's attention moves from Wei Wuxian himself to Wen Sizhui. "So... You mind coming with us for a cup of tea? I'm paying!" He congratulates himself as they leave the shed that seems to be where Mo Xuanyu lives, it seems that the man isn't comfortable moving into his new property or it hasn't sunk in that being the last member of the Mo Family means he's the new owner.

It's surprising how passive aggressive Mo Xuanyu is about following him but they do end up at a tea house and ordered a simple green tea for the three of them, inquiring if Wen Sizhui wants any of the pastries the place sells. "Your acting different." Blurts out Mo Xuanyu once the waitress takes Wen Sizhui's pastry order.

"For a Blessed of Heaven, I mean." The other man admits and, sadly, Wei Wuxian does know what Mo Xuanyu means by that. "Why?"

"Oddly enough, it's likely due to my Cultivation of **[Resentful Energy]** ." The dimension-ally displaced man admits after studying Mo Xuanyu for a few seconds, watching the other squirm. "It's interfering with my usual capabilities as a Blessed of Heaven but I'm

also more... here then them, I guess." His Character Menu is still so lacking and he doesn't seem to have a Level nor can Wei Wuxian spy the Level of those around him with the use of the **[Observation]** feature, be it used on monsters or humans. *It seems to be working differently, giving me some kind of impression of their relative power.*

Mo Xuanyu's expression is of wonder and worry, there's clear interest though, on learning more. "Has this happen to you before?" Asks the man across from him, it's then that Wei Wuxian notices that Mo Xuanyu is wearing make up for the first time.

"Not until the Descent Day." Wei Wuxian states calmly as he begins to take in the state of Mo Xuanyu. Everything changed that day and here isn't a place I wish to discuss personal matters.

"So, what method have you come up with in order to use **[Resentful Energy]** ?" *Who's been toying around with the concept these pass decade?* Wei Wuxian inquires curiously, though the answer to his thought should be pretty obvious, really.

The young man gets rather nervous and self conscious but, after a bit of silence in which their tea order arrives and Wen Suzhui pours the cups, it seems as though Mo Xuanyu comes into some inner peace over how this conversation is going to go. After downing the first cup after a few sips, Mo Xuanyu begins by giving an over view on the topic of **[Spirit Array]** s, the theory concerning their nature and use. Wei Wuxian is reminded of discussions of among Players about if the arrays couldn't be based off of Naruto's seals or computer programs as Mo Xuanyu speaks, making him wonder if he wasn't the only one to create in game books concerning in game content.

Or maybe the locals over heard discussions between Players and wrote it down instead? Wei Wuxian wonders, noticing how intense Wen Suzhui is about listening, it's also clear that the youth wants to interject but is holding himself back, for now at least. "So, you learnt which characters resonated with **[Resentful Energy]** and began using that as a power source for arrays."

Mo Xuanyu blushes rather cutely, nodding. "Yes, but just finding the characters doesn't help as **[Resentful Energy]** doesn't act like **[Spiritual Energy]** ." The clearly not a lunatic states. "Which means finding how to get it moving in the array."

"While I think on your words, would you mind answering any questions my companion, A-Yuan, has concerning **[Spirit Array]** s?" Wei Wuxian asks and Mo Xuanyu blinks before turning to look at the third member at the table. The younger man nods while Wen Suzhui looks a touch embarrass but also with thanks for his request.

So, the pair converse over the topic as Wei Wuxian considers what to do. After all, the news concerning that arm should be making rounds by now in Cultivation Circles, meaning that Mo Xuanyu's safety in this village is running out, along with his life. *What a shitty trope of a situation!* Wei Wuxian mentally laments. *Fuck my new life . . .*

It's really a question of how to get Mo Xuanyu to leave with them, really. Wei Wuxian isn't sure of much concerning Mo Xuanyu's life before they met but given people have been slandering him with accusations of being a lunatic and his sexual orientation, of which only the latter is likely true, then Mo Xuanyu's trust in others is likely at an all time low. *But then, most people do still trust those called Blessed of Heaven, perhaps he'll be a touch more incline to trust me?*

It's a gamble Wei Wuxian knows he'll be making regardless, after all, he's been gone from the game for a good thirteen years and then four months since Descent Day. There's been changes to the politics of the Cultivation Sects and then the waiting winds of change that are to come concerning that expansion. It's his hope that no matter what knowledge Mo Xuanyu has about the political climate, it's bound to be greater then his own at this particular moment.

"Senior Wei?" Blinking and coming out of his thoughts, Wei Wuxian hums in acknowledgement while resting his gaze upon Wen Sizhui.

"It there any more we need to discuss with Senior Mo?" There's a slight cough upon hearing the title that Wen Sizhui calls him.

Humming thoughtfully, he turns his gaze upon Mo Xuanyu, there's no more tea to drink nor any pastries to eat. "Mo Xuanyu, upon the **[Night Hunt]** at Dafan Mountain there was an arm in the possession of the Lan's Hanguang-Jun." Wei Wuxian notices how the tension returns to Mo Xuanyu's shoulders. "It acted up but with a duet of **[Rest]** it was subdued."

"Lan Jingyi mentioned that they captured the arm here during a routine wander corpse elimination." He continues as Mo Xuanyu looks down at the empty tea cup, the hands moving to the lap. "I am sure you are aware of what that means for your future within this village." *You have none.*

"Which is why I wish to help you out of this situation." Wei Wuxian adds after a moment of watching Mo Xuanyu tremble slightly. "I have founded a Settlement and I wish to extent an offer to you, Mo Xuanyu, former student of **[Lanling Jin Sect]** to make your home there instead of continuing to live here, in this village."

Wide eyes of Mo Xuanyu stare at his face once he finishes making the offer, the mouth is opening and closing, no sound coming out. "So, how about it? You mind placing yourself under this infamous Blessed of Heaven? This one commonly known and feared as the **[Yiling Patriarch]** ?" Wei Wuxian asks with a devil may care grin and projecting an aura of confidence and, of course, power. *I offer you . . . life.*

Ending it Here!

Beyond the Sky's Horizon: FateStay Night

I don't own Fate/Stay Night or Kateyo Hitman Reborn!

[Scanning Subject: Emiya Shirou]

[Inconsistencies Detected . . .]

[Magic Circuits Removal Suggested]

[Engaging Corrective Procedure . . .]

Phantom pain burns on his edge of awareness but it's not enough to fully stir the former Master of Saber from his current state.

[Magic Circuits Removal Complete]

[Resuming Scanning Subject: Emiya Shirou]

[Subject is Natural Incline in Construction/Hardening]

[Concluding Primary . . .]

.

[Conclusion of Scan]

.

[Conclusion of Scan is Both are Primary]

Color slowly flickers before him and Shirou isn't sure what to make of the blue purple that brings to mind cloud of moisture, the kind he's seen escape from pots when he lifts a lid while the other is a bundle

of green lightning that is flaring in a tight ball. He's not sure what's going on, he dimly remembers how he ended up in this place...

The pair of colored... Symbols? Energy? Whatever slowly come closer or does he drift towards them? Either way, the two colors begin to cloak his vision and a nice warmth settles within him, a space that he hadn't known need to be filled...

[Successful Installation of Primary]

[Resuming Scanning Subject: Emiya Shirou]

This time, Shirou can feel something moving across his skin and then slowly proceed deeper into his body. It's a slow and surprisingly gentle, which likely is why he finds himself drifting off. There's nothing around him that demands his attention nor does he seem to be in danger...

[Subject: Emiya Shirou Scans Complete]

[Processing Scan Results]

.

[Scan Results Complete]

[Scans of Subject: Emiya Shirou Show Fae Constructed Artifact]

[Fae Constructed Artifact is A*$& %]

[Scanning A*$& % Now]

.

.

.

[Error: A*$& % Can Not Be Fully Scanned By System]

[Error: A*$& % Is Unresponsive To System]

[Troubleshooting: A*$& % Now]

.

.

[Troubleshooting Result: Barrier Function and Limited Imm* of A*$& % Noted]

Shirou finally lets himself fall fully asleep at this point, after all, there's nothing really keeping him awake and this is likely a dream anyway. He'll wake at the apartment he shares with Rin at the Clock Tower.

Shirou fully wakes to find himself in a cell and finds his mouth dry upon trying to swallow. Closing his eyes, he takes his time to focus on countering whatever drugs remain within his system and the fluffiness of his thought slowly sharpen and he pushes himself into a sitting position, keeping hold of that sharpness that is helping to fend off the drugs. Opening his eyes, the former Master of Saber takes in the cell and the smell causes a sense of unease.

Unwashed bodies, bodily fluids like blood, chemicals, and the smell of something, something he can't place only that Shirou can't help but find that something should be tinted with said smell. There's little in the way of light within the room, the only light that enters is through a slit in the door. With nothing better to do, the former Master of Saber focuses inward to help purge his system of drugs by

focusing on the sharpness within him to steel himself from effects as they withdraw from his system.

Hunger is something he acknowledges along with a pressure of his bladder as the drugs loosen their hold on his senses and body. His mind feels more keen and Shirou comes to be aware of something Not Right with him. Frowning, the former young man finally realizes just how different his view of the cell is from what it should be.

Getting up, he walks over to the door and while the door doesn't have a knob on this side, Shirou can spy where it should be. With lips pressing together in displeasure, the now five or maybe six year old takes a few steps away from the door as he studies his cloths, which are not much, in the end. It's akin to a hospital wear, well, the shirt is given it lacks a back while it seems they put a pair of shorts on him. Although, it's clear the shorts are meant for someone taller, aka older, then he currently is, they are also ready sagging and would be on the ground if not for the draw strings.

Next order of business if looking over his body and he's a bit miffed to find his usual collection scars gone, replaced with needle marks and incision under a section of bandages on his stomach. Something in him burns hot in his chest at the sight of cut upon his stomach, the feeling bubbles into his mind. *Who dares?! **WHO** ?!*

It almost shakes his control over himself before he manages to distance himself from that part of himself, but, before he knows it, it goes from boiling to simmering with its 'vapors' soon bridging the gap, causing it to reconnect within his mind. It leaves Shirou rather off kilter, the shear raw emotion... He can't recall feeling an emotion so... Fully? Completely? So, encompassing?

He's not sure how long he stands there, trying to make sense of himself, before deciding to push the matter to the side, it doesn't matter when he needs to move on to checking his ability to use his Magic Circuits. Taking in a deep breath, he is slow to release it until he feels he's more centered in himself. He whispers, "Trace On."

Something is different and though he has an image in his mind for a simple dagger, Shirou finds that a step gets missed and yet, indigo flashes from the palm of his hand with green outline snaps into a shape before indigo fills the outline before vapor of indigo and discharge of green lightning flickers about the air before displaying the simple dagger he wanted to Project. The whole process had been sluggishly slow, feeling rather different from it should, but the end result is a simple dagger that he had plans of.

His eyes drift from the dagger in his small, oh so small, hands towards the door as he evaluates his options. Shirou isn't sure what's going on but figures it's for the best to remain here. Revolved with his course of action, he releases his hold on the simple dagger, it vanishes a half a minute without him touching it or feeding it more energy to keep it around.

He can't smell any Magic hanging around the cell, so he's likely dealing with scientists, mundane scientists of questionable morality but not Magi. Confident in his ability to come out of this without needing to dip into his supernatural abilities. Once out, Shirou will deal with the strangeness concerning his Projection and his age regression.

Looking at the small group of children, Shirou once more curses himself for his previous decision when it came dealing with his new situation along with his conclusion concerning his course of action. His emotions are so hard to ignore, tears of frustration at the sight of the survivors arranged before him while there's heat of the fire at his back. There's only nine kids out of thirty, the bodies of the dead kids ranged from twelve years to toddlers as young as two, never mind that one might die before the night is out due to having been pumped full of questionable drugs.

The group gaze at the fire going on behind him and Shirou isn't that surprised at their fascination with the fire that's slowly consuming anything, everything, burnable within the residence slash illegal, criminal lab. There's still not a lot that he understands about Flames

or about how he ended up seemingly a kid again, he is certain that this isn't his birth dimension and he no longer has Magic Circuits, which means that whatever substitute of the Moonlight World, it's likely centered upon Flames and the criminal underbelly.

They called themselves the Estraneo Famiglia . . . His crying comes to a slow until it stops, his mind whirling about how to make use of what little information he has. Knowing he needs more information but also realizing he's tired and would like to have an actual bath, even spending time cleaning a kitchen would help, even if he didn't get to make anything in said kitchen either.

I miss cooking . . . The former Master thinks with a slight sniffle. Shirou is soon wiping his eyes with the back of his hands, sniffling wetly as he tries to breath through his nose at thoughts of him making a warm meal.

"Now what?" The question gets snarled out of one of the three blonds, it's the one carrying the unconscious kid too. Shirou feels their gazes settle upon him and he's blinking rather blankly at them, not really sure why they are looking at him like that.

It takes Shirou a few seconds to realize that instead of looking to the eleven year old, he's assuming the platinum blond is eleven years of age, the eight are looking at him. Looking... to... him... The once again red head finds this to be rather alarming, after all, he's not really sure he's capable of leading this group of broken children, not when he's not even sure if he'd be able to keep himself out of trouble!

"Why are you asking me? He's the oldest!" Shirou deflects with a hint of panic, that he's struggling to contain, gesturing at said platinum blond. *Dealing with emotions are so HARD!* He mentally concludes and is more aware of how much more he'd lost to the fire then just his memories and his family along with childhood friends.

"You are the last one of the latest bunch they brought in from the streets." Said platinum blond counters and that only helps to fuel his

guilt over **that** *issue* . There's little change in any of the other survivors' expressions upon hearing that, even if he flinched at the reminder of those others he'd been unable to save.

"I'm not from Italy." Shirou adds to his defense. "I want to return to Japan." He admits to the group.

Japan shouldn't be that different from his home dimension, right? Just thinking about the island nation causes him to feel a large dose of homesick and crave the comfort of a traditional Japanese breakfast. The group of kids seem to straighten upon hearing that and after a second, the preteen blond nods.

"Ok, so, Japan it is." Shirou would like to argue some more only, he feels that it's best that they get moving. It seems that emergency respondents have finally been alerted and likely on their way here.

Without any real destination besides not here, Shirou leads the group elsewhere, being sure to Reinforce his senses so that they avoid trouble with 'concerned' adults. After all, none of them are in any shape to deal with answering questions about what they were put through. Nor does the former Master of the King of Knights wants to encounter other Flame Users and their political shit storm.

As Shirou finishes up putting the panel back in place, Skull, who's a man cursed into the form of a toddler viva a glowing purple stone in the shape of a pacifier, is worrying behind him, clearly unsure if the former Magus knew what he's doing. After all, Shirou does appear to be five, maybe six years old himself and yet, he finish repairing a pump for the curse man's blimp, which no, well street kid, should be able to do. Then again, he wouldn't know where to begin if not for his ability to use his twin Flames to mimic his version of Structural Analysis to pin point what needs to be fixed and which part needs a touch of Reinforcement to keep it going for a few more trips.

"That should do it until you can get it looked at by a professional." The former man turn kid says once he finishes screwing the panel

back on. Skull clearly doesn't know if he should trust that Shirou did manage to fix it or not.

"You're really young to know your way around something like this." Skull finally states after glancing between the panel and Shirou who does appear to be a street urchin. Doing his best to not take offense at the clear doubt and concern, Shirou simply smiles.

"Well, you can always give it a go..." He suggests and after a few seconds, Skull seems to decide to do just that, murmuring in Russian a prayer concerning 'Verde being in a good mood to build him another pump system for his blimp'. The seemingly toddler walking into the hold to get to the piloting seat, Shirou does his best not to get overly curious about why that hold is so much bigger on the inside then on the out, knowing that it would likely cause more of a headache, particularly if he reveals his own limited knowledge concerning Dying Will Flames.

Backing up, Shirou's smile becomes more genuine as everything works as it should concerning the blimp. As the blimp lands once more and the engines go out, Skull comes rocketing towards him, clearly joyful about his blimp working as it should. It's a nice feeling, being useful like this, being able to be responsible for someone's good mood by simply doing a minor repair job.

Then comes Skull's attempts to pay him for the repair along with almost jokes about hiring him as his mechanic, which Shirou declines pretty much automatically out of old habit. Just as he manages to get ready to leave Ken and Jina arrive huffing, Ken making use of his Flame to track him down viva his scent while Jina using her own to keep up with the blond, grabbing his arm as she says, "Shirou! It's Mukuro!"

Ken had come to a stop by the hanger entrance, gaze fixated upon the cursed Skull with a look of bewilderment and suspicion. Allowing himself to be pulled away by Jina, Shirou asks in a slightly defeated and exasperated way, "What has he done now?"

Though it's been a few months since they've been out on the streets, the formerly unconscious boy made a recovery from the drugs and the lack of proper medical attention, it's not like Shirou had much incline to learn anything besides first aid nor did he have much talent outside of his brand of magic, which circles around his Origin and Elemental Affinity being Sword. Still, when the kid woke and began to take instruction concerning his Flame, Mukuro proved to sport just indigo color, the kid has been stirring up trouble with pretty much any adult he encounters, using them to home his budding skill with his indigo Flame.

Mukuro's talents in using said Flame seem to lay in sensory illusions and possession of animals or already unconscious people. It's something that does cause Shirou to wonder if their differences lay in his possession of green Flame or if it's just something as simple as individual talents when it comes to him Projecting something with **weight** . Then again, out of the group, he's the only one to possess a green Flame of any sort.

"He, well, seemed to..." Jina bites her lip as she gazes towards Skull, who seems to be following them towards Ken. Shirou also stares at the transformed man, unsure of what to do about Skull.

"Family trouble?" Asks the cursed man. "Seems so." He replies with an apologetic smile.

"Weren't you worried about running late?" Shirou inquires at Skull as they reach where Ken is standing, coming to a halt. "Eh, what's another hour?" The stone pacifier seems to glow slightly brighter for a few seconds before turning to its normal glow.

Sighing, Shirou hopes that the trouble that Mukuro found is something easy to get Chikusa and him out of. "Just take us there." The former Magus states and Ken gives a sharp nod before taking point, trusting that Jina, Shirou, and Skull will follow.

"What did you do this?" Mukuro merely blinks at Shirou's question while the other's indigo energy is enshrouding someone, he knows it's a someone from using his Structural Analysis, fueled with his hybrid color Flame energy. Yes, he also knows what the other's energy is *trying* to do to the one nicknamed Dino but Shirou would rather hear it from Mukuro's own mouth.

"Reborn?" Skull is addressing the currently wall trapped presto-toddler in the wall. It's not long before the other to snicker before breaking down laughing while Reborn looks furious but unable to speak for the simple fact that his lower part of his face is stuck in the wall. Shirou wonders who or a pair of whos' are responsible for that but figures what Mukuro's trying to do to be more pressing.

It soon become clear that Mukuro is trying to delay answering him. "Hmm? Shirou, where have you been? And who's your new *friend* ?"

"Making a friend." He replies as he crosses his arms and calls on his own energy to aid in making him seem imposing, after all, Dino's duress is likely only increasing. "Mukuro." The simple name comes out with a lot of weight to it and the indigo energy dims for a few seconds, wavering before stabilizing, if a touch smaller then before.

"Just helping someone fit their nick name is all." Is the reply and Shirou sighs at the physically older boy before glancing at Chikusa. "Chikusa."

"It seems that one," Chikusa nods towards the shroud of indigo, "Is suppose to be the local... Owner ."

"Ah." And the pressure he'd been exuding goes down while Mukuro huffs, clearly not likely that the blue Flame user just gave up that information oh so easily. With a hum, he walks over and calls upon his own Flame, within seconds, he 'shows' Mukuro how to fully apply the Alteration, although he does notice the orange Flame being oddly sticky but it's also clear he's able to use that to make the Alteration stick for far longer without investing as much energy as normal.

Orange Flame is sticky, I'll be sure to remember that fact to use in the future. Shirou thinks to himself. Although he does note it takes a touch more energy to enforce the Alteration upon the orange Flame user.

"I hope you picked up how I did that." Shirou informs Mukuro, the other nods as their Flames retreat from the now transformed Dino, who's cloths he made sure to affect as well. He's also sure to Alter his own dual colored Flame to get rid of the remaining sticky orange. Glancing at Skull and then towards the one stuck in the wall, he asks Skull, "Is he a friend of yours?"

"No! We're just part of the same group is all." Skull makes a sound of dismissal before stating that. "He's a jerk! So yea, it's pretty funny to see him like this."

Out of the corner of his eye, he notices Dino's examination of himself and it's clear that the local Mafia Don doesn't know what to make of suddenly being de-aged to that of a four year old. Writing off why that age as not important, Shirou gestures for them to leave. "So, you don't mind if we just leave him stuck like that?"

"Oh! Wait, I should take some pictures first! I bet Viper will pay a few thousand for them!" With that, Skull takes out a small cellphone and begins to take pictures and it's clear that Mukuro's not going to be after Skull right now. The other strictly indigo Flame user does seem to be thinking about something though upon moving to stand with Ken with Chikusa.

"Taking pictures..." Mukuro muses as they walk away from the bewildered Dino and enraged Reborn. Shirou remakes, "I'm sure you'll find a way to create some sort of memory memento viva using your Flame as a medium." *Your driven enough when it comes to goals.* The former Magus thinks to himself.

"Indeed." Mukuro states with all the smugness of a feline. It's times like these when Shirou wonders if he really should be encouraging the strictly indigo Flame user as he's pretty sure the kid is going to

grow up to be such a menace to society and people's sanity everywhere but, then, he recalls the fact that this energy is in the hands of pity criminals primarily and his concerns vanish, after all, Mukuro took his words concerning death often times be seen as being a mercy to heart.

As far as Shirou is concerned, as long as Mukuro leaves his victims in alive then it's fine. After all, if these strange colored and oddly concept focus Flame energy can cause alterations to happen to people, it's more then likely able to reverse said changes as well. *If they are having trouble reversing them, it's on their own heads for not understanding the nature of the energy they are harnessing.* Maybe he spent a little too much time around Rin and Magi in general...

"So... Guess you guys need to skedaddle from this area, huh?" Skull muses, reminding Shirou of his presence. Coming to a halt, he turns to regard the fake toddler for a second.

"Looks like." Jina remarks before he thinks to inquire how involved Skull is in the Mafia, it's kind of hard for Shirou see the owner of the purple stone as a harden criminal. "Hopefully none of the others got caught up in anyone from that guy's group." Ken adds.

"I rather we leave Italy altogether, I'm trying to find a way to get us to Japan." Shirou admits to Skull. "I know my way around that country better and it's... familiar." *It's home.*

Skull seems to get a look of understanding with a touch of pity. "Got nabbed from home, huh? That must be rough."

"Something alike that. I had been in England before I ended up here in Italy, actually." Shirou admits, knowing he sucks at lying and anyway, it's true, he had been at the Clock Tower before this dimensional mishap occurred. "Waking up in a cell wasn't where I expected to wake up in."

"Oh? OH!" Suddenly Skull seems to eye them all with a look of sympathy. "Well, at least your out of that place, right? You all look like your doing well, all things considered..."

"We're working on acquiring the things we'd need." Shirou states, he's working on Projecting or using Alteration on existing papers for Passports along with figuring out a more honest way of acquiring funds besides using Alteration to turn business cards into bank cards. Which does work, as long as he still has the mental information from having used Structure Analysis on someone's cards, although, he supposes he could just leave an Alteration on one of the business cards with said Structure Analysis stored upon it...

"And thus we should really get going. Wouldn't want the others to wonder if anything happened to us." Mukuro states and he hums, Skull sighs but nods.

"Yea, I really am going to be late as it is." Skull states. "Still worth it, seeing Reborn owned like that!"

They part with simply farewells. Shirou wonders about this world's latest development concerning Reborn and Skull's appearance being almost that of toddlers when they are clearly not meant to be. It doesn't keep him from sleeping at nights but it does cause him to wonder if it's a common theme of this universe, after all, Mukuro did so concerning that Dino Don.

"... to death!" He manages to catch the last two words as he turns the corner to find, surprise surprise, Mukuro in a fight with someone. What does surprise Shirou is that the other one who fell for whatever taunt Mukuro used to rile them up is a kid, one who might be a year or two older then Mukuro himself. Black hair, gray eyes, and features of a typical Japanese kid who's armed with a beloved pair of tonfa make out of common alloy metal, mass produced from a factory.

There's a screech and the former Master and Magus' gaze snaps to the source, that of a brown haired kid who's clinging to Mukuro with wide hazel eyes. There's rips upon the cloths and an over turned bookbag not far, with the contents spread out. The brunette seems to be the same physical as Shirou himself is and what's more, Mukuro seems to have a comforting arm about the younger boy as well, clearly the indigo or 'Mist' is feeling protective over the kid.

As he watches as the tonfa welding boy tries to get pass the shimmering barrier of air between Mukuro and the young boy, Shirou finally notices that there's an older trio of boys and it's not hard to deduce that they are the bullies of the brunette. With a frown, he calls upon his dual colored Flame and Projected rope to bind Tonfa Boy up. The rope grows upon impact and it's not long before the green tinted indigo rope has the hands, legs, and the mouth is stuffed up with said Flame created rope.

Mukuro does his usual laugh at the sight of the Tonfa Boy struggling to get out of the rope before turning to him, already a satisfied smirk fixated upon his face while Shirou strides towards the pair of boys. The Looks he gets from the bullies are filled with a mix of awe and fear while the bound boy's Look upon his face seems to be anger and what might be the beginnings of begrudging respect, perhaps? Not that the former Magus honestly cares, they'll be doing some memory modifying, after all, knowledge of Flames isn't meant for the public and none of them really want to find out just who, or what, reinforces that unwritten rule.

"Why must you cause a scene so soon? We've only been in Namimori for two days." The dual Flame user sighs at Mukuro in Japanese along with a disappointing look upon his face. "I'm sure you could have solved this without using your Flame."

"I wanted to make a grand first impression, Shirou! How can I not use my Flame to do so?" Mukuro states in turn in Italian. "Look at him! He's so... so..." The indigo Flame user takes a step to the side and gestures at the brown haired kid and, well, Shirou gives the kid his fully attention and within a few seconds, uses Structure Analysis

upon the kid and it's not long before not only is he frowning but he's angry on Sawada Tsunayoshi's behalf concerning the Flame Seal, which is causing physical and Flame problems directly while indirectly causing the boy to go through emotional abuse by those drawn to his orange Flame. It's more then enough for him to mentally puts the two adults' names onto his mental list of people to avoid at all costs or kill at all costs if they're trying to approach the kids he's become responsible for.

With a click of his tongue, Shirou Projects Rule Breaker and Alters it to deal with the Flame Seal. Tsunayoshi's eyes widen and grow watery while there's a high pitch cry, he feels Tonfa Boy's struggles increase. "Just a minor prick and you'll find your thoughts clearing up along with your balance." Shirou promises and the kid's mouth snaps shut while eyes go wider.

"How?" The orange Flame possessor stammers. "How did you...?"

"My own Flame gave me a way to see what the problem was and who's responsible." Shirou states calmly. "If they show themselves in my presence, I'll do my upmost to kill them so they can't do something like this again." They might as well have just put a bullet into his head, it would have been a quicker death then this Flame Seal.

Once he's standing before Tsunayoshi, Mukuro hovering close, Shirou holds out his hand and waits. After a few minutes, Tsunayoshi finally seems to gather enough courage to place his arm upon his hand. The former Magus doesn't make any sudden moves as he pricks the palm of Tsunayoshi's hand. Orange flame energy sprouts from Tsunayoshi's forehead and the boy's eyes glow orange, there's a icy calm look in those glowing orange eyes as they seem to study Shirou's soul.

"You..." Tsunayoshi trails off as the eyes drift to his chest and the boy takes a step towards him. Before Shirou can speak or use Reinforcement on his being, orange Flame surges into his chest and it's like something clicks into place. It's then that Shirou Knows the

location of Saber's famous sheath and he's not sure whether to curse or cry at the fact it was within him this whole time.

There's a voice in his ear but it sounds too mechanical to be human. In fact, it kind of reminds him of that dream... Not that the former Magus has time to remember as it feels like Avalon is Activating and suddenly, someone else arrives.

"Artoria?" He whispers as he recognizes Saber's presence. There's a golden light that's blinding to look upon directly but, slowly, it shrinks and the presence changes, it distorts but also seems to become more... whole? Still, there's soon to be an eight, maybe nine year old looking blond girl with light emerald green eyes wearing old fashion attire.

"Shirou?" The child version of Artoria Pendragon inquires in turn after blinking a few times. Nodding as he doesn't, can't, make use of his voice.

And then Tsunayoshi collapses into Shirou's chest, which ends the touching moment of the two returned Master and Servant. After all, it's about then that Tonfa Boy manages to snap the weaken bindings and goes on to attempt to attack Shirou, although Artoria moves to intercept, he's quick to Alter the dagger in his hand into something more mundane item along with blunting the edges of the blade before tossing it to her. "Here!"

Artoria catches the tossed formerly Projected Rule Breaker with a quick spin and uses the blacken jaded sword to block the tonfa from the former bound boy. As the pair of physically older kids leap back, Mukuro moves to help him move Tsunayoshi to the side, vaguely does Shirou Feels something happening and then settling between the orange and indigo Flame possessors. It's something he'll address later as he's got three bystanders to keep safe from Artoria and Tonfa Boy's fight.

His gut affirming that Mukuro will protect the kid who seems to share Shirou's physical age, the former Master of Saber calls upon his

Flame, Reinforcing his body before he moves, darting towards the first of the bullies. A touch on the boy's forehead and the kid falls into a sleep, placing both hands at the boy's temple, he begins to do something concerning the bully's memory of this pass hour. Then, with ease due to his Reinforcement, drags the kid to the mouth of the alley.

It's a touch harder for Shirou to get at the second bully, it seems that Tonfa Boy wants to drag Shirou into the fight but Artoria manages to do a splendid job of intercepting those attempts. He does note that it's clear that Artoria is adapting to welding the jaded black sword to her style and realizes that her arrival in this world isn't that of a Servant either. Although, why he hadn't realized that fact until just then was distracting as he muddles with the memory of the second bully upon putting the kid to sleep.

It's hardly surprising that the Altered Projected Rule Breaker gets destroyed by the time he's finished with the final bully. The jaded sword breaks and then it's shattered remains fade into green and indigo energy before that vanishes. While not surprising, it's timing could have been better but Shirou has a pair of bokken Projected and is defending Artoria from getting hit by a metal tonfa. With a shared glance, the former Magus lets go of one of the bokken, which Artoria takes possession of and as he spins, Projecting a replacement for himself.

Between Artoria and Shirou's combine offensive, Tonfa Boy is becoming worn, the other's stamina running out, not that it matters as someone new arrives upon the scene and it brings Chikusa to the forefront of Shirou's mind. Shirou fairs better then Artoria and Tonfa Boy in the sudden surge of calm, turning, he finds an older man wearing restaurant chief cloths. There's a blue glow in the man's eyes, confirming that the man is in possession of the blue Flame like energy.

"Now, now, let's not be getting too hot blooded." The man states in a jovial tone while his eyes are assessing the three combatants up. "Why don't we just take this business somewhere a touch more

private?" There's an easy grin upon the man's face that's at odds with the underlying tone.

"Sounds good." Shirou states with a nod, allowing his Projections to vanish before moving to help Artoria up off the ground. He pauses, blushes a bit, and then Projects something more modern that should cover Artoria's old style cloths. She's clearly dazed from the effect of the blue Flame while it looks like Tonfa Boy is about ready to fall asleep.

Shirou notes that Mukuro and Tsunayoshi weren't in the alley, which means that Mukuro got the orange Flame possessor away to safety.

The meeting with one Yamamoto Tsuyoshi proved to be informative in some regards to a number of things, like Tonfa Boy's name being Hibari Kyoya and that Namimori is something of a retirement community for Flame using Mafia members. Which Shirou finds to be rather sketchy never mind suspicious given Namimori's location being in Japan instead of in Italy, meaning that the retired criminals should belong to Yakuza criminal underground and not Italian criminal underground. Never mind the question of how an Italian Mob Don expects to be able to hold onto said territory given the distance involved between the two countries along with the lack of an official 'office' to manage Namimori either.

There wasn't much that Yamamoto-san spoke about in the end that was really in depth, like why Artoria, Hibari-kun, and himself had been fighting never mind Shirou's bokken Projections or even the coat Projection that Artoria is currently wearing. Then again, perhaps Yamamoto-san thought that Shirou already possessed the likely common knowledge in regards to these colored Flame energies, given how easily the former Magus can use it. Deciding its not worth correcting Yamamoto-san's opinion on the matter, Shirou took the time to figure out if Artoria is also in possession of this energy.

Artoria, it seems, is in possession of orange and it's not as energized as others he's seen. In fact, upon regarding Hibari-kun's mainly

purple with hints of indigo, the pair's Flame energy is slowly reacting to each other, although Shirou is rather surprised to find his own dual color already interlocked with Artoria's sluggish orange. He's not sure what to make of this interlocking nor does he feel all that different, but then, the former Magus figures it might be different if her orange was as energized as his own, perhaps then he'll notice something different. Nevermind knowing how to feel concerning the sluggish interaction going on between the pair.

As for Hibari-kun, the kid clearly didn't know this tidbit of information and it's clear that the kid is going to be brooding slash sulking over this information for a while. Something tells him that Hibari-kun will be thinking of someway to counter this Mafia Don's claim to Namimori soon enough. It's just a question of whether Hibari-kun will be able to follow through with whatever course of action he'll need to go through to fully claim Namimori as his own.

He's sure to pay for the meal that was ordered and it's not long before Shirou takes Artoria by the hand to go buy a few things in order to make her some cloths that are more modern, it's not long before he finds himself catching Artoria up on what's been going on with him since the end of the War in bits and pieces, after all, they were out in public so he watched his wording. He found it easy to fall into talking with her even though over a decade had passed since they saw each other, it wasn't as awkward as he thought it should be either.

In a lot of ways, it just felt right to have her by his side again. Sure, they're currently both physically children but given time, that'll change and what happens by the time they're adults again, well, who knows what will happen in the meantime?

And then they arrive at the house to find at least two more faces at the house then expected, yea, he kind of expected to see Sawada Tsunayoshi, but the two local girls? Nope. And it seems they were having the equivalent of a pillow fight going on as well.

Point in fact, a pillow ended up flung at him and if not for the bags he'd been carrying, he'd have stopped it from hitting his face. Although, Artoria snorting then doing a short giggle kind of made him go a touch easier on the kids about the mess they made. Key word being a 'touch'.

Ending it Here!

Here Comes the Thunder: KHR!

I don't own Kateyou Hitman Reborn! Inspiration comes from Sonnie's Edge episode of Netflix's **Love Death + Robots** .

} - O - {

Are you ready for the thunder?

Are you ready for the freak show yet?

When the curtains hit the floor

I will leave you wanting more

So you won't forget

No more heroes left to save you

Just the keepers of the bleeding sun

When the sky above us fell

We descended into hell

Into kingdom come

- No More Heroes by Aviators

Which body? The larger one? The small one? Both response to his wishes! Yet, both don't *Feel* right enough to be his *True* body!

Unable to really recall, to really Think , not with **Danger** approaching in two direction. Both bodies are endanger! Snarling with two voice boxes at the approaching **Dangers** , claws flex while fingers curl to

make fists, teeth are shown to the world as his muscles tense, readying to spring.

A high pitched mindless shout is released from one throat while a bellow from another as both bodies begin charging at their respective **Dangers** .

Scenery blurs and he's in a room, there's a bed that houses his tiny body while his second is curled tightly around the room. Two view points threaten to overwhelm him, both are true, yet neither is *Right* . The room decor flickers to a glass walls and liquid filling the area, the bed is more simplistic before the bedroom scene snaps back into place. It flickers between the two locations, both have their appeal yet it's never perfect, for one of the bodies always seems out of place.

I'm dreaming... Yo, short for Tsunayoshi, realizes yet it's not enough to rouse him from his dreaming state. The dream changes, a toddler sporting a red stone sporting an adult crimson tinted shade about him giving him a lecture that are nonsense as Fon's speaking poetry that's ripped right out of a Chinese Cultivator web-novel, it's something that he has recently gotten into reading. A quick glance to the side, Yo notices another presto toddler with a green stone also sporting an adult shade, only this one tinted green stands off to the side, a paint brush in one hand and an actual stone tablet in the other.

Feeling he has some control over his current dream state, Yo causes the dream to change into an arena, it's one of the early ones that lack the higher walls now used in Beast Battles along with shimmering 'force' fields to protect the spectators from any stray ranged attacks. It's not long before a pair of Beasts appear and begin attacking one another, the fighting pair changes to another pair and it continues on like that for a bit, until it's Suna fighting against Bone.

With that, his view of the dream is from Suna's eyes. Without any input from the dreamer, the match plays out like he remembers it,

only there's some exaggerations that clue in the actual nature of the situation. Like blood slowly flying through the air and the way the wounds flicker like they are flesh to some underlying frame grid like a computer model, sometimes the two overlap.

As the Beast known as Bone attempts to choke him, the dream snaps out of reach as a blaring noise wakes him. Eyes open and Yo groans before rolling over to turn off the alarm, then tries to snuggle into his pillow to get maybe a few more minutes of shut eye. Not that it works as the teen recalls why the alarm was set and with great reluctance, pushes the blankets off and sits up on the bed.

Taking his time, the Sky exchanges his sleep wear for a black t-shirt, black jeans, and white socks. Before leaving, he's sure to grab the silver chain necklace with white gold done up on one of Suna's teeth as a pendant that he'd been gifted for his thirteenth Birthday by his two fellow Beast Pilots, Wei Rusong and Hua Xin. Once out of the room, instinctively, he checks on his Suna and without pausing as he walks, causes his second body to stretch a bit within the Bio-Pod before fully focusing on being Yo and mentally grumbling about having to depart to visit Namimori.

It's hard for him to feel any kind of emotional connection with the woman who birthed him and his younger brother, Ienobu. As for seeing Ienobu, Yo finds it's a mix bag, after all, even before he'd been kidnapped by the Silver Pelt Yakuza and quickly sold to the Beast Trainer Triad upon a member of said Triad noting a Flame Seal on him, his relationship with Ienobu hadn't been that great. *Dame-Tsuna.* He mentally pushes that name away, it doesn't Fit him, just as being called Tsuna doesn't sit *Right* with him, back when he'd been a confused mess that kept flickering between two bodies, controlling both at once or caught between them both.

"Yo A-Yo!" Calls out Ling Mei while Wong Renji gives a simple but firm, "Yo-Kun." Their respective Flames flare up in echoing those greetings.

He nods at the collection of five trainees plus I-Pin, who's busy sipping a drink, but continues forward to collection breakfast for himself. As he sits himself down next to Wen Mobei, a sixteen year old active Rainy Storm, and Wong Renji, a fourteen year old Sunny Lightning. Ling Mei, Shimazu Rika, and Oda Rachel, their respective Flames in the same order, fifteen year old Sun, fourteen year old Lightning Mist, and fifteen year old Sunny Rain, continue to chat away in Italian, good practice given it's one of the major Underworld languages that's used throughout the world.

His fellow Y carriers eat in silence while I-Pin is clearly understanding a word every so often of the conversation. The teenaged double X carriers are talking about the succession crisis of the Vongola Famiglia and speculating about the survival odds of whoever is chosen as their Heir. Three dead sons and the 'bastard' son who nobody has seen or heard from for over half a decade? Yea, it's pretty clear that the Vongola Famiglia is at the edge of falling apart in the eyes of the Underworld, but then, all three of those sons had been over the age to inherit and yet, the Ninth Don refused to hand over the reins of the Famiglia to a younger man. Such actions encouraged questions of what it was that the Don was looking for in the future Tenth Don and just how lacking the three in the old man's eyes.

"So, Yo-kun? What are your thoughts?" Rachel inquires with eyes glimmering with curiosity.

"I think the Ninth needs to get his head checked in regards to keeping my sperm donor around after failing in his duty to aid in protecting the man's *three* sons." Yo states in Mandarin in a flat tone and that causes his table mates to snicker. I-Pin nods in a sage manner, finally able to get the gist of what had been discussed and Renji's lips slightly turning upwards.

"So, you think Xanxus is going to get tapped?" Mei inquires, keeping to Mandarin. "He's suppose to be the Don's bastard after all."

"Xanxus' facial features don't really match the Don nor his sons, though." Pipes in Rika. "I mean, sure, he could have taken after his mother but..." Rika shrugs after trailing off.

"I've seen pictures of the Second." The Sky admits. "Xanxus could pass as his son or grandson."

"But..." Rachel trails off. With a shrug, Yo answers the unspoken question, "I'd put my money on Xanxus being at least a second cousin in blood relations or further related then him being the Ninth then son or grandson."

"So, anyone know where I can put my money on that?" Renji wonders out loud while Mobei nods, clearly in agreement with the idea of putting money on that.

"I doubt there's a betting pool going about it." Mei muses. "After all, why would a respectable Don like Timoteo Vongola lie about taking in an under-aged Wrath?"

"Yea, I wonder why." Rachel remarks with her tone dripping with sarcasm and she's not the only one to roll their eyes at the Don taking a wayward Sky child into his Famiglia. Skies being rare and thus highly prized in the Criminal Underworld, with Clouds coming in second but also considered far more dangerous of the Dying Will Flames of the Sky set.

He feels each of them, save for I-Pin, as she's inactive, tugging at his Sky Flame and Yo pulls them a touch more into his 'space' for the next few seconds, then they each pull away from him, having enough of being comforted for the time being. It's not long before Mobei bring up training plans for the coming weeks that the table is once more a place of chatter, with I-Pin being a great deal more interested in adding her own two cents.

Yo knows he's going to miss the six of them, he'll be gone from Headquarters for two weeks. He reminds himself that it'll give him time to catch up on his reading and that it's a break from Verde's

lesson plans. *Besides, half of me is still going to be here. It's not like the distance hampers my ability to slip into Suna's body. It's just Yo who's leaving on vacation.* The Sky reminds himself.

Oh yea, I forgot about Hibari-san. Yo thinks upon catching sight of the inactive grandson of Fon's upon his collecting of his bags. There's a *Feeling* of **Displeasure** emanating from the soon to be seventeen year old, which is rather odd, given Hibari-san only gets to that point by the end of his visit.

Still, the inactive Misty Cloud doesn't approach him but before leaving, it's clear as day to Yo that he's going to be getting a visit from the other within the next twenty-four hours. Has something happened with Ienobu? His brother does possess some degree of Sky Flame, although it also seems to lean towards Sun while reaching for Storm, not as strongly as it does for the Sun though. He can't really get a clear picture in his mind of his younger twin's Flames as the other isn't active and Sky Flame is very good at hiding in the background, from what he's noted when encountering inactive Skies.

It's a few seconds after getting to the doors with his bags that Yo gets a clue as to what's been riling up the Cloud Prefect. The sight of a presto toddler with a yellow stone also signals that his vacation isn't going to go as planned. Not with Reborn hanging out in Namimori for some reason and he'll have to inform Fon and Verde about this development when he's exercising Suna.

Maybe he's here as a bodyguard? The thirteen year old muses as he takes a bit to study the woman to gave birth to him. The woman who's looks he inherited introduces Reborn as Ienobu's Home Tutor before she begins to chat about how much more out going his younger brother's been since Reborn arrived.

Well, fucking damn it. Is a thought that flashes through his mind as he causes Suna's tail to thud against the glass of the Bio-Pod along which is followed upon with him shifting about within the Bio-Pod.

He's agitated as he mentally connects the dots. He really doesn't like the idea that the Vongola Famiglia have suddenly remembered that his younger brother and himself exist, it's a question if this is their attempt at decoying their actual choice of Heir or if the old Don just wants to 'reward' their sperm donor for all his 'hard' work.

He retreats a great deal out of Yo and settles more into Suna, doing his best to calm himself. "Suna? What's wrong?" Verde's voice inquires within the Bio-Pod as his human body leaves through the doors in the company of Reborn and Sawada Nana.

"Reborn." Suna Harmonizes with the comms within the Bio-Pod. *"He's in Namimori. Suppose to be Ienobu's Home Tutor."*

"So, the Don finally made a choice, huh?" He hears Rusong mutter in the background while Verde swears colorfully in French.

He doesn't like the considering looks the Sun is giving Yo. He can *Feel* the gears turning in that hitman's mind, more then likely comparing him with his twin. Suna isn't happy, not one bit at this development, after all, given the number of intermarriages of previous Dons' daughters, legit or not, along with spare sons, legit or not, it's not like there's no Skies in Italy that lack blood connection to the Second Don of the Vongola Famiglia.

"Why the fuck go for a teen?! There should be an already at age Sky who'd be trained up in less time then a former inactive civilian Sky!" Suna states, a dark mood already descending.

"Why indeed." Verde states in agreement, there's murmurs echoing that sentiment. *"It would be great if he'd just stop eyeing Yo as a slab of meat too!"*

Oh, how he feels so dirty just by getting looked at by that slimy git of a man whore. Yo is so going to end up in the shower once they arrive at the house. Suna keeps his eyes firmly close, focusing on directing Yo without putting too much of himself into the smaller, far more defenseless body.

Disconnecting from the comms, the Sky in possession of two bodies is forced to be patient and not commit justified murder. *The attic should still have those Sky Wards, right?* Suna wonders to himself.

There's no way he's going to be occupying one of the rooms, not when Reborn has had free rein of the house for who knows how long to set up whatever the tiny, cursed adult wanted to have set up.

Tsuna's home. Is the first thought that enters into Ienobu's mind at the sight of the brunette on the couch. It doesn't take him long to do the math to realize how the last month had flown by, it had been so eventful and at times, it felt like years instead of the three weeks.

The dyed blond considers the brunette, who's yet to turn to look at him. Eyes glued on the tablet and likely reading some foreign book on it. Looking away from his fraternal twin, he stalks towards the table, more then happy to greet his mother while the trio of teens with him gawk at Tsuna. "Is he a cousin of yours Decimo-sama?"

"No." He states while his mother answers, "Oh my, that's Tsu-kun! Bus-kun's elder twin brother!"

"Tsunayoshi and Ienobu are fraternal twins." Reborn supplies upon seemingly popping out of no where. "He attends a school outside of Namimori."

There's no reaction from Tsuna, but then, it's likely the other teen is listening to music as he can kind of tell ear pieces in his brother's ears. "Ignore him, he'll be gone in two weeks." He states while Reborn gives him a bemused look. "He's nothing but a liability."

He'll be gone until next year. The dyed blond reassures himself. After all, there can only be one of them to be Heir and Reborn had been sent to train **Him** , not his absentee brother.

Reborn merely hums but doesn't stop the four of them heading up the stairs to do their respect homework. "Just what kind of school

does he attend?" Takeshi asks to make small talk as they set about getting their homework out.

"Some school meant to help kids with trauma and mental problems." Ienobu states in a dismissive manner. "He got enrolled after we were eight. He only comes home for two weeks out of a year."

He does his best to push memories of glaring hazel eyes drilling into his own, tight fingers about his throat, claws digging into the skin, and an animistic snarl reaching his ears. "Don't be fooled by his appearance down there. He's damaged goods and it won't take much to get him to show his true colors." He snaps as he forces his eyes to open, he's not sure when he closed them.

"That sucks, Decimo, but we're here to protect you if that happens!" Promises Hayato with Hayashi hums in agreement. Ienobu gives the pair a considering look before feeling some of the tension drain from his shoulders, giving the pair a slight smile.

"So... Which subject? I kind of had trouble following math. And English, like why do they have so many words that sound the same but are spelt differently?" Takeshi interjects and he gives the baseball star a *Look* . But, in the end, shakes off whatever it is that bothered him as Hayato is quick to verbally dig into the easy going teen about his listening skills.

He decided they'll start on English. Ienobu doing his best to forget that his mentally disturbed elder brother is visiting. Doing his best to ignore the only familiar feelings of Dread that his fraternal brother inspires within him.

Charging through the primordial fantasy of the area, Suna is doing his best to keep pace with Guide, who's pilot is Mu, and is in current possession of the enemy 'flag', which is stone branch with a black leather attached. It's not a fighting match tonight, just a 'friendly' game of Capture the Flag between Beast Companies. Although tonight's is special, it's two Companies verse two opposing

Companies, which means that the arena is larger and teamwork can be hit or miss.

The game's rules are to encourage cooperation between the allied Companies, which means that pairs of Beasts are to stick within a certain distance with each other. To go outside of that sphere of influence means that they'll lose their collective team points. There's various ways to earn points besides the obvious objective, like tagging an enemy pair when they're in your territory.

Mu Rupert is a member of Chenqing Company and Guide is a brute of a Beast, not unlike a combo of a gorilla and rhino with coloring being fantastical as well, blue with hints of red with a dark grey under tone. His job is to run interference, to be the one to get touched by enemy forces as it'll mean they'll earn points for this attempt, otherwise, it was just a waste of a play. Which is why when he notices Spur of Rigger Corp Company, Suna is already moving to place himself between the spindly yellow with white Beast and Guide.

It's not Spur who tags him but Spur's partner, Black Sugar of Ravnica Company. Black Sugar is an oddly designed Beast with six legs and four tentacles on the back with hooked pads. According to Verde, Black Sugar is modeled off of a magical beast from Dungeons and Dragons called a Displacer Beast along with second generation of Beast. The base likely being a jaguar instead of a leopard, he can see the dark red spots hidden in the black thin fur coat. As the flag gets collected from Guide to be put back at one of the two locations, Suna lets out of breathy sigh and moves to settle down to wait for a rescue.

His current party writes in the dirt a capital g and a j. Nodding thanks, he uses a claw to write a u and a two. The Rain settles Guide down for a long wait, not comms allowed, so they all had to find other ways to communicate with one another, typically writing upon the ground. There's a limited use of Flames as well, although given that unlike his situation, most Beasts aren't really an extension of their pilots and thus, Beasts don't make good channels for Flames.

Not that it won't change in the future. Suna muses thoughtfully as he watches his surroundings. Second generation Beasts are beginning to yield information on the matter of whether or not that can change. After all, second generation Beasts are allowing pilots more immersion with between pilot and Beast, which means that the pilot doesn't need to be within the previous command range of fifty feet along with pilots able to connect with a Beast's senses, mostly sight and hearing but it's better progress then what was happening with first generation Beasts. It's also granting better motor control and finesse with movement.

Not that Suna needs such, given Suna is as much him as Yo is, he's a soul in possession of two bodies, more then capable of switching between them without the usual equipment. It's also due to such a complete merger that he's able to use his Flame easily as Suna, it might not come as quickly as with Yo but then, there's more to Suna to begin with, mass wise. *Then again, it could be a different issue then mass, after all, Suna's been studied for how many years by Verde?*

Then there's a slight feeling going down his spine and it doesn't takes Suna long to realize it's not within the arena but from the Sky Wards on the attic where Yo is relaxing in. *Reborn.* He mentally huffs while flexing his claws.

The hitman just aggravates him, sure, he doesn't like the Curse that clings to Fon and Verde's Flames but it wasn't the Curse that's the cause. *Is it because he's working for the Ninth Don?* Suna muses and that does seem to *Feel* right, not the primary reason though.

After pondering it for a bit, it feels like the answer is so close but it's gone the moment he tries to reach out to claim it, Suna mentally shoves said train of thought out of his mind as best as he can. There's a match going on and although he's currently idle, it doesn't excuse him losing focus on his surroundings. It's not long before a rescue pair comes their way, the pair managing to do some impressive moves to evade getting tapped by the pursuing pair.

Chenqing Company's Peerless is the one to reach him, as Peerless, engineered to appear as a raptor dinosaur with only some vibrant feathers, spins, their stiff tail smacks him in the side of his shoulder. He explodes into action as does Guide. They race back to their side of the arena, once safe, Xin in Reign, the Beast's genetic coding is based off of tiger, clearly taking an interest to ensure both Suna and Guide are doing well.

The game continues until the three hour timer finally ends the match. The winners by a single point is the Ravnica and Rigger Corp Companies. In the end, the scenery vanishes while portals open up that leads directly back to their respective Headquarters.

It's not long before they are all snug in their Bio-Pods and, reluctantly, Suna moves to settle into Yo while Suna's gets medical treatment. Opening Yo's eyes, he sighs and is more connected to the Sky Wards then he'd been just moments before. It takes him a few seconds to pin point the location of Reborn in relation of the attic.

Humming, Yo sits up and walks over to the mini fridge, grabbing a tall can, the door closes as he taps on the top with his index finger. Yo sits down on the small couch that's before a flat screen television, with a simple use of his Flame, he's connected to the screen and the modified gaming console. Both turn on and he releases his hold on the screen, waiting for the modified gaming console to finish rebooting so he can surf various streaming sites like YouTube, which is global, or Chinese based ones like Tencent Pictures, which most of members of the Nian Company prefer viewing.

As he settles on re-watching Digimon Tamers, Yo opens the can and takes a sip as the beginning of episode one narrates in his native Japanese. As the opening song ends, his cell phone is vibrating and with a soft sigh, pauses the playing of the episode. Putting the can onto the end table, the Sky gets up off the couch and walks over to the night stand where it's resting and charging.

Taking the charging end from the cell, the caller ID is Khanivore. *Shouldn't have let that suggestion pass my lips.* Yo thinks as he lets

loose a soft, depressing sigh as he answers the incoming call from Hibari-san.

"Hibari-san." Is his simple greeting while he gets a cold, "Omnivore."

In the silence that follows, he can only imagine how the older teen, almost a young man, is struggling to find the right tone along with statement to convey the reason why he's reaching out to Yo. "Fake Baby?" He finally hazards a guess and there's a surprisingly good animistic snarl from Hibari-san, perhaps a tiny, unconscious use of a spark of Mist Flame?

"Given their lack of inclination of bring him more into their Herd by having him move to Italy. I do believe you're going to be having this problem for the next few years." Yo states in a matter of fact way. "Never mind that the Fake Baby likely already wants you for his Pride."

Oh, the snarl upgrades into a very throaty growl that lasts for a good minute before Hibari-san catches himself displaying such emotions. It's hard for him to sympathize with the inactive Cloud in this matter, after all, Hibari-san has always been the largest fish in this lake and has grown use to that fact. It's to the point that there's a great deal of pride within the inactive Cloud surrounding that fact and he's grown use to people falling into line with his wishes, which, is likely why Reborn pretty much keeps ruffling Hibari-san's feathers with not bothering to notice the line and is typically a mile pass the line, as it were.

Which is why he's so glad that he'll be leaving Namimori in four days time, regardless of whatever plan Reborn has to try and keep him around. Namimori isn't home, hasn't been his home for years nor has Nana been much of a supportive mother for either of them, not that Ienobu likely knows that... It's still a sore point, even after so many years.

"And neither can Shizun be able to talk with him into falling into line, Hibari-san." Yo states. "This is a job for the Fake Baby and the Fake

Baby's pride is on the line." He explains, not that he ultimately cares about Reborn or the man's pride, but it should at least give Hibari-san some idea of why the cursed Sun is acting the way he is and likely why he won't just leave Namimori.

"Either you figure out how to evict Ienobu from the whole of Namimori or you learn to live with the Fake Baby's antics and a future concerning you getting uprooted from Namimori in the future." Yo states after a bit. "If any of them follow, you'll just have to let them, too." He thinks to add, after all, Ienobu might have already been gathering others to his Sky and thus would likely follow him out of Namimori.

That Rain might not. Yo mentally admits when he reviews the number of people Ienobu has visiting him or coming home with him. *Something happened to cause the Rain to be disenchanted with Ienobu.* Which seems rather odd, given how long the two seem to have been Courting and it must be something big if the Rain couldn't find it in him to smooth the issue over. It's also a very recent issue, one that might not have come up before too.

Hibari-san scuffs in reply to his suggestion but Yo suspects that when Hibari-san get the chance to think a touch more clearly, he'll see why that particular suggestion to his issue with Reborn has merit and likely to work at getting Reborn out of his Territory. He's yet to meet many Clouds, pure or mutt, besides Hibari-san and Skull but they are said to have a mulish outlook when it comes to their respective Territory to varying degrees. It likely doesn't help that Hibari-san also possesses Mist as a secondary Flame and Mists... Mists get possessive of people and it's clear that it's not just the physical location of Namimori that Hibari-san lay claims to, it's also going to be used against him in this instance.

The call ends on Hibari-san's end and Yo stares at the screen for half a minute before swiping the calling app away. Walking back to his couch, he can only shake his head a bit at the stubbornness of the inactive Cloud but also knows that, in the end, it's not like he's involved. He's not Hibari-san's Sky nor is that likely ever going to

change, not with Namimori being Hibari-san's primary concern and Territory.

He knows he's damaged goods, he's got two bodies that *Feel* fine but neither are truly **Right** . The Flame Seal is only part of the reason why, the rest has to do with how experimental the idea of Beast Pilots was in the first place. He's been kicked out of the Famiglia his ancestor founded with a Flame Seal slowly killing him, stolen from his only 'dependable' parent and indifferent twin, and sold to a Traid group trying to make it big in a big way.

It's kind of the reason why the name of the Company is Nian, it's translation of Twined. Most among the sub-culture of the Flame community think the Company's name is about two of the World's Strongest coming together to found the Beast Circuit. The truth has more to do with a warning of what can happen if the process between a pilot and a Beast, that a Flame User can be caught between two bodies. Not that anyone knows that about Suna and his solo 'pilot' Yo, most seem to thinking that as a Sky, both are just too Harmonized to accommodate another Beast and/or pilot.

Settling onto the couch until he's comfortable and reaching out to Suna, his emotions soothe themselves along with his train of thought. Forcing his muscles in his upper body to relax and taking deep, calming breaths, Yo allows himself to press himself up on the back of the couch. Once he's got his emotions back to more comfortable levels, Yo picks up the tall can and re-connects to resumes playing Digimon Tamers.

There's tension hanging about the kitchen table as they eat breakfast. Suna isn't all that surprised that the only one who either doesn't notice it or just plain ignores it is the one who prepared and is serving the breakfast. His instincts are a buzz and he's itching to take a swing at Reborn, the source of the approaching irritation that's going to be unleashed. It's the reason why he's so much more in Suna since Yo came down the stairs then in Yo.

Yes, he knows that his other body will be returning to China today, leaving after breakfast to head to the station, at which point he'll be using a Sky Path to arrive at the Bio-Pod that houses Suna. Yo will be **Home** and *Safe* from the scheming hitman and the fucked up succession crisis of the Vongola Famiglia. Which *Doesn't* involve *HIM* at **ALL** , thank you very much. *For fucking my life up with that Flame Seal, you saggy shit bag Don and fuck scum of a sperm donor money bags.*

Anger curls in Suna's belly as he flexes not just his tail but his Sky Flame. He's been itching to try a new Flame technique and his instincts purr at the thought of how *Surprised* the scheming snake of a Sun will be when he uses it on said hitman. He can almost feel the presto baby's blood on the palms of his hand...

There's a slight cough that causes him to turn Yo's head to regard Ienobu, pausing in bringing up food in his chopsticks, which has the effect of causing the dyed blond to mutter excuses before attempting to flee the table. Reborn chides something about Mafia Dons and being scared, which makes him give the fake toddler a flat look. After all, it's clear that Ienobu's Hyper Intuition is warning him about the approaching blood bath.

And, frankly, Ienobu has every reason to be scared of him after that near death by choking that happened when one of their sperm donor's men thought it was a good idea to steal him away during a shopping trip with Fon while when they visited in Japan, both to find out if he's been reported along with giving him a familiarity with his surroundings. The fucker knocked might have knocked out the tinier version of him to return him to his 'home'. Then, making things even worse was the fucker thinking it safe to be using their Mist Flame to 'ease' his trauma of his kidnapping and then the experimentation that resulted in his having two bodies, which didn't help a goddamn thing as it only served to confuse and rile him up more.

So, when Ienobu thought it a good idea to taunt him for missing school and threaten to tell Hibari Kyoya about his return, working his way up into what bribe to keep that from happening... Well, yea, he'd

been in a right state by that point along with recalling what Hibari-san was generally like... He freaked out then got angry, an idea of how to keep that from happening and, well, he proceeded to follow through with his violent impulse.

If not for Hibari-san showing up... Suna has Yo shift his head away from his younger brother and returns to eating. *So many fucking problems caused by having the 'best' intentions at heart... Hell is truly paved with good intentions, isn't it?* He muses, not giving Reborn the opening he's looking for.

That scar healed up nicely, didn't even see a faint impression of it during out spar when I ruined his shirt. Suna recalls as he has Yo pause to take a sip from his glass. *Still hazy down I managed to create a sword out of leaves or why it had been able to cut through stone so easy... Yea, that fountain got sliced up pretty bad.*

Not that Ienobu was awake to see the destruction Hibari-san, that 'extreme' Sun, and himself caused to that park. He's not even sure when that Sun joined the fight nor does he know why the boy retreated from the fight either. It was just as well, his Sky Flame was reacting to that kid's Sun Flame, which caused some strange things to happen to the various plants of the park. So, while he'd focus on battling Hibari-san physically, he'd mostly battled with that 'extreme' Sun viva Flames, they both were Active and very stubborn.

His only memory of that 'extreme' Sun was wearing light brown bark with yellow leaves as armor, which covered the shoes, legs, body, arms, hands, and head. *Actually, that might be why I haven't figured out how to recreated that leaf sword.* He reflects. *I wonder if Hibari-san ever learnt the identity of who that Sun was?*

His instincts snap at him, bringing him out of his musings. Breakfast is done and that tension is something he acknowledges once more. The embers of that anger flare up once again as Suna uses Yo to fixates the presto baby with an impassive look before getting up to clear away his dishes.

Ignoring the woman's protests, he puts them in the sink before heading for the door, to where his bags await him. Suna's mentally debating the merits of just creating a Sky Path there and then so he can get Yo back to Nian Company Headquarters faster. At this point, Nana's continued ignorance in regards to Mafia and Dying Will Flames of the Sky is her being willful in wanting to be ignorant then her not having the chance at coming to grips with reality of the situation that Ienobu is being toss into head first and with a lifeguard who's a firm believer in sink or swim mentality towards life.

"There isn't a school." The way in which the presto baby says that makes it sound like he's repeated that before, which, well, he might have. The hitman likely has been trying to get a reaction out of him since his mind when down memory lane concerning how he almost choked Ienobu to death. "I've check."

"Congrats on knowing how to read Japanese then." He has Yo states in a bland tone. "But then, that's hardly an accomplishment when you've been in Japanese for how long?"

He turns to regard the fake toddler, knowing his eyes are flaring with his Flame color. "Keep this up and you might be able to pick up some manners during your time here, Sun Arcobaleno." Yo's tone is biting as he gives the hitman a knowing smirk while titling the head just so.

"I'd be lying if I said Fon and Verde sends their regards." It's said in a light, teasing tone. Reborn's reaction is easy to see as the infamous poker face settles on that face along with the tilting of the head to use the hat to hide his eyes.

Ienobu murmurs the word Arcobaleno while keeping his distance. "Haven't told him, huh? About yourself? About the timer that's ticking away." He states as he settles more into Yo. "Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock. The time on the clock is running out, hitman."

The Sun's reaction only feed his anger but he holds back from continuing. "What do you mean? What clock? And how do you..."

Ienobu questions, he can tell that the other wants to demand answers but, well, fear concerning the two of them keeps him from doing so.

"Got kidnapped by a Yakuza, sold to a Triad, and experimented on by said Triad." He sums up. "Fon's the Storm Arcobaleno, he's my Shizun, and the one who put an end to the experiments of said Triad." By putting an end to them.

"Sperm donor never put much thought into security around us." He remarks. "He likely doesn't put much thought into securing anything, really, what with three dead Heirs staining his hands."

"And here Reborn is." Yo states lightly. "A weight of his fate about his neck and a contract that he stakes his pride on. To pick one of the civilian sons of the Outsider Advisor to train as a future Don."

"Of course the two wastes of flesh failed to mention a critical bit of information, you know?" He states after reading Reborn's pose and Flame. "They already kicked out the eldest son from line of succession when he was *Five* ."

"When the Famiglia had three **Heirs** to their name and vying for the position of future Don. When they had four Skies wearing the name Vongola." He continues as he feels Ienobu's Flames flinch. "Flame Sealed at *Five* , which basically means I was toss out of the *Family* our respected ancestor founded for the simply crime of becoming Active."

"Same would have happened to you," His eyes flicker towards his brother, "if you'd become Active during their visit."

"The old shit bag of a Don should get his head examined and that adopted son of his should be given regency over the Famiglia, to do some spring cleaning." He states with a snort as his gaze returns to Reborn. "So many potential heirs skipped over simply because the decaying, altered minded soon to be a corpse himself, who sits upon

a hill of bones covered in blood sporting a rotting corpse throne wants someone with Giotto's blood to succeed him."

"I pity the sons for having such a cock sucking shit stain for a father." He remarks pausing before continuing with a great deal more control over his emotions. "But it's not any of my business, in the end. After all, I was toss out of the Famiglia, a Flame Seal branded on my *Soul* ."

With that, he begins picking up his bags and with a final look starting from Nana, who's busying washing the kitchen counters, doing her best to not hear anything, to Ienobu, who's eyes are wide and is very pale, so many questions waiting to be spoken while **Knowing** he won't like the answers to them, and to Reborn, who clearly don't like how disrespectful he is to his contractor and burns with many more questions. Touching the front door, he reaches into himself and Harmonizes the door with a storage closet door that is where Suna's Bio-Pod is.

His Sky Flame engulfs the door and the door frame for a solid minute, he feels the Sky Path snap into place. "Hope to see you next year, little brother." He states before twisting the knob and opening the door, he walks through it, being sure to close it and then the Sky Path between the two doors.

Exhaustion grips him but he walks towards Suna's Bio-Pod, taking comfort from his other body. "I'm home." He states softly as he touches the glass and the tail moves to touch the opposite side of the glass.

He can see a tired smile on Yo's face while he sees Suna's dull orange eyes open enough to view Yo.

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Might be continued . . . Might not be as well!

Time in the Digital Realm: Digimon

I don't own Digimon and this is a bit inspired by Waiting for You Online!

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Cyber Realm , it's the revamp and updated title of the previous Data Adventures , the max level is now set at 200, from the previous 100 it had been for the past five years, and they added a number of new Races where previously, the Races had been Human, Elf, and Demi-Human, which are humans but with animal features. The four new Races are Orc, Mer-Folk, Centaur, and Angelic-Blooded, which is just Human with a Racial Wing Feature that unlocks at level 2 and it's duration is for a minute, every two levels, the duration increases by a minute. Players being people did want people do best, they complain about how which of the Races they should have allowed Players to use.

Hazardous merely sighs and his ears flicker back while he carries his in game Wife **StarLight** through the Capital City of Scarlatina, Rainbow Ring. They do gather a few looks, after all, **StarLight** is considered rather famous back when this was Data Adventures due to her playing 'solo' all the time and, of course, her level. There's still a number of... glitches since the previous Data Adventures went into the VMMT, short for Virtual Mind Meld Technology, market about ten years ago, when he'd been eight while **StarLight** had been nine.

There had been a random option for creating Characters back then, and by random, it was *Random* . If not for a pair of friends, unofficial leaks of a limited time promotion, and minor rumors surrounding said the option, he'd likely just go with Human for his first and, really, only Character, **Hazardous** . But since he followed through with their badgering, **Hazardous** ' Race ended up being fairly... odd but then, not as odd as what other Players ended up with as their Race back then.

People posted selfies of their Characters during those three weeks on various forums, some Players ended up with Characters of not just the enemy Races within the game but also Characters who's Races were Animals and Plants, a few ended up as Animated Items, well, that's what some people claimed but the developers claim those to be false. Those with Animal Characters started as young examples of the animal, once the Character reached the unknown max level for the Animal, the Character's Avatar would update to be an adult version.

Feeling a pat on his neck, he comes to a stop before moving to the side of the street. "Maybe they'll have it?" **StarLight** muses and he snorts, whispering to her, 'I won't hold my breathe.'

"I'll be back." Letting her down, **StarLight** heads into the Auction House. He gets up from his bow and glances around the street, there's more then a few Players watching him.

"I thought mounts are suppose to vanish?" A Mer-Folk, the Avatar appears to be female, muses to her companions. "The rider must have been **StarLight** ." Comments one of the two Angelic-Blooded. "Really?! That's who she was? Do you think she'd pose for a selfie with me?" The other Angelic-Blooded Player.

Yea, **Hazardous** ' Race is an Animal, a Horse, which upgraded to a Stallion when the Husbandry System engendered all of the in game Animals, and it's both a bemusing curse along with an annoying blessing, after all, he doesn't have hands so he can't use weapons. He's got problems communicating with other Players, it's only when he's in a Party does it work and, later, when the Marriage System was added, did they find out that he can use the new feature of the game called Whisper. It allows the married couple to talk to each other regardless of distance.

They also found a number of other hidden features concerning the Marriage System that they come across over the years since the system became a thing, nobody has made threads about, like the fact that when they are within a kilometer of each other, the game

treats them as though they are already in a Party, which means they share EXP and can Roll for items of rare and higher quality. It's commonly known that there are **Hidden Events** and weekly Quests only available to married Players. What most of the Players don't known is that there seems to be something more to said events and Quests, after all, in the years that they've been playing and doing said Events and Quests, they've noticed a steady increase in what they gain from them, for example, it seems that every eight weeks they saw the EXP increase and changes in what rewards they receive, often in number or it changes to something better or something new gets handed out as well.

Although, there's a glitch that seemed to have not been fixed in regards to said Marriage System , it seems that due to his Race, **StarLight** 's Character Information doesn't list **Hazardous** as her Husband. Further, it doesn't read as Married or Single, that space is blank. Which has lead to another reason why Players look up to **StarLight** , many believing she's Single and is a Solo Player.

Due to his lack of ability with weapons, it meant that **Hazardous** was limited in what he can be spec into. So, he went the magic route, namely pursuing White Magic, aka Healing Magic, for as far as he could before spreading out to learn other kinds of magic, which were Black Magic, aka Debuff Magic, Blue Magic, aka Self Argumentation Magic, Brown Magic, aka Shield/Ward Magic, Green Magic, aka Buffing Others Magic, and Yellow Magic, aka Area Effect Magic. With the revamping of the game, there's now Purple Magic, which is Shield/Ward Breaking Magic, Orange Magic, which is a magic for crafting Magical Items, and Gray Magic, which is for Transformation Magic.

As for what **StarLight** is looking in the Auction House for is a Beginner Tome of Gray Magic. It's been a week since Cyber Realm has been out and, as usual, there's plenty of rumors going around concerning the three new Magics. There's hope that with Gray Magic, he'll be able to have **Hazardous** transform into a form that sports hands, sure, the duration of said Transformation wouldn't be

for long but it would allow him to enter certain areas that are rather tight for his Character's Avatar body.

StarLight arrives out of the building, turning to focus on her a great deal better, it looks like she's more nervous then disappointed. "I bought something, it's not the Tome but it's something that should work, it's got four charges." She explains once she's at his shoulder, an arm about his neck.

'That's better then nothing.' He admits in a happy tone. 'Random form?' **Hazardous** inquires as he bends down, 'picking' **StarLight** up.

"Seems like it." She agrees as she settles onto his back with her facing forward. With a hum, **Hazardous** gets into a trot, they'll head out of Rainbow Ring to further discuss things.

University isn't what she expected it to be, yet, in the end, Kari finds relief from her studying to be a teacher where she can, be it along side her 'husband' in the revamped Cyber Realm as **StarLight** to enjoying meet ups with old friends or family when they can find the time. Which is why she's got dinner plans with Tai for tonight, although he might be bringing along his room mate, Matt, at least, that's what his latest text to her seem to imply. She's met Matt a few times since the two became room mates and Kari finds him to be nice enough, a touch aloof but decent kind of guy.

She gives a brief thought towards Takato, who's her 'husband' **Hazardous** and wonders about how he's parents are doing. Smiling slightly at the thought of her self adopted younger brother, she's never really talked about what she gets up to in Data Adventures , the now Cyber Realm with her older brother. In fact, she doubts he even knows her only Character's name but that's not that surprising as Tai's not one for RP type video games, his tastes tend more towards the popular shooters and beat em' ups.

In a lot of ways, Takato's her longest standing friendship, who's also her first male friend, and is someone who's more like a little brother then just a friend she plays the game with. They've met a few times in RL and it's rather startling to realize they kind of resemble each other some what, with both of them sporting red hazel eyes and are brunettes. So the few time they meet up, a lot of people mistake them to be cousins or siblings due to similar coloring.

Pushing that out of her mind, she closes the door behind her, locking it and then continuing down the hallway to the stairs, she'll use the elevator when she returns to the apartment. She arrives with ten minutes to spare when it comes to the time they said they'd met up at. Once within the restaurant, Kari finds that there's an extra person sitting at the table with her older brother and his room mate, who might be a relative of Matt's given how they share similar features, although he looks kind of on the gloomy side.

Tai waves at her, beckoning her over while Matt and third member of the table look up at her. With a better look at the third's features, the resemblance to Matt is a touch more strong which means this might be a brother. *Does he have a sibling?* Kari wonders as she greets the three with a slightly forced smile.

"This is Matt's little brother, Takaishi Takeru, he'll answer to TK though." Tai informs her with a playful grin while Matt gets this put upon look while TK says a rather meek hello. "Nice to meet you, TK. I'm Tai's sister, Hikari, but I'll answer to Kari too."

That gets her a smile and TK seems to relax a touch. She lips into the seat next to Tai, who moves over to give her more room. "He needed to get out of his room." Explains Matt. "Bad break up."

"Which happened two months ago." Pipes in her brother while TK just seems set to endure the discussion of his break up, likely for the nth time since it happened. Not that she can relate, given her experience had only been at best, two dates with the same guy. She's never been in a serious relationship, well, being married in a video game hardly counts as dating, generally and even then, they

spent two years playing together before the game update brought in the Marriage System.

"I can't really relate to that, but from how my friends act, I'm sure, given time, it won't be as raw?" She isn't sure if that's much of a comfort, yet TK gives her a slight smile and a hum. Matt and Tai have the menus up and going through it.

A waiter arrives to take their drink orders as TK and her take a look through their own menus. Conversation is mostly on the typical small talk, circling around school, popular series and music, and Matt bring up the recent revamping and updated of Cyber Realm . "So, Data Adventures is now Cyber Realm , have you heard of it, Kari?"

"I've been playing it with the same Character for over ten years now." She admits and all three of the guys at the table seem rather surprised to hear that. "How about you three?" Kari asks in turn. "Or have you just gotten into it recently?"

"Been playing for about three years." Matt replies. "I've been bugging Tai into giving it a try and he finally did two days ago."

"I played for two years with my brother but, well, I haven't played for over five years." TK admits. She decides not to pry while Tai's emotions are circulating through various emotions about this bit of information.

"To play that long... Is there someone special?" Matt inquires with a touch of deviousness, after all, he knows perfectly well how Tai is when it comes to her and guys.

"More like a younger brother." She admits. "He's a year younger and we've met in real life."

"This... wait? Younger... I don't recall..." Tai is clearly stumped about this development.

"His name is Matsuki Takato and a lot of people think we're either cousins or siblings, due to our similar coloring." Kari tells them. "And yea, our Characters are married in game."

Their food arrives while Tai clearly doesn't know what to make of this revelation while the other pair of siblings chat about how their respective parent is doing, it seems that their parents are divorced and they'd each gone to live one either their father or mother. It seems that TK was raised by their mother with Matt with their father. She politely listens but is glad when the topic changes to a few times until they return to the game, by this point, Tai looks like he's got his feet back under him, emotionally and mentally speaking that is.

"So... What's your Character's name?" Tai asks after Matt shares a story about his latest dungeon crawl with his guild-mates in Smoking Mirror Caverns, it's for levels 65 to 70 and it's one of those that's been altered with the game's update.

Kari pauses as she considers Tai's request but, in the end, sighs, " **StarLight** of Fourth Musket Server." There's a slight widening of eyes from Matt while confusion flickers on TK's face and Tai's confusion blooms into surprise.

"But, I thought that **StarLight** wasn't married?" Tai states, glancing towards Matt. The blond in question kind of nods in agreement.

"Takato did the Random challenge and ended up with his Character being a Horse, the game still has glitches when it comes to Player with Animal Characters." She admits and it's clear that the others find it amusing. " **Hazardous** is his Character's name, you won't find it on the Ranking Lists either."

"How does one manage to actually *play* an Animal Character?" TK inquires, beating Matt to the punch. "I seem to recall forums complaining about how weak they were at level 1 and problems with interaction with the environment along with other Players."

"Yea, most of those Characters have been sold to the company for in game currency." Matt adds and she hums, before saying after taking a few bites, "Yes, they can't hold weapons but they can learn magic, **Hazardous** use to focus on only White Magic but he's branched out due. The game doesn't hinder him becoming a Magical Generalist like the official Races but that could be a balancing things out given the lack of hands or it's not registering his Character correctly."

"Isn't there a new color of Magic that needs hands due to crafting?" Matt muses and Kari hums before stating simply, "Orange and we've found something to work around that."

She ignores that Tai is busy on his phone, likely looking up both Character's names and mentally wishes her brother luck trying to find anything on **Hazardous** . As TK had said, most of those who ended up with Animal Characters grew frustrated with trying to play them and it's the rare Player who kept said Character for either novelty or as a status symbol. Given that Grey Magic is centered around transformation, who knows what the game developers actually did with those bought Characters. Then again, they might not have done anything given the still awkward interfacing Takato has with **Hazardous** , even if it often works in their favor at times.

They've managed to buy the beginner tome and Takato's been working hard to grind this ability in said branch. Beginner level means that he's only able to effect tiny changes that are superficial in nature in regard to appearances. **Hazardous** ' coat, mane, and tail has changes into a lot of different colors and now Takato's figuring out how to do patterns with his current ability. The final spells of beginner allow for minor physical changes, like antlers, cat's eyes, or feathers to a Character, they only last for an hour but it's progress and the next stage in the magic likely allows for permanency with those changes.

Yes, given time, **Hazardous** can look like a unicorn but on the other hand, he might even kirin, although that would involve figuring something out for the hooves. The options that Takato has, will have, would be only limited by his imagination. The transformation items

he'd been using doesn't alter Takato's **Hazardous** ' Race nor affect his stats but it does allow him to use of hands, which had been the biggest hindrance when it came to casting certain spells which requires a hand gesture.

We did find out that his Equipment does stay bound to him once the transformation is gone though. Kari muses as she shares some of her early mishaps with Takato. She still has screen shots of **Hazardous** as a colt, which are very adorable and she has a few of them on her phone, which she shows to the other three.

Before they part after they pay for their dinner, TK asks for the server again, mentioning that he's interested in getting back into the game. She does make a suggestion that if he does make a Character on the same server that he sends the Friend Request to **Hazardous** and she'll then get his Character's name from him to send an invite back.

It's hardly surprising that she gets a text from Tai asking to met Takato later that night, having checked her phone's battery before turning in for the night. Sighing, she replies with a simply, maybe.

It's been so long since he'd played that TK had forgotten his Password to his Data Adventures Account. It was easily solved with re-verifying his information and email, then putting in a new one. Then it was a matter of finding the server that Tai's sister was on. It had taken him two weeks to work up the nerve to follow through with actually making a new Character, in that time, he did try to slip back into the game but, well, it's been so long since he played and the changes...

So, when he did do it, make a new Character that is, after all, what was the point of spending actual money to transfer one of this three Characters to this server when he decided he wanted something of a fresh start? Then, seeing the new Playable Races and having checked out the new updates to the older ones, in the end, TK decides to pick Angelic-Blooded for his new Character's Race and

after trying a number of different names, all of which just didn't feel right to already in use, it's when he puts in **SparkingMoutain** that his Character gets a name.

It's an embarrassing name but it does its job. Once within the game and goes through the Game Tutorial, he's able to bring up the Friend List and it takes a few seconds to remember the name. It seems that **Hazardous** is online and within a minute, accepts the request and within another minute, he gets a request from **StarLight** . It takes him a few seconds before accepting the request, it's kind of strange to look at the list and notice how there's not the normal profile picture next to **Hazardous** ' name, but then, it must be normal thing.

It's not very long before he gets a message from **Hazardous** about meeting them at Glacier Coast Harbor so they can hook up. He sends a reply back agreeing, although he does warn it might take him a while, given his current level is 3. **Hazardous** replies back that it's fine, that **StarLight** and him are still got some collecting to do, which is going to take a while.

While tempted to inquire about what they are collecting, he re-frames and, after checking his World Map , heads out in that direction. It takes him nearly an hour to travel there on foot, doing his best to deal with the Mob of Monsters and getting use to flying with his Racial Feature. He messages **Hazardous** that he's arrived and gets a reply saying that they're almost done, then another saying they'll be there in about fifteen minutes.

He gets a Party Invite from **StarLight** , which means that they're within a mile of the harbor. Accepting, he finds it's just **StarLight** and him as members then, a minute later, **Hazardous** gets added and then promoted to Party Leader a few minutes later. 'Sorry, I was trying to talk to you but it seems you couldn't hear me. So we decided to see if you could if I were the leader of the party.'

It's a whisper, given how way the voice sounds, it's soft, gently even and yet, glancing around shows that neither **Hazardous** or

StarLight are within sight of him. "Can you hear me?... Can, ah, **StarLight** hear me?" He inquires curiously.

'I hear you just fine.' Then a few seconds later, **Hazardous** replies with a hint of bemusement, 'She hadn't so, no, she can't. Huh, good to know.'

"Where did you want to meet?" He asks, it's rather strange to be talking with **Hazardous** when the other Player isn't in sight. He considers where to go or, maybe, give a description of **SparkingMoutain** . Then again, **Hazardous** is a Horse, which makes it hard to miss given that most Players prefer more exotic for their mounts theses days, like woolly rhinos and gigantic felines.

'We're turning in the Quest at the Wine Cellar of the Toad's Spawn Inn. It's the orange and green building, hard to miss given generally all of the buildings around here are all creams and browns.' **Hazardous** explains and with a leap into the air, his wings spread and he flaps a bit until he gets a better view of the various buildings and, hums upon spotting how close he is to said inn. "I see it."

It doesn't take long before his duration on his wings expires but he's not that far from the ground. He arrives in the building and it takes him a bit of exploring to find the way into the Wine Cellar, it's stairs door is hidden by the stairs leading to the next floor. It takes him some effort to move the sliding door just enough to get his hands in between, then he uses his body weight to help move it. "Well done."

Startled, he finds **StarLight** , who's an Elf, and a man who does sport human features, like a five o'clock shadow but the ears seem to be pointed like an elf's. The hair is a dark red with streaks of gold while the eyes point to a clearly non-human feature given they are a warm amber yellow. The man is sturdy in frame, really sturdy with broad shoulders and the man's height seems to be almost seven feet, which is beyond the limit for humans, elves, demi-humans, and, hence, the Anglic-Blooded as well.

" **Hazardous** ." The man says as way of introduction and it takes him a few seconds to realize that, yes, that does sound a little like the whispering voice from before. "I didn't expect you to figure out where the door was." The other Player admits with a easy smile.

"Yea, we found a way for him to enter into buildings." **StarLight** says, helping him to realize what he's actually seeing is what he's seeing. "Orange Magic, for now, at least until he gets more skilled in Grey Magic."

Nodding, he offers a hand to the both of them, introducing his current Character, " **SparkingMountain** and it's nice to meet you both and thanks for letting me join with you, in here, you know, for today." **StarLight** takes his hand first and then it's **Hazardous** .

"Not problem." StarLight says with a smile, her attire is that of a front line fighter and it's clear she hadn't bothered to edit any of it to form fit her Character's Avatar, which costs in game currency and it binds the equipped armor to the Player, so it can't be sold at the Auction House. "We don't have a lot of people who *know* , you know?"

It takes him a few seconds to realize that its about **Hazardous** ' Race or about the marriage, likely both actually. "Ah, so, just, down?" He stumbles with his words, **Hazardous** humming positive and **StarLight** nodding.

He walks down the stairs, keeping a hand on the railing as he does so, light foot steps are next before heavier ones bring up the rear. The Wine Cellar turns out to be rather spacious, with huge barrels on various racks and the room is lit up with a very rare item, which are hard to find as drops never mind purchasing from the Auction House, Amulets of Haunting Light hanging in the air.

"Wires." *Oh, yea* . Squinting, he can see the wires the necklaces are hung on.

"Aren't those... Well, I know it's been some years but..." He trails off and StarLight answers his question, "Yes, they are still hard to find

item, although creating them using Orange Magic is likely going to be happening soon, once people get around to experimenting with Orange Magic outside of the usual recipes and spells."

There's a table at the center space and a Demi-Human sporting feathers, with a name floating above the head, it's clear that he's an NPC. **Courting Gentleman Joe White** , he's pretty sure it's a reference to something but he doesn't know to what off the top of his head. **Hazardous** strides forward once he comes to the table, **StarLight** moving to stand to his left. "Did you bring my request, my good sir?"

"A hundred pink roses and two thornless white roses." States Hazardous and he raises his eye brows at the shear amount of roses, never mind the comment about thornless ones. A trade screen pops up between the NPC and Player. "Excellent work, my good sir." The trade screen closes only, suddenly, the NPC turns to congratulate *him* on *his* marriage.

"Huh?" A second later, fake confederacy explodes as he gets a pop up message 'Congratulation concerning Players **Hazardous** and **SparkingMountain** on their recent marriage', he gets a sinking feeling that this wasn't something that should be happening. Although, he did just level up thrice...

"What...?" **Hazardous** seems at a loss about what just happened and suddenly, **StarLight** snorts before laughing heavily. "You... Another... You... Stud, you!" She gasps and he shares a bewildered look with Hazardous concerning this laughing fit.

Shaking his head, **Hazardous** ' gazes at something before him, a hand raised up. He blinks a few times before checking his own Character Profile and, huh, yip, it's been updated. "Second *Wife* ?" **Hazardous** states in startlement, he glances at the other Player before trying to find that on his profile but, well, there's not anything like that on his.

"Stallion." StarLight seems to have calmed down enough to speak clearly, although she's still sporting a wide smile and he swears there's mischief in those eyes. "Stallions have a herd of mares, or, rather, using human terms, harem of them. So, given your Race and that you have been engendered by the game..."

"That... make some sense..." He admits while Hazardous merely frowns, "But we're not at a Holy Place nor a Court House, never mind having an in game Marriage Certificate that we'd both need to sign."

"Well, you have signed one, so we do, and we were on a Quest for Married Players." She points out. "And animals in game, don't need visit either of those places to... make pair bonds nor are they strictly singular in said bonds."

"So... It's a glitch in both systems?" He suggests while it seems like **Hazardous** is mentally cursing up a storm, at least it looks like it.

"Let's go with that." **StarLight** states, "It's not like we have any better idea of how the game came to the conclusion."

"Wait, if that Animal Husbandry system if about animal breeding..." He looks between the two and it takes them both a minute to realize what he's implying. "Nope, never happened and never will. We do our best to stay clear of Barnyard Barns just to be on the safe side of that." States **Hazardous** , **StarLight** nodding in agreement.

The mood slowly become awkward as it slowly dawned on him that yes, it seems that he's now considered married to Hazardous. "Ah, divorce?" He inquires curiously.

"That's hard to say but we could try?" Hazardous admits after sharing a look with StarLight. "And if doing so causes us to also divorce?" StarLight inquires in turn.

"..." *First day as **SparkingMountain** and I'm already married. Matt's so going never let up on me about this, is he?* TK thinks to himself,

they head back the way they came.

Ending it here!

Author's Note: I wrote this for FireHedgeHog, who wanted me to write something for Digimon. It had very different take but, well, I found some starting problems before I figured out the angle I wanted to go with.

As for Waiting For You Online, I'm almost done reading what's been translated, it's not yet fully translated but, here's hoping that it will be by winter. Also, been watching Log Horizon, not sure if anything is going to happen because of it though...

Wandering Musings of the Four Heroes:RSH

I don't own Rising of the Shield Hero, Kateyou Hitman Reborn, Digimon, Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation, and High School DxD.

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Who's Who:

Takeru Takaishi, Hero of the Spear.

~Christ Tales, Party Role Rogue

~Jules Elnath, Party Role Paladin

Wuxian Wei, Hero of the Bow.

~Monsters: A-Lan, A-Yao, and Shuhang

~Marcus, Party Role Fighter

~Kimberly, Party Role Rogue

~Earl, Party Role Wizard

~Nova, Party Role Ranger

Issei Hyoudou, Hero of the Sword.

~Hans Von Cohen, Party Role Cleric

~Corvin Baker, Party Role Wizard

~Hunter, Party Role Ranger

Tsunayoshi Sawada, Hero of the Shield.

~Monsters: Natsu-Kun and Lark-Chan

~Vikki, Party Role Alchemist

~Nicholas Rue, Party Role Fighter

~Kieth Lyrewood, Party Role Fighter

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It's the playing of a flute that draws TK and his two companions through the woods. Light of a campfire comes into sight and with Christ and Jules trailing behind, they arrive to find a group of people along with the flute player. The man playing the flute looks familiar, not in 'I've met him way' but in the 'I've seen his likeness before'.

"Well, hello there! I'm Wei Ying, courtesy name Wei Wuxian!" The player says upon noticing their arrival as the song ends, the flute, which is an odd design, gets put on the belt.

"Your the Hero of the Bow?" The blond fourteen year old states in surprise. In the past three months, there's been plenty of stories floating about all of the summoned Heroes, most of those concerning Wuxian are about how much he can drink along with being a necromancer. There's nothing concerning his musical skills, which are fairly good, it seems.

"And you are Takeru, the Spear Hero! You're a lot younger then I'd expect." The Chinese featured man counters with a cheeky grin.

"I prefer to be called TK." He admits and then goes on to introduce his two Party Members, "This is Christ Tales and Jules Elnath."

The cheerful Wuxian nods and introduces the seven members of his own Party, the most notable are a Karma Rabbit named A-Lan, a Wyr named Shuhang, a Filolial named A-Yao, the four humanoids use to be a gang of Demi-Human orphan street gang, Marcus is a Crow Demi-Human, Kimberly is a Cat Demi-Human, Earl is a Rat

Demi-Human, and Nova being a Fox Demi-Human. Given what he recalls concerning Demi-Humans, it's more then likely that the four are a lot younger then there appearance would suggest.

The Digidestine of Hope had come to notice that Wuxian seems to lack his Legendary Bow, although his gaze does keep drifting to the odd flute, it's shape is rather strange, to be honest. There's a knowing look in Wuxian's gray eyes while the other Hero is still telling the story of how he came rescue A-Lan from the stew pot of a merchant. He wonders how much of that story is exaggerated for comedic effect but, admits, Wuxian is rather good at weaving stories.

"Curious about my Gu Jian, huh?" Wuxian muses, gesturing to the flute and he nods, admitting, "It's a rather strange shape for a flute, isn't it?"

"It's actually his Bow!" Blurs out Nova while the others giggle at TK and his Party's expression. "It is, it truly is!" Kimberly adds.

"I just figured out how to get it to transform into a flute, it was surprisingly simple!" Wuxian says. "You know how you can unlock other forms when it comes to having your weapon absorb bits of monsters? Well, the same can happen by having it absorb items! I had Gu Jian absorb this flute I bought months ago, it wouldn't let me play it." Wuxian pouts while patting said transformed Bow.

The shape of the flute does look like a bow. TK mentally admits while Jules does what she does best when it comes to a source of information, starts asking questions and memorizing the answers given. Wuxian seems to be delighted to share how he came to conclude that theory, which also involved butchering monsters and having his Gu Jian to absorb different parts of the monsters, which proved to unlock a lot more forms then just having the Legendary Weapon absorb the whole corpse.

He's rather surprise to hear that and knew he's got more experimenting to do. "Have you spent gems or money to upgrade the forms?" He inquires curiously.

"What? You can spend money for upgrades?!" It seems that Wuxian hadn't known that. TK nods and explains how he figured that out, particularly as he's got at least three forms he generally uses, after all, one good turn deserves another.

He's curious about why Wuxian named his Bow, still, he admits as to what they'd been doing out so late, hunting down rumors of a woman luring monster. It seems Wuxian also heard about it and had also been looking for it, only he's been in the area for a week already. "Now though, I think I know what's become of those women." Wuxian's eyes flare a ruby red before fading back into their normal gray.

Looking at both Parties, it seems that they don't know what it is that Wuxian has figured out. Wuxian inquires if he'd mind stopping at a location for him and, well, TK's not unwilling to do the other a favor, not if it leads to stopping whatever it is that's happening concerning those women. They left not long after, although before leaving, he takes out a torch then pokes it in the campfire and then, with it lit, has it absorbed by his Spear, which unlocks the Torch Spear series.

His Spear transforms and Wuxian smiles, nodding a bit as they said their farewells. TK leaves with Christ and Jules.

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"Ah! Come on! Just one little bite? Please~?" Tsunayoshi isn't sure what to make of the scene before him.

He's pretty sure the guy sporting the red armor is the Hero of the Sword, one Issei Hyoudou, and wonders why he's begging Vikki for some of the baby Dragon food, she's been making a lot for the pass two hours so they don't run out for the month. It's food for Natsu-Kun, who just hatched out of the egg this morning and is a Water Dragon. The contains in the pot is for feeding Dragons, namely, newly hatched ones. He's pretty sure that Natsu-Kun is still with Lark-Chan, although where Lark-Chan is, he's doesn't know.

Both Kieth and Nicholas seem to be at a loss as well. The three with Issei, one of whom is a Demi-Human, of the canine variety it seems, seem to be a touch embarrassed about their Party Leader's behavior. Issei seems to be fifteen years old from what Tsunayoshi can tell and is the first other Legendary Hero he's met since he's been summoned. Tsunayoshi only just turned thirteen before he ended up getting summoned as the Shield Hero five months ago.

"Oh! Hey, how'd you get two shields? Also, I'm Issei Hyoudou and your Tsunayoshi Sawada, right? The Shield Hero?" Issei pipes in upon noticing him and his companions watching the scene.

"Yes, yes I am. Nice to meet you, Hyoudou-san." Tsunayoshi replies and Issei looks a touch bemused at the -san at the end of his name. "Vikki's currently making baby Dragon food."

Issei blinks and then blinks again while the Sword Hero considers this new information. "I just hatched a Dragon egg this morning and Vikki wanted to make enough food to last Natsu-Kun for a month. He's a Water Dragon." He decides to add.

"..." Issei turns to look at the pot with Vikki standing beside it. "But it smells so good!" The other Hero pretty much whines.

To baby Dragon, maybe. He thinks while his companions walks over to the fire, making sure to move upwind of the cooking pot. Natsu-Kun ate two bowls of it and they almost gave in to give him a third helping, if not for his gut feeling saying it was a bad idea, it's not often he listens to that gut feeling, if he had, he's pretty sure he'd be more trouble then just dealing with the Waves and Monsters, after the first three times he's gone with that feeling, he regretted the results soon afterwards and had to deal with a bunch of politics ramifications then he, a thirteen year old boy should, never mind knowing a single thing about the local politics or the people involved.

"You're human, right?" The teenage Sky inquires curiously, head tilt. Issei sobers up and his mouth opens but then closes as the older teen decides against speaking. A particular look in the Sword Hero's

eyes makes him believe that the other is recalling something, a past memory most likely.

"You know, I had someone read my fortune back when I first arrived and he mentioned I had a soul of a Dragon in my left hand." Issei recalls with look of nostalgia upon his face, "Of course, he also went on to say that I was suppose to meet death at the hands of a Fallen Angel only to arise as a Devil before the dawn of the next day. That was all he could read about that future, he claimed that since I'm here, that it was unraveling as it is no longer my future."

"Ok..." Tsunayoshi doesn't know what to make of most of that, then again, Issei did rise his left hand up while speaking. He frowns as he studies it fairly intently, after all, that gut feeling seems to believe what the Sword Hero said about the hand and his previous fate. "Where did you meet him? What was his name?" He asks without even thinking and then, blushes, after all, he hadn't meant to go seeking the man, and yet...

"Curious about your own fortune, Shield-Kun?" Issei asks in a lightly teasing tone and, well, he shrugs, not really sure if he should or not. "Well... Get her to give me a taste and I'll tell yea!"

He sighs in exasperation with Issei's back to him as the other points in the direction of Vikki and the baby Dragon goop that will be put into a tray to cool down into a kind of jello, which will keep fairly well outside of his Shield's storage space. Then blinks to find Issei no longer standing before him but engaged in a fight with Lark-Chan with Natsu-Kun gamely biting the other Hero's left wrist.

The generally ill tempered Filolial's beck is pecking at Issei's forehead. If she'd been a male, he'd name her Skylark-San in honor of Kyoya Hibari, so, he shorten it to Lark-Chan. Given that her temper being what it is, the previous owner had been more then happy to sell her to him, not accepting the full amount for her either, regardless of the fact that her kind generally fetch a larger amount these days due to the Waves. Then again, most mount prices have

gone up due to the Waves, as people are looking to evacuate or hide from the Waves.

"Lark-Chan! That's not how we are to treat guests!" He finally recovers enough to scold the Filolial, mentally praying that Issei won't be angry over Lark-Chan behaving, well for her, normally.

In the end, much to the horror and fascination of both Parties, Issei did manage to eat five bowls of Natsu-Kun's steaming stew of baby Dragon food.

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"Hard to believe a year has passed since we got summoned, huh?" Issei Hyoudou remarks and Wuxian is the only one among the four Heroes who's opted to actually order and drink a something that isn't a juice or water, there's so many kinds of alcoholic drinks to try, the one he's drinking is wheat based and he's heard of ones made from grapes and potatoes! He's still in the process of figuring out which he prefers, given the wide selection never mind that different Kingdoms have their own brewers who brew differently in regards to creating their product.

"It's kind of hard to believe we haven't gotten together before now." Remarks TK, who's the only one drinking water. It seems that the three all grew up in a similar country of origin, Japan along within about the same Era to boot. They spent a lot of time comparing their respective Japans.

He'd been shocked listening to TK's adventures in another world, a 'Digital' World who's inhabitants were generally called 'Digital Monster' or Digimon for short. It's hard for him to wrap his mind around a bunch of kids saving not just a single world but two. Thankfully, he wasn't the only one amazed by TK's previous adventures and it was pretty clear that the blond Spear Hero missed his friends, particularly his Digimon partner Patamon.

Neither Issei or Tsunayoshi had lived as an exciting childhood as TK though, although Ddraig had plenty of stories to share concerning the secret magical side of Issei's world. He'd been a touch dismayed to learn that Cultivation, and thus Cultivation Sects, weren't a thing, yet again, on that world. The ancient Heavenly Dragon Emperor is still a bit miffed about the owner of the Divine Dividing Sacred Gear hadn't been summoned as a Hero, so that the epic rivalry between the white and red Dragon could continue. The Booster Gear Sacred Gear only became active a month back, which unlocked all of Issei's Dragon Sword series along with explaining that Issei's soul is incline to being Draconic in nature.

Tsunayoshi's likely the only one who life had been 'normal', well, other then the extreme bullying the teen enduring from both peers and teachers, with a lot responsible adults turning a blind eye said bullying as well. The now fourteen year old's odd orange fire hints that there's more to his world then Tsunayoshi thought there was and according to various experts, it's properties is akin to a glue and allows Tsunayoshi to be more in-tune to, well, anything he wants to be in-tuned with. It's also seems to be the source of much headache to the kid as it keeps trying to put the teen into dangerous situations, regardless if Tsunayoshi and his Party's wishes on the matter.

He'd been rather reluctant to share his own life story but, well, Wuxian can feel his worries about sharing it fade away with each cup of beer and a shot of whiskey. "Well, we all did meet up individually." Remarks Tsunayoshi, who then glances at him with a concern look, which makes him wonder if the other's picking up on his getting ready to share about his life.

Giving the youngest member of the Legendary Heroes a reassuring smile, he takes a steadying breath, which draws the attention of the Shield Hero and Spear Hero. Something on his face must be what gives away that he's ready to share the story of his life, including how it ended. His, unlike TK's, doesn't end on a happy note after all.

Ending it Here!

The Cultivation Hero: MHA!

I don't own Cultivation Chat Group or My Hero Academia!

"Foreign/Non-fluent Language."

"Fluent Language."

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3 Barks at Noon found the world a changed place then it had been four centuries ago, when he enter into mediation seclusion while visiting Japan. The shine he'd settled in to mediate at is in such disrepair that the wooden structure pretty much gone with wild flowers and grass growing from the decomposed wooden floor. The six hundred year old Immortal Cultivator, maybe it should be thousand year old one now, finds himself rather unsure what to make of the state of the shrine that housed him for those four hundred years.

With a soft sigh, 3 Barks checks what he has one him. His Dizi named Kunrao (Haunting) is still hanging from his belt while his Jian named Feng Saole (Wind Swept) is sheathed next to it. Next is his iron quankun ring and its contains, finding everything within in order, the blue eyed Chinese man with a twenty something appearance studies his own cloths before setting his shoulders straight and holding his head high, fully ready to face the world once more.

Once out of the ramshackle building that housed his stone covered body during his mediation, the Cultivator's only reaction is to blink once at the sight that is before him. Still very much sporting the usual untouched immortal mask upon his face, 3 Barks finds himself at a loss how to react to the buildings that stand across from the abandoned shrine. So very much taller then he's seen before and he expands his senses to notice something slightly off with the mortals that are around him. The difference is tiny but there, glaringly there.

Sensing a mortal passing overhead, 3 Barks turns his gaze in that direction to find a mortal with the guise of a monster! And yes, to his senses, that woman is Not a monster but a mortal person. Wearing cloths that are very scandalous in nature to boot!

The tips of his ears burn as he mentally recovers from the woman's choice in cloths and the fact she sports a two sets of wings that are not unlike a wasp or fly. He can't fully tell as he feels scandalized at continuing to scrutinizing her. It takes the Daoist a full minute to find the courage to continue venturing forth, into the clearly much changed world.

"Give me that flute!" Snaps the man sporting pink and green hair along with black spines crowning the forehead, a more advance pistol being held in the left hand while the right hand it extended for him to hand over something. 3 Barks finds himself feeling rather worn at this point and pretty much done with this strange mortal world, where mortals have the traits of non-humans and/or powers that weren't very spiritual in nature. The man's manner is clearly hostile and there's a slight intent to kill to get his way.

"Leave me be." He states in his limited Japanese and then does his best to ignore the mortal. In the end, the rude mortal tries to grab Kunrao from his belt.

Patience gone, 3 Barks deals with the mortal with a simply thrust of his hand, palm up and out, knocked the wind out of the rude man's lungs along with sending the man back four feet onto the ground. The pistol lands not far from the man, who is now clinching his midsection with both arms, clearly coughing and trying to recover from the fairly gentle blow that 3 Barks could manage.

Given the previous issues concerning wearing weapons out in the open, 3 Barks had done a trick to keep the mortals from noticing Feng Saole. Giving the rude man the respect he deserves, which is none, the Cultivator continues on with wandering the shop to get a glimpse of what's new and what's been updated from what he's

known before he went into his seclusion. As he finishes stating his curiosity while restraining himself from merely sending whatever caught his attention into his quankun ring or opening the container to examine it in greater detail. His fingers itch to play around with the numerous devices that exist in the world now.

He knows better then to simply take things that weren't his, not when he can acquire them once he has the resources to do so. 3 Barks knows he needs to get into contact with another Daoist, it's just that he's unsure if any of his former students are alive, he taught five students, having taken them as his personal disciplines having decided to teach upon reaching a hundred and thirty years of age. His last student had earned her second the Daoist name, Crimson Stripes Over a Leopard's Forehead, generally called Crimson Stripes for short.

As 3 Barks contemplates his dilemma about who he should try to get in touch with as he heads to exit out of the shop, he gets stopped by a pair of mortals wearing a uniform. The one to his left sports green scales along his forehead and the one to his right seems rather normal. *"Did you knock out the robber, sir?"* The one with scales demands, 3 Barks takes note how hostile this mortal's body language is along with how different accent along with how the words sound.

He's spoken with older Immortals before and had noticed their own accents, he can only assume that the spoken language is one of those things that can change over the centuries. 3 Barks laments his choice of picking a foreign nation to enter into a seclusion meditation as it's clear that his shaky Japanese isn't going to help him. His grasp of the written versions are far better, although there seems to be a new written variety to learn to read.

"Sir?" The one to the right's tone sounds more gentle to his ears but it's the scaled one that keep his attention as there's impatience growing and the angry expression is becoming fixed upon that one's face. *"Please answer my partner's question."*

"This humble Daoist don't understand what your saying." He states simply in Cantonese. "This Master wishes to exit this building." 3 Barks informs the two, the scaled one sports a sneer now and makes to grab his left arm, he moves it ever so slightly so that the mortal can't grab it when he reaches for it.

"He's not hostile, Ryo! And he doesn't seem to speak Japanese!" Hiss the one to the right sharply at the one with scales, who's only grown angry with not being able to snatch his arm.

"So what, Kenshin? If he doesn't know the Japanese then he shouldn't have come to Japan!" Snaps the scaled mortal. *"He obviously resisting arrest to boot!"*

The scaled mortal continues to try to grab him, getting angrier and angrier. The one to the right seems to be at a loss and sports a defeated manner, not that 3 Barks is overly concerned with that one, not when it's clear the mortal isn't moving to support the other in trying to grab at him. Then the mortal snarls in a beastly manner and goes for the pistol that's on his belt.

"Ryo, don't!" Snaps the one to the right but 3 Barks finally decides to put an end to this encounter between them. Again, a single palm thrust and the scaled mortal gets the wind knocked out of his lungs along with being forced back a few feet on the ground, arms clinching the midsection.

Doing his best to keep his look of indifference, 3 Barks begins walking for the door that will allow him out onto the street. There seems to be a horseless carriage before the door, it's rather unique in coloration and he spies the previous hostile mortal sitting in the back of it. Turning away, the Cultivator heads in an northern direction, heading for the coast. He'll look for a boat heading back to his home land, hopefully he'll be able to hunt down one of his former students and get caught up on what he's missed.

After some minutes of walking in a leisurely manner, 3 Barks finds him confronted by a mortal sporting red skin and bright orange hair

that moves not unlike a flame. Adjusting his walking, he moves around the... woman, it seems, but she seems intent on blocking his progress. The cloths are indecent and he does his best not to Look at her.

"Hold it there, your under-arrest!" The woman shouts with a hand held up. *"I'm the Flickering Hero, Emberlight!"*

3 Barks speeds up on his walking and it's not long before he's away from her, again, his ear tips are burning. *"Hey! Stop! I'm arresting you!"* The woman's cries are becoming faint.

He's not sure how that mortal woman can have such a thick face. Then again, it's him who's wearing cloths that are centuries out of date. *It's still indecent! Showing off that much skin! Wearing so few layers of cloth...* 3 Barks thinks to himself, noticing that there's another oddly dressed person intent on confronting him.

As he moves around the city, it's like a maze in its own way, but 3 Barks knows which direction is north so does his best to navigate the best of his abilities along with doing his best to ignore the shameless dressed mortals that seem intent on following in his wake. 3 Barks also got his first glimpse of a air traveling vehicle and paused to stare at it for a few minutes, only to recover before those trying to hinder him catching up, so he did his level best in ignoring said air traveling vehicle, even though he'd love to take one of them apart just to find out how it works.

Resist, Noon, resist. Just buy one later, then you'll have all the time you want to take it apart to learn how it functions. 3 Barks reminds himself as he does his best to keep his face impassive and his fingers from twitching.

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"Little Print! Little Print! Our former teacher is on the news!" Grave Dirt's Paw Print groans upon answering his cell phone to hear his elder 11 Roaring River Cats.

"Master 3 Barks at Noon?" Paw Print inquires and his senior martial sister, River Cats, states, "I don't recall either of us sharing any other Cultivation teacher."

Feeling more awake, he finally rolls onto his back. "Have you gotten a hold of White Stalker Among Autumn Forests? To tell her of this?" The last student that their shared teacher had taught.

He's at his computer now, the screen is powering up as the tower's fan comes to life with a hum. "Are they streaming this online?" River Cats gives him the name of the station.

"As for White Stalker, I think she's tending to her garden, has been for the last year." *Which means her phone's battery is likely dead.* Paw Print reasons.

All too soon, 3 Barks at Noon's 'rampage' in Japan is playing on his computer screen and with a click, the steam takes up the whole screen. "Teacher..." Paw Print says with a sigh, a fond smile settles on his face as his heart feels like it's over flowing with joy at the sight of his father figure being alive and awake.

"Is Lord Yellow Mountain back from his vacation?" Inquires River Cats and he sighs, his head shaking. "No, but I can reach out to Benevolence Cultivator to find out who to contact about this."

"I'll visit our youngest martial sibling about his return." River Cats states and with a quick farewell, they end their call. Paw Print wonders how long it'll be until 3 Barks at Noon finally decides enough is enough, after all, he can see that his former teacher is in possession of both his Dizi and Jian when the station switching to a different camera and angle.

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He stares at the trio of mortals sitting across the table while at his right, Chen Mao, a young Cultivator student and is a discipline of Ancient Saint Yellow Mountain's sect is sitting while to his left is one

Chu Chu, she's here representing one Song Shuhang, it seems that one of his former students had approached the woman's master in regards to his emergence. 3 Barks knows that he owes favors for the aid he's receiving and wonders if they won't be cashed in the very near future. He hopes that once this is cleared up, he'll be on his way back to China and catching up on what he's missed in these pass centuries.

"You expect us to believe that some Villain messed with his memories and that another one teleported him to Japan?" Snarls the balding Japanese man sporting very sharp looking teeth. *"That we're just suppose to just let him go! After he knocked out twenty of our Pro Heroes without breaking a sweat?!"*

"Yes." Chen Mao states, 3 Barks notices how confident and yet bored the young Priest sounds. The conversation is one he can't follow besides noting body language and tone of voice, he does his best to keep up the usual look of an Immortal Master.

The balding mortal's face goes slack in a very subtle way before the mortal tries to spear 3 Barks with his eyes, which doesn't work out given the man lacks spiritual power. As the mortal gathers up his emotions, the door of the room opens and he finds himself rather interested in one of the incoming mortals, after all, the creature clearly isn't a Cultivator, nor because he lacks the ability but more from lack of training. Which actually does cause him to wonder what became of the Shinto Priests, Monks, and Priestesses?

3 Barks recalls the state of the shrine, yes, it had been rather small one back then but it did have a Priest caretaker and it had housed a weak Spirit, he can't recall the of what type but then, it likely no longer dwelling at the ruined shrine. He highly doubts he's the only one who's interested in the creature that just walked into the room but he's the likely the only one among the three of them that had can get away with being impolite in regards to staring at the white furred creature with spiritual potential. After all, he's supposedly had his mind messed with by a 'Quirk' and thus, this should help 'sell' that.

Still, after a time, his gaze wonders at the three that accompanied the spiritually inclined creature and finds them each fairly typical mortals he's encountered since coming out of his meditative state, although why one of them seems to think sporting a beard of fire is beyond him, after all, it's not like it's helping the man in any fashion, but, he could suppose, it's a display to demonstrate his control over the element... *How he is it that he hasn't set his shirt on fire?*

Still, in the end, he's transferred to Japan, it seems. It seems that the white furred creature has noticed that they were Cultivators, even if the creature isn't formally trained, the white being's raw talent allowed him to pick up on something being different from them compared to the mortals in the room and likely then what he's experienced before. 3 Barks isn't sure what to make of this turn of events, after all, they were suppose to get him out of this country, not... transferred.

He'll have to learn to respond to Shan Xing, it seems, for the foreseeable future along with his Hero name being Qiaopi Feng (Playful Wind) and, if asked for his 'Quirk', that is it called Wind Pulse, it's to explain how he's able to send people flying when he's not bulky with muscle. He'll be assigned a translator to help him learn the current spoken Japanese language. 3 Barks wonders if this wind theme is all due to the simple name he gave his Jian.

Xing studies the drawing that he'd absentmindedly drew while he'd been going through the messages he exchanged with his former pupils, the group chat is titled Walking Grave Forest by River at Noon. A green and black hare or rabbit sporting closed eyes as it is cowering, almost trembling really. There had only been five previous times he's drawn something so life like and not long after, he ended up with a student.

Putting the colored pencils away, Xing stands while pocketing his cellphone. He walks out of the office of he'd been lent to fill out his latest paperwork concerning his recent undercover assignment. Before leaving, he checks his pockets to be sure he has his wallet

and house keys. Finding he does, Xing walks out of the office and once on the street outside of the building, closes his eyes for a brief moment, the wind brushing across his skin and tugging his long hair, done in a, practically scandalous, simple high ponytail that shows off his neck.

It's been near eleven years since Xing woke to find himself in Japan and he's found himself in a bemusing position of being the only Cultivator in Japan along with finding himself picking up the vacant post of keeping the native deities, spirits, and monsters of Japan from overly preying on the much in denial masses of people of Japan, even those who still had the ability to see the being of their forefather's myths and legends tend to cling to the simple belief that what they are seeing are just fellow Quirked mortals. Which tends to piss off said beings to no end but, due to that self same attitude, the beings powers tend to be rather temporary but strong or weak but stable.

He's not very good with handling said beings nor do they really like him but as he's the only spiritual incline human they can interact with reliably, both parties put up with the other. Being Chinese and a Daoist Cultivator means that his way of handling them isn't how the Shinto Priests would have. It's not like he hasn't tried to teach a few of those with the natural ability to see the beings clearly, it's like having a Quirk seems to keep them from fully believing in the beings and thus, keeps them from being able to utilize the native created talismans and spell incantations of the Shinto spiritualists of Japan used to defend themselves from their deities, spirits, and monsters.

Then there's the fact that he's suppose to be an Underground Hero and yet, due to his ethereal good looks, he's ranked as the second Hero. He's thankful that he's figured out a mental trick to get people to overlook his appearance or else he'd be recognized where ever he goes, whether he's undercover or just wandering about Japan. Xing had also learnt to moderate his strides and overcome his up bringing to keep from forever feeling shame and being scandalized by, well, how people act with their same gender to the opposite one.

Unlike his fellow Cultivators, he's always exposed to this era due to his job as an Underground Hero and it's hard to get a long enough break to take a moment to reflect on the changes concerning himself and to properly work on progressing his Cultivation. For all that this era claims to have things so much more easy then previous eras, he finds that to be a bold face lie! They are always keeping track of the clock and always making plans upon plans! If the littlest thing comes up that throws that schedule off track they panic! The shear WORRY over every single little detail! It's beyond his belief!

Still, as the wind tugs at his cloths and his pony tail, Xing takes deep, calming breathes, doing his best to ignore the smell of man made creations. Some of the tension of his shoulders fades as does his reflections concerning his current position of Cultivator, Underground Hero, and post as middleman between the local mortals and the ageless spirit beings of Japan. Xing finds himself allowing the wind to direct where he should go and, sensing this, tugs and pushes at him with greater force.

So, he goes for a walk, being sure to hide from the eyes of mortals as he goes. Xing walks for days, traveling on foot with the wind as his guide, eyes kept close, navigating using his other senses to keep himself from harm or causing harm. Then the wind that lead him seems to recede and the blue eye Cultivator opens his eyes to find himself before a clinic. With a thoughtful hum, he walks up to and then through the doors, finding a spot, sits down and takes out his cell phone.

There's a number of alerts and messages on it, it seems he's been walking for a good five days. With a slight huff, Xing begins the task of reading them. About an hour since he arrived, a woman and child walk into the clinic, both sporting green hair but it's the child, almost five and with hints of black among that green hair that grabs his attention. His eye brow raises as he notices the lack of that distinct feel in the boy's spiritual presence.

The few adults he's met without that were Quirkless, even the number one Pro Hero lacks that minor twitch in his spiritual

presence, which is only mildly interesting given that All Might does indeed possess a Quirk, just not one he was born with. The number of those mortals born Quirkless are rather tiny in this day and era, never mind finding one just the right age to be taught Cultivation... The boy could learn, sure, it's not great potential but it's untainted compared to most of the children being born.

A glance at the names of the doctors of this clinic and he's doing a search, he's got a hunch as to why the pair would be at this clinic. Xing hums at realizing he's correct and what this clinic specializes in. Putting his phone away, the Cultivator studies the child, who's clutching an All Might figurine. After minutes, the pair go into the doctor's office and Xing expands his hearing range.

It's heart breaking news for the pair, with the mother seemingly taking the blame for the lack of Quirk to be her own personal fault. Before following after the pair out, he pays the doctor a visit and does a few other things, after all, his future discipline can't have it on his record of being Quirkless when clearly he has one. Xing gets the name of his future student and finds it rather bemusing and yet fitting name, Midoriya Izuku.

He grabs something to eat and to drink before he pays the pair a visit, he's already has something in mind on how to get the mother to agree, it's more about his approach to the child in question that is his concern. He needs to get an idea of what kind of person his future student is to know how best to start him on the path of Cultivation, the boy's the optimal age to begin creating his foundation after all. Children before eight years of age generally are.

Three days and it's a simple confrontation in a park that has him approaching Izuku-kun. A blond eyed boy with the ability to cause explosions attempts to push a younger girl to the ground for the crime of bumping into him. Izuku-kun intervenes and he approaches as he notices how hostile intent from the young blond spikes up and begins to hold steady at a certain level. He is at the side of the about to be an illegal action by the blond, who's clearly getting ready to use his Quirk on his future student.

"Children, is something the matter?" He inquires, which startles the group of five, two children had come to have the blond's back just seconds ago. The children are quick to deny and four of the five scatter, the only one remaining is Izuku-kun.

Crouching down, he notices tears of frustration leaking down the boy's face. "Shan Xing." He introduces himself, which clearly startles the boy, who looks up with wide eyes.

He allows his mental technique to go concerning Izuku-kun and is rewarded with a gasp along with awe plus adoration within those green eyes. "The Trickster Hero, Playful Wind!" The boy exclaims, the tears stop flowing.

"I wish for you to answer a question of mine." Izuku-kun blinks before shyly nodding for him to go on. "Why did you step between that boy and girl? It looked like that boy was gearing up to use his Quirk on you by the end there."

"Kacchan wouldn't do that! He wants to be a hero!" Izuku-kun states, clearly offended on the blond's behalf. The child rambles on about how awesome and cool Kacchan is along with the blond's Quirk.

Which leads him to realize just how observant the boy is for his age, but also that the child seems to already develop blind spots in certain regards. Which is something he'll have to correct as the child's teacher. Izuku-kun seems to trail off as the boy realizes just how long he'd been talking for.

"You didn't really answer my question, though." He gently points out and this causes Izuku-kun to blink at him a few times. "Why did you step between them."

"Why wouldn't I?" The boy finally answers and Xing just knows he's going to have a very troublesome and worry causing discipline in the future. "Ah, sir?"

"How would you like to become my personal student?" The Cultivator asks the boy before him. Izuku-kun's eyes widen and his mouth drops open, excitement brimming only to die seconds later when the boy mutters something very softly under his breath, he hears him but asks for the boy to repeat it a touch louder.

"You shouldn't cause I'm Quirkless." Izuku mutters and he hums. "I know you are, which is why I want you to agree to be my discipline in the Ancient and Secret Art of Cultivation."

"Cultivation?" The boy inquires with a frown after being stunned that he had known about his lack of a Quirk but had asked him anyway. "What's that?"

"You want to find out? I assure you that you are capable of learning and at your age, you'll be able to harness your potential to the fullest. The best age to learn is before nine years of age." He holds out a hand and Izuku-kun doesn't take it right away, looking between the hand and Xing's face, clearly conflicted.

"I am an Immortal Daoist who's over a thousand years old and am Quirkless myself, same with all my previous students." He adds and understanding seems to flash across the boy's face after the kid digests this information. Izuku-kun does take his hand, it's clear that he has his doubts about the offer but Xing knows that the child wants to be someone special, someone that isn't worthless in the eyes of the public.

"Let's go talk with your mother about this, ok? We best get this down on paper." He says as he moves to stand up, the child keeping a grip on his hand, which he gently wraps his own hand about.

Xing does his best to ensure that Izuku-kun at his side as they walk, him slightly slumped as they go hand in hand towards the mother, who's busy chatting with another mother, who seems to remind him of the blond. "Mama! Guess what!" Izuku-kun launches himself at this mother and now it's time to get Midoriya Inko on board with his course of action in regards to her son.

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"Your brat just caused lightning to hit in a dome full of Villains." Xing merely hums at his discipline's home room teacher over the cell. Not really paying the complaining much mind from his fellow Underground Hero.

"Just... How?!" Aizawa Shota wonders and it's clear there's frustration and a touch of awe.

"He commanded it most likely." He says in a drool tone and Eraserhead just groans, "I'm pretty sure his Quirk shouldn't function like. He used some sort of mathematical formula, didn't he?"

Spell Arrays is what they settled on when it came to cover story about how to explain off Izuku's Cultivation abilities. Though, to be fair, the teen is very talented in regards to them and it'll also explain away why Izuku likes to carry around note books and pencils everywhere he goes. Izuku's running speed, he's got special arrays written on the underside of the sole insert. Izuku being able to carry far more then his frame would suggest, special arrays lining the inside of his jacket or sweat bands on his wrist.

"You owe me a shot of whiskey for putting up the your brat, Shan." Aizawa snaps and he can practically hear the man rubbing his temple with his other hand. "Sure, sure. I owe you another shot of whiskey."

The call comes to an end after arranging a time and place for said purchase. Moving the cell phone before him, he can't help the smile that's on his face as he clicks to read the message his student sent, given the previous phone call, he can guess what it's about.

Ending it Here!

What a Strange Shop: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter.

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Ryo sits behind the counter the store front is rather small with metal tablets resting on the counters. Each tablet is connected to the inventory of the store and upon getting touched by someone with magic, bit it an external magic user or internal magic user, or commonly called Witches or Wizards, based on gender being more external magic users with Squib generally being internal magic users. Although, it seems, few realize that Squibs do have innate magical abilities and thus the Squibs aren't ever tested nor trained to harness said abilities.

It's been a fairly lazy summer and given the location of his shop, he tends not to get the external magic users as customers and most of the customers he does get hear about him viva word of mouth, which is fine with him. After all, he prefers to avoid the Magical Society, finding the lot of external magic users to be self-centered and clearly short sighted in regards of what kind of lives they can actually live instead of what they seem to be living. It's why his prices are all in pounds, what use does he have of the popular currency of the Magical Society when it doesn't have anything he wishes to buy?

The gentle chiming of the door draws the owner's attention to it and Ryo finds a fairly young looking preteen with bright green eyes and messy hair. Although with a slightly more probing look with a touch of internal change to his eyes, adult notices how magic flows about the preteen, which marks him as an external magic users, although the thing on the boy's forehead is of foreign origin and is leaching a portion of magic that the kid is pulling into himself from the world, altering it enough to be 'claimed' and stored within the kid for future use.

And someone thought they had talent for Blood Magic... Fucking idiots. Ryo thinks, after all, Blood Magic being the realm of internal magical ability, what the whole point of Blood Magic is the use of the user being able to charge the fluids of their body with magic. It's generally coupled with Written Spells, which is a magical style that can be used by both kinds of magic users, the difference being how the writings are charged with magic by the user.

Allowing his eye alteration to fade back to its basic abilities, the owner nods a greeting at the boy upon the preteen look towards him after taking a look at the various metal tablets sitting out on tables and chairs. In someways, it's not unlike a cafe, although there's only four tables with four chairs, each table sports four metal tablets. "Ms Hammett said you only accept pounds..."

"I do, I don't have any reason to venture into so called Magical World." The adult explains. "Which Year are you in?"

"..." It's clear that the kid doesn't fully understand the question. *I think your reaction answers that.*

"Which school are going to be attending come September?" Ryo inquires lightly and the kid replies, "Hogwarts, sir."

"Ah, that one, huh? So, what bring you to my corner shop, young sir?" He rests his head on his closed hand, leaning on the counter, clearly looking rather interested and unprofessional.

"I don't suppose you have something to... to speed up my ability to learn? Sir." The preteen says and he's slowly getting an idea of what kind of history this kid has.

"Speed up learning... Got a lot of different things that could help, but they only really work if the user puts the effort into learning the material, you get me, kiddo?" Ryo informs the kid with a slight smirk. "Otherwise, you might need to hunt down a Memory Merchant, if the UK still has one lingering about. One of them can give you the copied memories of a former Hogwarts student's book readings."

"You can sell memories?" The kid seems rather startled by the very idea and Ryo merely hums in a positive manner. "Magic is capable of a lot of things, kiddo, it's ultimately up to the user and their ethics that determine how it's used along with what it's limited to."

"Some people are naturally more talented in some area and on the flip side, there's areas people can be weak in. Given the right investment and effort to put in, you can cover those weak points in various ways. Can't say you'll ever get rid of them, but you can, at least, know what they are and it's up to you to keep them in mind when it comes to living your life along with dealing with them as they come up." He adds with a bit of a smirk.

"And that said, schools aren't tailored suited to the individual student, they're meant to force students into a kind of mold that some just never fit into." Ryo explains to the kid with a slightly sad smile. "Schools aren't for everyone but in this day and age, kids having difficulty in schools tend to get bullied by their peers and the not all teachers are willing to put in the effort to find out what a student is having trouble with. And from the number of teachers at Hogwarts..."

He shakes his head, he doesn't get why there's so few teachers compared to students, never mind the lack of having more then one professor per subject. "Those teachers get run ragged so I doubt you'll be able to approach them for any real help." The owner can see that the kid seems to be rather nervous about the subject and yet, a little resigned about it as well.

"Don't really know why they doesn't hire more teachers, heck, they got a ghost teaching the History class, so they should be able to afford another teacher, given the fact that ghosts don't really need money." Ryo admits with a sigh. "Let's just say that Hogwarts has a number of things I can ramble on about for hours." With a dismissive way of his other hand.

"Oh... But I thought it was number one in the world..." Murmurs the kid and he sighs.

"Living here in the UK, I hear a lot of talk about Hogwarts, namely from the... err... Muggleborn?" He isn't sure, he doesn't particularly care about those useless categories ultimately. *If you possessed the inherit ability to use magic, your lineage rarely means anything as such generally doesn't effect said ability in any way.* It just so happens that external and internal have the ability to 'herd' or 'gather' magic from their surroundings into their bodies so that it collect it into a personal 'pool' or reserve, getting slightly altered in the process.

"I'd offer them jobs but not many accept." Ryo admits with a easy shrug. "Most of them are rather bitter about the lack of work after Hogwarts that keeps them in the Magical Society."

The kid blinks but is clearly getting overwhelmed with information. "Sorry but I'm pretty opinionated when it comes down to the current Magical Society and very much bias when it comes to how they generally regard magic and their approach to it." He admits freely.

The kid slowly nods, there's still a gazed look in those green eyes. "Anyway, the tablets are connected to the store's inventory and will show if it's in stock or not." He gestures towards on of the tables and the kid's gaze falls on one of the tables.

"It's easy to use and given this is your first time, how about a free bubble tea? Or would chocolate milk be more to your likening?" Ryo's pretty sure the kid hasn't a clue what bubble tea is, which is fine, if the kid ever comes back, maybe he'll give it a try.

"I couldn't possibly..." The kid tries to decline and he snorts lightly as he moves to stand up. "You've been patient with listening to my ramblings, it's the least I can offer for being such a willing listener, you know, kiddo?"

He walks over to the fridge that's stocked with all kinds of cold drinks along with a Temporal Pause to keep everything from going bad. Next to the double door and enchanted fridge is a counter with various drink machines and magical up devices for creating various kinds of drinks, from hot coffee and tea to cold milk shakes and ice

cream dishes. Under the counter, in the cupboard, are stored most of the dried ingredients for said drinks. Touching one of the devices, a large cup gets created and once it's created, he take it and opens the fridge, placing it under the jug of milk, he twists the jug's sprout and milk pours into the conjured glass.

Once it's nearly full, he twists the sprout back and waits about ten seconds before moving the glass away. Closing the door with his hip, Ryo places the glass on the counter, near the magical device for infusing something into a liquid. He crouches down as he opens the cupboard door, once he spies the container with prepared and dried coco beans, its out from its spot and is putting a cup of the bean into the magical infusion chamber. It takes a few seconds for the device to start up. He closes the lid and puts it back on its shelf before closing the door of the cupboard.

Then, a hint of brown begins to erupt in the white milk then it begins to swirl as more of the coco bean gets infused into the milk. When the device is done, the swirling of the milk dies down. Humming, Ryo picks up the glass and walks back to the counter, the kid clearly been doing his best to watch what he'd been doing. There's a look of awe and wide eyes clearly shining with curiosity at having seen magic at work.

"Here you go! One fresh chocolate milk." He puts it down on the counter, sliding the glass over to where the kid is. "Enjoy, kiddo!" Ryo gives the preteen a bright and easy going smile.

After hasting and trying to get him to accept money, which he declines, with a shake of his head, the kid finally takes the glass from the counter and walks over to one of the tables. Ryo N. Usui is pleased at the look of surprise the kid has upon tasting the chocolate milk and returns to his show, it begins to play once more in his field of vision.

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He hadn't known what to expect upon entering into **Aether's Child** but found it hard to be disappointed as he does find it easy to use the metal tablet. The chocolate milk has long since been drunk yet, he's list of what he would like to buy has only grown! Harry had been looking for something to speed up his ability to learn magic but he just wanted to... Well, be out of that house and to get familiar with magic being, well, real.

His thoughts do often drift over the information that the man ranted about and tries to reconcile his brief visit to Diagon Alley plus bank with this store. It's hard to say which of the two he prefers but then, if the man behind the counter, who's likely the owner, is to be believed, he doesn't have much connect with the Wizarding World, or, as the man calls it, the Magical Society. After all, the man hadn't tried to shake his hand or reacted to his scar, didn't say, "It's Harry Potter!", just referred to him as kiddo and seem to generally treat him normally.

Harry glances at the glass, kind of wishing he'd drank it a bit more slowly then he actually had but it had been hard to restrain himself as it tasted unbelievable! He's also rather hungry and having gone through the food and drink menu hadn't helped either... Glancing towards the man behind the counter, who appears to be watching and listening to something only he can see and hear, he sighs as he returns to looking at the tablet and what it's displaying.

With a sigh, he notices the time, he's been in the shop for over two hours now. Harry flips back to the drink and food menu, looking through the opinions yet again, he puts in an order of fish and chips along with another large chocolate milk. He goes to the Check Out and then, it asks him to insert his money into the glowing space that suddenly appeared that seems to float between him and the tablet. Blinking a few times, after all, this is unexpected and yet, maybe it made a kind of sense?

Still, it's magic on display before him and checking the amount, he pulls out his small bundle of bills that he'd gotten before leaving Gringotts with Hagrid. He'd been thinking he could buy things on the

sly, without his aunt or uncle knowing, namely food. Taking out the right number of bills, he puts it into the space, which accepts then it changes color and his change fills the space. Harry takes the change and out of the corner of his eye, notices that the man gets slightly startled before touching something in the air as he turns to head into the back.

He gets up and takes the glass over to the counter, along with curiosity over how he'll get his meal. The glass does vanish after resting on the counter for a half a minute while Harry watches as the man heads for a different fridge and pulls out a few containers before walking over to the counter near this fridge that sports a large device that seems similar to a microwave but given it's got wood in its make up, he doubts that it's one now. A plate gets created with a device that matches the one that created the glass from before. The containers get opened and it's not long before at least five strips of previous deep fried fish onto the plate, it's interesting to watch each of them floating between the man's fingers and thumb, not touching the skin at all.

The man takes out a pair of tongs and brings out a large amount of french fries, the portion is rather a lot. "Want gravy with your fries?" He is startled by the way the man's voice sounds so close.

"It's free. Also, if you want something other then tartar sauce for your fish, just tell me." The man states.

"Yes please and tartar sauce is fine." He says and he gets the feeling the man is smiling but does fetch another container from that fridge upon returning the two containers. A plastic ladle gets used to scoop up some of the contains of this third, smaller container. A great helping of a rich brown is placed over top of the fries and then the plate is put into the microwave device, after a minute, the plate comes out and the man brings it over with a rolled up napkin about a fork and knife for him to use.

"Here's your meal, I'll get your chocolate milk now." The man promises and he nods, gingerly touching the plate with a finger tip,

he finds it's not that hot to his bare hands. Hovering a hand over the two portions of food finds that they are steaming hot. He picks up the wrapped up utensils, he walks over to the table with the plate. By the time he returns to the counter, there's a large glass of chocolate milk.

Still... "What was that? I heard you pretty clear when you weren't even near the counter." He inquires and the man as a lazy smile while his hazel yellow eyes seem to glint in amusement at the question.

"It's a foreign taught Written Spell from China. The original version is a mental network between magic users and had a range of two kilometers, it's been modified since then." He blinks at the mention of it coming from China but, it makes sense, that the UK can't be the only place where Witches and Wizards are born, right?

"Oh... I guess that makes sense..." He admits and the man sighs.

"Don't worry over it, your world view is still trying to accommodate that magic exists, right?" He nods. "Just remember to keep always have an open mind when your attending Hogwarts, that your talents in magic might lay outside of what they teach."

He admits that's something very good advice and that he should keep that in mind. "I'll try to keep that in mind." Harry promises.

"Do or do not, there is no try." The way the man says that, it sounds like a quote and it seems that his expression causes a chuckle. "Star Wars quote." The man explains and he blinks a bit as he lets out an "Oh."

Ducking his head, he takes the glass and walks back to the table, it seems that there's more reason for considering the devices that would allow him to watch TV and released Movies. *Still, I'm going with the Dream Classroom Amulet.* It's a single owner item and it comes along with a permanent hiding charm on it to keep those who aren't the owner from seeing it, which, if his experiences with his

cousin and his gang taught him, is something he'd like to have so it doesn't get stolen from him.

Taking time to eat, he finds its nice and warm, so different then what scarps he's usually given. He's pretty fully midway through eating the chips and after eating two strips of fish. Stopping for a bit, Harry returns to the tablet and the list of magical items and devices with their prices to the right, which all get added together at the bottom, which is far more then he has on him.

With a soft sigh, he cancels all but three, of the three, one of which is the amulet he decided on. The other two... the bracelet is a eye corrective which also sports a feature to grant the wearer low light vision by twisting the little wooden disk to an image of a star, it's disguise is that of a watch, it also functions as a wrist watch with an illusion over the disk and its covering. The final item is a collar that's a defense against emotional altering potions, it comes in a variety of metals along with a disguise enchantment on it, so he can hide it or make it appear like a tattoo even.

He's only got enough for two... "Something wrong?" The man behind the counter, he guesses the man is a Wizard.

"Just trying to decided between something, that's all." He admits and the man hums, his eyes suddenly feel rather heavy upon him once again.

"If it helps... Some idiots dabbled in Blood Magic in regards to you, trying to protect you from that leaching anchor that's lingering viva that scar on your forehead." And that startles him, a hand reaches towards the scar on his forehead. "What?"

"Blood Magic is not generally a talent that... Witches and Wizard get or, perhaps I should say, they don't get it right." The man explains and he's all ears, after all, he's willing to talk about magic with an eleven year old who's yet to attend Hogwarts. "Most people think any blood will work but true workers of it know it's their own blood that

works the best, heck, any of their bodily fluid could work with the right understanding, as long as it's of them."

Harry feels his face redden as a sudden image flickers into his mind, causing him to duck his head while doing his best to shove it out of his mind. "Due to you being closely related to one of the idiot dabblers, the... enchantment is feeding from your reserves to keep it going. The other's intentions seem to be what keeps it from dispensing, which is why it's been eating at your reserves, which in turn, means you're reserve is larger then a kid your age should have."

"The leach is more then easy enough to get rid of now, has been for years actually, that's what the original intent seems to be concerning the enchantment. Keeping it from devouring your young mind and turning you into a copy of the thing that's been butchering its last remaining humanity." Remarks the man and Harry suddenly recalls the story Hagrid told him.

"I could remove it now but then the enchantment will likely mutate as it won't dispense with it gone." The thought of having some connection to his parents murderer, that it's leaching something from him... *But then, it'll get rid of something his parents set up on him, but would I need it if the thing was gone?*

He's conflicted but, well... "Is either threatening my health?" The man takes a few moments before answering, "Your about to head into a magic heavy area and excising your magic ability. The enchantment's going to be stretching for a bit before focusing fully on you and it's not much of a defense, really. It's only aim is to keep you safe from the thing that put the leach on you."

"The leach on the other hand, it'll be able to grow stronger in said environment and given it's likely a fucked up Horcrux... Your mind is at risk by the thing that made it and you will met it as long as you have a direct connection to it." He blinks before inquiring, "I thought he was a Wizard..."

"Ah, yes, the thing might have been, when it cut up half of it's 'soul' but once that portion then got sliced in half, the man stopped being considered human. You can possess half of a human 'soul' but once you get below one fourth of one?" The man sighs, shaking his head. "The thing likely made sure to have the other Horcux are in magic rich environment, given how scared the thing once was as a man, it put up a lot of defenses to secure those too."

"Oh..." *So, Voldiemort, if he's still alive, can't be classified as a man.* Harry thinks to himself. "Is he still..."

"Alive? Given how tiny that leach is, even if the thing likely didn't expect to part with that bit... It still exists." The man behind the counter admits. "Doubt it'll exist for a full century though... Not if it splintered what little of its portion so easily and without any perpetration."

"How much would that cost? To get rid of it?" He asks and the owner of **Aether's Child** replies, "Free, it won't take more then five minutes to get the thing out of that scar, it'll take a bit longer to get rid of the faulty Blood Magic."

Just as he's about to ask about the cost for the removal, the man states, "Given there won't be any rush to rush it's removal... How does three pounds sound? What we'll use will be a wooden ring, you can toss it in the fireplace when it's done its job or let it rot away on its own, if you like."

"Deal, though, could you, ah... Well..." He tries to figure out how to ask for help about deciding between the two items, the device that's disguised as a wrist watch and the metal collar. When he does, the man seems to be rather bemused.

"Well, you can always visit the bank to get more money." Remarks the man. "You don't have to walk out of the shop with the whole order either."

"You noticed how you paid for your food order?" Harry nods slowly. "I'll send you off with a specially enchanted cardboard box with a similar enchantment, only, upon paying the amount, the item will appear in the box upon the insertion of the correction funds."

"That sounds fantastically brilliant!" He exclaims, realizing that he could likely get those other items as well, although it would take him a while to get around to paying to receive them though. The owner gives him a smile as he says, "Glad you think so. It been a hassle finding someone willing to trust such a system."

"I'm Harry, Harry Potter." He introduces himself and the owner returns it, without reacting like any of the Witches and Wizards had done before. "Ryo Usui."

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Lounging in the magical created hot spring, Ryo enjoys time in his alternate form. His ears are now long and narrower along with sporting large scales of a light blue color with hints of jade green and his hair sports a rich blue shine to it. Due to his youth, he's arms and back sport the same blue scales only the jade green is more noticeable, lingering at the pointed tips of his blue scales going down his arms and along his back. In time, the scales covering his more human appearing body will vanish to give him a more human look at those areas.

His human portion of his body is a bit over five feet with a good eight feet of snake tail. His belly scales are a creamy white while the top of his back sports jade green markings that are in a simple V pattern. The longest a fully grown member of his breed could grow to be, from head to tail tip, is twenty feet long. Generally fully grown examples will also sport far more intricate patterns on their scales and there's a maximum of three additional colors besides the basic and belly color.

There's a lot of names used for his modified breed, Naga being most common to be used, even though there's a number of other modified

bloodlines that sport similar snake traits that also get that heading. Although, Greater Naga seems to be used given their alternate appearance does come closer to the classical idea of what a Naga should look like when they are compared to those other breeds. Although, unlike those other modified breeds, they don't naturally speak Parseltongue, not that it's common knowledge about that little fact and the enchantment for that ability can be etched into any kind of item be it a cheap plastic earring to they can carry in a pocket, like a wooden coin.

It's not that they have any blood connections to, if they actually existed, the Naga race it's just that an ancestor found she/he liked a certain body look and decided that her/his descendants should be born in that body shape or able to take it as easily as breathing. For all that Ryo looks like he should be cold blooded, he's as warm blooded as any other human, which also explains their lack of natural ability for Parseltongue. It's just that due to size, he can get cold more easily due to how much of his body surface is exposed. He'd been born looking perfectly human, his mother had been a non-modified human after all, he only showed his father's traits breed true three days after when he transformed into a rather fat and short snake sporting white scales.

As infants of his modified breed, they come in either are black scales or in white, it's only when they reach four that their base color will begin to overtake as the dominate color. Between ages ten and thirteen, they'll undergo a metamorphosis concerning their snake body, the head altering to be more akin to a humans with shoulders along with arms finally forming. Between ages eighteen and twenty, their heads will become pretty much clear of scales, save for the ears, and hair will begin to grow. By the time one of his breed is forty-five to fifty years of age, they'll lack scales on their human portion and actually have scaleless pointed ears.

Ryo's is thirty-four now, thus he's still got some scales covering his human portion, he's pretty confident that by the time he's forty-six or forty-seven it'll be clear of scales. Not that it bothers him, after all,

he's capable of changing into a non-modified human. Which is just as well, given the general attitude of the local Magical Societies of this parallel world. They'd think him as something lesser due to his natural magical ability to assume his current appearance, it wouldn't matter that it's due to this ability that he's naturally talented at internal magical use or that he's just as capable of using magic in an external manner with the right magical conduit.

He'd arrive in this dimension at twenty years of age and spent two years traveling around before picking to settle in an island country that this world calls the United Kingdom. Even before leaving his home dimension for this parallel world, he had created a pocket dimension apartment for himself that he can live in. A simple anchor array set up and he can vanish into it without anyone able to reach him. It had taken him four years to do so as any error in expanding it forced him to start from scratch once more, which could be highly frustrating but the end result is so worth all of that hard work and of being at his wits end for days at a time.

With this pocket dimension, he's still got an easy connection to his home dimension, which is how he continues to keep up to date with events at home along with any new developments, in magical research or if some other world notices the non-native dimensional immigrants and follow how relations develop from there. News concerning his family isn't overly important as the clan he belongs to encourages independence in any members belonging to it, be it from getting adopted into it or staying registered in it once those born to members of the clan become adults.

Clan Usui membership is wide ranging, from non-modified humans to half-humans and modified breeds of humans. Most non-humans make up their own nations or have long since migrated into isolation on empty parallel worlds. In the past, countries/nations or corporations had put forth plans concerning terraforming other planets but only about five dozen ever got around to being terraformed to support life from Earth due to the usual reasons and

wars almost happened over who had the rights to which planet for such and such a reason.

Then someone did recalled some old charm and went about not just recreating it but altering it to fit the current social climate where space was a very pressing issue. Space Enlargement Charm became the solution to the space problem and it also went on to solve the issue of food. In time, more people played around with the Space Enlargement until someone figured out how to create pocket dimension that are keyed to a single person and then trying to create ones that could be anchored to a community of people instead of relying on a single individual, they discovered alternate dimensions and the ability to travel there and back.

And so, terraforming planets finally peppered out and those planets settlers were free to develop their own governing systems without pressure from outside forces from their ancestor's original planet. Terraforming is still practiced, just on a much smaller scale and isn't so much a job as just a part of how people live their life. Most teens wanting to prove themselves to be capable adults create their own space, be it in the form of a cabinet or a large crate with a version of the Space Enlargement Charm etched into the wood or they work their asses off in creating a permanent pocket dimension that only they can access.

Finding himself becoming rather restless, Ryo dives down into the water before heading to the edge of the spring, getting out of the water as he shakes his head back and forth, sending his wet hair about as he slithers to grab a towel, trying his hair as he curls his lower snake portion under him and around him. Once done, he heads out of the Japanese style, man mad hot spring and into his bedroom, being sure to grab his computer lap top to so he can play some games.

And then, there's a ripple coming from his anchor. It happens a few more time and with a sigh, he does a save point in his game and closes the lap top. It's late, he checks the clock and it shows that in the dimension he's operating in, it's almost one am.

As he comes to the exit of his pocket dimension, Ryo assumes his non-modified human form, being sure to touch the device by the doorway to conjure cloths upon his body. Walking through the doorway, he finds that there is a ringing going on at his back door, which is rather close to where his anchor is.

He opens the door and finds a very nervous looking preteen, it's the green eyes that brings to mind the youth's name. "Harry?" Ryo inquires and there's a deer in headlights look on the preteen, before nodding and swallowing heavily.

"Can I spend the night?" The youth blurts out and he just blinks as the youth begins to ramble on and on about how he blew up his aunt, who is his uncle's sister and there's no blood connection between them. About him pretty much running away from said house with his things, which includes a snowy owl, and his adventure on the Knight Bus. The youth kind of trails off, it's clear the Wizard before him is on the edge of emotional episode and is likely going to be the source of a lot of accidental magic if not calmed down.

He opens the door and allows the youth to enter, which he does while bringing in the caged owl and trunk. Locking the door, Ryo leads the emotionally charged youth up the stairs, he does have rooms for personal visitors. Twisting the knob, he gives the youth a nod and before leaving, says, "We'll talk in the morning. Just... calm down and get some rest, ok?"

Harry nods, clearly overwhelmed by his kind gesture and once in the room, he closes the door. Taking a few steps away, Ryo tries to figure out just what the fuck could have caused such an emotional reaction that Harry's magic run-amuck. *What did this 'aunt' do?* He wonders but forces himself to head back down stairs, returning to his pocket dimension to try and take his own advice.

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Morning comes and Harry finds it hard to figure out where he is, but slowly he remembers where he is and feels so embarrassed about

imposing on the owner of **Aether's Child** . *What was I thinking? Coming straight here... I should have gone to the **Leaky Cauldron** .*

Still, he gets up out of the nice bed and begins to change out of his current cloths for another set, not that they are any better. He also is surprised to find that there's a bathroom attached to this room and decides to have a shower before going down to speak with Mr Usui about... Well, he's not really sure what he really wants to talk to the man about anything that happened. After all, they are hardly close, after all...

But a treacherous voice in the back of his head whispers just why he came to **Aether's Child** , that in the end, Mr Usui wasn't someone who seems aware or care about his title as the Boy-Who-Lived nor has the man been anything but professional with him. Somehow, he found himself coming to like Mr Usui and think of the man as someone he can trust. That a lot of what Mr Usui had once ranted about during his very first visit ended up having a lot of truth to it, which actually help him not feel so betrayed when his hopes for Hogwarts withers due to the bullying from his potion teacher, lack of aid from the other teachers, treatment by his fellow students, and when his own House Head doesn't believe him when he went to her for help concerning a certain stone.

He hadn't liked the fact that the Headmaster seems to think he's safe at his aunt's house for the summer. Harry hadn't wanted to return to that house, but he had no other option that year as he hadn't really thought of to pursue find another option. *Not that coming up with an alternative place kept me from returning this year.* The soon to be thirteen year old thinks sourly to himself.

Still, his stomach is so empty and the lure of food finally gets him out of the room, he's sure to pack up his belongings once again. Walking out of the room, he heads down stairs and takes a moment to figure out which room Mr Usui is in. He finds the man in what appears to be an almost cozy dinner room. Taking a moment to look at the door, it reads Staff Room.

"Morning Harry." Mr Usui greets him and he blinks as his attention returns to the adult once again. The owner of the shop is looking at him and gestures towards the table while the gaze shifts to his luggage and Hedwig. "You could have left your owl and trunk in the room."

"I was thinking of getting a room at the **Leaky Cauldron** , actually." Harry admits as he does enter into the staff room. "For the rest of the summer, likely."

He notices that there's some waffles along with sliced up fruit plus syrup bottle on the table. The waffles look likely they have something added to the mix as he focuses on them. *Chocolate chips?* He thinks as he settles his trunk on the floor, walking forward to the table to eat the breakfast provided by Mr Usui.

"Not sure if I approve of that plan, I'd suggest looking to get a passport and leave the country as a proper vacation. North America is an English speaking country." Mr Usui remarks and he blinks at the suggestion. "Or maybe visit Ireland? That's closer to home and with that shade of eyes... A simple dye job, get rid of those glasses..."

He doesn't know what to say, so he just blinks while look at the man with a touch of bemusement but there's a warmth in his chest as Mr Usui continues to muse on and on about alteration to his appearance that could be had to throw people off his trail so he can have a proper vacation. Mr Usui walks over and joins him at the table, he waits for his host to begin putting food on his plate and begin eating. The man's musings dies and they eat in silence.

Harry finds himself thinking over the musings and, well, it seemed like a good idea. "Doesn't it take a time to get a passport?" He asks as he feels filled.

"If you go official mundane channels. Getting a magical one... Well, I assume there's various ways to get them." Admits Mr Usui. "I

traveled some years ago having created my own passport, making it look like an official mundane one."

"Isn't that illegal?!" He blurts out with wide eyes and Mr Usui seems to shrug, admitting, "It likely is but then, isn't it illegal for people to get away with child abuse?" There's a clearly knowing look in the owner's eyes, he's not sure which caused him to flinch, the fact that Mr Usui just accused his aunt and uncle of child abuse or that look in the man's eyes.

"Don't kid yourself kiddo, magic was more then likely the reason they got away with treating you the way they did." The man states in a matter of fact way, which causes him to stiffen but found he couldn't counter that. "And the current government in regards to magic is more like an auction house then an actual governing legal institution."

Auction house? Harry doesn't get it and it must have shown on his face. "Anything can be bought as long as the price is high enough or *right* ."

"People are humans, humans are selfish beings, and selfish beings general aims are in their self interest." Add Mr Usui. "Money is the general standard but, well, there's always connections viva friend and family that can be used if the person won't take the... carrot, they'll try resort to other methods. Threats are generally called the stick and they aren't always on the individual that's having the conversation."

"The latest English Dark Lord? He owned the government through his slaves, you see. But I figured it wasn't taking over the government that was the actual goal, he just liked killing people, in the end. Torturing them before killing them even. It wasn't about politics with that one, it was about killing and the fact he got away with it, that nobody could force him to stop." Mr Usui states and he blinks but, well, given what he's heard concerning Draco's family, maybe there's truth to that.

"It was Voldemort who's anchor you removed." He states and the owner blinks before a look of dawning seems to settle on his face. "Ah, that might explain that a bit more about how that rampage seem to linger for so long."

No, 'so, your that Harry Potter'. Just... Harry isn't sure what to make of the lack of change in attitude. "Any listing of who owns it's surviving slaves? Or did they all get imprisoned?"

"Why are you calling his... its followers slaves?" He asks curiously. For some reason, calling Voldemort an it... That seems to... It's hard to really say why he's got mixed feelings about it really.

"They sold themselves to it at a price and were branded with an ownership mark by it." The way the man says that as if it were the simplest fact... "Slavery is illegal."

"Since when has that ever stopped anyone from doing anything?" Mr Usui remarks with a slight tilt of his head and a bemused smirk. "We were originally on the topic of how the local magical government is an auction house and mentioned how various members of said government all have a price tag. That's not unlike slavery in its own way."

Some part of him particularly whispers, *Like you weren't a slave in all but name to your aunt and her family...* He reaches for the water and takes a sip as his mind whirls.

"Legality... I think one of the oldest rules is, it's not illegal as long as you aren't caught." Admits the man.

"How are you not ruling the world?" He blunts out, because he's pretty sure that the man in front of him could succeed in doing just that. His question has Mr Usui giving him an owlish blink before snorting then laughing in a gut bursting way, which actually makes him think that Mr Usui is younger then should be.

"Well, ultimately, the person I swore to answer to is my Clan Head." Mr Usui states after a considering look settles on the man's face for about a minute. "As for the world conquest... It's because I love not being chained to a desk, dealing with children in the disguise of adults looking, forever, for both attention and praise." Admits the owner after recovering, a small fit of giggling breaks out, likely at the look upon his face. "I have far more freedom as a store owner and without hordes of people eyeing my back to knife it or trying to figure out why my price tag is."

"Clan Head? Shouldn't it be..." He doesn't really know how to say it.

"Laws? Local government?" Remarks Mr Usui and he nods.

"Laws... Laws are made by governments and governments... Well, I think we are looping back to what I was kind of ranting about earlier." The man remarks and he can kind of get it but...

"Have you been asked to vote for the current Minister? Did you elect the... do towns still have mayors?" He shakes his head at the first while shrugging concerning the second.

"Other then being born in this country... do you *feel* invested in this country? In its laws?" It's an odd way to think.

"It's not like I have a choice." He admits and the man snorts. "Of course you do, you can not be a selfish prick to other people and not get imprisoned or you can just do whatever you want and get imprisoned."

"And the reason why they can imprison you? It's that age old excuse of Might equals Right." Mr Usui states. "Anyway, can you guess what kind of Might you have to bare? One that is a rather multi-factional tool?"

"Magic." He replies and feels a bit uncomfortable in giving that answer. "Correct. And given the usual human attitude, if you commit

crimes against those without magic, do you think you'll be tossed into a cell to wait a trial?"

Harry sighs as he realizes that he almost replied, he wouldn't and it takes him a few seconds to realize that it's unlikely he's going to get expelled from Hogwarts either. "Oh bloody hell..." How could he forget? He's their bloody Boy-Who-Lived and they needed him as their symbol.

"Oh? Something dawn on you?" Mr Usui inquires as he feels like a load has been taken off.

"No letter showed up, for me I mean, did it?" He asks and the owner shakes his head. "No owls have been flying about."

After a few minutes of silence, he decides to ask, "How much for an item to not only make me immune to mental influences but also record who it was and for what behavior?" Some things have started to click in his mind and, looking back, realizes that he might have defended again one angle of attack but left himself open from other directions.

"You'll still want that amulet to work... I can create a weekly list of items approved to interact mentally with you. You'd have to register the items weekly, they'll be examined to ensure no outside tampering."

And Harry finds himself nodding in agreement, he finds himself feeling rather relieved about the short rant the owner went on or else, he might not have been reminded of the simple fact that, he's not just the usual Hogwarts student, he's the famous Boy-Who-Lived and regardless of his feelings on the matter, it ultimately means, what with Voldemort's trying to return, he's got a lot of ley-way within the Wizarding World and unwanted special treatment. He might as well make use of it while he had it, if his past year had taught him anything, Witches and Wizards are very fickle minded people.

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Leaning against the door frame, Ryo takes in the sight of masked group and the thing that they sold themselves to. They are here for his renter slash apprentice, just two hours ago had been midnight, which signals that it's July thirty-first. It's Harry's seventeenth Birthday, which is suppose to be the day the teen is considered an adult. Due to certain shitty events concerning Harry while he'd been attending Hogwarts, the teen became a legal adult at fourteen years of age, due to being forced to participate in some dumb ass tournament with an age limit of seventeen for the participants.

Harry's fourth year became his last year and the teen then approached him concerning his continued education. Since that summer before the teen's third year, Harry's been renting a room from him during the summer, getting away from the poisonous family that raised him. After all, there's no true love between the four, heck, the teen didn't even attend their funeral when they'd been killed by that 'rogue' dementor wandered onto Privet Drive of Whinging, which is located in Surrey.

He's rather bored, after all, they can't approach the shop nor will are their wands much use in attacking the wards of his home and business. They've been going at trying to get pass his protections for the past hour and he only showed himself in about forty-five minutes since they began as he founds it hard to return to sleep with the ripples of their attempts at getting pass, which doesn't work, and which means they have been trying to rid of his wards. They seem to get excited upon his arrival, their efforts increased, ignoring the previous pace only for him to continue to look less then impressed and even yawned more then a few times at their efforts, which only made them mad.

Letting his eyes close and leaving them closed, ignoring the demands from the thing and its slaves, Ryo wishes they'd just stop so he can actually go to sleep tonight. "Mr Usui?" With a sigh, he moves to stand up and open his eyes, turning his back on the group, he regards the now seventeen year old.

"Getting noisy aren't they?" He remarks, stifling another yawn. The teen's lips are pressed in a thin line as green eyes move pass his body and face, looking out of the door at the group of slaves and their master.

"You'd think they'd figure out that their efforts aren't working by now." Remarks Harry and he merely hums after doing a lips closed yawn. "If they are still here by dawn, then it's their death."

There's a slight blinking from Harry before the other seems to recall the lesson concerning general symbolism and concepts in regards to how to use them in your magic. Day break and sun set are two of the most common events that happen daily that people have grown to take for granted. In the current case, black clothed, which can symbolize night and darkness, and the wearing of a skull mask are symbolic symbols of the grave and death. Then with dawn being the event that symbolizes new life and light conquering darkness, well... Why wouldn't he use it as one of the triggers for threat elimination?

"Oh!" Harry's eyes take a hard glint with a bit of a smirk upon his face. "So... I should go make some fresh popcorn for when it happens?"

"We've got plenty of time until that happens." Ryo assures his renter, he hardly thinks of himself as Harry's Master as a lot of what he's teaching can be pieced together from reading enough books that the local Magical Society has on their shelves, be it legally or viva their black-market. He mostly just helps by handing over highlighted texts on bookmarked pages for Harry to go over and think on, helping the process by gently asking him leading questions. "Dawn is still some hours away."

"Hot chocolate?" Suggests the teen and after giving it some thought, Ryo nods. The door closes behind them as they head for the staff room for it, it's what serves as a common kitchen between the two of them. Harry's altered his space to include a kitchen along with a small counter where he can eat his meals while he has a kitchen in his dimensional pocket.

Before he'd closed his store, a group of magical locals showed up and tried to talk Harry into leaving his property before midnight. He hadn't really paid them much mind once he finished examining them and noting the various magical compulsions influencing their personalities and behaviors. They were pretty much per-programed flesh dolls, only difference is that they did originally have minds and personalities of their own that show up under that mental conditioning.

In the end, Harry didn't leave and the teen tricked them into taking a fairly strong mundane sleep aid. The group was then transformed into mice and hamsters then placed in a conjured enchanted cage. Said cage is resting on the table and the group have yet to wake up, which goes to show how modern mundane chemicals can affect a group of people who have never been overly exposed nor had their parents and so forth. It's a question how the one 'muggle' born in the group was as effected by it as the rest though, which makes him wonder if it might have something to do with the magical mental conditioning playing a part as well.

Not that he's got any plans to research this, no point along with the fact that getting them to sign a waver for said research would be child's play. That's without using any magic to urge them to sign, he's pretty sure that he'd be able to talk them into not only signing it but that they wouldn't even read what it is they are signing. In their current state, they are so gullible and can be easily influenced if you know how to go about doing it.

The only defense he has concerning the transformation into animals is that they weren't capable of leaving due to their clearly illegal mental tampering. Ryo had finished creating the report and sending it, after all, he can't say that they were unwelcome given they had been allowed into the building, so they weren't trespassers so he didn't have any grounds on that front. The current assault on his residence though... well, them dying is more of a clear case of self defense, particularly as he's long since submitted what wards he has on his place of both business and anchoring point. He even got a

visitation from his second cousin Shinso Tendo, as representation of the Jade Sun Empire, a third party ward master, and an Usui Clan ward master and got their seal of approval upon completion of an investigation concerning the local dangers and whether his measures were within reason.

He only did it to cover his bases, really. It means that if anything happens, he can reach out towards his birth universe for aid if things grow far out of his ability to handle things safely. He's pretty much the only one from his universe settled on this world and it's both liberating and frightening. Ryo knows he'd be lonely and homesick if he hadn't the 'direct' connection to his home dimension that his pocket dimension offers, he'd be dependent on waiting for the right alignments that would bring the two universes close together, making contact so much easier and reliable.

Harry, well, there hasn't been any reason to really share information about where he's actually from. Oh, the teen has caught him in his alternate form, not long after the teen became a permanent resident under his shops roof. Harry hadn't given much thought over the idea of using magic to modify his body, to sculpted it to look a certain way or that others had, it had been an amazing concept for the teen but the novelty did wear off after the teen got use to seeing him in that form along with realizing just how common body modification is, even if it wasn't magical in nature.

Ryo notices the small black feathers that pepper around Harry's right ear. It's only a temporary modification and it's a rather subtle one as the feathers coloring blends well with the teen's hair. He recalls other temporary modifications Harry's done over these pass few years along with researching ways to fully transform into a wide range of animals, putting effort into creating a few items to that effect. There's reasons why wolf or fox belts feature in stories featuring people transforming into said animals or the story about a Goddess' feathered cloak allowing her to transform into the form of a bird of prey. Enchanted items of that nature tend to be easy to create, given that it generally need some part of said animal they want to turn into.

"So, it's the one that's pale and without a nose, right?" Ryo asks after minutes have ticked by and having finished drinking his cup of hot chocolate. Harry seems startled awake and is blinking rapidly as the teen recovers from almost drifting off to sleep.

The teen hums a positive, he can still feel them trying to get in, only now they are pacing themselves. He wonders how long until reinforcements are brought in or if they'll try involve non-human beings in breaking into the building. "You want something stronger?" He inquires.

"No thanks." Harry says with a yawn between the no and thanks. Shaking his head before stretching his upper body, clearly doing his best to wake himself up.

Humming, Ryo gets up to get them refills on their hot chocolate, placing both on the table before leaving to fetch a few things from his pocket dimension. With a duplicated copy of a manga he'd been reading before bed and then the plate of cookies he baked a few days prior. Returning to the staff room, he finds Harry with his head on his crossed arms and looking into that conjured cage with those transformed people.

Placing the plate on the table and sitting back on the chair, he flips through the book until he reaches where he left off. "Official Heaven's Blessing?" Murmurs Harry, given that it's written in the written language of the Jade Sun Empire, it's rather surprising until he notices the ring on the teen's finger.

"It's a romance story between a thrice ascended god and a ghost who became a demonic ghost king." He explains. "Both are men."

"Men?" Harry looks puzzled. "How does that even work?"

"What do you know about sex? About pleasuring your bed partner?" He inquires, putting a finger between the pages before closing the duplicated manga.

It seems that Harry knows next to nothing about dating and what it leads to as the minutes tick by as Harry is clearly uncomfortable with relating what little he knows on the topic. "I would have thought you'd know more then that... I'll see about correcting that." He says with a sigh.

"How?" Harry asks, both bewildered and yet eager. He blinks before saying, "It'll be along that amulet you bought for studying, you'll get lessons in a realistic dream with the option to participate in the lessons, which will be the faster way compared to observing what they do."

Harry seems rather relieved upon hearing the method. "Seems helpful... Will it... I mean, between two men?"

"Do you want to know how two men would go about it?" Ryo asks in turn and there's a kind of torn look on the teen's face. It's not like he's one to judge, he might not find men attractive but that doesn't mean he hadn't been curious about the how of two men doing it was himself.

"I'll include that information but seal it so you have to want to access it." He informs Harry. "I can't help with the dating portion, though. Too many factors to take in account. You'll just have to go out and learn through trail and error."

Harry nods, face rather red and takes a cookie, biting it while deciding not to look at him or at the transformed people in the cage. Once silence reigns for a good few minutes, he returns to his manga. The ripples continue to happen, the timing changes over the passing of hours and Harry clearly falls asleep by his third cup of hot chocolate while he does head back to his pocket dimension to get update the magical duplicate with the next book when he's done reading the last five chapters.

Upon feeling the warmth slowly engulfing the air around him does he realize it's getting close to dawn. With a hum, he makes a mental note of where he left off and closes the book. Then he gets up and

gently wakes Harry up. "It's almost dawn." He gently says and it takes Harry seconds before he remembers what that means.

Returning to the front of the store and opening it, the numbers had increased along with goblins and dementors lending aide, be it through threats or because they had thrown their lot in with the thing. He notices that there aren't any werewolves, but that's not that surprising, given most can't use wands as magical foci. They can't contribute to bringing down the wards nor could giants and trolls. Seeing the dementors, he just knows that what's about to happen will be far more spectacular then it would without them.

Slowly the night takes on the predawn grays and he feels the wards warm up in sympathy with the coming dawn. As the light of dawn finally break, the air within the building becomes filled with the lively colors of bright fire, golden yellows and vibrant oranges with scarlet reds and sparks of silvery blue and silvery white swirl about within. Then, it all just pulses and the magical energy surges out of the building, through the very walls and glass, sweeping through the air and all those who were trying to break in are seemingly washed away as their forms take on the likeness of living shadows with skeletal white faces.

Gone like shadows before fire light or flashlight. There's no resistance or residue to be had, not even from the goblins or dementors. Seconds later and the wards return to their usual state with the area clear of their would be tormentors and murders. The only evidence they had been had to be the magical items that lay on the ground.

"That was... fast. And... well, merciful, I mean, they didn't even cry out." Harry remarks and he explains, "It was the dementors that ultimately caused it to be like we witnessed, cold and cloaked in black, that's almost like night itself."

He walks out of the shop, towards the magical items. Harry follows in his wake a few seconds later. They collect the magical items from the street, a number of them had already been used up while the

others had been in the process of being used and the others getting set up to be used. "Nice of them to drop off some birthday presents, huh?"

Harry snorts before chuckling. "If your sure..." The seventeen year old trails off.

"I don't need them and you can make a study of them." Is all Ryo says as they pause at the bottom of the stairs. With a hum, Harry begins walking up the stairs and Ryo falls in behind him.

The End

Author's Note: Inspired by a picture a picture of Naga!LuoBinghe and Shen Qingqui. The story with said picture is called Snakebite Love by Blackberreh, the story can be found on Archive of Our Own.

Reincarnation? Or is it Transmigration?

I don't own Kateyou Hitman Reborn or High School DxD!

Faolan O Hicidhe... The name echos in his mind, which is ringing. His body is wet and his limbs barely move.

I'm alive...? He finds himself thinking as his vision comes into focus and he realizes that being in pain means he's not yet dead. In the end, the blond sporting amber hazel eyes causes his fingers to curl and tests his arms to push himself off of his stomach, to maybe get into a seated position.

It's hard as it seems he's got a few new additions to watch out for, namely a bright yellow scale covered tail and how his legs seem to be rather altered. There's very little remaining of his cloths and it gives him a view of his body, he's got a patch of bright white scales around his belly button with another patch upon his left breast, around the nipple and looking more like a slash moving in a slant towards his belly in truth. His finger nails are clearly sharp with them looking far thicker then they should and far longer then he expects them to be.

Just rubbing his finger tips over the back of his finger nails, he finds them surprisingly smooth to the touch. The tips don't bend as he expects nails of this length should and it confuses him. He finds it hard to recall what happened to him, after all, he's got memories of going to bed in a very soft bed to falling from a great height, seeing the some winged person with a sword glinting with blood on it...

He remembers refusing to accept death in one of those memories while the other privately welcomed it. Faolan, great grandson of the dragon who named himself Cabhan, although he's more commonly known as the Green Dragon, due to his brand of magic in regards to plants. Often prayed to and offered tribute to ensure bountiful crops.

Grandmother had been the product of a bride tribute during a particularly rough number of years.

Yet, Tsunayoshi, or Tsuna, didn't know the names of either grandparents, being a blood descendant to one Giotto from Italy. The man did something... Caused something? Or was he just a famous bandit? A highly successful one?

It's all jumbled in his head and sporting bright yellow scales along with noting his hair is blond kind of means Faolan is the name he should consider his primary, after all, Tsuna had been a brunet along with possessing hair that's naturally spiky. And yet, with just a want, an orange energy flickers around his hands, moving in a way the would remind one of fire. He feels warm as it dances around his hands and there's no uncomfortable pressure nor heat with using his Sky Flame.

He has it vanish, sure, it help warm him up along with bring order to his mind but it was also tiring him out. The youth would rather not fall asleep, he needs to sort himself out, he can rest when he's not out in the open like this. After all, that... well, from Tsuna's memories, that man's appearance would mark him a devil. The black bat like wings and sinister aura...

Faolan has never heard of devils before but then, from Tsuna's memories, dragons were considered supernatural and fictional. Yet, from Faolan, he recalls meeting his great grandfather in his true appearance. Dark green scales that in darkness might as well be black, crimson eyes with black horns, spines, and talons. Belly scales being more a light gray then some shade of white.

Which means that there is a Bible Parthenon, likely made up of angels and devils under the authority of a singular God. Tsuna never became Catholic, not that any of the other Dons seem to realize that or if they suspected, they never pressed the issue. And Dons were... kind of like Kings? No, wait, Skies were considered Kings and called Knights to their side... But not every Don was a Sky, so they didn't count as their own Kingdoms...

Groaning, he rubs his temples as his headache starts up again as he tries to untangle the whole Mafia thing from what he knows about Kings and Knights. As his pounding headache subsides, he is kind of noting the difference that there's something about Tsuna's memories that make them tinted, almost dreamlike. *Seen through a filtered lens.*

Still, they flow to the forefront of his mind far easier then Faolan's does right now. Which could mean that their not overly tied to his physical body and that's why they're easier for him to recall. Which means... what? Is Faolan O Hicidhe the reincarnation of Tsunayoshi Sawada? If so, why is he getting a previous incarnation's memories? It's not like that the injuries he got as Faolan overly affect his soul to any real degree... Right?

Sighing, Faolan moves to stand, it takes him a few tries, between the tail and how different his legs are kind of screw it up for him. It's clear he hadn't sported such traits before he woke. He mourns the lack of cloths to fully cover him as he does his best to ignore the issue, after all, his legs might be bend and altered in a clearly non-human manner but there isn't any hint of scales. The backs of his toes sport a scattering of yellow scales with the toe nails looking more like thick talons, the same white color as his finger nails.

Just standing is an odd experience as it seems like he's doing it wrong. The feel of his tail twitching and moving is rather novel. He takes a step forward and ends up using his tail as a third leg to steady himself from collapsing forward. Shuffling towards a tree is easier then trying to walk and once he's got a hand on the trunk, he gets use to walking, all the while keeping a hand on the trunk and walking in a circle around the tree.

Once he gets his confidence built about how he should be walking, he pushes off from the tree and walks a few steps away from the tree. Now that he's able to do something as simple as walk and he's now standing, he takes in the area where he landed. There's a stain of blood where he'd woken up from upon the grass which causes him to rub the scales on his chest. His mind still drawing a blank on

how he ended up falling from the sky or how he ended up on his belly.

With a sigh as he runs a hand through his blond hair, he finds there's a few braids in it. "How long until my memories settle?" He wonders to himself out loud.

It's like he's a stranger to himself, that he's got a lot of things to discover. Faolan isn't sure if he's annoyed about the issue or he's angry with himself for getting into this position in the first place. There's not much to jog his memory at this location and nothing to recover, so, taking in his surroundings, he can only hope that he'll find something to cover himself with before he encounters anyone.

He heads south, once he figures out which direction that is. Doing his best to keep an eye out for something he can use as a make shift weapon. He doesn't think he's able to really defend himself with his bare-hands at this moment. Not when his body is aching and seems to alien to him.

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With his Sky Flame humming about his being, Faolan is left undisturbed by the various people on the street. It had taken him ten years to finally track down the devil who'd been the source of rousing his draconic lineage but also wounding his very soul, ripping a part of it loose. He hadn't realized why he always felt a tug leading to the south east this pass decade but he now knew that it generally means that the devil who entrapped a part of his soul, fueling the magic of his sword, is in the mortal world.

He can honestly say he doesn't care about about the devil's name nor reasons, well, the reasons seem kind of easy to guess at, when one considers his mother's lineage. Dragons are powerful beings, so what luck must that devil thought he had upon stumbling upon a human who's got a great grandfather as a dragon? A fifteen year old virgin at that? What better way to blood a freshly made and

enchanted blade then with the life blood of someone who recently awoke their draconic blood?

Too bad for the devil that Faolan not only survived the awaking of that lineage but also the wounding of his very soul. It's why he'd reached for anything to help keep him alive, any kind of power would have worked and there was a power that echoed with that wish to defy death. So, an old incarnation was unsealed and with those memories came the power that he'd wanted to starve off death itself.

Those old memories hold a lot of interesting knowledge, to be sure, but they also don't help him much, after all, what's the point of knowing how to use a computer when there isn't one for him to use? Or a microwave? Not all of the knowledge he inherits from that life is of any use but that which is, is invaluable.

He does his best to get a *feel* of where in the building across from where he's standing the devil is viva the sword. The land is what Tsunayoshi knows of as Egypt, which have their own Pantheon of Gods and Goddesses that generally sport the heads of animals, like a falcon head or black furred jackal. He's also fairly sure that the building is what is called a brothel.

So, after a decent period of time, Faolan crosses the street, he's careful when he does, memories of fast moving cars playing out within his mind's eye. Most of the traffic is on foot but there's a few carts loitering on the street. Once in the building, he catches sight of a minor statue of what could be one of the local Deities with a food offering before it.

His gaze flickers around as he moves away from the door, none of the patrons or workers notice him. With a nod to himself, the blond ghosts up the stairs, following the tug at his soul. He transforms his left hand, yellow scales grow around the root of his finger nails, spreading down to his elbow while his fingers thicken along with his finger nails growing white along with longer and thicker.

Finding the right room, he slips in and comes up behind the devil, who's topping and rather occupied with the human woman under him. With ease, the head goes flying and then wetly thunks as it smacks the wall. Grabbing the body with the same hand, pulls the body off the woman, who's eyes are wide and it's clear she's beginning to realize just what happened to her client. He ignores the woman as he tosses the body backwards as he gets a look on the bed.

Finding that the sword is indeed on the bed, laying next to the woman, Faolan reaches for it with his right hand. Once in his grasp, he calls upon his Sky Flames and melts the sword. The woman finds her voice and screams while pushing herself away from where he stands.

With the sword nothing but melted metal, the bit of soul is free and with his Sky Flame, an ache that he'd learn to live with finally begins to fade. Faolan can't help but become relaxed as his Sky Flame speeds up the mending between that bit of torn soul and the rest of his soul. It also feels like something else is getting fixed along with feeling more connected to this world as well. It's an empowering feeling and it's likely why he forgets that this isn't the time nor the place to ravel in said feeling.

He's soon not the only one standing in the room and there's another man taking in the sight before rushing at him with a sword raised. He blocks the incoming slash with his left arm, the man's eyes widen as the sword glazes off the yellow scales. He counters with a punch to the man's jaw, which staggers the man back a bit while there's weeping and whimpering with the occasional begging in a totally alien language to his ears. It's the local language, he knows but it's not one that he knows from the limited number Tsunayoshi had been forced to learn to speak and understand.

Bat wings come from the other male's back, marking him as a devil and eyes glowing bright with both magic and rage. "You bastard!" Snarls the devil and this time tries to stab him with the pointy end of the sword.

"You think I'm the bastard? I just killed a thief and my almost murderer." Faolan easily reads the devil's body language and since he doesn't have scales on the palm of his hand, uses the back of his hand to stop the attempted stab. "He's lucky to die so quickly, given what he did to me a decade ago."

The devil clearly doesn't care and continues to attack him, getting angrier with each deflection and evasion, he slides into the devil's arms and lands a blow in the stomach viva his elbow before hooking a leg behind one of the devil's. The devil falls to the ground and he's quick to place his left foot on the wrist that holds the sword. "I suggest you surrender, devil. I only came for that one and what he stole from me. I rather not kill another if I don't need to."

The devil glares up at him, spite and hate join that rage but there's clearly not much this devil can do. It's fairly clear to him that this devil hasn't had any training in regards to using magic. The way the devil always attacked with the sword also suggested that the male hasn't been trained in hand to hand combat, or perhaps what's more likely, wasn't confident in his unarmed combat skills.

Sure, Faolan hadn't been able to use magic but that hadn't stopped him from taking lessons on it, after all, how else can he learn to defend himself against it? Or identify it when he comes across it? The tell tale signs he or someone else had been Cursed?

Something about the way he feels more connected to the world seems to hint that something has changed in that regard. Given the year it took to travel beyond his country of origin, he might as well take the time to find other teachers to learn magic from. *Each Pantheon of Deities have their own traditions when it comes to magic, right? Seems like a reasonable hypothesis at least. I'll just have to find out if that theory is right or not. It's not like I'm in a rush to return home after all.*

After what feels like two minutes, he snorts and walks out of the room, turning his left arm back into that of a human. Faolan continues to walk out of the building, the feeling of that devil's hateful

gaze fixated upon his back as he leaves. The various people are sure to keep their distance, not wanting to get close and yet refusing to leave the same room.

Once out on the streets, he transforms fully into a dragon. He's not that big, not yet, but he's the size of a draft horse though. He's pretty sure that he is, it's not like he can stand next to one while in his dragon form. Bright yellow scales, white horns along with the occasional white spine littering his body. His talons are just as white.

Putting his weight on his back legs, he readies himself. All bunched up, his body tenses and he springs into the air. Wings snap open and within a few mighty beats, he's flying through the air.

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He's not sure what possessed him to visit the location where Albion and Ddraig are slumbering, having been tricked by the Pantheon headed by God of Hebrews, more recently of Christians and his heavenly host, fallen angels lead by Azazel, and the devils lead by the corrupted fallen angel Lucifer but here Faolan is, nearly a decade since they'd been put under this mountain. The pair are known as the Heavenly Dragons, their fights against one another are the stuff of hushed warnings and ruined countries who's only crime seems to be their location, well, most of the time. Even he is wary of getting close to either of them and yet, here Faolan finds himself visiting their mountain prison.

"Here to pay your respects, oh Great and Benign Realm Wanderer?" It doesn't take much for Faolan to spy the human form of the Crescent Circle. "Crom."

"Faolan." The evil dragon returns with a smirk, he'd been a slave of the God Balor. Just by looks alone, Crom stirs Tsunayoshi's memories of Mukuro, what with both having two different colors when it comes to their eyes. Take in the account of mind control and...

"Are you?" He inquires in a mild tone. He doesn't want to dive into Tsunayoshi's memories, not when he's in the company of others.

Crom snorts and turns to face the mountain, not giving his inquiry a reply. Both of them consider Ireland their birth place, but, it's doubtful that Crom has overly fond memories of that country. He'd come here for the sake of memories of a pair of frenemies then out of any true feelings concerning Albion and Ddraig. Their rivalry and the consequences of their fights never fail to bring to mind Kyoya Hibari and Mukuro Rokudo from when he'd been Tsunayoshi.

He doesn't know either of the powerful Emperors personality, Faolan never tried to get to know them as he rather not get pulled into their fights, he wouldn't likely survive the experience, even with his ability to weld Sky Flames. Closing his eyes, he remembers the story concerning Merlin and these two dragons, which causes him to wonder how events will play out in the future? Myths and legends that Tsunayoshi knew of... He's been around to see or hear them play out in this world.

Never mind Tsunayoshi's recollection of historic events, although, Faolan suspect that the dates are subject to changes along with any number of other minor alterations. The rise of the Roman Empire... It's decline... The rise of the power the Christian Pope...

His heart clenches at the thought of the future of the lands that are likely to be known as the Americas along with the fate of the native populations, both of humans and the supernatural beings that live there. Faolan isn't sure what he's going to do about any of it, only he knows he can't live with himself by just being an observer. It's more of figuring out in what way he can try and help, after all, what right does he have to trample on the rights of other, free thinking beings?

Free will... It's something to be valued, it's something that Tsunayoshi was robbed of by a contradictory old man and the man who didn't see his son but a toy to keep his wife entertained while he was away. He's seen enough to know that history won't play out exactly as Tsunayoshi memories show, just that there is a general

out line or guide line that history seems to be following, it's still in the hands of those living it to see it made.

Free will... He wonders if anyone realizes that it is a frail and even when broken, it is never truly gone. There's always choices to be had, it's just that they weren't always the ones that lead to the kind of future the possessor wants. *Sometimes, all you can do is pick the time and place.*

That's what Tsunayoshi did, although it took him a decade to finally figure out his way out of being a Mafia Don. It wasn't a spectacular ending either, but then, if it had then those with good intentions would have found a way to keep the worn Sky alive against his private wishes. Tsunayoshi died without an heir, the ability of which to produce said heir had been robbed from him by an unknowing hitman and who knows the number of Dying Will bullets. He also never got around to looking for one either, after all, the Ninth never bothered to look into his actual family tree for someone closer to home and already aware of that world...

Was that spiteful? Why yes, yes it was. There's a reason why Mukuro and him kept becoming Flame Bonded for short periods of time, it just that it hardly ever stuck due to the Flame Seal and the Flame Filter that Reborn unknowingly installed in those holes he'd made when creating holes in that Flame Seal.

Both of them suffered at the hands of Mafia Dons, both were viewed as things, and both couldn't escape from the Mafia and the criminal underworld, just that the ties binding them were different. *At least there isn't any hint of Flames in this universe, well, besides myself.* Faolan thinks to himself.

And I wasn't suppose to get lost in my own thoughts, damn it. He mentally curses and opens his eyes. Crom stands before him with a slightly raised eyebrow but he doesn't think that the other dragon had spoken to him, not approached him in a threatening manner nor does the manner in which Crom regards him seems overly hostile.

They study each other silently for a bit. Crom's face twists into a wicked expression before musing, "I wonder how they'll reward the so called Three Factions for this little nap-time? They're going to be furious when they finally wake."

"Given they'll likely be rudely awaken..." He trails off, frowning as he considers the matter. "I won't be at all surprised that they'll attack that Pantheon once they recovered from their nap, either together or alone. It'll be a matter of pride." And bruised egos.

"Oh? You so sure about that?" Crom remarks as the evil dragon regards him with a calculating look. "They can easily wake on their own, they are the Heavenly Dragon Emperors after all. They rank just under the Dragon of Dragons and the Dragon God."

"Do you want to make a wager, Crom?" He asks easily, after all, what little back story there is concerning Merlin, he's responsible for discovering the source of why that lord can't build his castle at this location. Which means that, Merlin is the one to play a part in their waking and release from this prison under this mountain. He can *feel* he's right about that.

His confidence must have shown as the black dragon in humanoid form's face goes slightly blank. Faolan is fairly sure that the other's brain is going into over drive, weighing the pros and cons. "And what, pray tell, would we be wagering?"

"Well, that's really up in the air, isn't it? What, exactly, could we want from one another?" He muses and Crom frowns while the head tilts to look at the ground instead of at his face. It seems that Crom is now lost in thought.

He looks over the other dragon's shoulder and regards the mountain once more. It's not like Crom and himself have any songs or stories about their interactions, it's not like he hates Crom for almost killing his great grandfather as the Crescent Circle Dragon hadn't been in control of himself nor did Crom ultimately think that Cabhan was worthy of being killed by him, once he'd been free from that God's

control. Most of their encounters, save for when he arrived to save his ancestor, had been verbal in nature. More a clash of words and exchange of opinions then physical in nature, even though Crom seem to regard him as someone worth getting into a physical fight with.

He's not a dragon that features in myths and legends, the few accounts told are only among the supernatural folk and are hardly exaggerated, if anything, they try to down play him simply because he'd been born human. Only being able to awaken his supernatural potential due to that devil. There's still a lot of different versions of that encounter between himself and that devil, who's name he refuses to learn, but since he never spoke of it and that devil is dead, it's just conjecture these days.

Big surprise that the devils try to portray that one as the victim but it doesn't work. It's likely due to their actions during this war with the God of the Christian and Hebrew and his angels in regards to treatment of humans along with other supernatural beings. Given Lucifer's stance, anyone that isn't either an angel or devil are scum to be trampled on or tricked into being of use. The angels do share that kind of sentiments, only to a far lesser degree while thinking of humans as young children who need a guiding hand.

Shocking how that doesn't win the various factions of said Pantheon any friends or allies, huh? The Biblical Pantheon is often called the Three Factions due to the fact that, some other angels have indulged in a vice or in multiple, which is why they are called fallen angels. The oldest among that third group is Azazel, at least, that's how it seems to be, given that those fallen angels do fall in line with that one's leadership.

Hearing a hum from Crom, his attention shifts back to the dragon who is far more well known in their shared island then he. "How about... a favor, one that can only fall within the realms of possibility of the loser?" Both gold and black eyes glint as they return to staring back into his own.

"That's surprising fair." He admits. "I accept."

"I say they'll free themselves without outside help and you say they'll have outside help." Crom states and he nods. "Then we have an accord."

Early dawn makes itself known and Faolan wonders where the time went, but figures it hardly matters. Crom calls upon his wings, the cloths on the back shifting to make room for them while he calls upon a teleportation circle. He vanishes from the location once Crom takes to the air, arriving at his nearest lair, of which he has three.

One lair is in Ireland, which is where he teleported to, his second is in what will one day be called Japan, and his final one is in an abandoned plane, it once housed a Pantheon but it's long gone without human believers to fuel their existence. He's been working on making it habitable location for baby and preteen dragons, after all, the world is getting to be fairly hostile for his species, never mind that one day, humans will have weapons that can devastate countries, which will be ruinous to the wildlife, upon which the younger members should be feeding off of.

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Faolan doesn't his best to ignore the whelps that seem to have decided his back is a good place to have a play fight upon. He's trying to nap while the whelps are intent on having their fun. *Why on my back? Why not among the field of flowers over there?*

In the end, the whelps seem to stop upon the approaching figure. Lazily opening an eye, he notices the black and blond hair. Letting out a breathy sigh, he raises his head at the approach of the evil dragon.

The whelps slide down his sides and attempt to bury themselves into him. While doubtful that Crom will harm the whelps, he moves his tail, curling it near he can feel the eight whelps while the ninth seems

to decided the safe place was near his front 'paws'. Faolan hadn't seen the black dragon since they made that wager.

"You win." Is said sourly and it's clear the other wasn't pleased with having lost said wager. The whelp that's settled on his 'paws' makes a sound of inquiring, not a loud one, more of a growl honestly.

"I see." The yellow dragon admits simply. "Do I need to collect right now?"

"You want to make me wait?" The other inquires, clearly not liking the idea of this favor being hung over his head, like at all. "How about waiting until I've had a peaceful sleep? These nine seem intent on keeping me from having a sunny nap."

"That sounds like a you problem." There's a bemused smirk as the other glances down at the dragon whelp that's settled on his 'paws'. "You pretty must volunteered to be the ultimate babysitter."

Faolan lets out a breathy sigh, after all, he hadn't thought that the whelps would prefer to hang around him instead of pursuing their independents. The whelps come from different breeds, even one being the daughter of Tiamat, he can't remember which one of the four that is and suspects that's the point. Humming, he gives a calculating look at the currently transformed black dragon, it's not like he has anything he really wants in regards of Crom...

"Well, how about becoming the protector of this realm, how's that for my use of that favor?" He smirks while Crom's face twitches, clearly not use what to make of that. "Keeping watch for intruders... Having to deal with wanna be heroes looking to carve their path to fame in the bodies of young dragons?"

"Your delirious." The Crescent Circle Dragon states in a deadly calm voice. "Clearly sleep deprived if you think to use that as your favor..."

He can't help but chuckle at the clear derision coming from Crom from the very idea of being called upon to join him in being a

babysitter. "Oh, I don't know, maybe you'll come to enjoy it? I mean, there's no humans and plenty of room... I made sure to find and cultivate various plants that a lot of our fellows like..."

"I'm no babysitter." Snaps Crom with a bit more heat and balled fists, both eyes daring him to argue with him. "While true... That doesn't mean it has to be party of your duties. This realm was abandoned, up for grabs when I found it. You never know who else might stumble upon it or what they'd do when they do."

With a look that should be able to kill him, Crom teleports away, a sign that the other would rather not be consider an enabler to his current plan in regards to making a safe haven for baby through preteen dragons. "Now I really want to make it the official favor." He murmurs while the whelp on his 'paws' chirps in a smug way.

A bit after, the other eight dragon whelps get over the visit from Crom and come charging at the little one that's settled on his 'paws'. Soon enough, they are playing by trying to push the others off of his 'paws' while being the only one to remain on him. *So... no nap anytime soon it seems.* Faolan mentally muses, watching the nine play around.

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There are times when he figures he's projecting identities of people Tsunayoshi knew upon people he encounters or knows. Right now, Crom very much reminds him ever more strongly of Mukuro, all that the other needs to complete the resemblance is a personal weapon, a staff or spear, maybe even a halberd? Something along those lines and it would only cement the idea of the evil dragon as Mukuro's reincarnation.

He'd also need to develop a similar laugh, but it's not really needed... Faolan notes as he watches as the black dragon in humanoid form fight in a free for all with the current possessors of the Booster Gear and Divine Dividing. The current owner of the Booster Gear is a half

Chinese woman by the name of Song Meiying and the current owner of the Divine Dividing is a Dutchman by the name of David Gross.

He'd noticed a barrier and decided to investigate it, which is how Faolan arrived to witness Mr Gross join the fight, it seems that it started out with Crom wanting to test Ms Song. It's an odd location for a fight between the two owners of Sacred Gears, given this is India. He's also pretty sure that this area is part of a shrine to one of the native Deities, not that he can figure out which one as he doesn't move closer to said shrine, rather hoping that it'll be left undisturbed but the odds of that happening is pretty much dust in the wind as a blast from Ms Meiying lands near one of the decorated walls and then explodes.

This really isn't my problem. Faolan reminds him as he forces himself to turn his back on the fight. *They're adults, over nineteen years of age. They are not children, even if they are acting like it.*

So, he walks out of the barrier, doing his best to ignore the itch of being responsible for that fight, which he isn't responsible for! The only one among those five he knows personality is Crom Cruach but knows that the evil dragon is merely toying with first Ms Meiying and now Mr Gross. He curses his previous incarnation for how his martyr complex had been nurtured by the Mafia, another leash around the Don-to-be's neck, something to be exploited for the betterment of the Vongola Famiglia.

What happens between those five, two of whom are spectators, not his problem. Neither Mr Gross or Ms Meiying have met him and he doubts they have heard of him. Given how proud people those that generally inherit those two Sacred Gears, the two wouldn't want his aid anyway, resent him at best, swear a vendetta at the worst.

He rather not have another one sworn on him, thank you very much, not when that one devil had found death in the current civil war going on among the Devil Faction. With the death of their primary God, that Pantheon has withdrawn from their epic war, the angels keeping to Heaven and working with the Catholic Church. As for the fallen

angels seem to be doing a lot of random things but then, their leadership had been altered or maybe it's just that without the war going on, those other leaders are able to pursue other agendas?

"Father?" He pauses in his steps and it takes him a few seconds to find the source of that voice. "Arwia?"

There's at least one horn on display along with brown scales under each eye, although the way they are displayed isn't uniform. This is hardly the first time he's been called Father by unrelated young dragons, those nine whelps had been the ones to do so and it seems that the habit has been picked up by those that came after them, even those that weren't of the Western stock. A number of females have laid clutches in that realm he claimed, some leaving once the eggs have hatched while others stick around until their children are teenagers.

Given how times have been turning against dragons, it's not that surprising that some of those mothers end up clutching alone. Generally, if the dragon pair are still together, they generally protect and raise the clutch together, until their children are preteens. Perhaps that's why those that grow up in the realm think of him as their Father, he's the only adult male dragon they are in contact with.

Arwia shifts uncomfortable and it takes him a moment to realize her condition. "The father?" He inquires gently.

"He doesn't know. He can't know." She states, arms moving to cover front.

He steps forward, making gentle soothing sounds, soon enough, she flings herself into him. Arwia's arms hug him and he returns the hug, rubbing her back. "I just wanted... But he couldn't, so I..."

"You don't need to say anything more." He assures her, now isn't the time to press for information about the father. This is about comforting Arwia, who's clearly emotional and barely keeping it together.

It doesn't take long to convince her to spend the rest of the pregnancy back at the realm of her childhood. Arwia refuses to transform out of her human form, convince that it'll cause harm on the child. Faolan doesn't know if she's right but, well, it's not long until Arwia's mother, Tiamat, arrives once he'd gotten her to rest on a conjured bed.

Watching the Dragon King assume the form of a naked human woman isn't something he wanted to see. "My foolish girl... Really? You picked an angel?" The transformed Chaos Karma Dragon murmurs.

Ah, that... explains a few things. "Do I want to know how...? I mean, I doubt the other party fell." Faolan remarks, deciding that he's better off not transforming out of his dragon form.

His elder dragon seems to be rather bemused, it takes his imagination to lead him through a number of options but, well, what he knows about getting pregnant without sex comes from Tsunayoshi's memories. "I never thought they were allowed to masturbate..." It's the most likely way for Arwia to get a sample without crossing a certain line.

"Well, now you know." Tiamat says in a catty fashion. "I'll look after her."

Noting the dismissal for what it is, Faolan does so. After all, Tiamat is also known as the Mother of all Dragons for a reason. It's unlikely she'll allow her daughter to miscarry, it's rare for the Dragon King to have children since the death of her husband. Those few she does have she treasures, it's just that people are idiots and tend to act on possibilities of the future then leaving well enough alone. Far too many target the children of those legends, thinking said children are nothing but future disasters waiting to be unleashed upon the world.

Crom arrives to find him moping before a waterfall. "Tiamat?" The other inquires and he rumbles a positive.

"Arwia's going to have a half-angel child." He states as he turns to regard the black dragon. Crom pauses and blinks a few times, clearly taking time to think on that before snorting.

"I'll be sure to congratulate her on having a grandchild then." The black states while moving fairly close before settling down on the ground next to him. The other gives him a challenging look at invading his personal space so easily and Faolan gives the other a bland look before snorting with a slight shake of his head.

"Don't you want to know who won?" Crom inquires after a period of silence between them. He replies, "I'm going to assume it got interrupted by a... fourth party, I seem to recall an attack ruining part of that shrine."

Crom lets loose a laugh while he watches the other out of the corner of his eye. Few know that they have a friendship of a sort, those aware of Crom almost killing his great grandfather generally think he's holding a grudge and is plotting to kill Crom, all the while Crom finds his murder plot to be far too interesting to feel offended. Only one other knows that Faolan had almost killed the infamous Crescent Circle Dragon on their first meeting and his ancestor never spoke up because nobody would believe him, dismissing it for any number of reasons, after all, for all that he's a dragon, has been for centuries now, the fact he'd been born as a simple human causes derision within the supernatural circles. That his draconic blood had been awaken by an external factor makes him even weaker then if he'd done it on purpose.

It had been pity for the position Crom had been in that kept him from finishing off the slave. With an application of Sky Flame, he lodged the beginnings of a weak spot in that control Balor had over the other dragon. After all, dragons grow powerful with age while the time of the Irish Pantheon was destined to be on the decline, either Crom Cruach will free himself or another will finish the job.

Thoughts of having used his Sky Flame upon Crom causes him to consider a few things in regards to their relationship before deciding

that it hardly mattered as it likely would have come about one way or another as long as he hadn't killed the black dragon that day. It's not as if any of his Sky Flame remains clinging to the other dragon and he's never felt a tug on his Sky Flame while in the other's company either. The evil dragon's positive regard for him is one that Crom nurtured without much influence on his part, after all, the other might have developed a negative impression of him and things might have devolved into a bitter rivalry.

Dragons are generally prideful and possession of plenty of self confidences. Killing an adult dragon is difficult and if they aren't actually dead, it could prove deadly for the children of that wanna be Dragon Slayer. "I don't understand why they keep entitling the possessors the those two Sacred Gears Dragon Emperors." He remarks as the other finishes laughing and seems to be waiting on him to speak.

"It does make them seem more... threatening. More important." Crom notes. "But they only have their sealed abilities to draw from. I have yet to hear about a welder of the Booster Gear in possession of that all consuming fire that Ddraig sealed away."

"Would the welders be immune to that fire though?" The yellow dragon counters. "Other then Ddraig himself, none could survive an encounter with it. It's why the red ended up so focused on Albion, the white was the first beside himself to prove immune to it."

"Same goes for the white's sealed ability." Crom agrees. "Makes you wonder why their souls are still trapped in those gears."

"Forgetfulness? Pride?" He remarks and the black seems to find those worth considering.

"The challenge?" Adds Crom and he adds. "Companionship?"

A few more comments get toss out about the reason for why the pair of Heavenly Emperors haven't escape their current soul containers that's under the Heaven's give-humans-supernatural-weaponry

distribution system. He wishes that the God of Christians and Hebrews hadn't bothered to do so, it only gave humans another thing to bitch about and pretty much baiting the rest of the supernatural world on focusing on those poor souls who are born with said weaponry unknowing about them until somebody catches wind of them possessing one and the person is tossed head first into the supernatural world. Not all of those Scared Gears come with a built in mentor, after all.

As silence descends between them, they both rest their heads on their respective forelimbs. Even though he's relaxing, he doesn't fall asleep. It's sometime later that he realizes that Crom had done just that, much to his bewilderment, after all, Faolan isn't sure it's due to the black's trust in him or if it's to how just how harmless the other regards him to be right then and there.

After a while, he allows himself to fall asleep in turn, deciding to have Crom share in his confusion over why he'd done so.

- } F_o_T { -

Hearing giggling from Arwia's daughter, named Arariel, called Ariel for short, who's rather unique in being an angel and dragon hybrid, he looks up to find that she's gently getting tossed in the air by Crom. Her silver feathered wings flapping uselessly when she's in the air. The girl is only eight and is growing like a weed when compared to those whelps that hatched around the same time she'd been born.

This time, he's actually babysitting as both mother and grandmother wanted to spend time away from this realm. He suspects that Arwia's wanted to spy on Ariel's father while Tiamat wanted to find a mortal to share a bed with. They've been gone for a month already, he suspects that they'll be gone for another two before returning.

He must have become rather absorbed with his transcribing of an abandoned divine magic system. He's unsure as to why it had been abandoned but he has theories like the Pantheon likely faded or that

the believers switch to a different one, likely reassigning certain Deities to fit with it. Only reason Faolan decided to examine it in more depth has to due with having run out of other abandon realms to gently pull into merging with this one, expanding the size and resources, in both number and quality.

"Crom." He states in greeting once the pair walk in his direction. The sight of Ariel being on Crom's humanoid shoulders is kind of odd, honestly, like there's something he's either missing or that the other is trying to provoke him in some way.

"Faolan." The black dragon returns, there's something about that smirk that makes him want to frown in thought but figures he's projecting memories of Mukuro onto Crom again. "Anything important?" The other's eyes flicker down at the leather bound journal that he'd been writing in.

"Not really. Just documenting an abandoned divine magic system." He admits, watching as Ariel slides down Crom's back upon him coming to sit not that far from his right.

Ariel is quick to fetch the stuffed canine he made for her, he can't really tell what he'd been trying for when making it, it could have been a wolf or a fox, but it doesn't have the socks that a fox has while the head sports ears too large. She returns and settles on his lap with the stuff toy clutched to her chest, her wings wrapping forward as he puts an arm to help steady her. All the while, the two adult dragons are content to let silence hang between them.

There's something different concerning the black dragon. He concludes as Ariel settles a bit more comfortably against his body, her head tipping forward onto her chest. "You seem to be in quiet the mood today."

"Oh? What gave me away?" There's a certain glint in the other's eyes.

He raises an eyebrow, the manner is rather... With a slight press of his lips, he calls upon his Sky Flame and takes in his environment. He stiffens as he feels something he only knows from Tsunayoshi's memories.

It's Crom's turn to rise an eyebrow while Mist Flames slowly float closer to him. Feeling Ariel react to his body's reaction, he does his best to relax his muscles even as the Mist Flame brushes up against his receptive Sky Flame. A look of surprise flash across the other's face and it almost seems like someone what's to let out a chuckle while the Mist Flame slowly and gently weaves into his Sky Flame, which is a very strange sensation, particularly given how he'd been studying his environment with said Flame.

"Mukuro." Faolan whispers and that does cause a familiar laugh to come from the black dragon. "Tsuna." The other purrs out a few seconds later, after giving that oh so familiar laugh.

"What happened?" He asks softly, he knows how it happened for him and he wouldn't want anyone else to go through it. It's so odd, feeling how his Sky Flame and the Mist Flame just seem to... settle, like it's only natural for them to forever be intermingled. *Like it should have done during that life...*

"Might have went back to pick a fight with a certain Hindu Deity." Crom doles out. "Might have almost had my soul ripped out of my body."

"I see." And he kind of does. "Got a bit of my soul torn out by a devil looking to blood his sword."

"Oh? Is that the reason you killed that one? I don't seem to recall what became of that sword..." Remarks Crom, who's likely more Mukuro then his current incarnation.

He's been through that, he's confident that Crom will come to terms with access with both, memories of a previous incarnation and Mist Flames. "Melted it using my Sky Flame after I killed the guy." The

story about what happened in that brothel is old news, although few likely knew the bit about a portion of his soul having been stolen and stored in that sword. Few understood why he named that one a thief, after all, that sword had been commissioned, some had wondered if he'd been implying about the blood that got soaked on it.

Either way, it hardly matters and he rather not someone try to replicate what might have been an accident within the enchantment upon said sword. It's fairly satisfying that few ever gave the sword a thought. For the best.

"So, you've recalled being the Tenth Don since our very first meeting..." Crom muses and he merely inclines his head slightly. "To possess Sky Flames even then..."

"I did use a bit to wedge a crack into Balor's control over you." Faolan admits. "I don't possess the same degree of intuition from when I was Tsunayoshi and I've never found myself in a situation that I didn't want to be in either."

Hyper Intuition... It was something tied into Giotto's bloodline, part of an agreement when the man had been gifted the rings likely, and it wouldn't surprise him that it wasn't geared to helping the welder but on the benefiting that curse filled system that the Vongola Rings were one of third of. Not that he remembers its name, after all, he's really not suppose to remember who he once was so the fact that there are some details like names or dates concerning special events escape him is natural and to be expected.

"But..." Trails off Crom and he snorts while looking away from the other. "For some centuries, I've been drawing a lot of conclusion between Mukuro Rokudo and Crom Cruach, mostly due to the eyes and when it comes to both having grown up in an environment that controlled them in some way." He admits after a bit.

"I would like to point out that I also drew parallels concerning the relationship between Albion and Ddraig with Kyoya and Mukuro." He adds as he notices the smug smirk on Crom when he returns to

looking at the other's face. "So, don't think I have some sixth sense about realizing if Mukuro was your previous incarnation, Crom. Or that I can find Kyoya Hibari's current incarnation for you to troll."

A familiar chuckle erupts from Crom but the other seems to be pleased, regardless of what he said. "Oh, I don't know, after all, dear Nagi~ Or should I say, Chrome darling has already found her way to you... to us." Crom states and deliberately lowers his gaze onto Ariel, who's fast asleep in his arms and on his lap.

He finds himself stiffening as he recalls how two weeks ago, Ariel had collapse while running a fever. There had been a lot of whimpering and non-sense spoken but he wrote that off as her being feverish. There had been an odd pressure in the air and the smell of water but, given who her grandmother was, put it down as Ariel inheriting Tiamat's connection to water.

They could have been twins... Faolan thinks to himself as he recalls the closeness between Chrome and Mukuro. There had been a bond between the two Mists, one that lead to Mukuro saving her life while allowing Mukuro some sense of freedom while his body had been imprisoned.

"Two weeks ago..." He trails off as he looks down at the child, his mind trying to wrap itself around this turn of events. "You two renewed your connection."

After all, it's not like Crom has ever shown any interest concerning Ariel nor in Arwia herself. In fact, he hadn't seen Crom since that encounter at the waterfall, when Arwia had arrived in the realm and he'd been dismissed from her side by Tiamat herself. He still recalls the closeness the black dragon had shown that time, too.

"Well, here's hoping it's just the pair of you then." He decides. "I am not Tsunayoshi, after all. I am Faolan O Hicidhe, great grandson of the Green Dragon, Cabhan."

Channeling the Mist he'd been in a past life, Crom Cruach give him a smirk, saying, "Who knows, my Sky, who knows..." Then he gives that familiar chuckle while the yellow dragon gives him a flat, unamused look.

"So... Are there any truth to the rumors of you being the Yellow Emperor from Chinese Legends? The Emperor who ascended into a dragon?" The other asks after nearly an hour of silence.

To be continued . . .

Reincarnation it is then!: DxD

I don't own Kateyou Hitman Reborn or High School DxD!

For as long as he can remember, Issei felt this feeling of being trapped. That something is smothering him, pressing on him, trying to steer him into behaving in a certain fashion. It only got worse when he became an adolescent, when he experienced what most boys on the way of becoming men find waking up on morning.

From there, he began to experience black outs at times and returning to himself only when he's on the receiving end of a furious girls beating on him for being perverted. Fear gripped him when he realized that those black outs were happening for longer periods of time, he didn't know what's going on with him and then he'd been out of it for a total of three days... The sight of those magazines that he didn't recall buying.

Issei broke down into hysterics that devolved into sobs, he didn't know what's happening to him. It was like he's getting replaced within his own skin and he's unable to defend himself! Give him a name! A face! Just... give him some reason why?!

What did he ever do to deserve this?! Why him?! Was this karma from some previous life?!

Waking to the sight of a spear of light coming at him, Issei feels his rage boil within. "I won't... I Won't Die Here! Not like this!" Issei bellows both in his mind and out loud.

He punches the spear before it lands, his fist ablaze in purple fire with hints of green. Issei finds himself feeling... lighter then he's ever felt before as he stares at the left fist, watching as black bindings get devoured by the flame. Once gone, his hand and upper arm are

transformed, a green gemstone with crimson red with dull gold spines.

His heart is pounding in his chest as it feels like more bindings snap, falling away. It's like he can finally experience the world, like something had been filtering the world through something, muffling it. It's the sound that really causes him to snap his gaze at the woman sporting black wings and leaving barely anything to the imagination.

Watching her summon more of those spears causes him to narrow his eyes, this... this... Fake Carnivore DARES?! It's child's play to dodge the incoming spears even with a surge of memories threatening to pull him under. "Fake Carnivore! For the crime of attempted murder! You! Shall! Be! Bitten! To! Death!" He bellows as he leaps right at her, his whole body is now cloaked in that purple flame with hints of green and now indigo.

His left fist lands in her stomach while his right upon her jaw. Before he knows it, he's clutching a pair of tonfas in both hands and he's using them to Bite this fake carnivore to Death! Even upon the ground, the winged fake carnivore takes a lot of damage and has yet to go unconscious.

When the final Cloud empowered blow slams upon the forehead, Issei finds himself unable to remain conscious. As he faints upon the ground, the tonfas vanish in a burst of Mist Flames while the crimson gantlet vanishes from his left arm. Memories of one Hibari Kyoya pull him under and Issei is more then happy to fall under their sway, after all, he might just find the answers he's been praying for.

- } F_o_T { -

Coming too, Issei isn't sure what to make of his situation concerning recalling a past life. Then again, he's got a situation to deal with right now. After all, he'd been in a park when he passed out, having been overwhelmed with the memories that came along with his Dying Will Flames.

And so, calling upon his memories from having been Kyoya, the proud Demon Prefect of Namimori and former official Cloud Guardian of the Tenth Don of the Vongola Famiglia, the teen takes stock of his situation. He begins with listening, slowly doing his best to guess what each sound is before cracking open an eye, taking in the sights. Mentally taking in what he sees, he begins to form a picture about the person who stumbled upon him and took him from the park.

Most of the decor is Western and very expensive, given who Kyoya had ended up working for... With, yea, with... Issei can tell just by looks of the it that they have money, old money at that. A touch of Cloud Flame to enhance his hearing and he catches a muffled conversation going on in another room. Feeling secure for the moment, he sits up and takes stock of his body, besides a touch sore on his chest, which is odd, after all, he hadn't been hit at all, he's fine.

Memories of how fit Kyoya's body had been at this age flickers through his mind and Issei begins to remind himself that he's not the feared head of the disciplinary committee and later appointed Cloud Guardian of a Mafia Don. *And that's fine, after all, I'm fine with being Issei.* He assures himself, it's all he ever wanted to be once those black outs started after all.

It's not like he'd had a chance to *be* Hyoudou Issei, not when those bindings had been on him, restraining him. So, he gets off the bed and begins to take stock of what he can find within the various drawers and testing the window. Focusing on his current situation, reminding himself that he can have an identity crisis when he's in the safety of his room.

The window seems to be an illusion or it's sealed through some unknown means, so he returns to finding something, anything, as a weapon. After all, he's still feeling kind of drained from causing a previous incarnation's memories to wake along with that incarnation's ability to use Dying Will Flames. So yea, he should

have concluded he wouldn't find anything of use and that they'd return before he figured out how to escape.

Staring at the red head and beyond her, one with black hair. Both of them seem familiar but his mind is blanking on their names. All three of them seem to be studying each other, surprise giving way to unease on his part while the two young women seem to become cautious, yet there's hints of aggression. Aggression that likely comes from them feeling like they have some upper hand, which, hey, he's only just survived a murder attempt, thank you very much.

He might be weaker then his previous incarnation that he now recalls fairly clearly, but he now has access to not just Cloud Flames but also Lightning and Mist, although the Lightning is the odd one... Issei pushes that trail of thought away. Now is not the time to ponder why he'd possessed Cloud and Lightning Flames before his memories as Kyoya finally pushed through, adding Mist to the mix.

"Hyoudou-kun, your awake." The black haired young woman states the obvious in a coying tone that he's not sure how to react to. "My, my, are you looking for a souvenir already?"

While he does react by stiffening, his mind gets thrown for a few seconds before it races as he moves away from the dresser he'd been searching through. Yes, he'd found cloths, cloths of the feminine persuasion but he'd had no inclination of taking any of it. There's anger curling within him midsection at the reminder of those previous times of coming to when getting beaten up for peeping on the gentler gender, of actions he never recalls doing and yet, that budding personality must have.

Reigning himself in, Issei draws on his Mist Flame, Kyoya might have hated having it as a secondary but he might as well use it here, to cause misdirection in the conversation, to get information that the pair likely won't give if not for an external force. Let's see find out just what it is they want from me.

=] C_o_V_P [=

For some reason, Faolan finds himself accompanying Crom to Kuoh Town in checking a rumor concerning a dragon egg having been transported there. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Crom knows it's getting transported there viva him keeping track of Rizevim Lucifer and his group bend on flooding the world with evil dragons in fulfilling the Khaos Brigade's mandate of causing wide spread war among the Supernatural World. The idiot offended the black dragon by simply appealing to the fact that he's an evil dragon, thus, Crom should be interested in doing meaningless, petty evil on a world wide scale.

Yea, the idiot didn't get that Crom preferred to do unspeakable evil on a select few who have wronged him deeply, so deeply that he didn't want them just dead but ruined in every way that matters before granting them the mercy that death would be by that point. *The Crescent Circle Dragon would like the world at large to acknowledge he has this thing called standards.* He muses to himself with a slight bemused smile on his face.

Yet, within being in Kuoh Town, someone has laid claim to it. Oh, he's heard that the younger sisters of two of the current four leaders of the devils are in residence and are co-owners, but it seems that someone with Dying Will Flames is challenging their claim, not that the pair are even aware of that fact. "Cloud with Lightning and Mist." He murmurs after examining the nearest 'spray' point and turning his Sky Flame into a receiver, in his previous life, most used their Flames in a sonar like fashion when it came to examining the areas, Tsunayoshi had picked up that habit but he'd already been bred with a natural inclination of being a receiver of environmental signals commonly known as Hyper Intuition.

"Cloud and Mist..." He hears Crom muse over and that combination was familiar, after all, they both knew the same Demon Prefect once upon a time. His thoughts circle around that combination as he returns his Sky Flame to it's usual passive state, he rather not attract the owner of those Flames, he wasn't here for that right now. *Once*

the egg is safe, then we can investigate who it is that remembers their previous life. Faolan thinks to himself.

"Human." Crom tosses out and he replies, "Dragon Sacred Gear welder."

"Hmm, damn, you're likely right." The black states with a slight sigh. "How about... which one?" He suggests.

"Can't be Albion." Crom states and that's pretty obvious, given that the current welder of the Divine Dividing is known to the Supernatural World, well, for the most part. "You want the Booster Gear? I'm incline to go with one of Vritra's Sacred Gears." He recalls Kyoya's personality and how reckless the Cloud had been.

Crom chuckles before countering, "How about I bet on one of Vritra's and you take the Booster Gear? I remember him just as well as you do."

He sighs, but gives the other a nod, after all, it's kind of trying always winning these little bets between them. "Sounds fair." With that, their minor bet is sealed and they move on from the lamp post.

They both attract attention from the residences, from the women due to their respective looks and from the men due to the fact that they are attracting the attention of the women, although a few seem to be of that orientation themselves. It's not like they are wearing anything expensive, both of them avoid business suits and stupidly expensive brand names like its the plague and for the same reasons, more then likely as well. That also included rings and metal chain necklaces, well, pretty much anything that reminded them of their previous incarnation's time belonging to a Mafia Famiglia it comes to cloths and accessories.

They're dragons, when all is said and done, they really didn't care about what's trendy among the current era, although a lot of it was familiar in the end. For all that this world seemed to be guided along similar paths as that old world that the recall from their previous

incarnations, it doesn't mean he's incapable in affect history. Like he'd noticed centuries ago, some minor details are different but over all, the same major points in history happen. Which made it some what easier to work around those seemingly fated points, like, having a number of unknown cities or tribes vanishing either before they encounter Europeans or after a brief encounter with them. There's plenty of cause to write off those cities and tribes, first being discounted as stories and the other by introduced diseases or territorial pushes from neighboring tribes.

"Is it here yet?" He inquires as they wander the town. "Hm... The Territory is interfering with the trace I placed on it."

"Which means that it's been found by him." He realizes and the black dragon doesn't discount his use of gender, after all, both of them have already come to the same conclusion when it comes to the previous life that's been recalled. It's a question about how alike the current incarnation is to the one who served as the Tenth Don's Cloud Guardian.

With a soft sigh, Faolan takes a few minutes to use his a hybrid spell between his magic and Sky Flame to pick out which part of the town seems to possess the highest concentration of Flames hanging around. That's the property of Mist Flame or more like an after effect, it's capacity to hang around instead of dispersing away. It's likely why the indigo colored Flame was ever given the name Mist in the first place, it's so much like the weather it's named off of. Besides Sky Flames, it's the next one to leave enduring traces of itself after it's been used.

"The Cloud attends that academy that's in the devil's pocket but I have pin point two other locations, one seems to be a training area and the other his residence." He informs Crom. They could split up to check out the two spots or they can remain together.

"Residence." Crom states after a bit, just like him, weighing the pros and cons of their opinions. "Likely living with his parents, could get in easier through them."

With a slight hum, he takes the lead and it takes time to get to said home. What they're doing is fairly rude but they rather not alert either the local devils or the agents of that Qlippoth subgroup. Never mind agents from the Japanese Pantheon and from the other two factions of the Biblical's Three Factions. Not only do they arrive at there but the egg is most definitely here as well.

It's now just a question of how to go about their approach, after all, it's fairly late, what with it being pass ten pm local time. The odds are high that there's going to be a fight of some kind, they notice the watchers but due to their use of Flames haven't been noticed by those watchers. "It's safe enough." He decides because, ultimately, it's because of his desire to ensure the egg's safety that they were here in the first place.

With ease, both of them set up their own alarming spells, after all, it's unlikely they won't be back in the future and they won't always be together. With that, they head for a decent hotel, he's the one to be seen renting the room that they'll share. Once within the room, they secure it through only Flames before they both transform into miniature versions of their dragon forms, which are about the size of the average house cat, which gives them both enough space on the bed to sleep upon.

=] C_o_V_P [=

There's something different about this day compared to the day before. Its a feeling that takes Issei a while to recognize within himself while he's going over the protections upon the dragon egg that he'd wrestled out from under the two devil heiresses so called secure location and protection. If the two haven't realized they're looking after a fake, that's not his problem.

"Issei... Be careful." Ddraig advises as he leaves his room, he's got school today and neither of his parents want to miss out on it. It's aggravating, attending that school.

"You don't have to tell me that... I can tell that something's changed." He mentally sends to the ancient dragon that's kind of forced into haunting that gauntlet that's located on his left arm.

It's not until he's out the door that Ddraig lets out a long, drawn out sigh. By the time he's a block away, he gets fed up and inquires, "You have an idea about what's different. Mind sharing it?"

"Crom Cruach paid a visit last night, near as I can tell." The crimson dragon states. **"Either there's a tag a long or he'd been followed here. Whoever they'd been, also set up alert spells."**

He mentally repeats the name as he does his best to recall what research he did concerning dragons mentioned in myths and legend. *"Irish... He is or was, big in Ireland, right?"* The few images that he'd seen had the dragon more akin to a Eastern dragon, a serpentine body and without any limbs. *"Wyrm, right?"*

"Oh, if only... No, he's a 'proper' black Western dragon. Crescent Circle Dragon is a common title for him and he's a former slave to Balor, who was an evil god." Explains Ddraig. **"There was an encounter between him and a previous holder, which got interrupted by the white bastard's own welder and a bit later by a Hindu God, don't recall which, it happened too fast honestly but did end the fight."**

Another dragon in Kuoh Town... It's like he can't catch a break, like, at all. Issei would wonder what it was he did in a previous life that caused so much karma to be dumping upon his head only, he knows, doesn't he? *Kyoya...*

Oh, it's one thing to blame Tsuna about some of his previous incarnation's troubles but Kyoya would have run into trouble one way or another from how Issei recounts from Kyoya's memories. The Cloud had been so... so... unbending in so many ways and to an unreasonable extent as well. He's more of a people person then his previous incarnation, after all, and that's how reincarnation is suppose to work, too.

He's not going to be the second coming of the Demon Prefect of Namimori, he honestly doesn't want to be either. There's something lonely about how Kyoya had lived his life and recalls how clearly the Cloud was never fully satisfied. For all that Kyoya was suppose to be Tsuna's Cloud Guardian, there never seemed to be a connection between them, at times, Issei wonders if Kyoya hadn't been somehow tricked into the position... But that's hard to swallow, given his intimate knowledge of Kyoya's personality and how contrary the other had a tendency to behave when pressed in a situation.

The day is fairly normal, Asia is as bubbly as ever and still human. Which is rather important as Rais had extended an offer to join her peerage to the former Holy Maiden and the younger teen has trouble saying no. He's not sure who's living within Kuoh Town that's connected to the Grigori, only there is and whoever they are, is with whom Asia is living with as she seemed intent on attending Kuoh Academy along side him, to keep him from falling back into the clutches of lust.

Even now, people don't fully trust his supposed turning of a new leaf. He has long since vowed to kill the party who put those mental bindings on him, no mercy, straight decapitation with a dull edge weapon, might be Enchanted to ensure that the pain they feel as that dull edge goes through their neck is felt in triplicate before death takes them. He doesn't care if it starts a war or the political implications, they crossed a line that should never, ever, should be crossed and if people want to defend their actions, then onto the chopping block they go, too.

Wrenching himself mentally from the promise of messy deaths, he checks his phone's map. It's then that he feels his eyebrow rise up at the sight of indigo and orange upon the map. "I'm not alone..." He murmurs out loud, a touch of disbelief while relief also floods through him.

Mist and Sky... There's other Dying Will Flame users, which means that maybe, just maybe, there is a secret society of Flame users. In

the end, he closes the map app on his phone as it's getting close to the end of lunch.

He can't wait for school to end so he can track down the pair.

=] C_o_V_P [=

It's been a while since Vali visited Kuoh Town, not since that issue concerning the Excalibur Sword Fragments which resulted in the capture of Kokabiel and his accomplices. It had also been his first encounter with the current Red Dragon Emperor, Issei Hyoudou. Even he found it hard to explain where those chains came from, after all, the teen in question shouldn't be capable of such a high tier magic in the short time he's became aware of the Supernatural side of the world.

He's sure that it's just a trick of the light that he thought he saw an indigo flare up before those chains appeared. *If so, then how did it even connect with Conjuring those chains? That's not how Elemental Magic works.* Vali thinks as he wanders around listlessly through the street where most of the restaurants are.

It's through a window of a cafe that he spies the pair, they are both sitting across from one another, with one keeping his hood up to hide his ears. It takes a second to realizes that he recognizes the two of them and he finds himself both curious as to why the two dragons are here and excited at the idea of why they are here, after all, he's heard about Crom Cruach and the fight in India from Albion. Given what he knows his grandfather is up to, perhaps the Crescent Circle Dragon is here for that?

His gaze goes to the blond that's sitting across from Crom, he's only seen portraits of Faolan and Albion doesn't know much about the so called Realm Wanderer. Most of what he knows comes from accounts from devils, which makes sense as the devils are more interested in the yellow dragon, well, more interested in a sword that is rumored to be in the yellow dragon's horde, which is called Discord Striker. It's said that a cut from said sword could mess with

not just the wounded being's magic but also body. Nobody knows how it was that the sword got its Enchantment to cause havoc so easily as the sword's creation process was fairly standard for an Enchanted blade at the time.

It takes him seconds to slip somewhere he can hide to wait for them to leave the cafe. So, as he hides in the shadows, he mentally reviews reasons for why the Crescent Circle Dragon would bring the yellow dragon. Another train of thought is that the yellow dragon trailed after the black dragon as well. It's hard to say what kind of relationship the pair ultimately have, some say the two are lovers while most believe that the black has this plan revolving the yellow with the ultimate end game being killing the other in the most horrendous fashion. What history there is between the two, it began concerning the yellow's grandfather, a green dragon, it's said that Balor wanted said green dragon dead only for the yellow to intervene and, well, the black spared the green's life because of the yellow.

None know what bargain the yellow offered to the black, hence why it's hard to rule out the lover angle of their relationship. The idea of two male dragon doing that... Well, with Balor out of the picture, there's just the two to question really. After all, none really believe the account of said blood relative claiming that the yellow won against the black. The green dragon clearly just trying to puff up his reputation with that claim, that a member of his family was capable of not just matching the Dark Dragon of the Crescent Moon, particularly a dragon who started out as human who's only claim to the supernatural was through said green dragon.

He's not sure when he became so wrapped up in his own thoughts that when the two finally do leave, for a second, there is another pair of adults standing in the place of the two dragons. One is a adult sporting a pineapple hair style that glints blue while wearing an expensive business suit, for some reason, he gave said individual a trident that's casually resting on the shoulder, it's gently tapping on said shoulder as the man walks. The eyes... one red and the other is

a shade of blue. This image is super imposed upon Crom Cruach's form.

On the blond though, it's a short brunette with spiked up hair that's defying gravity. Another expensive business suit and there's odd gloves, almost gauntlet like, on the hands that sport a large gem. The eyes for a second are hazel brown and then the next, they are a burnt orange.

Everything seems to freeze, his heart clenches at the vision of the super imposed forms in place of the blond and blue eyed Irish man that is the yellow dragon's human form and the dual color haired with gold and black eyes of Crom Cruach's almost human form. There's a haze of purple, indigo, and green about his vision and as he rubs his eyes, it fades along with the pair of images. Time unfreezes and the pair of dragons turn to join the crowds on the streets.

He can't take his eyes off of the yellow dragon as his emotions are all over the place all of a sudden. Vali wants to catch up to the yellow, place a hand on the shoulder, get the other to stop walking away, to turn to look at him so he can... *So I can what? Apologize? What do I have to apologize for?* The half-devil wonders as he clenches his fist.

Envy surges and he finds himself glaring daggers at the black dragon's back. Why he's envious, he doesn't know, only that he is so overwhelmingly envious of the evil dragon all of a sudden. It doesn't make any sense as to why though. After all, this is the first time he's seen the two in real life.

He's left shaken, disjointed mentally, and feeling so many emotions that it's like he's getting tossed around in an ocean during a storm or he's being left out in the rain while everyone else is inside of the house. Vali Lucifer is at a loss of what's going on, it's worst then those two nights after witnessing the Red Dragon Emperor Conjuring those chains. Those unremembered dreams that left echos of emotions that he didn't fully know the reason behind.

=] C_o_V_P [=

It's not long after he's changing out of his school uniform that the door bell rings. Issei hears his mother answer the door as he hurries to finish changing as a pair of supernatural beings enter into his home. He manages to reach the stairs just as his mother is giving the pair, a blond, blue eyed stranger and a dual hair color sporting two different colors for eyes permission to go up them.

"Crom Cruach." Ddraig comments, the dragon within the Booster Gear is awake now it seems. *"Which one?"* He inquires as the two seem to study him in turn.

"The one with two colors for hair and eyes." Replies the ancient Dragon Emperor. **"I guess the other with blond is likely Faolan, he's a dragon of interest to devils. Something about killed a devil over a sword, I think? Claimed the devil was a thief before killing him."**

Over a sword? Must have been some sword. He thinks to himself, but then, if the sword had originally been Faolan's, it's seems likely. "Hello." He greets the pair and watches as the two share a Look of some sort.

"Greetings, I'm O Hicidhe Faolan and this is Cruach Crom. We're here to speak with you about a plaster replicated egg that came into your possession? It's this wide and this long." Said dragon gives the size of the dragon egg that he claimed.

"Right, the replicated egg... Ah, why? Why are you interested in it?" He inquires, he knows someone wanted it and he's unsure as to why though.

"We want to check to see if there a treasure hidden within it and if so, we wish to ensure it's place in a safe and secure location, even if we can't return it to its original owner." Explains the current blond dragon in a honest tone. He blinks as he's torn between leading the pair to it to lying about no longer having it.

A second later, he decides to check the two over with his Flame, as his Flame touches both, his eyes widen at the fact that both of them are the Flame users his map showed him earlier. The Sky is the blond and the Mist is the black dragon, the evil dragon. The two were also Flame Bonded, it's clear that Crom Cruach is Faolan's Mist Guardian, not just a Mist that calls the Sky home but the actual position that denotes that the Mist is an active Protector of this Sky. Which puts a new spin on why the two adult dragons seem to be comfortable in each other's company.

The pair seem to sport looks of bemusement and he hurries to withdraw his Flame from the two. "You can check to see if it has the treasure, I guess." Doing his best to ignore the fact that there doesn't seem to be any other Flame Bonds between the Sky and other Flame users or how familiar the two Flames seem to be.

This new bit of information does change things, though. After all, Dying Will Flames were meant to be for humans, right? *What were two dragons doing with them? Weren't dragons overpowered enough as it was?* Issei wonders to himself.

Then again, I have a dragon based Sacred Gear... He mentally admits to himself as he leads the two into his room, Faolan moves to sit down next to the nest of blankets that have been Enchanted viva his Mist to hold at a comfortable and healthy temperature for the egg. Issei notices that Crom is drifting around the room, studying the walls, which causes his heckles to rise and he manages to bite back a sniping comment concerning the other's current appearance, after all, the hood is still kind of up, covering part of Crom's head.

"Crom... Stop teasing him." Faolan calls out as he struggles to keep himself from sniping at the black dragon. Crom lets out a dramatic sigh but instead of walking to Faolan's side, moves to the door, taking up position by leaning against the door frame.

For some reason, he can't help but think he hears a comment from the black dragon. Something along the lines of 'But he makes it so

easy.' Yet Crom hasn't said a word, in fact, the only one who's spoken at all between the pair is the Sky.

"So... Flames?" He finally comments and he feels both eyes of the two dragons on him while he's looking at the dragon egg. "You have them too." It's not a question, he didn't mean it to be one at least.

"I woke mine during my teens, the reason for it waking has to do with a devil forcing my draconic heritage to wake up." Faolan admits. "Not sure if Ddraig mentioned anything about me or about what I did to said devil."

"It was the devil you killed who cause you to start on converting?" Ddraig inquires. **"Then why did you kill him?"**

"I killed him because he stole more then just some blood and almost ended my life. He tore a bit of my own soul out and it got stuck in that sword of his." The voice is rather cold and there's a seriously icy calm look in those blue eyes. "He should be happy I killed him so quickly when I found him, given what he stole."

"Who..." He trails off and the eyes soften while a tired sigh escapes. "Sawada Tsunayoshi."

His everything tenses up and he can feel Crom's eyes go into predatory mode. Issei finds it hard to breath for a few seconds as he tries to absorb that revelation. "And I, recall being Rokudo Mukuro." Crom states just as he manages to breath.

Ok, he's not sure when he spun around to face the black dragon, nor does he recall when he gripped the front of Crom's cloths, glaring at the Mist's face, who seems to sport a knowing look in his two colored eyes. "Good to see you too... Kyoya." Remarks Crom.

Then there's something soothing him and it feels like he's once more in control over his emotions. Letting go of the front of Crom's cloths, he wants to apologize only his mouth doesn't obey. It seems that

he's not fully himself if he can't find it in him to speak such words to Crom.

"You three have history together?" Ddraig inquires politely. "From our previous incarnations? Yea." Faolan admits.

He isn't sure what to make of Faolan, there's just... Tsuna has always been a mix issue for Kyoya, particularly as details about why the Sky died were brought to light and the following collapse of not just the Famiglia but also the Tri-Ni-Sette as it turns out, Tsuna's Sky Flame hadn't been able to be recorded within it due to the Seal and then there's the fact that the Sky never named anyone his Heir. One bitter realization had been that the Sky never recovered from having been Sealed so young, never could recover, he should say, as they found the Flame Seal still holding on even a week after the Don's death.

The fact that Reborn hadn't destroyed the Flame Seal like they all believed and then there was evidence of something even covering those holes within the Seal, not long after those holes getting created... Well, it explained a lot, in the end, concerning the lack of Flame Bonding between Tsuna and the rest of the Tenth Generation along with why Tsuna began to 'dim'. It was enough for Dino to under go a Flame examination and low and behold, it seems that there was evidence of something similar within Dino's Flame and patchy remains of a Seal.

And thus did Sun Flames went on record as another Flame capable of causing brainwashing or installing condition behavior into another person. The first, of course, being Mist, second Sky, and third had been Rain. Not that it ultimately mattered, given the Tri-Ni-Sette self destructing and then the literal flood of Dying Will Flame that came six months after that fact. It wasn't just Dying Will of the Sky Flames that got woke in civilians, as it was, for every civilian that woke to the Sky Flame Set, three woke to the Earth Flame Set.

For ten years, the world was a chaotic place and yet, contrary to everything they've been told, life didn't end nor did Dying Will Flames

vanish. It took them a few years afterward to also realize it wasn't just humans that can use Dying Will Flames but also animals, not every animal but enough could. The world entered into a new era and Dying Will Flames were never again just something that exist among criminals but by everyone.

Kyoya had hated the chaos following the destruction of the Tri-Ni-Sette while Issei can review that time and note that the Tri-Ni-Sette's actual purpose wasn't what Kawahira said it was or what the True Earthling thought it did. In fact, given what happened after its destruction, it was more of a selection system of deciding who should possess Dying Will Flames, after all, a number of those who once used said Flames couldn't during those six months while others found it easier to use in fact, he recalls how more mellow Kyoya felt when using both of his Flames, how less irritated the Cloud had been towards most of the other Guardians and hadn't felt overly crowded when he'd been in a room full of people that he knew.

Hayato lost his split of Sky Flames but woke as a Swamp Flame user once the Flame Flood started. Issei recalls. A number of individuals had that happen, not all of them but enough of them to make one wonder if that wasn't another one of the Tri-Ni-Sette's purposes, the blocking of Earth Flame Set along with the selection of who should be allow to access the Sky Flame Set.

All of that wouldn't have happened if Tsuna had picked an heir upon learning he couldn't have kids, started training said heir to pick up the Vongola Rings when he died, it's doubtful that anyone would have let Tsuna retire when he hadn't even been Don for very long, he'd been more like twenty when the Ninth finally passed along the reigns of the Famiglia after all. Is it any wonder that things could have gone a different route if Tsuna had decided to not decide to fuck his responsibility in that respect? In was pretty clear that it had been spite that kept Tsuna from doing the proper thing upon learning about his upcoming death, a big 'fuck you' to the Vongola Famiglia in particular.

Memories of all the times Tsuna saying he didn't want to be a Mafia Don play out in his mind as he turns to regard the dragon egg. It's clear that, in the end, Tsunayoshi found a way to make his true wishes felt. It's something that Kyoya had found able to respect, the blame for putting the former civilian on that path to becoming a Mafia Don hadn't cared at all about the young Sky, not really or the Ninth would have had Tsuna brought to Italy to remove said Flame Seal or found an other excuse to visit the Sawada household to remove it along with hiring actual tutors instead of a hitman who did extra tutoring lessons while Dino was attending that Mafia School.

"I think I'm going to lay down." He murmurs. He feels exhausted just thinking on such things, so much so that he's pretty sure he's not sure if he's standing level any more.

"You want to come see where the egg is going to end up? Or should we just leave right now with it?" Inquires Faolan and he pauses as he sits on the bed.

He blinks, Issei would like to see it, if only to assure himself that the egg is in a safe place but there's the matter of does he trust either of them? Just because they all remember a previous incarnation and weld the same power set doesn't mean they are trust worthy.
"Where are you planning to take the egg?" Ddraig asks in his stead.

"The Nesting Realm." Pipes in Crom. "Faolan's merged a number of abandoned realms together, a great many of them had been divine once upon a time when he create it. It's secure enough that Tiamat entrusted a whelp to grow up there."

"Oh? Ho! You must be rather powerful to do that." Ddraig remarks while he snorts automatically, after all, Sky Flames had been called Spirit Glue once.

"I'm a Sky, Ddraig. It was just a matter of finding the frequency needed to pull those former Pantheons into my own." Comments Faolan in a somewhat dry and droll tone.

"So... Are the two of you actually lovers?" Ddraig inquires upon Crom's soft snort upon Faolan saying that. And now he's got them both staring at him, one giving him a look of bewilderment and the other frank look of disbelief.

"The fuck? Why would you ask that?!" He hisses at the original Red Dragon Emperor.

"They think..." "People are spreading..." The two dragon trail off with Faolan shaking his head in disbelief while Crom sports a rather sinister smile while the look in his gold and black eye promises retribution of some kind.

"Can you blame them? They say in order to spare Cabhan, Faolan offered a bargain of sorts to have his great grandfather spared." Ddraig explains.

Faolan rolls his eyes while Crom snorts and laughs heartily on hearing that. "There was no bargain, Faolan spared my life after our fight. He even went so far as to wedge a bit of Sky Flame into Balor's control of my mind, allowing my own power to begin weakening his grip over time." Crom states simply with a fond smile after recovering from laughing.

"Wait, you actually lost?" Ddraig exclaims. "He was a puppet, it was easy to see what attack he was being told to do before he did it. I didn't even need to my Sky Flame to disrupt said strings to win, the whole fight might as well have been a joke." Faolan states with a look of contentment on his face at remembering that fight.

"So, Cabhan is telling the truth about it? You won in a fight against the Crescent Circle Dragon?" Ddraig presses.

"It's not really that impressive when you recall that he was enslaved to a God throughout that fight." Faolan points out in a matter of fact way. "It would have been different if he'd been master of his own person. His moves would have been more fluid and less mechanical,

he would have reacted to what I was doing instead of just following through a set pattern of attack."

"Hmm, I guess I'll have to take your word for that, after all, I never had the chance to fight Crom during that time." Remarks Ddraig and he had come to a decision. "I guess it couldn't hurt. A visit to this Nesting Realm."

Faolan gives a nod as he gets off the bed while the Sky easily takes the egg into his arms, a portal shimmers into existence, courtesy of Crom. Faolan steps through without any pause and he follows behind by a few seconds. "Wow..." He exclaims at the sight before him.

"Wow indeed." Remarks Ddraig. They arrive near a cliff face that grants a great view of a river along with a group of young dragons that range about the size of ponies to the size of cats. Among the... what does one call a group of dragons anyway? Either way, there's Western style mixing with Eastern style, coloring is rather wide along a few other details like how the horns are set to how board or narrow wings are.

Although, his gaze soon finds itself on the adult dragon that's resting not that far from where the whelps and young dragons are goofing off. She, and Issei knows the adult is female, sports feathers upon her wings, silvery white. There's feathers about her head as well, again, a silvery white while the rest of the body's coloring is more of a light gray while opal white belly scales. Shiny golden horns not unlike stag antlers crown her head, and it's not unlike a crown hovering over her head at that. The eyes are emerald green and her claws appear to be a far darker gray compared to the rest of the body.

"Who's that?" Ddraig inquires. "Arariel, or Ariel for short. She's Tiamat's granddaughter." The voice is far deeper and seems to come from higher up.

Turning, he finds a yellow scaled Western style dragon sitting behind him, blue eyes are not unlike sapphires. "Arwia has yet to share who the father is, then again, I doubt he's aware of her existence either." Faolan comments. He notices the whiteness of the claws, horns, and the spattering of spines, all the while the belly sports a different shade of yellow instead of going white like one would expect.

"Is she...?" Ddraig trails off and he swears there's a touch of a smile upon Faolan's muzzle or is it snout? "The father is an angel, still of Heaven even."

"How?!" He exclaims before Ddraig does. "Funny enough, I wondered the same when I heard that too. It seems that angels are allowed to masturbate, I highly doubt Arwia would go about it any other way."

"She's also Chrome's current incarnation." Faolan shares and he turns to look back at Ariel with new eyes. "So it's due to the dragon theme after all..." He murmurs as it seems to be the only conclusion he can reach in regards to who can awaken their Dying Will Flame along with their previous incarnation memories.

Ddraig seems to find this all to be rather amusing, given that he's chuckling. **"Well, well, well... I wish we can be there to witness a meeting between one of Heaven's Angels and Tiamat's granddaughter. That should be a very note worthy encounter."** Remarks the ancient dragon.

"Come along, I'll show you where Crom took the egg." Says the yellow dragon that is both Tsuna's reincarnation and a Sky. The dragon holds out his 'hand' and, well, he climbs into it. Gently, the yellow dragon moves to stand and with wings out stretched, walks over and then off the cliff. He grips the 'hand' but the other comes to cup him.

It's a strange sensation of being carried in flight and he resorts to the use of his Mist to create a pair of glasses Enchanted to keep the wind from his eyes. And so, he gets a good view of more of the

Nesting Realm, there's a great number of various herds grazing about the meadows, bison mostly but there's beasts that might be magical breeds or maybe they are adapted to this Realm after generations of living here.

They arrive at a place near a spring that feeds into the river from before. There's a nest and relaxing next to said nest is a black dragon sporting one gold eye and a black one. The landing is a bit bumpy but once Faolan has settled on the ground, he's allowed to get off. He studies Crom's dragon form, comparing it to both Ariel and Faolan, noting just how different all three clearly are and yet, are all under the category of Western Dragon.

He approaches the nest and there's a good nine other eggs besides the one he'd secured from the devils. Each egg is different, which Issei concludes means that they must be from different breeds. He recalls how the egg was that of a Spectre Dragon, one of the high level dragon lineages according to Ddraig. Seeing the egg among the nest, next to other dragon eggs, he knows that it's safe here and that when it hatches, the hatchling will most likely have plenty of company along with adults who'll be around to ensure the hatchling is well taken care off.

"How many of these are rescues?" Inquires Ddraig, there's a underling serious tone to that question. "All but the original three, the ones at the center." Crom answers, the voice has its differences from before but, yes, it's still familiar enough to recognize to the previous form's own.

"There's a plan of using the Sephiroth Graal to create an army of evil dragons." Crom remarks casually, it's rather familiar in its own way and Faolan sighs while Ddraig merely grunts. "The remaining child of the original Lucifer is the one heading this... project." Continues Crom.

"He'd sweet talked a number of my fellow evil dragons into helping that plan. They're also looking to revive who they can while modifying the unhatched." Crom reveals. "I've been keeping track of

their activities and so far, I've collected each egg they manage to get their filthy, grubby hands on."

"They'll be switching course soon." Crom adds. "Given the current possessor of the Sephiroth Graal, they'll likely use vampires."

"Along with using her to revive those dead." Faolan remarks thoughtfully. "She likely won't live long, they'd likely look into transferring the Sacred Gear into someone else, I doubt they want to lose the use of it."

"Doesn't that... Oh..." He trails off, he recalls the plans the fallen angels had concerning Asia, both her Sacred Gear and her dead body. He never did wonder where they'd get a device like that.

"Who's the current welder of the Sephiroth Graal?" Inquires Ddraig. "A dhampir by the name of Valerie Tepes. She's might yet still be the current Queen of the Tepes Faction, I haven't seen anything that suggest she's been grabbed as of yet."

"So... Sacred Gears can end up being born to half humans?" Issei asks and Faolan hums a positive while Crom informs him, "The current possessor of the Divine Dividing is a half devil, grandson of the head of this evil dragon project in fact."

"Oh?" Ddraig seems to perk up and it takes him a second to realize that they're talking about his 'destined' rival. "Vali Lucifer."

"You mean that guy from that night is the White Dragon Emperor?!" He remembers that guy, who collected the chained up Kokabiel. "Wait, doesn't that make him half fallen angel? I mean, the original Lucifer was an angel, right?"

"Well... Lucifer went beyond just fallen, there's rumors that he yanked out his own black feathered wings at one point and fashioned himself a new set either out of them or out of whatever poor race he claimed leadership of and then corrupted or created the

devils out of." Faolan admits. "Weren't devils just humans that got experimented on?" He asks.

"No, Lucifer wouldn't want to have humans among his army, he wouldn't even want to sleep with one either. Couldn't stand them given how the God of that Pantheon favored them, only good human would be a dead one in that one's books." Crom explains and Ddraig snorts but doesn't offer a comment.

"Which is likely why Vali's father isn't among the living any more." Faolan remarks. "I'm rather surprised that Rizevim Lucifer hadn't just killed the kid's... well, young man's mother."

"Oh, I think I have an idea of why he hadn't." Remarks Crom. "It wouldn't surprise me that he going to get Vali to do it one of these days, either by directly ordering him to or indirectly giving him the right kind of push to do so."

"That's depressing!" He exclaims, feeling kind of sad for Vali, sure, the guy had rubbed him the wrong way but he figured it had to do with parallels he was drawing by comparing Kyoya to the guy. "But... well, I guess there's a reason devils aren't considered good beings..." He admits with a sigh, after all, with some help from Ddraig, he had managed to find out the cause of his former black outs, just not the party behind it. He's also got a suspension of which supernatural group to start his investigate into it as well, hearing something like this, it only makes him feel more certain that his suspension is more correct then not.

"They call that reincarnation system the Evil Pieces." States Crom in an exasperated tone. "Those things are fucking buggy as freaking plate of shattered glass. That system is all cooky cutter with the odd random element popping up every so often but even then, it's riddled with issues after all, if it weren't then the reincarnated stray devils wouldn't mutant that quickly when abandoned or claim their freedom by killing the so called King."

It suddenly strikes him that he's currently in the company of two dragon in their truest forms, pretty much calmly talking about a lot of different topics, straying from the issue of what they're going to do about this project of Rizevim Lucifer all the while standing next to a dragon nest in a different Realm all together, and that he's *getting along* with Mukuro's current incarnation. Never mind that the current incarnation of Tsuna is a member of one of the strongest races around, even though he started off born as a relatively normal human, who just happened to have a dragon in the family tree and might have killed a devil without being remorseful over it. Never mind that he's yet to actually introduce himself to another fellow being who remembers her previous incarnation, Chrome had been someone Kyoya respected after all, despite her relationship with Mukuro.

In the end, he's not alone in dealing with the burden of memories from a previous life, even though he's the youngest one to be dealing wit it. Issei wonders when he'll end up converting to a dragon and wonders if he'll end up with the crimson scales of Ddraig and befitting the bearer of the title Red Dragon Emperor or if he'll have scales that will be something more uniquely suited to himself? Which left the question of what will become of the Booster Gear when that happens...

To be continued . . .

Reincarnators Anonymous, Anyone?: DxD

I don't own Kateyou Hitman Reborn or High School DxD!

The plan concerning the brat didn't succeed, fine, they were gambled and lost the current welder of the Booster Gear from joining their side as a reincarnated devil. The only plus is that the brat hadn't thrown his lot in with the church and thus Heaven or with the Grigori and their collection of Sacred Gear welders. Other plans are in motion and there's always the chance that the brat will still end up joining either Heiresses Peerages as a reincarnated devil.

"Any word concerning the welder of the Sephiroth Graal?" He murmurs out loud as he goes through various in Pillar politics concerning the Satans' attempts at reaching out to the angels and fallen angels for a Peace Conference. He's aware of Rizevim Lucifer's intentions concerning that dhampir.

"We are unable to ascertain her current where abouts nor can we say when she was taken." Reports the spy within Rizevim's staff. His hands still while he frowns at the revelation concerning the missing Sephiroth Graal welder.

"Any hints on which party pulled it off?" He asks calmly after a minute of silence. "No, my King."

"Well, given time, the party will reveal themselves." He decides and focuses on another matter.

=] C_o_V_P [=

His eyes open and Faolan shifts his bulk and tail. *Seems like Issei pulled it off.* The yellow dragon muses to himself.

It has only been two weeks since their meeting with the current incarnation of Kyoya and already the trio, aka Ariel, Crom, and Issei,

have not just come up with plans but are already carrying out said plans. The fact that their current actions involved kidnapping the dhampir Valerie and current possessor of the Sephiroth Graal? It could be considered a rescue in a way, getting the Queen of the Tepes vampire faction away from those looking at her as a mere tool is in her best interests along with the added bonus of causing various parties to subtlety start pointing fingers at each other, of causing them to come into conflict far sooner then any of them expected.

His tail flickers as the yellow considers if he really wants to involve himself in what the trio are doing right now or later down the road. While he is concerned concerning Issei's youth and current position as the welder of the Booster Gear, it's not like Issei is without an unknown card in his hand, two if one considered his memories of being Hibari Kyoya. *He's not Kyoya though, he's just a teen that's the various predators are starting to circle around.* Faolan reminds himself.

Many of whom have vast resources at their disposal along with meat shields. He thinks, knowing he'd been very fortunate when it came to reclaiming that portion of his Soul. That the devil went to visit that brothel instead of the camp followers along with taking only one subordinate along.

Then he hums as he considers his abilities and a sly look settles upon his face and within his eyes, they glint with mischief at the Challenge of the undertaking he's slowly beginning to find himself motivated into taking. *Akasha... is the Sanskrit word for aether, sky, or atmosphere. Aether or Ether, a primordial deity of the 'upper sky' among the Greeks mythos, and then there's the more common use of it as a name in regards to magical energy. Never mind that it's also called quintessence, which has so many different and delightful theories connected to it.*

They might not have asked or decided to include me in their plans but that doesn't mean I can't offer my support. Faolan decides as he lifts his head, turning his head so he can look upon the eggs resting

in the nest to his right. He's careful of the numerous smaller bodies pressed around him and on him as he does so.

It wasn't even that hard to chose who to start with, after all, wasn't there already a group who's very name is just begging to be shown its true potential? A group that's far too organized for its name? It wouldn't even be that hard to weave the actual concept into that name and then just let things take their course in regards to that group... *But that target is far to easy and it's already in the sights of others now.*

But there's plenty of others I can work against. Faolan muses as he recalls that devil he just spied upon. *There's a lot of background weavers that few, if any, ever track down. Plenty of plump spiders that wove those webs and it would be interesting to see how they'd react to my plucking of their webs.*

It'll be interesting to actually see those abandon magic systems in action too. The yellow admits. *I wonder if any of them would be able to track down any sources I would use?*

But are there any sources for them to track down? It wouldn't be overly fair if there isn't anything for them to find... Faolan muses and ponders if he should try to find said leads first. He returns his head back upon his arms, closing his eyes as he chews on said thoughts and ideas. His body slowly relaxes over the next few minutes, the sleeping bodies around him settle more deeply into their slumber.

=] C_o_V_P [=

Issei isn't sure the hows of it but, well, it seems he's been kicked out of his room, by his 'hostage', his self proclaimed girlfriend, and one of his fellow kidnappers. **"Congratulations seem to be in order."** Comments Ddraig.

"For what? Getting kicked out of my Own Room?" He asks as he finally recovers enough mental footing to head for his living room. To be honest, he's doing his best to not react a great deal concerning

Asia's declaration. He's not certain of his feelings concerning the matter of girls, to be honest.

"Sure, let's go with that." Ddraig states and he knows that the ancient dragon doesn't mean it like that. The teen suspects that it might have more to do with whatever conversation the three had before he'd been kicked out.

He gets to the kitchen and mills around within there for some minutes, mindlessly going over the contains of the kitchen, fridge, and freezer. "Couldn't see put up more of a fight?" Issei muses as his thoughts return to the whole kidnapping of Valerie, being a dhampir means she's a touch more capable of fending off attackers, right? Plus, she had to have been taught how to fight?

Regardless, they successfully kidnapped the Queen of the Tepes Faction five days ago and it's only yesterday night that the Mist clone got discovered, when Rizevim made his move to grab her. While Ariel sticks around to help keep Valerie from getting into contact with anyone, Crom seemed to have decided to stick around among the vampire factions, watching how things play out, likely hoping to smoke out more then just Rizevim and the Khaos Brigade's interest in Valerie and her Sacred Gear. Which, given what the Sephiroth Graal's capabilities are, what they can mean in the long term, you'd think there's plenty of people who'd want that for their own goals.

But there's a cost to it, though. Then again, that's only when using it to revive the dead, right? Issei muses as he comes to a stop by the door of the house. Blinking, he glances towards the stairs before letting out a sigh, he might as well head off to his practice spot to work through things in a semi-physical manner.

Once he's switched to his out door runners, Issei takes off at a jog, heading for a spot where nobody could see him easily. Once he finds a location like that, he flares his Flame to create a worm tunnel between said point to the interior of the warehouse he's claimed as his private training spot. Mist being the fracture of focus with Cloud and Lightning holding it stable. It takes only five minutes to reach the

other end of the worm tunnel he created and once out of it, allows it to close up, done so in a slow fashion, an exercise of Flame control.

Soon enough, he's empowered the Enchanted dummies to float and dart around, not hovering above five feet off the ground though.

=] C_o_V_P [=

Where ever he goes around Kuoh Town, Vali finds his vision tainted by purple, green, and indigo. Some spots, it hangs more heavily then others and the only connection between those spots has to do with the current Red Dragon Emperor. There's three locations where it's as heavy as fog, Kuoh Academy, the teen's home, and in the warehouse district.

Each of those locations seem to have their differences when it comes to how the colors are set up, Kuoh Academy is primarily featuring purple and the other two colors seem to arrange in drawings and simple sentences. The warehouse district is covered primarily in indigo while purple and green just seem to play within the indigo, green moving about the indigo in a manner like lightning does while the purple keeps high above the ground, just drifting in the cloud formation, which strikes something in him that's just out of reach. As for the home, green is the primary there while the green seems to be infused with the walls of the house while the purple can be seen reflected in the windows and indigo seems to lurk in the shadows within the house.

The White Dragon Emperor finds himself very much disincline to approach the residence compared to Kuoh Academy and the warehouse district. He gets the feeling that the house is a far more secure location out of the three while which ever warehouse the Red Dragon Emperor visits is the most elusive to find out of the three. As for the school... it's just seems that the colors are more akin to graffiti, that his fellow Dragon Emperor is mocking the two heiresses claim to the location then anything.

In the weeks he's been in Kuoh Town, he hasn't seen either Faolan or Crom Cruach nor does it seem that the two co-owners were aware of the two visiting dragons. Then again, the two hadn't realized that someone had swapped that dragon egg out with a fake when a pair of lesser known dragons attempted to reclaim it, the Cursed One, Curlebre and the Child-Napper, Drac. The pair of evil dragons weren't well known and were rather young, they did get through the security the co-owners had placed about the fake egg and with Curblebre almost ripping off one of Gremory Heiress's Queen's legs while Drac almost claimed the Sitri's Heiress's eyes.

Nothing the two Peerages did stopped the two dragons from leaving upon the revelation of the egg being fake and from the sounds of things, they likely bothered the former Holy Maiden to heal their injuries. It's hardly the first time the devils have taken advantage of the girl's gentle nature, it's rather surprising that she's been able to decline Gremory's offer of becoming a member of her Peerage. Then again, it's clear that... well, the girl has a crush on his fellow Dragon Emperor, so where ever that teen goes, she's bound to follow.

So, as he's wandering through the warehouse district, toying with the idea of using his Divine Dividing on the colors, to see what effect his Sacred Gear would have on this phenomenon, not for the first time either. Vali had even inquired Albion notices the coloring and the trapped dragon hadn't noticed anything off. The trapped dragon hadn't pressed him about if he noticed anything though, but Vali gets the feeling that the white dragon is patient and is paying more attention to him since he inquired.

Then, something changes in the district, he's not sure what has changed but there is one. So, he leaps into the air, his Sacred Gear's wings out. Minutes pass and that change is gone but he searches over the roofs. He notices a large bang and heads in that direction. It happens again, he alters his course.

Minutes tick by and with a growl, he does use his Divine Dividing. It takes a good five tries before it seems to find something to effect and then, as he absorbs a portion, he finds himself veering in the air as

images of a stern young man welding a pair of tonfas surge forth. **"VALI!"** Albion shouts in alarm.

He can't hold onto the portion but it hardly matters as it sparks something from deep within his very Soul. His vision swims with blue but also hints of red and yellow. Takashi... *No, I'm Vali, Vail Lucifer.* He reminds himself as it seems like he's standing before a mirror sporting blue frame with hints of pulsing red and yellow moving among the blue, flaring and dimming while the blue shimmers as though it's pouring downwards.

The image is that of a darkish gray hair young man sporting light blue eyes, attire is generally stylish Gothic punk. Then the mirror would ripple and in those ripples, another image gets hinted at, eyes of light hazel and black short hair while the features of a Japanese adult in a business suit or young man in rather casual cloths. The rippling dies down upon only it's not Vali Lucifer staring back at him. *Yamamoto Takashi, supposed Rain Guardian of Sawada Tsunayoshi...*

"Hahaha, so, I guess your the new me?" The adult Rain remarks with an enigmatic smile and Vali jerks his head on hearing that voice. The reflection's mouth hadn't moved, not one bit and yet...

"Get out of my head." Vali snaps but the adult in the mirror only tilts his head slightly to the side, there's a look in those hazel brown eyes that seems to akin to pity. "Kind of can't, I think, not after you tried to absorb some of Kyoya's Flames, and isn't that rather funny, we're older then Kyoya's reincarnation!"

That word... Vali stiffens, oh, he knows his religions, one kind of gets around to reading up on all sorts of them, after all, the Gods and Goddesses are still around, still getting worshiped, still playing politics. "Yea, your my current incarnation, just as I'm one of your previous ones."

"Why You?" Vali snaps and Takashi gets a thoughtful look, he can hear the humming. "Well, it might be because of the fact you did try

to absorb Dying Will Flames of the Sky. Seems like your going to be in possession of not just Rain Flame but also Storm and Sun, kind of how Kyoya's incarnation added Lightning to his previous dual Flame." Remarks the adult in the mirror.

His stills at the terms used, Vali remembers how the green and purple colors had acted while he'd wandered around the warehouse district. "Indigo?" He asks.

"Mist, or Fog, kind of how some people called the green Thunder instead of Lightning, which is rather odd, you know? You can't *see* Thunder after all, you hear it though." Takashi muses with a bemuse look upon the face.

"Maybe I don't want these... *Flames* ." He states and that look of sympathy enters into those light brown eyes. "Can't help it now, Kyoya's Flame set off the spark that ignited the fuel that's been starting to develop as it were. It was only a matter of time this happened, after all. You've been wandering and sleeping in a Cloud Flame rich environment, not sure what that means for the future residence of Kuoh Town, I wasn't really interested in that kind of stuff, you know?"

Neither speak, Vali doesn't like the idea of submitting to his previous incarnation nor does he feel like he has any need to possess these Dying Will Flames. Minutes tick by and suddenly, Takashi chuckles, "It's funny, you know? You're so much like Kyoya! I wonder how that happened? You got a rival? A Mukruo to your Kyoya?"

A white screen suddenly appears to his left and a memory plays out, it's the one where Faolan and Crom Cruach exit out of that cafe. "Tsuna..." Takashi's voice is filled with longing, guilty, and regret. The memory focuses on the brunette form around the usual blond human born dragon.

Then it focuses on the trident welding man with a red eye and blue eye. "Mukuro found him, huh? Kind of makes sense... He did go through something once that let him remember his previous

incarnations, well, supposed incarnations..." There's a hint of envy and wistfulness.

Tsuna was a Sky. Mukuro a Mist. The knowledge seeps into his mind. *Kyoya's incarnation has Cloud, Lightning, and Mist Flames, he might even have Kyoya's memories...*

More information comes to him, information concerning Flame Bonds and what each of the seven colors of the Dying Will Flames of the Sky were capable of. His mind considers the relationship between Crom Cruach and Faolan, a new insight gained along with another suspicion concerning the pair of dragons. Some where along the lines, it feels like he's gently been pulled down towards the ground.

Tranquility coats him as remembering his previous incarnation Activates within him while his resistance towards merging, of healing gets Disintegrated. When he wakes, Vali finds himself on a roof and he feels the Divine Dividing is still out and it seems that it's covering him. His head does pound while his front aches from the rough landing. For a few seconds he lays there, trying to remember why he thought that Takashi would overwhelm him, overwrite his existence...

That's not what happened, I just... became more myself, I guess? Vali muses. There's changes, of course there was going to be changes but there's also this feeling of completion too.

Finally deciding to move, Vali pushes himself up off the roof and then into a sitting position. **"Vali?"** Albion inquires.

"I'm going to be fine." He murmurs to the trapped dragon upon being reminded that he's not alone in this life. That he's never going to be alone until someone either kills him or if someone manages to extract the Divine Dividing from his body.

Closing his eyes, he reaches out to his Flame and it answers him with ease. Soon enough, he directs the Sun of his Flame to help get rid of the aches while deciding to see if he can't use his Storm to get

rid of the dust on his cloths. *It shouldn't be too different from using magic.* Vali reasons with himself.

He finds himself tiring rather quickly though, but that shouldn't be too surprising, given he not only just got a life times worth of memories but also using a power that's fairly new to him, even if he has memories of having used it before. There's a different feel of his Flame compared to Takashi's as well, then again, Takashi had been a straight Rain while he on the other hand sport Storm and Sun in addition to Rain. As he stops using his Flame, he takes a moment to examine himself and his cloths, it's both reassuring but also disconcerting, particularly looking at his right hand and there's no Rain Ring of Vongola Famiglia upon his finger.

"What are you doing here?" Vali stiffens upon hearing the voice, he hadn't noticed Issei arrival upon the roof. Turning his head to the right, he finds Kyoya's reincarnation and the current Red Dragon Emperor Hyoudou Issei standing there, studying him with a guarded expression and yet, the Booster Gear isn't out on display.

"..." He's unsure what to say. So he lets out a simple disinterested grunt as he pushes himself off the roof, having his Divine Dividing move to a resting position on his back.

It's hard for him to not notice the differences and yet, similarities between Issei and Kyoya. The proud Cloud from his memories would be threatening him, as Kyoya was never one for patience. Letting a bit of his own Flame out, it's then that he notices the presence of two Mist Flames, again, both are rather familiar feel to them. "How's Chrome and Mukuro?" His mouth moves, seemingly, on its own.

Eyes widen and purple flares in the eyes, Issei uses his Flame to get a feel of him in turn. "Chrome is at the house, she's doing girl talk with Asia." Issei admits as some of the tension bleeds out of the other Dragon Emperor's body. "Mukuro's doing his own thing."

He racks through his memories to try and figure out Chrome's current incarnation could be. "Her name?" He asks after a minute of

silence, he already knows Crom Cruach as Mukuro's and Faolan is Tsuna's.

"Doubt you've heard of her, she's Arariel, daughter of Arwia, granddaughter of Tiamat." His first thought is about the fact that there's a surviving child of Tiamat and that said daughter went on to have a daughter herself. "Another dragon..." He murmurs.

"Yea." Issei seems to be puzzled how'd he'd known. Vali doesn't see the point in mentioning how he knows.

He wants to ask after Faolan, maybe pass along a warning about... Well, if Crom is Faolan's Mist Guardian, then, anyone plotting anything against the yellow dragon isn't going to get very far or close to said dragon. Vali finds himself with a jumble of emotions and desires. "Dragon themed Sacred Gears..." He hears Issei softly sigh out and finds himself snorting in agreement after realizing the connection going on.

Right now, he's simply exhausted on two levels, emotional and mental. He merely wishes to leave and just sleep it off with the hopes that some of it will have sorted itself out. And yet, he doesn't want to leave, doesn't want to be... alone.

Yet, as he moves the Divine Dividing, feels it weight upon his back, he's reminded that he's not alone, not any more. Finally finding it within himself to turn his back on his fellow Dragon Emperor, he takes to the air. "I'll let the others know... Takashi." Issei says and he gives a slight nod, fairly sure that the other notices.

With that, Vali heads out of the warehouse district and upon finding a spot to land, dismisses the wings his Sacred Gear gives him. **"Takashi..."** Albion's tone is curious and it's clear the trapped dragon would like some answers.

"A previous incarnation was named Yamamoto Takashi. I... now have access to both the power he had and his memories." He admits to the ancient dragon.

"Takashi and Kyoya... Issei's previous incarnation, had a working relationship, at first, they became friends, I guess, as time went on." Vali continues. "Things changed greatly when Tsuna, Faolan's previous incarnation, died at thirty years of age. With his passing, a lot of things came to light about..."

It hurts, even now, that Tsuna hadn't told any of them about his health problems but then, if he had... Could they have helped him? *He didn't want that life, he never wanted to be a Mafia Don...* Whispers an voice that not unlike Takashi.

Ninth hadn't been around by then for anyone to take out their frustrations on as for Iemitsu... Well, he'd been dead for a month already by the time Tsuna had died due to the Flame Seal and the various complications caused by those Dying Will Bullets. It didn't help that, for a week, everyone had been walking on egg shells around the remaining members of the Tenth Generation thinking that they'd all been Flame Bonded to Tsuna, that they were about a push away from Rampaging or falling into Grief.

It was never about what Tsuna wanted, it had always been about... Vali mentally cuts himself off from that train of thought along with doing his best to mentally distance himself with knowledge that Faolan is fine, despite devils gunning for him, the yellow dragon is alive and well.

"Vali?" Albion inquires, clear worry and concern within it. "It's Takashi's memories..." He admits with a soft sigh as he lets himself run a hand through his hair.

His emotions settle down but they don't vanish. And so, he considers where he wants to be. The thoughts of where he should go are varied but, in the end, his mind kept coming back to the room he has at Azazel's New York condo, for both the view and he just liked the sky rise condo.

Using a simple Teleportation spell, he teleports to said room and once his boots are off along with his jacket, Vali head for the bed and

just, lets his exhaustion over take him.

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How...? Vali isn't sure he fully understand what's being implied concerning the Archangel Michael and Arariel, or Ariel for short. It doesn't help that most of the Three Faction Leaders attending this peace talk conference also seem to be lost, after all, everyone would have heard about Michel getting married to a dragon and he most definitely didn't Fall so...

"Your his daughter?! Wait, you mean... Oh!" Issei eyes widen as if remembering something. **"Well, Tiamat can't say her daughter didn't have good taste, at least."** Remarks Ddraig and that causes more then a few eyes widening upon learning that bit of information.

"Arwia was a... No, wait, that means she's..." Michael seems to be at a loss over the idea that Arwia is not just a dragon but the surviving daughter of Tiamat.

"How?! Just... How?" Rias Gremory voices the thoughts of pretty much the majority of the table.

"Masturbation, apparently." Ddraig states dryly which causes the Archangel Michael to blush while he and others merely blink upon hearing that. "Angels can do that?" Rias' Queen asks bluntly.

"Well, congratulations on having found someone and finding a loop hole, Michael." Azazel says in a friendly way, having moved to put a supportive hand on the current leader of Heaven's shoulder. "Good luck dealing with your love's mother, though."

"What's your name?" Inquires Gabriel and Chrome's current incarnation blinks before introducing herself, "My mother gave me the name Arariel, though Fa... I mean, most people call me Ariel for short." It's a toss up on what she was going to say before she stopped herself, it might have been Faolan, after all, it's highly

doubtful that Micheal and her ever met before now, given his reaction.

"Perhaps a short break is in order?" The current Lucifer suggests, even though the meeting had barely started on introductions. After all, Issei only just arrived with Asia, Valerie Tepes, *huh so she's here, wonder how that happened* , and Ariel and then both Archangels did a double take upon seeing Ariel.

In the end, Ariel and Michael move off to a corner to awkwardly stand around without actually talking while Azazel seems to be in a whispered conversation with Gabriel. The two heiresses are pulled off to another corner by the current holder of the title of Lucifer. **"I wonder if she's got a halo?"** Albion pipes in.

"Her horns are more akin to stag antlers and they form more of a gold crown then a halo." Comments Ddraig, he hadn't been aware of when Issei walked over to him. "She also has feathers on her wings along with on the back of her head." Adds Issei.

It shouldn't be that surprising, really, but then, while he'd known she'd been granddaughter of Tiamat, Issei never mentioned the part concerning her father being... He considers Issei's reaction to realize, it was the fact that Michael being Ariel's father that was news to him, not that she's half angel. "You knew she was..." *Well, what do you call a half angel half dragon hybrid?*

"Oh, I didn't mention that back then? When you asked?" Issei remarks, getting a thoughtful look. "Yea, I guess I didn't, then again, you hadn't heard of her so..." His fellow Dragon Emperor and Flame user shrugs.

It's been two weeks since his grandfather's plots of creating an evil dragon army fell through, well, to put it more bluntly, Crom slaughtered Rizevim after the super devil pestered the Crescent Circle Dragon three days straight. So, yea, it pretty much died with him as none of those evil dragons saw much point in belonging to Qlippoth, although some of those dragons did find other positions

within the Khaos Brigade though. What he's gathered concerning his grandfather's pestering had to do with getting Crom to hunt down Valerie Tepes and bring her to him after slaughtering the ones who took her.

It's been two months since the welder of the Sephiroth Graal had vanished, though. "When did you see her dragon form?" Vali asks, it seems that Asia and Valerie are having their own whispering conversation.

"Huh... Let's see, today is..." Issei rambles a bit out loud as he does the math and it seems, it was that day that he spotted the two coming out of that cafe. He does notice that Issei is a lot more talkative then Kyoya ever had been, then again, the same in reverse could be said of himself and Takashi.

"So... You've recovered? From the whole memory remembering?" Issei asks after a few seconds of silence between them.

"Clearly." He states, refusing to think about his desire to speak with Faolan. "You know, Faolan was the first to remember, it had to do with that devil sword ripping a bit of his Soul and keeping it." Issei says and he stiffens upon hearing that, his mind blanking at the thought of someone damaging the Sky's Soul...

"Hey, stop, he got it back on destroying the sword!" He blinks, he hadn't known how he ended up by the door only for Issei to stop him from leaving. Vali wasn't sure where he'd been leaving to go to, either. "Yea, beheaded the guy and destroyed the sword to get it! Of course, you would know about the beheading, not sure about the destroying of the sword, though, I mean, the devils seem to be unable to wrap their heads around Faolan just destroying it I guess?"

With this news, he can actually put together how it was that Discord Striker ended up with it's ability. After all, what's the opposite of Harmony? It also explains the thief accusation as well. Still... even though it's been... centuries since then, he can't help but want to check up on Faolan, to ensure he's fine.

"Is he..." Vali almost voices the question but Issei had said he's fine, well, implied he's ok. "He's good, I mean, it's back where it belonged instead of in a chunk of metal and he's a Sky, you know?"

"You want to see him, right? With your own eyes?" Issei seems to realize his desire and he looks off to the left, feeling rather valuable all of a sudden.

"Well, here." Issei grabs his hand and puts a stone carving about the size of a thumb onto the palm of his hand. "It's only got two charges but transport you to him as long as you use your Flame." The stone is green in color and seems to be a wolf sitting down, which fits given what Faolan translates into.

Nodding, he pockets the wolf carving, forcing himself to leave it alone within his pocket. Vali isn't sure when he'll use it, but knows it won't be tonight nor tomorrow, if certain things end up happening. "Not going blame you, just so you know." Issei states after a period of silence and before it dawns on him that Issei Knows about what's planned for tonight, the current Lucifer calls for their attention and for them to restart the meeting.

His fellow Dragon Emperor walks back to where Asia and Valerie is, same with Ariel. It's about then that he realizes that both Kyoya and Mukuro were very good when it came to information gathering and given that both are Mists, although Crom also has magic to couple with that, means that the pair Know that those behind what's about to happen either were pressured or were zealots to the 'cause'. In the end, he heads back to where he'd originally been standing and awkwardly, the meeting picks back up.

- } F_o_T { -

So many things came up since that Three Faction Conference along with a number of various eyes watching him, Vali never did get a chance to use the wolf carving to pay a visit to Faolan. In a way, he's thankful for that, after all, the intense feelings from Yamamoto Takashi's memories no longer feel so pressing nor raw so getting

closure with Tsuna's reincarnation falls into the background. Now though, at the sight of Faolan in his full draconic glory along with Sky Flame dying the yellow dragon's horns, spines, and claws orange...

Breath taking... The half devil admits safely behind a magical ward as Faolan along with Ariel and Crom halting the Emperor Beast of Apocalypse, their respective Mist Flame on display in a different manner then Faolan's. In Ariel's case, indigo striping the feathers, glowing and dimming with each breath and in Crom's case, indigo seems to trail behind the black dragon's wings flap, fading within seconds only to be replaced seconds later.

Trihexa, as some have decided to call it, can't shake the bindings of Mist Flames with a coating of Sky Flame cushioning contact between the Apocalyptic Beast's inherit ability to destroy anything it touches and the Mist Bindings. It's a clear example of the Sky's property of Harmony on display, then again, Skies were able to deal with the property of Disintegration connected to Storm's crimson Flame. He also doesn't doubt that there's more going on with those Mist Constructed Bindings.

"How?" It's a whispered cry that comes behind him but the sentiments of that singular word is likely voicing the other bystanders own thoughts as the Emperor Beast of the Apocalypse for the past few minutes. Previously, all attempts hadn't held for longer then a few seconds, so they went for bulk in the way of restraints, even if they didn't last very long in the Dimensional Gap.

He'd heard that the devils, with the subtle back of Heaven and the Grigori, trying to press Faolan for Discord Striker and even when confronted with the simple fact that the sword had long since been destroyed, still seemed to think the yellow dragon was lying concerning the topic of the sword. Upon hearing that bit of news, Vali realized that they seem to be gambling on it's legend concerning it's capabilities having an effect on Trihexa. It's clear that they'd been desperate on thinking of things to try and given that he knows the reason behind the sword's legend...

Well, I wonder if this was some kind of bet... Why else would Faolan be here? He muses as time continues to pass while everyone seems to be in shock over the fact that a trio of dragons are easily keeping the Apocalyptic Beast where it is.

And then, well, someone new joins the trio, *wait, two someones...* He realizes, the first is clearly Ddraig while the other dragon is much smaller, rather young in truth along with more of an Eastern style dragon. Emerald green eyes while there's an almost black blue for the horns and claws with the main scales of the body being a royal purple with tribal looking stripes of a darker shade of purple about the back of the body that give an impression of flames moving up from the tail tip to the brow ridge. As for the belly scales, Issei's dragon form sports a very dark red, almost black. The glowing trail of primarily purple with green and indigo means the young dragon is Issei. The build is more geared for power then agility, it's clear that when grown, Issei's dragon form will longer then Dragon King Yu-Long but also far more bulky.

"Bastard!" Snarls Albion, which seems to startle the others also standing behind this barrier. It doesn't take him long to figure out the reason behind the emotion and likely resentment as Issei's Flame joins with the Mist Bindings, green and purple seem to cause them to evolve in a fashion as it begins to spread about the projected image he sees that makes up the Trihexa's body.

"Well, might as well join in... If it worked for Ddraig and Issei, it should work us." He reassures the trapped dragon.

"What?! You... That's... That's Issei-kun?!" Exclaims the Gremory's Heiress' Queen in clear disbelief.

"Valerie Tepes is the welder of the Sephiroth Graal." Remarks Azazel in dawning realization.

"Part of my grandfather's scheme had to do with using the possessor of the Sephiroth Graal to revive a number of ancient evil dragons as well as convert others into evil dragons." Vali admits without an

ounce of shame or remorse. "It looks like Issei talked her into using it on him to convert into a dragon that matched the nature of his soul." Which is likely he's a young dragon instead of a whelp, adding Kyoya's memories to the mix likely help ensure that he's more at the child stage then whelp stage.

Which should hold true for myself. Vali mentally reasons to himself, he is in possession of Takashi's memories just as Issei is in possession of Kyoya's. He has been itching to join his Flame with the trio of dragons, between the five of them, they have the full set what with him possessing Rain, Storm, and Sun and Issei possessing Cloud and Lightning along with an extra helping of Mist. With Faolan being a Sky and two Mists, that's the whole collection of Dying Will Flames of the Sky.

Before anyone could try and 'reason' with him, he combines the use of his Sun with his Sacred Gear, being sure to keep his target in mind. Within seconds, he's on the back of the Dragon of Dragons, which is surprising in it's own way but it seems that Asia is easily chatting away towards said great and powerful dragon while Valerie seems to more focus on watching what seems to be a Mist Screen that's giving the two his view of what's happening, which explains what Asia is chatting about, she's narrating to the Dragon of Dragons.

"Huh, you know, they figured you'd show not long after Ddraig and Issei get spotted over there." Remarks the dhampir as she notices him. "Want the same treatment?"

"Yes." He states simply and both Asia and the gigantic red dragon give him a look or a simple glance. "Not sure if it'll release Albion like it did Ddraig but then, Faolan did create something that will if Albion isn't released when you convert."

Valerie holds up a simple thumb size crystal that whirls with a small portion of Faolan's Sky Flame. She puts it back into the leather pouch that's hanging about her neck. "Just... stand still." She informs

Vali and he does his best as he watches as she approaches, gently taking his right wrist and pulling said arm up.

As he *feels* something slowly peel back layers of his being, his own Flame begins to flare up until it's enshrouding him. His ability to see, hear, smell, touch, and so many other things he's taken for granted are denied to him for what does and doesn't feel like a twenty four hours. His senses return only there's so *much* more now as he does indeed sport a pair of wing, which means he's of the Western style when it comes to dragons.

He is covered in sapphire blue scales it seems, as he notices his snout before rising up his left hand to take a look at it. Claws are white in color while his belly scales appear to be a soft yellow shade that might be complimenting his blue scales. "My eyes?" He asks, his voice does sport a similar quality but it sounds slightly off along with young.

"Crimson." Valerie informs him and it makes sense, given what he had seen of Issei's own form. **"This... this feels..."** There's a sigh of contentment and he turns to find Albion in his full glory.

The White Dragon Emperor moves his limbs and takes pleasure in the simple act of breathing. **"It's been far too long..."** Albion states and then the Dragon Emperor looks off into the direction of where the others are stalling the Trihexa.

"Lead the way." He commands and Albion gives him a look then a bemused snort. **"Sure you're ready to fly?"**

"Only way to find out." He counters with a smirk. The white dragon chuckles but he does manage to get into the 'air' as it were and before breaching the barrier, calls upon his Flame. It keeps him warm the moment he is within the Dimensional Gap himself.

He follows after Albion as he learns how this flying works in this new body of his as he also compares it to flying before, in the mortal world. Soon enough, he sees what's happened since he teleported

to where Valerie had been stationed. There's Lightning helping to reinforce the Sky's buffering while the entity is pretty much wrapped up, not unlike one would find an Egyptian mummy to be done up like. There's little of the Trihexa to be seen while the Mist pulses with Cloud Flames, highlighting the purple of the Mist.

"Vali!" Chirps Issei and he's struck by how different sounding the other is now. "Issei." He returns in a level fashion, Issei gives him a slight pout for a few seconds before doing a shrug and focusing back on funneling his Flame into Faolan's Sky.

Finding a good view and ignoring the exchange going on between Albion and Ddraig, he begins to do the same. It's a strange feeling Faolan's Sky, it's not unlike Tsuna's but, well, it's... just... more... And then it's also... healthy and uplifting. It's not long before his trio of colors join with the Mist Bindings, Rain blue, Storm red, and Sun yellow.

The Mist Bindings seem to alter, evolve, really as they begin making use of the new aspects. Soon enough, it's like it all just up and crystallizes with all seven Flames each reinforcing different forms of attack. He can't feel what's happening but with each flash of the various colors, it's clear that something is happening within the crystal that seems to be made up of Dying Will Flames of the Sky. Then, after a few minutes, the crystal dims and the steady feeling of his Flames being pulled into Faolan's Sky begin to tamper off.

Then, it's like Faolan's Sky releases a pulse while gently pushing his Flame back at himself. As he stops channeling his Flame besides keeping himself warm, the crystal explodes in a rainbow of seven colors and as the particles vanish, there's no evidence of the Trihexa anywhere in that spot, nor pieces of it. He's a bit disappointed at how quickly it's over but then, it shouldn't surprise him either, given how long the original trio had been holding the Emperor Beast of Apocalypse at bay, giving the two Mists a chance to Construct an understanding of the said Apocalyptic Beast along with creating a way to kill it while Sky Flames acted as a buffer to keep it from noticing what the Mist was doing.

"So... How do we turn back into... well, change into our previous looks?" Issei inquires and Faolan seems to blink before looking between Issei and Vali. "Well... I assume you'll need to spend a bit of time settling into those bodies before anything else. First order should be getting you two something to eat and drink, then a spot to sleep."

"You shouldn't be crashing yet, but give it an hour." Adds the yellow dragon in possession of Sky Flames.

"Nesting Realm?" Issei pipes up and Faolan nods. "I'll take the both of you, Ddraig, mind showing Albion how to get there?" The yellow turns to regard the two Emperors, he turns to find that the two seem to be already at each other's throat, literally.

The crimson dragon hums an acknowledgement while the white dragon merely grunts. "Wow... I wonder how long did it take for them to get to that point?" Issei wonders as the two go back to trying to tear a mouthful out of each other.

He hears Crom chuckle in a very familiar way and it doesn't take him long to realize why the scene before him causes him a case of deja vu. "Kyoya and Mukuro..." He finds himself stating and from what little he sees of Issei's form, the now purple dragon seems to curl a bit in on himself.

"Yes, our previous incarnations really did go at it like cats and dogs, didn't they?" Remarks Crom and then Faolan transports them away from the Dimensional Gap. The change is very noticeable in how he now feels along with what to see.

"I still am incline to say that those two are courting each other." Remarks Ariel upon her arrival a few minutes after Faolan gets both Issei and himself to drink from the river, well, after they admire themselves in the water's reflection. "I think they're more frenemies." Counters Crom.

The two adult dragons settle down and Faolan takes off to hunt them something to eat, leaving them to listen to the minor exchange of opinions between the evil and holy dragons.

=] C_o_V_P [=

"Well... I don't know about any of you but I'm not going to look a gifted horse, or in this case, dragon, in the mouth." Remarks Azazel while the two newly released Dragon Emperors continue their... well, wrestling match. "I, for one, do believe it's high time for your Faction to let the matter go concerning that sword." The leader of the Grigori adds as he gives the current four Satans a slightly flat look.

"I looked into the event and Faolan did destroy the sword after he killed the guy." Adds Odin. "It seemed that the blade took a bit more then just a bit of blood when it was first blooded, when your devil attacked and almost killed the yellow back then."

He does his best not to react to the news but, well, that news would have been great to know before they started pressing said dragon for said blade. "Given what we just witnessed, it's likely best to keep our end of the deal, in both spirit and word." Suggests Micheal, but then, the current leader of Heaven hadn't wanted to pursue the issue of Discord Striker in the first place. It had been with great reluctance that the Archangel did so, more due to the pressure of his fellow Archangels at that.

"It's also for the best that whatever plans people had concerning Hyoudou-kun be scrapped as well. After all, it's clear there's a connection between Faolan and the former welder of the Booster Gear." *Never mind that there's one between Faolan and Vali, how can both of them have a connection to either of those three to begin with?* He mentally wonders. "We now have to deal with two, newly freed Dragon Emperors, who might be carrying over any number of... grudges or ill feelings over any number of reasons."

"Well, once they get tired of their current wrestling match." Pipes in Odin. "Although, I do believe I am agreeing with Ariel concerning the

kind of tension that's between them."

Ok, all leaders of the Three Factions turn to look at Odin. Yes, they had noticed a conversation going on between Ariel and Crom Cruach before the pair vanish in indigo flashes, but they didn't know the details. "You know what they were discussing?" Gabriel asks.

"They were discussing the actual relationship between Albion and Ddraig." Odin explains. "Crom says they're frenemies while Ariel maintains that they're courting, that it's unresolved sexual tension."

His gaze drifts towards the wrestling dragons and, well, he can't stop seeing Ariel's point of view. *But then* , Azazel mentally admits. *I also thought the same between Crom Cruach and Faolan, only it's clear there's something more intense going on between Ariel and Crom Cruach then either of them have with Faolan.*

"I don't suppose them both being males is going to stop those rumors?" The current Lucifer wonders. "Never stopped people from gossiping about Crom Cruach and Faolan being fuck buddies." States Akeno, reminding them all of the fact that both Serafall Leviathan and Sirzech Lucifer brought their respective younger siblings to witness this... gambling happenings that concerned a sword that's no in existence any more.

Rias Gremory seems mortified by what her Queen just said while various people react in their own way about the curd language. "Am I the only one that noticed the strange phenomenon concerning those colors and what they mean? It wasn't elemental magic." Remarks Serafall's younger sister, Sona Sitri.

Recalling the blue sporting red and yellow trail that followed after the latest young dragon to that battle... That dragon being Vali Lucifer... It did strike him as odd but at the same time... Azazel mentally shakes his head. He'll get answers later and hopefully they'll be honest ones.

"That, I think, is a matter for another day." Ajuka Beelzebub states in a simple but firm tone. He echos that sentiment and soon enough, they depart from the Dimensional Gap.

The End

Author's Head-Canon:

So, reason why I went the way I did concerning the Tri-Ni-Sette, about it's primary function not being what we're told from both Anime and Manga is simple. Humans have built up cultures and various religions around ensuring the survival of the world as they know it. Take the most famous example, the Aztecs use to rip out beating hearts from various defeated enemies each day to ensure that the sun would return the next day along with many other reasons. We know that's not how it works through science but to those Aztecs? It was a fact, the sun continues on its course because they offer up the hearts of their enemies each day.

I see the True Earthlings as a Flame culture of human who stumbled upon a method of delaying aging, of keeping themselves from dying viva old age. Like all humans, they grew to view themselves as better then their neighbors and their view concerning their place in the world, taking it to it's 'logical' conclusion that they were the only ones 'privileged' and 'capable' of understanding what became called Dying Will Flames of the Sky. Which led to the usual course of actions for anyone who view themselves as superior and more deserving, they tried to figure out how to keep that power form others. I also make note of the Sky as I think that Earth Flames did co-exist along side Sky Flames until said group of likely majority of Sky Flame Users led a purge against their Earth Flame Users, considering them Other, giving any kind of reason and thus did Earth Flames get hated on.

I think, when those seven stones were found and how easily they responded to Sky Flames, the True Earthlings began laying the

foundations of a Flame Dam, first aimed against Earth Flame Users world wide then, later, they wanted to be the only ones capable of using Sky Flames. Given how many Wills they could call upon and who were likely better trained and educated in regards to Sky Flame use, it wasn't hard for their plans to come to fruition and thus, their hubris began to turn inwards once more.

I believe that, again, like regular humans, that in time, power plays began to crop up and slowly plans for mutual destruction became a thing. Politics divided them along with social classes, likely there was contempt for those who had only a single Flame or maybe multiple. Given that nobody was dying of old age, I can see how the age to be regarded as an adult went up and let's go with, someone had to be alive until the age of fifty to be considered an adult. I also see people doing breeding experiments to give them and their future descendants advantages besides Flame Use, which could have lead to Foresight that we see with Luce and her daughter and granddaughter.

I doubt it was normal humans that caused the destruction of the True Earthlings, I would suspect that someone somewhere within their civilization didn't act soon enough and it resulted in those hidden plans of mutual destruction getting triggered. Blame gets put on their neighbors, the short lived primitives when in truth they were innocent as in, they likely didn't know they even had neighbors, given the True Earthlings would have set up Mist Territories to hide their cities, towns, and farms from said neighbors.

And so, the True Earthlings began to die off, knowledge got lost, destroyed really, in the ensuring chaos and when it was settled, those seven stones' function began to wane, what with there being fewer people connected to it, for it to channel the Flames safely. There's a trickle of not just Sky Flames finding hosts but also a tiny portion of Earth Flames make a return as well. Now, the truth concerning those seven stones lost and given generations of lies about their function, we get the survivors trying to keep the stones functional but, a last, the Flame Dam needs to release Dying Will

Flames and so, they begin to noticed those short lived, inferior versions of themselves can all upon Flames, idea happens and, well, the stones are sliced up, two sets of rings and stone pacifiers happen, the rest is the history of KHR.

Different Rant:

Another reason why I think this is a believible concept has to do with the fact that those seven stones get, well, grinded up. I'm not sure if anyone is familiar with the D&D Module the Apocalypse Stone but, well, if those seven stones were really needed to keep life on earth, well, alive, then cutting and grinding them into different shapes kind of destroyed their identity and left flakes of discarded material around, too. I also think that the Blood Seal on the Vongola Rings shows that it wouldn't have functioned for long either, given that it was crippling the time axis' ability to function right before we being in the whole tainted by the Curse originating from the Arcobaleno Pacifiers.

Bloodlines die off but in the case concerning Tsuna inheriting, the Ninth Don clearly skipped a number of Heirs closer to home as I'd imagine that daughters married out of the Vongola Famiglia before along with legitimizing bastards also likely getting used for political marriages. Meaning that there's a number of third, maybe fourth cousins that should have closer ties to the main Family then Tsuna's bloodline, after all, I'd imagine that the Mafia had, at one point, been marrying second cousins, meaning that since the Main Family are descendants of the Second, until there were no viable Sky blood relations to the Second living in Italy, Tsuna shouldn't be the fourth heir in the first place and, well, he did get kicked out of the Famiglia as I'd imagine using a Flame Seal on a Flame User is something of a death sentence and something akin to shunning in a social manner too.

Only reason why Tsuna was in the Ranking had everything to do with the resources that the Ninth had at his disposal in regards to enforcing his will be done and even in decline, the Vongola Famiglia had a lot of pull. I'd imagine a lot of Dons didn't mind the idea of a

former civilian being given the reigns either, seeing him as an outsider and given his young age, a clear puppet for them to use. I think, in the end, he was ultimately a puppet and that Flames had been used in regards to 'change' Tsuna's mind, after all, he'd have sported a Flame Seal for a good eight years, if he had been Flame Sealed at that age, and he'd also been a social parish due to the fact that Sky Attraction was on going but with his Flames behind a Flame Seal.

He had be, unknowingly, driving everyone crazy when they couldn't connect with his Sky Flame, which is likely why even adults were behind on the bullying scene. They were punishing Tsuna for his, supposed, deception or baiting them. He'd been ripe for the indoctrination and with most of his Will behind that Flame Seal, he, of course, was at a disadvantage when it came to enforce his Will to not be Don of a Mafia Famiglia. Reborn hadn't been told that he'd been Active when he'd been Flame Sealed, if he had, I do believe his approached would have been far different or, at the very least, he'd call in Shamal Trident a lot sooner to have the doctor examine Tsuna to ensure that his health wasn't in any danger when re-introducing Sky Flames to Tsuna's body.

So, yea, given Dying Will Flames of the Sky are... well, there's something that, in the hands of a highly imaginative person, highly danger and capable of impossible things, I've kind of did show some of what I believe they are capable of in that Trading One Life for Another unfinished story.

Shorts of Gods, Ghosts, and Slayers: Buf

I don't own Buffy the Vampire Slayer or Heaven Official's Blessing!

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All that is gold does not glitter,

Not All those who wander are lost;

The old that is strong does not wither,

Deep roots are not reached by the frost.

From the ashes a fire shall be woken,

A light from the shadows shall spring;

Renewed shall be blade that was broken,

The crownless again shall be king.

- J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring

One

"Rest well, Gege." Hua Cheng murmurs at the sleeping teen, he so wishes he can reach out to touch his love's cheek under the eye bandage.

The yet to be twenty year old incarnation of his beloved Prince sleeps on. He'd been drawn to this room hours ago, the world he finds himself on, it's clearly not his own. And yet, this bright soul continues to be a beacon, calling the Devastation Class Demon to his side.

And yet, Hua Cheng can't say for certain if the young man resting is his Prince reincarnation or if a previous one. After all, while the foundation of the soul is the same, it's lacking a certain feature, one that takes the Ghost King a handful of seconds to realize.

It's the lack of Divinity but, like Cultivators, he suspects that the soul is getting ready to house it or will house it again. Which ever the case maybe, he's certain that his beloved Prince will once more ascend to his rightful place in the Heavens.

Still... Crimson Rain Reaching Toward a Flower muses. "This does offend me so."

His features shift and his cloths alter in style while calling up his signature Silver Spirit Butterflies. Eming rattles in its sheath in excitement at what's to come. His finger tips gently glide about Eming's hilt before the Ghost King, one of the Four Great Calamities, a Devastation Class Demon, the infamous Crimson Rain Reaching Toward a Flower, Hua Cheng, fondly referred to as San Lang by his beloved Prince readies himself for hunting down the one who stole his future or past beloved's eye.

The Spirit Butterflies flutter off as Hua Cheng with all the grace of a hunting cat stalks out of the room. Before he re-enters the Void of Realms, he will have the head of the one who dared take his Prince's incarnation's *eye* .

Two

"Who...?" Xander trails off, he's so tired and for the first time in a very long while, he's some place warm and secure.

"Hush, you're find San Lang. Sleep for now." A man's voice says in comfort, the petting of his hair is rather soothing.

Xander tries to suppress a yawn, wanting to murmur that's not his name. Yet, in the end, the touch of this man seems to be so *right* and

some deep part of him refuses to let him speak.

And so, under the comforting strokes of the former Crown Prince of Xian Le, also known as Flower Crown Martial God, Xie Lian, also sneered as the God of Trash and Lost Things behind his back watches as his beloved husband's incarnation rests, his hand gently going through the young teen's black hair that's matted with both blood and sweat.

"So young, San Lang... And just how did you getting so lost that you wind up here?" Wonders the God.

While he's got plenty of question to inquire about, for now, Xian Le is content to have his husband with him once more. Yes, the former Ghost King is once more alive but it's also so heart breaking that his San Lang ended up here of all places, in his domain of the toss aside, the forgotten, the broken, or to summarize, what people consider **Trash** .

For now, he'll remember his San Lang and treasure those memories, for in the future he'll deal with the teen that holds his beloved's soul, learning about who San Lang is currently and they'll figure out things from there.

Eming rattles sadly in its sheath while Ruoye shifts just so and then gives his shoulder's a comforting squeeze. "Thank you Ruoye. And we'll take things as they come, Eming."

Three

Willow isn't sure how this fell apart, after all, it was just suppose to be a gentle push to get Angel and Buffy to reconcile. Yet, it went wrong, oh so very wrong.

"Which story did you use?" Giles asks, he's not pleased at all.

"The Tale of Elemental Masters and the Black Water Ghost." Willow answers. "I mean, Ming Yi and Shi Qingxuan were lovers!"

The English Watcher gives her a look of supreme disappointment before rubbing the bridge of his nose. "Ming Yi was He Xaun, who was the Black Water Submerging Boats." Giles states slowly. "He spent centuries spying on the Shi brothers, waiting to exact his vengeance on the brothers."

Her heart clutches as she gets a clearer picture of the story but there's something... "Brothers? Isn't Shi Qingxuan called Lady Wind Master in the story? How can she be a he?"

"Gods and Ghosts are able to freely shape-shift, Shi Qingxuan just happens to enjoy switching freely between the two genders."

"That explains the Ghost in Red always looking different." Willow realizes.

The doors open and Xander walks into the library, causing Shi Qingxuan, aka Buffy, to bolt towards the new arrival. "Xie Lian!" Then corrects herself after a few seconds, fanning herself in embarrassment, "Ah, sorry, you seem like someone I know."

"Ok?" Xander clearly is at a loss of what's going on while Black Water, aka Angel, seems to be wary all of a sudden. "Ah, what's up with the get up?"

It's no long before Cordelia storms the library, it seems that Xander and her might have had another argument. *One crisis at a time please!* Willow mentally begs the higher powers.

Four

Feeling the magical bandages moving about his torso as he approaches the bar counter. Xander's been working at this bar for about a week now so he has an idea of who's who among the

regulars, so the Chinese teen wearing white is a very new face. Then as he gets closer, the bandages snake up from where they like to rest to his neck.

"Ruoye?" The seemingly teenager inquires and the bandages wave its ends, clearly not caring about the crowd.

Although, it seems that most people are pointly looking away. "Your's?" He inquires and the teen blinks, looking up at him with a brilliant smile.

"Yes, Ruoye is mine. Thank you for taking care of them." The teen says as the silk bandages snake their way about the fingers before wrapping about the wrist.

"It was my pleasure, they were fairly useful but I'm glad they are back with their owner." Xander says, he'd found them in Ethan's back when they had been clearing out the shop.

"Ah, where are my manners, I'm Xie Lian, wait, I think I should say Lian Xie." Lian introduces himself.

"Xander Harris." He returns the introduction. "How long are you in town for?" Xander inquires politely.

"Nice to meet you" Lian says upon his introduction, it's clear that something about him seems to cause some kind of reaction. "Not for long, my husband should be arriving shortly after he finishes with something."

"Husband?" Ok, yea, that does throw the Scooby member for a loop. Lian smiles in a rather fond manner, "Yes, Hua... Cheng Hua. We've been together for some time now."

It's at this point that he suspects that the Chinese teen is older then his actually appearance would suggest. Getting a good look at Lian's eyes, yea, this wasn't an actual teenager before him, not at all. What Lian was, he didn't know but not human would be a safe bet at this

point. Silence hangs between them as Xander marks off what what Lian can't be, which is clearly not a vampire.

"If you don't mind... Just... What do you usual do for a living?" Lian inquires and Xander blinks at the question.

"Well, I did graduate from high school and I never had a job before this one." He states truthfully while finding Lian suddenly rather larger then life.

"Where did you attend high school?" Lian asks and he says truthfully, "Sunnydale High School."

There's a slight widening of eyes before a look of sympathy overcomes the other's features. "Ah, Sunnydale..." Lian no longer seems as threatening as before.

"What about Sunnydale?" The voice comes from behind him. "Hua Cheng!" Lian greets another Chinese man wearing primarily red although there's an image of a silver butterfly on the front while around the neck are tiny butterflies... Wait, that's actually a silver necklace, Xander realizes as it moves as the two hug each other.

"I grew up there." He admits and finds Cheng studying him with crimson eyes, although for some reason, he kind of feels right at home for some reason in this man's presence. "Is that so?"

"Again, thank you for looking after Ruoye." Lian says in the silence that descends between them, there's something akin to approval in Hua Cheng's gaze not long into said silence.

"It wasn't any trouble, they were a great help in the past and I'm happy they are back with whom they belong." Xander states.

Before the pair of husbands leave, Hua Cheng leaves a business card, it's simply red in color while sporting a number of silver butterflies exploding from the center of the card. On the back of it, it's

black and there's characters in white. He can only guess at which alphabet the characters come from.

Putting the card into a pocket, Xander notices the time and mourns that he's unable to grab a bite to eat before his shift begins.

Five

The strangest item in the shop seems to be the sword behind colored glass that sports a number of paper talismans along the edge of where the glass box meets the wooden surface. Buffy isn't sure why she feels drawn to the sabre, even with the talismans keeping it sealed, it's clearly magical in nature, doesn't stop her from sensing something coming from the sabre.

"Ah, the young lady perhaps you best get away from that!" The clerk calls from the counter where Willow had made a beeline for. There's a note of distress in that voice.

"What's the history of the weapon?" Buffy can hear Willow ask, the Vampire Slayer's attention is on the clerk, although, out of the corner of her right eye, it almost seems like the metal... rippled.

"I don't know its history, the owner hasn't said anything other then order that it's to be kept under that glass and that I'm to add more paper talismans when needed." The clerk states.

"Do you know anything about it? Anything at all?" Asks Willow while Buffy places her right hand on top of the glass case, the clerk glares at her and she does withdraw it in an innocent fashion.

"Eming... The sabre's supposedly called Eming." The clerk says and turns to hurry them out of the shop.

There's a child in red looking through the window that they walk pass. "You think that sabre is important?" Willow asks her.

"A sabre called Eming? Pff, I doubt it, but we should get Giles to look up the name just in case." She admits, not caring at the feeling of eyes at her back.

Unknown to the pair, the child in red is giving the pair a considering look.

Author's Note: I thought up this crossover during a work shift once, I felt such an urge to write out a number of idea, really, the first image to enter my mind had to do with Xander getting found among the junk of Xie Lian, having toss himself into that gaping mouth that Buffy left as she fled with Angel upon his Soul returning.

Another idea of a crossover would be Xander taking over Shen Qingqui's life and Anya being his System. That would be The Scum Villain's Self-Saving System, it's the first story from the writer of Official Heaven's Blessing and Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation. The only idea I have concerning a Buffy and Grandmaster crossover has to do with the Halloween Episode, so I might write that up under title of Halloween Episode, My Style.

[New as of Aug 20th 2019] Also of note, I am posting this on after I posted Part 3 of the KHR! and HS DxD is finished. I posted this on my DA account on the 19th of Aug. This... might throw off how I update here on ... Maybe, not sure, guess we'll just have to find out, huh? :D

Cultivators OnLine P 2: Grandmaster

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation.

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Personally, Wei Wuxian isn't sure how it is that after ensuring that Mo Xuanyu and Wen Sizhui were well on their respective way to Luanzang Wei Settlement, that within almost twenty hours on being alone once more, he encounters Hanguang-Jun, who's alone this time and it's evening as well. If this were still just a game, he'd figure this was a Random Encounter or the beginnings of a troublesome chain of a side Quests. Given it's no longer a game but his new reality, the former American puts on a pleasant smile and decides to wait for said said man to speak, all the while beginning to make a mental file under the heading of Hanguang-Jun.

The Cultivator before him is a touch taller then him, sports golden eyes, seems to have a very good poker face, and seems to be the intense sort of person given how intensely focus the man is staring at Wei Wuxian. The silence between them does wear on him, he shifts his weight a few seconds before he finally breaks the silence hanging between them, giving the other man a beaming grin as he greets him, "Hanguang-Jun! Fancy meeting you here? Did ya miss me?"

There's a slight widening of eyes that are so quick that if he hadn't been waiting for any kind of reaction, Wei Wuxian is certain that he'd have missed it or dismissed it as a trick. "Shameless." States the man in white robes with hints of baby blue.

A touch a mischief more then likely glints in Wei Wuxian's eyes as he remarks in turn, "Well of course I'm shameless, I'm the infamous **[Yiling Patriarch]** ! The corrupted Blessed of Heaven! Demonic Cultivator extraordinaire! The most diabolic Necromancer ever!"

It's hard to believe but it's like the Cultivator before him did get stiffer and his demeanor chillier. It's enough to make the former Player wonder if it's not some kind of unconscious use of **[Spiritual Energy]** as the air seems to be a touch colder now as well. Yet there's not a single change upon that handsome face.

His grin only seems to widen a few seconds later and throws his hands behind his head, turning around, Wei Wuxian begins to walk away. After all, this isn't a game and, well, he's got some distance to travel, he could have used Suibian to travel there but wanted to spend time in a wilderness that was lush with color. It's a little while later that he notices that the famous Hanguang-Jun is following behind him.

Wei Wuxian isn't sure what to make of this current situation, he's never really interacted with anyone, be they Cultivators or civilians, before he'd been broken out of that jail cell by Wen Qing and her younger brother, Wen Ning. In the months before leaving with Wen Yuan for company, the former Player had only interacted with the Wens that are the remnants of the **[Qishan Wen Sect]** , mainly, they were generally the civilian members, they were the ones who did the grunt work in regards to creating talismans and Spiritual tools, although it seems that Wen Qing is considered the foremost expert in regards to Medical Cultivation and in the pass almost fourteen years, Wen Ning had been learning from his elder sister in that field while also helping to teach their nephew to become a Cultivator.

He's also fairly certain the only reason why Mo Xuanyu even agreed to leave his village has to do with learning how to harness **[Resentful Energy]** along with the fact that the **[Yiling Patriarch]** himself wanted him alive, as in, Wei Wuxian wasn't going to kill him for the 'crime' of trying to mimic his Demonic Cultivation unlike a certain Sect who's members wear purple. He knew that the younger man had his back against the wall, between a rock and a hard place, so, yea, it was kind of a no brainer once Mo Xuanyu realized he'd been honest about sending him, alive, to Luanzang Wei Settlement to live and to study, after getting cleared by Wen Qing, of course.

The fact that said young man being a Cut-Sleeve didn't really seem to be cause for concern in Wei Wuxian's books, after all, when it came to giving Wei Wuxian character traits, he put down bisexual as one of those.

So, as he journeys unhurriedly through the forest, nothing attacks him, the few Ghosts that linger in this forest avoid him. It's clear that they also seem to be divided over whether the Lan Sect member is with him, so they also don't approach Hanguang-Jun. It brings to mind the fact that the Party function is still something he has access to along with his Friend's List, not that anyone who's Logged In has replied to any of his Private Messages.

Calling up his Character Menu, he, again, notices the lack of Level.

Birth Name: Wei Ying

Courtesy Name: Wei Wuxian

Title: **[Yiling Patriarch]**

Gender: Man

Physical Age: 19

Character Traits: Fear of Dogs, Bisexual, Enjoys employing a public persona of reckless, shameless, and disrespectful individual, Curious in regards of Resentful and Spiritual power use in any complicity, and Kind.

Status: Rogue Cultivator

Equipped Spirit Tools: Chinese Sword named Suibian, Chinese Flute named Chenqing, Black Cultivator Robes.

Party Members: None

Not much has changed besides the list of Spirit Tools equipped. He muses to himself. Wei Wuxian relaxes his pose, lowering his arms and does adjust his robes.

It causes his thoughts to wonder, once more, concerning the nature of this world and why it is that he's still able to access certain things in relation to this having once been a game while the rest of the world doesn't behave as though he's a Player Character. It's jarring to have access to things that should mean that he's in a game and yet, nothing outside of those limited function act like he's in a game. There's no Levels to be seen nor does there seem to be floating names above the heads of what should be typical game spawned monsters.

There's a lot about this new life of his that doesn't make much sense to the former Player and there's still this nagging feeling that he's got an answer to the why of it, it's just at the tips of his fingers as it were only, grabbing it doesn't do anything besides make it move away from his hand. Reviewing what little hints he has, it's not hard to realize that it's that game update that is related to his current situation. *But it doesn't explain what's been going on with the Blessed of Heaven, even the former NPCs say that there's something wrong with them.* Wei Wuxian admits with a frustrated sigh.

Tilting his head up and trusting his ability to sense the two types of energy, the former Player stares up at the stars. Even though he's never made a study of stars, he's fairly confident that the stars over his head were different. Wei Wuxian feels rather lonely, even when he tried Private Messaging those few names that are on his Friend's List but they seem to remain Unread along with the simple fact that the same names seem to always be online.

Man... Is this some kind of gamer hell? He wonders to himself. Feeling depress, the former Player continues to walk through the night without any of the various ghosts lingering within the forest hindering him in any way.

C (o _ o) D

It's been two days since his encounter with the Lan Cultivator and for some reason, Hanguang-Jun seems to be dogging Wei Wuxian's heels. *Maybe I should try conversing with him again?* The former Player asks himself.

In the time he's spent within the presence, Wei Wuxian noticed the bundled up left arm acting up every so often and how long it took Hanguang-Jun to calm the piece of fierce corpse using the string instrument that took him a while to learn is a guqin. Wei Wuxian had been tempted to play Chenqing to help speed up the process like he had after destroying the Goddess Statue but can't say if his aid would be appreciated. He'd noticed how like stone Hanguang-Jun's expression is and he did hear another title for the man, the Second Jade of Lan as well as a Courtesy Name of Lan Wangji.

Both were added to his mental folder concerning Hanguang-Jun along with how the Cultivator doesn't seem to think to barter when it came to purchasing things, sure, bartering is a touch of a foreign concept to such a modern man that Wei Wuxian had been, he, at least, knew that you could. He'd done it back when this had just been a game, after all and he's managed to knock a bit off the prices he'd paid. Then again, few of them want to offend him once they realize he's the infamous Blessed of Heaven, the **[Yiling Patriarch]** .

It's noon of the third day with Hanguang-Jun and him seemingly traveling in the same direction. Plopping down across the table of said Cultivator, the man's only reaction is to lower the bowl to the table before staring at him with those lovely golden eyes. "So... It seems we're traveling buddies, Lan-gege! Perhaps you should share the details of this quest we're on?" He is fairly sure that he got the nick name just right, given the slight narrowing of those golden eyes.

"Not traveling together." Finally states Hanguang-Jun in a chilly tone and he merely grins widely. "Really? Cause it seems you've been following me, you know? What are the odds that we're going in the same direction?"

"I mean, I know why I'm traveling into **[Qinghe Nie Sect]** territory, why are you? And why on foot?" He asks a minute after waiting for Hanguang-Jun. The white clad Cultivator seems to get composed, the hands that had held the bowl slip under the table, likely settling on the lap.

Still, Hanguang-Jun doesn't say anything other keeping a chilly feeling that seems to roll off of him. After he orders a cup of wine tea, Wei Wuxian decides to see if he can't get more words out of Hanguang-Jun. With a course of action that should get an annoyed response from the Lan Cultivator.

So, Wei Wuxian began chatting about the injustice of having been thrown into that jail cell back when he first entered into this world and transmigrated into his Wei Wuxian's Character. Whining about how he'd been so bored, thirsty, and hungry during his short stay in the **[Yunmeng Jiang Sect]** prison. Still, as his whiny rant winds down, Hanguang-Jun hasn't spoken but had finished drinking his bland soup, it had to be bland given Wei Wuxian had noticed pretty much nothing besides herbs within it.

After getting a refill from the waitress, who also came to take away the now empty bowl. He lets the silence descend as he wracks his brain for another topic before settling on the more recent incident at Defan Mountain, commenting on the various rumors he'd heard concerning that **[Night Hunt]** , like how someone set up over a hundred nets and suspect which of the sects had the money to spend on such a course of action. Mentioned how overwhelmed Wen Sizhui had been, although he called the teen Wei Sizhui, he's unsure if Hanguang-Jun still possessed a grudge with the surviving Wens over the actions of their more influential and prideful relatives of the **[Qishan Wen Sect]** , who were mostly the Cultivators while the remnants had been mostly craftsmen with a scattering of low level Cultivators who'd been punished for one reason or another by having their Cultivation crippled.

Still, Hanguang-Jun doesn't respond to his ramblings and the various rumors, some of which he exaggerated while others he made up on

the spot. In the end, silence descends between them once more and he pouts. Privately admitting that Second Jade of the Lan is proven to be rather accurate, given his attempts to rile up Hanguang-Jun was as useful as getting a reaction from a stone.

"So... Lan-gege, you're likely wondering where Wei Sizhui is, right?" He muses as he breaks the silence. "Well, not sure if you noticed it when you had met the guy but Mo Xuanyu had a bit of **[Resentful Energy]** clinging to him, you know? Which is kind of funny, as I thought that given how people demonized me for figuring out a way to harness **[Resentful Energy]** that all my books on the topic would have been put to the flame, you know?"

"Isn't your sect rather close to the **[Lanling Lin Sect]** ? Do you know if they're looking into the subject?" He's gambling on that sounding like an accusation.

Hanguang-Jun's eyes seem to blaze in anger before snapping sharply, "Ridiculous." Wei Wuxian can't help the grin that grows on his face at the reaction.

"Oh? I seem to recall something about a guy named Xue Yang? He was a guest Discipline there, for a time and people seem to mention he'd massacred a minor sect?" It had been a talked about in hush tones during the late evenings, after Hanguang-Jun went to bed.

There's conflict of emotion in those golden eyes, which makes him wonder if the topic hit a bit too close to home for Hanguang-Jun. If Hanguang-Jun is the Second Jade then his elder brother must be the First Jade and also the current Sect Leader, who's title is Zewu-Jun. There's something about Zewu-Jun that has to do with the end of the **[Sunshot Campaign]** but he's got a blank about it, after all, it's been over a decade since that event happened.

"Is there more to the story of concerning Xue Yang?" Wei Wuxian asks curiously. Hanguang-Jun actually inclines his head, to his surprise. "Mind sharing it?" He inquires and there's a slight frown, he's getting the feeling that it might not be because Hanguang-Jun is

tight lipped but he's just not comfortable with talking, like, at all. Given that so far, the words spoken had been short and rather blunt.

"Lan-gege... Your not one for talking, are you?" He comments with a bemused smile as he rests his head on his left hand while leaning upon the table. His sitting pose shifting in such a way that almost seems like he's laying on his side. "So... Are you or aren't you headed somewhere in the **[Qinghe Nie Sect]** ?" Wei Wuxian asks, hoping that this will at least get answered with a simple yes or no.

"Yes." Hanguang-Jun admits simply and with a slight frown. "Ok, so, is it due to finding more pieces of that fierce corpse?" The former Player asks.

The silence is rather telling in its own right as those golden eyes look away before a slight incline of the head. "Do you want help in putting Hum... the guy back together again?" He'd been about to say Humpty Dumpty but figures that would just confuse the other Cultivator as it isn't a local nursery rhythm.

There's a clear look of suspicion, likely do to the quick change mid way through his question but, it's clear that Hanguang-Jun is considering the pros and cons of accepting his help. So, when Hanguang-Jun nods, something highly unexpected happens. To his vision, fireworks go off and a banner unfurls with Congratulations for forming a Party with Lan Zhan and mentions him accepting the Quest entitled **[The Puzzle Pieces Collectors]** . As it fades from view, he becomes aware of Hanguang-Jun sitting across from him.

There's a look of shock in Hanguang-Jun's golden eyes, it seems what happened hadn't just been seen by him either. "Well, looks like the Heavens have decided to bless our endeavor concerning this course of action." He does his best to say in a light tone, all the while he's anything but calm or collected over this forming of their Party. It's also slightly weird how it feels, then again, this is the first time he's formed a Party since transmigrating into Wei Wuxian. He can only guess at how things will proceed from here, after all, when in a

party, not only can you find your party members easily but you can tell how full their HP and SP are.

Birth Name: Wei Ying

Courtesy Name: Wei Wuxian

Title: **[Yiling Patriarch]**

Gender: Man

Physical Age: 19

Character Traits: Fear of Dogs, Bisexual, Enjoys employing a public persona of reckless, shameless, and disrespectful individual, Curious in regards of Resentful and Spiritual power use in any complicity, and Kind.

Status: Rogue Cultivator

Active Quest: **[The Puzzle Pieces Collectors]**

Equipped Spirit Tools: Chinese Sword named Suibian, Chinese Flute named Chenqing, Black Cultivator Robes.

Party Members: Lan Zhan.

Arriving at the strange castle that's also a crypt, Wei Wuxian can't help but tilt his head in regards to the cut opening, doing his best to ignore the presence of a certain beast. Honestly, what had he been thinking, picking being afraid of dogs as a character trait? Then again, what little he recalls about Wei Wing's background, it seemed like a logical characteristic for former street urchin to have. Something to do with competing with stray dogs for food in back alleys of some small city he recalls.

"This seems familiar..." Murmurs the former Player, there's something he must have read on a game's forum once but he can't be sure he's remembering it right. It's something about the sabres that the **[Qinghe Nie Sect]** uses instead of the usual Chinese straight sword that the rest of the Cultivator Sects use. It had to do with what was once a real life thing that once happened in China that got carried into the game.

"Well, guess there's only really one way to find them." He states before entering into the hill castle tomb, using **[Spiritual Energy]** to light up the blade of Suibian, it's more of a gimmick technique, an Easter egg of a sort with the only justification being teaching people how to channel their **[Spiritual Energy]** into testing to see if the item, generally used on swords, is suitable to be used as a spiritual tool. The lighter the color that the item glows, the better suited it was.

So, Suibian's glowing a bright white and chasing the darkness of the hall back. Tapping Chenqing with his other hand, he slowly enters more into the tomb. Upon finding a coffin, he shares a look with Hanguang-Jun and moves to let the white robed Cultivator said coffin. Once the lid is moved and Suibian's light shines on the sabres within does he remembers more about why this Sect built them. "Sabre tombs... Oh, that's why those corpses wandered out..." Wei Wuxian murmurs with a knowing nod.

Then a canine whine taints his mood, causing him to stiffen and glance from the way they came, the dog didn't enter, much to his relief. Yes, Hanguang-Jun does look at him once more, it shouldn't be long before his current Party Member puts the pieces together concerning his reaction to said dog to realize his mild phobia. Doing his best as though he didn't just stiffen in fear from a mere dog's whine, he glances between both sides of the hallway.

"Lan-gege, I think we might get a clearer direction if you play **[Inquiry]** ." There's a slight stiffening in Hanguang-Jun's pose, yet again, at him calling the Lan Cultivator said nickname when it's just the two of them. He knows that use of gege means brother, same with didi. He's not overly familiar as to which means older brother

and which means younger, never mind the ones that also translates into Martial Brother. He also gets the idea that use also is a mark of closeness between two people as well, kind of like chan and kun in Japanese.

"Not close." Remarks Hanguang-Jun as the other pulls out his guqin from its cloth bundle that had been carried on the back. "We're Party Members, Lan-gege! We're close, close as close can be right now! I can sense you without even trying and I know it's the same for you." Wei Wuxian counters, good to get a confirmation that the use of gege does denounce a close relationship.

It takes about two minutes before Hanguang-Jun's guqin plays due to the owner of the dog answering. They do find the owner within one of the walls, who kind of looks familiar along with being only in his early teens plus sporting the uniform of the **[Lanling Jin Sect]** . Hanguang-Jun carries the teen out while Wei Wuxian stays within the sabre tomb and he frowns as he does his best to ignore the sounds concerning the dog and the teen, focusing on his thoughts as he reasons out why else they might need to explore deeper into this tomb.

What he knows about the sabres used by **[Qinghe Nie Sect]** is that they get imprinted with a certain desire along with aligned with yang. The walking corpses are one of the usual enemies Cultivators, it means that the restless sabres likely find some kind of fulfillment with having those kinds of corpses around, perhaps keeping them from wandering the country side looking for them? Which means that there's a kind of spirit balance within this sabre tomb, that it's been disrupted by the would be looters and the leaving of a number of the corpses within the tomb. Which means that the looters never left...

"...me!" Wei Wuxian blinks as he finds said teen before him and looking rather upset, even if rather pale. "I'm sorry, were you talking to me?"

The teen gets rather flustered by that while he look beyond the teen towards Hanguang-Jun. "I think we need to figure out a different

approach for this one, Hanguang-Jun. I rather not risk getting stuck in the walls like the looters or what almost happened with the kid here." Reaching out and ruffling the teen's hair, noticing the red dot, which means the kid is related to someone important.

The kid's whole pose stiffens in shock along with gaping at him with wide eyes. It's clear that the kid isn't use to being touched by strangers and he withdraws his hand before gently using both hands to turn the teen then pushes the teen out of the tomb. Let then a foot of getting moved, the teen recovers and slaps at his hands along with moving away from him, within a muttering of murmurs, the teen marches himself out of the tomb.

Doing his best to ignore the dog by focusing on the two fellow humans. "So, kid, what's your name?" The former Player asks curiously as he focuses on the teen.

The teen seems to straighten up to his full height with a clearly puffed out chest. "I'm the heir of **[Lanling Jin Sect]** , Jin Ling!" The dog does a bark in agreement.

He'd have cooed and ruthlessly teased the teen for puffing up like a bird of some sort if not for the fact that there is a dog standing to Jin Ling's right, from the sound of where the bark came from. "I see, I see. I'm Wei Ying, Courtesy name Wei Wuxian, Blessed of Heaven's **[Yiling Patriarch]** ." Walking over to where the Lan Cultivator is, he pats Hanguang-Jun on the shoulder as he introduces him, "And this is Hanguang-Jun!"

And if it puts Hanguang-Jun between himself and the dog, well, that's just a happy coincidence. Really, it just was as far as the former Player is concerned. "We better head for the inn together, best check for you for a **[Curse Mark]** some place private." He adds cheerfully while he pats Hanguang-Jun's shoulders before turning and leading the way back to the local town.

When the dog comes bounding across his path, he only flinches only slightly as the dog moves behind him. A few seconds later, through

the Party function, he can tell that Hanguang-Jun is following behind him. Given how the dog keeps appearing to run before him, he's pretty sure that Jin Ling is following behind as well.

They encounter a Nie Sect Cultivator, who Jin Ling seems to know. "Sect Leader Nie!" The apparent Sect Leader's gaze lingers in studying Wei Wuxian and towards the teen trailing behind him, who marches forward with his dog falling in step with the Jin heir. "Lan Wangji. Blessed Wei Wuxian." The sabreless Sect Leader Nie greets politely who uses a fan to cover his lower face while turning his full attention upon the teen.

"Jin Ling, your uncle and his men have been looking for you." Sect Leader Nie addresses Jin Ling. He notices how the teen almost bunches up at the mention of an uncle while the Nie slowly gazes back upon the former Player and then towards Hanguang-Jun.

"Well, best not keep your uncle waiting, eh, A-Ling?" Wei Wuxian comments and the teen's head snaps to give him a heated look, kind of reminding him of a cat, in truth. *So prickly...* He thinks to himself as the teen seems to remember his manners and thanks the odd Nie Cultivator, who gives directions on where to find Sandu Shengshou.

"A-Ling! Remember to have your uncle check you over for a **[Cursed Mark]** !" He calls out after Jin Ling is about six feet away. He can only imagine the teen's reaction to his holler as his focus returns to the strangeness that is the current Leader of the Nie Sect.

"So... We have business to discuss in regards to that sabre tomb of yours." Wei Wuxian remarks with a sharp smile and there's only a slight widening of eyes before the fan closes as the Nie Sect Leader plasters a rather friendly look. "Ah, I heard rumors that the **[Yiling Patriarch]** seems unaffected by what plagues the rest of the Blessed of Heaven. It gives one hope that, given time, the rest should recover as well."

"I hope you don't mind if Hanguang-Jun joins us? We're working together on this investigation and it would be quicker just to include

him then to catch him up later." Wei Wuxian states, he rather not be alone with this seemingly harmless man, plus, if he were to guess, Hanguang-Jun and him seem to know each other given how close in age they are.

"Ah, yes, of course." Then the Cultivator bows to him, introducing himself, "I'm Nie Huaisang, Sect Leader of the **[Qinghe Nie Sect]** , Blessed Wei Wuxian."

"You can drop the Blessed and just call me Wei Wuxian. After all, given the path I created, I doubt anyone considers me anything but a villainous demon these days." He remarks with a self-deprecating smile.

They walk side by side, in the end, heading to get a private room in which to discuss matters. *And might be the beginnings of a business partnership.* The former Player muses privately to himself.

Ending it here!

Divided Paths Begun with a Seal: KHR!

I don't own Katyou Hitman Reborn or the background concerning Guides & Sentinels!

- x + i | i + x -

It's been eight years since Tsuna came online as a Sentinel. He's not sure if he should be celebrating the anniversary of when he came online, after all, not only had he'd been five but that, according to his mother, his father's family has a history of being Guides of a maximum of third ranking while his mother's few online relatives had been Guides, general ranking of two although his mother is ranking one. With that kind of family history, none expected him to come online as anything but a Guide, a weak one but a Guide.

A tapping on his left hand back alteration snaps him out before he fully Zones into his own mind. A quick tap on the pressure plate across his palms causes his ear bud to blare music while the tapping upon his almost knuckles begins to go into an off rhythm to the music's score. Soon enough, the lights turn and the crossing walk changes, he walks across with a few other students. It's the first of November and it's rather mild when it comes to weather.

The teen switches through his various senses, keeping to his five physical senses as his sixth sense is highly... odd, like how in recent months, he swears he sees chains lurking under the skins certain people sporting various glows with a black outline never mind the feeling of... futility(?) approaching. Just seeing those chains make him uneasy and he's spent many an evening checking his body over to see if HE has chains like that lurking under his own skin but nothing seems to be lurking under his skin besides it's usual orange that pulses to various beats that he can't hear.

The tapping alters on the back of his left hand and he's pulled once more out of his thoughts. Pressing the pressure bar third, the music

changes to metal rock. A slight smirk on his face, Tsuna jogs the rest of the way to school, the feeling of his muscles moving and the way air brushes across his face... It makes him feel alive.

It's not that hard to know where Kyoya is upon getting through the school gates and gives a wave in said direction without flickering his eyes in said direction. For some reason, since age eight, he's always been able to sense where Kyoya is within a mile range. The older teen hasn't come online but for some reason, he figured that the Prefect could go in either direction, something to do with the purple with indigo that the chains under his friend's skin seem to suit both.

Doing his best to empty his mind, he enters the special room that are meant for Sentinels. Given his young age when he went online, a lot of his studies had been him alone in a computer room. He'd join his age mates for lunches and gym. Tsuna doesn't get why he couldn't just stay at home for his computer lessons but figured it had to do with keeping him socialized. Given how it's more common for people go online in their late teens through thirties, there hadn't been a special room designed for Sentinels kids and then, when tested for his ranking, it's hard to say if it would have been a wise investment.

There's rare cases of kids between ages of ten to fourteen coming online so there's more suitable rooms designed with Sentinels in mind since he'd turn ten. Although, he'd been the only one to make use of said rooms up a few months ago when Yamamoto Takeshi went online during a baseball game. It's clear that the baseball player is having trouble coming to grips with being a Sentinel, sure, the other is only rating two but senses involved are sight and smell, which relates to the other's taste buds. The other teen had to give up on eating his favorite junk foods along with eating his typical fast food, plus he's been having trouble learning to cook food.

"Hey Tsuna!" Takeshi chirps with a semi-fake smile, which he returns. "Takeshi."

Settling down at his table, he slings his pack off his shoulder and onto the hook next to his seat. There's likely a number of social cues

that been skipped between Takeshi and himself but, well, he's found being polite to be near the bottom of his priority list, the last slot on that list is caring about his absentee father. He gets rather impatient with people, it's not about how they are, it's just... within a few minutes he Knows things about the person that he shouldn't or want to know.

It's like how he knows about Takeshi's problems with adjusting without Takeshi mentioning it or about how his progress when it comes to his cooking lessons with the Cooking Club, what little of it there is. Tsuna glances over to where Takeshi is seated, looking rather bored and loose. He's thankful that smell is one of Takeshi's senses or else, he'd have to worry about scented soaps and detergents from the other teen.

Soon enough, their computers power up and as the booting menu finishes, the school bell goes. The first class program loads itself and he unplugs the ear bud along with turning off the notebook phone before taking the mechanical band from his left hand off, putting it on the table top. Putting the plug for the ear bud into the computer's headset jack, he checks to be sure the mouse works before putting in his Student Identity Number and then inserting the Student ID into the card reader, thus begins his first lesson of the day.

- = Time | Flow = -

It's been three days since Reborn showed up claiming that Tsuna's going to be the next Don of some Mafia Family due to him being descended from the founder of it. It's not going to amount to anything, he knows for certain, the events that lead to him coming online as a Sentinel saw to that. It also seems as though Reborn is very skeptical of him being a Sentinel, something to do with Skies always being Guides, there's mention of him might being in some kind of Hyper state. It hardly matters if Reborn does or does not accept that fact, in fact, it hardly matters what said shrunken man thinks as far as Tsuna is concerned.

The Cursed Man is a rank two Guide along with, well, Cursed, with a capital C and it's a clear case of it destroying him, bit by bit. There's a number of bank accounts along with aliases, some the man remembers and others that he's long since forgotten. The man's loyalties lay in the criminal underworld and he's a Sun. There's a number of titles the man claims ties to but the one that's overtaking his identity is that of Sun Arcobaleno, which is also the source of the Curse that's leaching what it can from the man, mostly the hitman's Dying Will Flame, pretty much every second of the day, every day of the year.

Tsuna finds it hard to even Look at the shrunken man as he can't help but see the effect of the Cursed Stone that's steadily consuming the man. Yes, there's an ironic bit of karma about how this man is dying viva the Curse but at the same time, it would be a fair greater mercy to just rip the man's head off at this point. It's the easiest method of freeing the man from the Curse and it would also get rid of the passive influence that the Curse has on the man's surroundings.

Was Reborn beyond 'redemption', well, not, but the Mafia Hitman isn't looking for redemption. Was the man heartless? No, but that doesn't mean Tsuna is incline to give the man's emotions any consideration. After all, Reborn's only here for one singular reason, one ultimate goal...

That's to do whatever it takes to shape/break/mold Sawada Tsunayoshi into a Mafia Heir, regardless of his opinions or desires on the matter. The man doesn't see Tsuna, thirteen year old Sentinel and youngest one to come online in recorded history. No, the Cursed Man only sees Tsunayoshi 'Dame-Tsuna' Sawada, who's the son of the Young Lion, one Iemitsu Sawada, an Active Sky (and thus an offline Guide), a naive child, and a civilian boy.

It's only a matter of time before the Cursed Man tries something in regards to proving that Tsuna isn't actually a Sentinel, likely by showing off how skilled of a Guide he is, even if he's ranking two. And he's going to let the man try, after all, if the Cursed Guide fried himself, he'll be out of Tsuna's hair for a few months...

It's that intuition blaring that shakes him out of his Zone and he evades the shoot to his head, Reborn had taken and destroyed the poking device by the end of the first day. Over the course of the last two, now three, days since, he's been Zoning Out into his thoughts more and more. Without the device, he can't easily change what's coming to him through his ear bud either, until the replacement arrives, and it's been ordered to Hibari Kyoya's place to keep Reborn from taking and destroying it as well, he's pretty much on his own with trying to keep from Zoning Out, which he has trouble with even with said device.

There's a few more shots that seem oh so slow to him and are so simple to evade without needing to move more then a few inches at most. Doing so always aggravates Reborn, particularly how effortless he makes it seem as the shrunken man prides himself on his accuracy. And just as the next shot it about to come, the Cursed Man does what he'd been waiting for, he doesn't feel anything but his intuition almost seems to snarls in triumph and the feeling of the gun vanishing causes him to turn in the direction, to find that odd lizard trying to get a response from the Cursed Man.

With a snort, Tsuna pulls out his device and puts on We Are the Champions by Queen as he turns away. He heads to school feeling highly pleased at breaking a cherish belief of the prideful Mafia Hitman along with Knowing it'll be some time before Reborn will recover from trying to mentally intruding on a Sentinel that's beyond his ranking. It wouldn't have helped if the Cursed Man used his Sun Flame to go beyond his normal ranking in a temporary manner either. Not when he's considered beyond the current systems ability to assign an accurate rating as a Sentinel, sixth rating Sentinel is pretty much what's put down, after all, there use to be no way that there could be a Sentinel go beyond rating five.

| [i _ i] |

Staring at the *gaijin* laying on the bed pretty much dead to the world, Kyoya finds himself smirking in dark pleasure at the sight of the Baby Carnivore that's been causing trouble for his Sky, the Omnivore

Sphinx. Arrangements had to be made for this one's recovery and the current condition of this *gaijin* shared with the Dragon Carnivore, given that the two are Baby Carnivores. It takes him a few seconds to think of how to go about doing the latter.

Taking out his phone, the Cloud takes a few pictures from different angles before taking pictures of the medical report he'd gotten his hands on. Then it was a matter of finding the Dragon's Contact Number and texting the pictures to said number. Walking out of the room, he pockets the cell, it shouldn't be too long for a *gaijin* or two to show up to deal with his Baby Carnivore, already plans are in motion to send him to another hospital's long term care ward for Guides who 'burnt' themselves trying to reach a Sentinel outside of their ranking.

Given the difference in ranking and rating, the disruptive *gaijin* will be recovering for over six months, and that's likely with Flames involved to speed up the recovery. After all, his Sky very much didn't care for the fake baby or else the other would have called attention to what happened with said Sun it seconds after it happened. It had been nearly two hours before anyone found said *gaijin* and called for medical assistance.

Whether or not the Baby Carnivore learnt anything from the encounter with the Sphinx is hardly a problem, given it's going to be a very long while before the prideful Baby Carnivore re-enters his Territory and attempts to **Tame** his Sky for another goals.

| [i _ i] |

"Have you seen Reborn?" His mother asks as they settle down to eat. There's a few dishes that were clearly meant for said 'tutor'.

"Not since I was walking to school." Tsuna admits with a bit of a shrug. "Maybe his parents finally showed up and dragged him home?"

His mother sighs a disappointed sigh, but seems to accept his suggestion. "It would have been nice if they showed up here to get his belongings before they did so." He raises a slight eyebrow at that comment but decides to not comment as he begins to fill up his plate without a certain pest making comments about him being picky over what he eats and doesn't eat while doing his best to keep said pest from contaminating his food more then the other already likely had.

For the first time in four days, he eats his fill and is relaxing at the table, talking to his mother about his day along with how Takeshi and him had preformed during gym class. His mother slowly talks about her meeting with his school's principal and how it went about trying to get him to attend normal classes with his peers, which, didn't get approved. Tsuna hardly cares, after all, just because Takeshi is getting reintegrated with their peers doesn't mean he's able to and it's only for a single class anyway. Given how common rating one and rating two Sentinels are, they tend to have an easier time finding Guides capable of helping them out of Zoning Out, so much so that they to have a compatible Guide to do so.

Rating three Sentinels are more uncommon but ranking three Guides are still fairly common, so neither need to Bond. It's when it comes to Rating four and five Sentinels that finding the right Guide becomes an issue along with the simple fact that this is where finding such high ranking Guides are more sparse compared to the Sentinels of said rating. It's actually rather odd when one considers the number Guides tend to always out number the number of Sentinels of any given ratings.

"Are you sure your not upset? Your friend might be getting fully integrated next semester." His mother comments in a concerned tone and he gives her a smile.

He knows Takeshi's not going to go for that, not when the other is distancing himself from his old 'friends' and teammates. With Tsuna, Takeshi's been slowly but surely relaxing from the mask persona the other had developed over the years, not that he'd noticed at first, after all, he's hardly had any social interaction with his peers. It had

been more of a comment from Reborn that had him evaluating the difference between how Takeshi use to act and how he acts around him these days to realize that the other teen is more relax in his presence and doesn't smile that fake smile when it's just the two of them during school.

"I think the school won't do that due to the fact that it would keep me socially isolated during school." He remarks. "A lot more of my peers spend more time with me when Takeshi and I are together." *Plus, they want me to spend more time with someone other then Kyoya for fear I would finally pick up his incline of 'biting people to death'.*

His mother seems to consider that. "There should be more Sentinels coming online in the next few years anyhow, so, even if that happens, I won't be alone in class anymore." He adds after a few seconds of silence and that seems to cause his mother to nod, rather firmly, in acceptance.

"And my Tsu-Kun will be there to help them adjust." She says with a bright smile, worry about his isolation clearly beginning to fade from her being without Reborn here to contradict that or strengthen her worry about raising a Sentinel child 'right'. He's gives her a smile upon hearing that, glad to see the self doubt fading from his mother's mind.

- = Time | Flow = -

There's something... off with the silvery haired teen and it's not about the other's smoking habit or jewelry choice of metal skulls. The teen is the transfer student that's been hinted at last week, a transfer from Italy. *Reborn arranged this.* Tsuna muses at the teen.

Reborn's been moved to a 'special' hospital in one of the wards of Tokyo, he's unsure of the name but it's located in Setagaya though. He's pretty sure that Kyoya had been sure to be the one to see the Cursed Man out of Namimori. Tsuna didn't care whether or not Reborn recovers, there's no way he'd inheriting anything concerning the Mafia Family, let alone the post of Don.

While Reborn's 'prints' are all on the silver haired teen, it was something arranged before Reborn ever arrived. It's an example of clear confidence that things would go as Reborn had planned. *What a ego the man still had, even after getting Cursed, huh?* Tsuna mentally muses to himself as he turns away from the teen.

As he stops before entering the classroom, he notices Takeshi frowning down at the keyboard. Knocking on the door frame, the other gets startled before turning to look at him. The fake smile shrinks into a softer one. "Tsuna! Did you... Ah, well..."

"The transfer? Yea, I saw him. I didn't get close." Tsuna admits as he walks over slowly towards where he seats.

Nodding, Takeshi remarks, "He's a smoker... Although there's more... chemicals on him too."

"I'll be sure to say upwind of him then." He promises as his noses wrinkles at the mention of chemicals also clinging to the silver haired teen. His vision alters and he gets a good look at Takashi's blue chains that lurk under the other teen's skin. It fades but Tsuna had stopped moving as he finally recalls that yes, the chains hadn't been under the silver teen's skin, but wrapped over the skin. Yes, there had been other colors but it hardly mattered as the chains hadn't come from within the teen but from without.

"Tsuna? You ok?" There's worry in Takeshi's tone and he blinks, giving the other teen a slight smile.

"Yea, just recalling another detail of the transfer." He admits honestly. "I'm not sure what to make of it."

"Oh? Was it the dress code violation?" The other teases and he snorts in amusement, yes, he's close to Kyoya but he's not overly interested in up holding every little detail of the school rules.

"No, it's... it's about something I Saw when my vision... changed." He admits. "Those chains that are suppose to be under the skin? They

weren't with him, they covered him, outside of his skin."

"Huh, that's... strange?" Takeshi asks and he nods. "Most chains I've seen are in the skin or originate from within." He recalls the mess that is Reborn's chains, how they'd erupted out of the skin with flecks of 'skin' clinging to some of those links, how those chains would constrict and relax... Never mind the horror that had been the Cursed Stone's thorny vines and how they try seem to be reaching out to some unknown location.

"And his doesn't?" The other teen reasons and he nods in agreement. "I wasn't close enough to see them in any great detail though." He admits with a slight frown and then, after a few days, shakes his head before heading to his usual table.

Takashi hums before turning to face the computer. Taking out his cell, he opens the Notebook App, typing out a note about the observation. He'll mention it to Kyoya at lunch through a text message too.

- = After - School = -

"What?" Tsuna finds that breathing through his mouth isn't working very well and with how close the young Guide, who's a ranking one, is. He also gets a fair better look at the spiny chains that cover the teen, the spines digging into the skin.

Hayato glares at him with a ugly sneer on the face. "You heard me! You don't deserve to be the Tenth Don of the Vongola Famiglia!" The teen repeats himself, clearly trying to be threatening, which, well, Tsuna's friends with Kyoya, so, yea, it's a pitiful attempt in Tsuna's humble opinion.

"No fighting on school property." He parrots to Hayato. "Be prepared to be bitten to death, by the way." He takes a few steps away so that Kyoya can enter into the teen's view.

"What the hell are you talking about?!" Snaps the silver haired teen and Kyoya is already surging forward. "For attempting to bully a fellow student, you will be bitten to death!"

There's a look of betrayal on the teen's face and parrots out, "Sentinel Students face suspension if they get into a fight with an offline students or lower ranking Guides." If the rating and rank were equal, well, both got into trouble, after all, both were on a level playing field. "Prefect Hibari, I don't feel like filing a report as it is his first day and clearly, he's yet to adapt to his new school."

Hayato evading attempts of Kyoya flatter at the mention of Sentinel and he gets a glare at the mention of filing a report. Not paying full attention on Kyoya, the silver haired teen takes a blow to the right shoulder, which sends the teen to the ground. Kyoya is going rather easy on Hayato, not that it matters as the teen pulls out a stick of something that looks like dynamite.

With a shake of his head, Tsuna steps further away and prepares for the scream of pain that follows. It happens quickly as Kyoya hits the teen's hand, causing the unlit dynamite to fall before the tonfa gets slammed on the teen's forehead with ease. Hayato drops to the ground fully unconscious from the blow.

Kyoya shares a look with him before reaching down and carrying Hayato to the Discipline Office to file a report. Tsuna walks forward and with a wrinkled noses, picks up the stick of dynamite. He does his best to carry it downwind of him as he follows after the older teen. There's a strong smell of cigarette smoke clinging to the stick along with the smells of chemicals used in making it never mind the personal smell of Hayato.

Meeting up with one of the incoming Disciplinary Member, he hands over the stick with a simple, "Evidence from Hibari-sempai's latest... case." The teen nods as he takes it from Tsuna and then heads off, taking the stick else where, leaving Tsuna to head straight for the set of rooms that Kyoya had claimed for his Disciplinary Committee Offices.

It's not overly long before he arrives at the rooms and waits outside, time tick away as he listens to the sounds of nature in his ear bud while the device on the back of his left hand taps in time with water dripping. Kyoya's Second in command arrives, Kusakabe Tetsuya, they study each other before the Guide, ranking four, enters into the office. "Your friend is at the door."

There's a simple grunt and Tetsuya gives him an apologetic look, which he nods, before closing the door. Taking out his cell, he finds something to watch while taking out the other ear bud to put into his ear. It's an old anime called Inu-Yasha and begins watching it as he does hear Hayato wake up, soon enough, he's filtering out anything besides the anime's music and voices. It seems that one of the tropes of the anime is that demon's don't possess Guides and Sentinels, the half-dog demon that's the male lead isn't a Sentinel but the female lead is a Guide though, ranking five at that.

He gets to the fourth episode when there's a tapping on his shoulder. With ease, the playing stops and he takes out one of his ear buds, his senses finally acknowledging Kyoya's presence and filling his senses. So close and he can heart Kyoya's steady heartbeat with the rhythm of breath as the lungs expand and shrink. The scentless soap used on the cloths, the scent of mild mango hand soap that the washrooms offer, and the smoky smell that hints that the young man before him had carried Hayato here like a sack of potatoes. He can see the texture of the school uniform, spying an old stain that had still marks the threads, and which parts of the cloths are getting worn away faster then usual.

Kyoya taps his forehead, bringing him out and he also notices the frantic tapping on the back of his left hand. Blushing, he closes his mouth and wonders what he'd talked about while he'd been Kyoya's presence in. It's not the first time he's blabbered about something he had no way of Knowing. It's why Kyoya compares him to the legendary Sphinx as some of what he says might not make sense when he says it but, given time and review, it becomes clear.

"So... expulsion?" He asks curiously and Kyoya lets out a simple grunt before turning to walk down the hall way. Tsuna follows after Kyoya, they'll be heading to a local field for their spar.

Huh, I would have thought Hayato would have been expelled... Guess Reborn set something up in advance. He muses to himself.

- = Time | Flow = -

It's a month to his fifteenth Birthday and yet the *baka* of a Cursed Man seems as confident as before the incident upon returning to continue on as his 'tutor' after a year of needing to recover. The only change seemed to be the acceptance that Tsuna is actually a Sentinel and a high rating one at that. The *baka* Sun still seems to think that he's capable of molding Tsuna into a Mafia Don.

He never was around when his sperm donor is, so Dino is the first Sky he recalls meeting. He's not really listening to the non-sense the two Mafioso as his attention is on the odd cloth that's covering the Mafia Don's 'heart' in the chest. Yes, there's chains within Dino's skin but there's some that are not unlike Hayato, ones that are anchoring themselves viva metal spines. Tsuna's beginning to suspect that the external original spiny chains come from outside sources while the chains lurking under the skin mean that it's internal.

Tsuna's noticed a few that were much like Hayato more often then not, that they are covered in chains and is getting fed Flames, being filled with Flames that's not his own. Not all of those getting fed Flames seem to be able to use them, it's like they're more there to act as Flame reserves then being able to use them for themselves. It's rather off putting, in truth, like they're not really **human** human , just human .

Still, the cloth around that 'heart' is rather strange. Tsuna mentally admits. It takes him focusing on the cloth to notices a thin thread that snakes out of the cloth and following it, it goes to the jewelry box and then there's a thinner, finer thread that goes out of the house. It's

clear that the cloth and thread are... nicer(?), well, they look better then the thorny vines of the Cursed Stone.

Tsuna automatically bats the jewelry box away from him as he tries wonders if he possesses a cloth around his own 'heart' like Dino. Although, he suspects that like the chains, he doesn't, not that he likely won't spend a few hours tonight checking before a mirror to be sure of that. As the jewelry box comes near him once more, he slaps it away once more as he begins to come out of his thoughts concerning the cloth and it's importance to Skies.

"Not mine, don't want it ever, and *it* won't have **Me** ." He states flatly and with that, heads for the stairs to go check himself over for thread and cloth. Evading the fired bullet is easily done while ignoring the *baka* man's commanding tone.

- = After | Midnight = -

He wakes just as the ring is about to touch his skin. Tsuna misses keeping the wrist from letting go but as the ring falls and touches his skin, it jumps, orange sparks across his skin. The ring speeds away from him, the chain snaps easily as the ring attempts to burrow into the brain of his well fare supporter, sperm donor viva the forehead.

The words that come flowing out of his mouth, he doesn't need to understand as he already knows that he's cursing the two supposed adults out on their stupidity and how often they must have been dropped for them to be brain dead. The ring does stop trying to bury itself in the brain of the narcissistic Sky and he's already out of bed and carrying the Mafioso out of his room, down the stairs, and tossing him out of the house viva through the god damn door. "And stay out, you fucking shit stain of a yellow bellied coward!"

"Out!" He snaps at Reborn, pointing at the door while glaring at the fucking *baka* Sun. " **I. Said. Out.** " He commands, his words fueled by fury and empowered by his Flame.

It's a battle of wills that the *baka* Sun loses and out the Cursed Man walks, in a daze. Once out, he walks over to the door frame and within second, the door is repaired and a barrier set up to ensure that neither of those two Mafioso can enter into the house, at all. Noticing Dino, who'd been invited to spend the night, "I am not going to be a Mafia Don. I do not care about the Mafia. I will not be responsible for that ring killing someone over this issue."

With that, he marches back up the stairs and into his room. Once in his bed, he finds himself emotionally drained and does his best to get comfortable. It takes time but in the end, exhaustion finally drags him into thoughtlessness of slumber.

- = Ring | Battles = -

Kyoya's prissy about the location while Takeshi is brooding over the lack of listening to Tsuna and he's no better as he's furious about being forced to attend this mockery. Ignoring the other teens and the one actual kid, Tsuna wants to splatter his sperm donor's brain upon the wall behind them, never mind the desire to crush the *baka* Sun's tiny throat with his right hand. "What part of **I. Can. Not. Be. A. Mafia. Don. Do. You. Fuckers. Not. Understand?** " He growls as he glares between Reborn and sperm donor.

Ignoring the comments from what amounts to the peanut gallery, particularly the being blackmailed/threaten members of it, he reaches out to the ring around the sperm donor's neck and channels his Flame around his hand. Soon enough, the both rings begin to act up, the one that's under his hand and the one that's under blackmailed's shirt. Then, the two half ring seem to vanish before a ghostly image of a blond man he kind of resembles appears, the completed ring at the 'heart' of the ghost.

"Explain to these idiots why the ring won't accept me! Explain the details of that deal you made when you accepted that ring too." Tsuna snaps and then glares at the robot. "And somebody get that man to an elderly care facility! He's mentally incapable of continuing to be the Ninth Don given his current medical state! Or put a bullet in

his brain as a mercy kill! Which ever! I don't Care, just get him out of that mecha suit!"

When nobody moves, Kyoya proceeds to joyfully rip the robot apart to reveal the cause of all this stupidity. "I wasn't that bad... Was I G?" Murmurs Ghostly Ancestor.

"I'd say you were far worse, actually." This ghost got formed seconds after Kyoya started in on ripping off the metal panels of the mecha suit. "As for the why... It's not just because he was kicked out of the Family as a five year old, is it?"

"What?!" Is the most common sentiment that gets roar from many members of the peanut gallery, which causes Tsuna to glare at them for causing his ears to ring. His Ghostly Ancertor gives him a pitying look while the peanut gallery all chatter among themselves while his only good for money sperm donor tries to snap at blackmailed about the mecha suit/robot thing, not that blackmailed seems to care.

Putting some distance between himself and the others, who are all so interested in speaking at once, which isn't good for his now headache. Rubbing his temples while Takeshi rubs his back, it takes a good hour before people have stopped talking over each other while demanding things from the Ghosts that haunt those rings or deflections from his sperm donor about said disownment. It's only just the two Ghosts that are visible though, but that's due to their rings getting fused as a single one at the moment.

The blond Ghost that is his Ancestor hadn't paid any of them any mind, his attention either on his companion or studying Tsuna and his two friends, there's a clear fond expression on the Ancestor's face upon seeing how close they are. And while the blond was doing that, G, the almost pink haired Ghost that looks a lot like Hayato... Or should that be that Hayato looks a lot like G? Well, G was snapping at various members of the peanut gallery and even got into an argument with both *baka* Sun and Hayato.

G's argument concerning Reborn seemed to do with the Sun being a Free Lancer thinking he had what it takes to train anyone to be a Vongola Mafia Don and a list of reason why the *baka* Sun shouldn't have been hired in the first place. The argument with Hayato had to do with Tsuna should never have been appointed as a Heir due to having been kicked out of the Family with sperm donor's approval, which means he's also been disowned by his own sperm donor as the man's son. This a number of other, minor, arguments that mostly didn't offer anything new.

He didn't miss the changes that happen when someone arrives about forty minutes into that hour either. How could he? When those thorny vines of the Cursed Stones go straight to said new arrival? There's stems that come out of the new arrival that lead to the rings and notices that there's no leaf buds or branches coming from the stems. While the stems look... better then the thorny vines, it's clear that the ugliness remains with the stems.

It takes a lot of looking but he does notice something akin to those stems and vines that exit out of the rings, heading off to someplace off in the distance. These look like leaves and flower petals overlapping, the ugliness is back at the level of the thorny vines though. The leaves and petals seem sharp plus rigid, in flexible compared to the vines and stems.

It's the silence that snaps him out of his reviewing of these connections between the Cursed Stones and the rings within sight along with the mentally skimming of conversations. "So... the deal... It's... Well, I'm not naturally a... 'Guide', particularly when I was alive." The Ghostly Ancestor begins, glancing towards sperm donor and Dino upon mentioning that. Blackmailed's eyes narrow at noticing that, which makes sense, given both of them sport cloths and threads leading to that ring.

"I came online, as you call it these days, as a... 'Sentinel'. A rather sensitive one at that." Ghostly Ancestor glances at him, there's a slight pause before continuing. "It was... G couldn't help, he just wasn't capable of reigning me in, he can notice when I start to Drift

and snap me out of it before I fully did but... when he wasn't around to..."

Tsuna didn't have to guess overly hard over what that must have been like. "I was... At times I just... I'd speak without realizing I'm doing so or suddenly just Know things about a person or an event... Insight into things I had no right to Know about... Could see things about other people that they didn't... It was blasphemous and yet, oh so helpful, even though it was akin to Witchcraft..."

All things he has experienced and it's clear that those invisible Ghosts seem to be hearing about this for the first time, so it was clearly a secret that was only shared between G and his Ancestor. "So when She came with the ring, it's offer of power, I bargained for something to... dampen my senses or to be changed... Sepria... it took a while to convince her but, well, she agreed. So, she flipped my... status and in doing so, it became half as strong as my previous state."

"Of course, if a descendant of mine fights against the ring, that they'd void the deal and the blessing would be withdrawn, leaving them to their natural status." Ghostly Ancestor states with a sigh. "And Tsunayoshi fought against being Flame Sealed when he'd been five and had just fully gone Active."

Oh look, the sperm donor would be dead seconds ago if looks could actually kill, particularly given that both G and Ghostly Ancestor both glared at the Sky. "Which kick started his... Tsuna going... online as you call it, after recovering from failing to win against getting Sealed. Which, in turn, got rid of the Flame Seal as the blessing was gone and Tsuna was able to access his full potential."

"That's what I've been seeing with Dino and sperm donor? That... 'blessing'?" He inquires but suspects he is already in possession of the information.

"Yes, I figured out how to share the blessing, which allowed me to regain access to my previous status, for a time. They called it a

Hyper but the truth is, if not for the blessing, I'd always be in that state." Confirms Ghostly Ancestor. "Which lead to the belief concerning Skies being Guides." Mutters blackmailed.

"Half... so I'm actually a..." Dino's eyes widen as it sinks in that Dino's a rating four Sentinel instead of a ranking two Guide. "The blessing also disentangles Sky Flame from the senses, which was why I seemed to be a Witch." Admits Ghostly Ancestor. "As a lot of problems a Sky... Sentinel gets comes from how their senses mix with their Flame. I'm sure you've all know examples of how those of other Flames influence the senses of either... Guides and Sentinels." His Ancestor glances around at the peanut gallery, particularly at the Storm with a crown and at the *baka* Sun.

The Storm doesn't seem at all squeamish at the attention while *baka* Sun merely tilts his head so nobody can see his eyes. "And since Ricardo and Demon decided to tie leadership to the rings... Well, I was more then happy to let them have them, after all, he was my half brother." Ghostly Ancestor admits with a shrug and he snorts, fairly sure that Ghostly Ancestor had known in advance that the rings would be forced out of his control before ever agreeing to the deal.

"And thus, bucked the responsibility of them." Snaps the silver long haired sword welder, who's a rating four Sentinel and Bonded to blackmailed, who's a ranking four Guide. Ghostly Ancestor shrugs, remarking, "The bargain never stated how long they'd be in my possession." There's a slight smug tone in there plus a slight smirk.

"I picked Japan for a reason , after all. It was far from the Vongola and Italy, thus the rings and my direct descends wouldn't be put on the spot on whether they want to feed a broken and unfair system but have tamed senses or refuse but find themselves overwhelmed by the very world around them." Explains Ghostly Ancestor. "Of course, exceptions happen." There's a clear sour and look of disapproval given to sperm donor.

Sperm donor does try to defend himself but Ghostly Ancestor's attention has already moved on. In the end, it's clear that Ghostly

Ancestor doesn't support sperm donor's life choices, not at all. "So... the rings are Iemitsu then." He muses and that seems to cause the peanut gallery to give him glares and looks of disbelieves. "Yes, I guess he has." Admits Ghostly Ancestor, which causes a lot of conversations to erupt about why Iemitsu can't become Don.

It's at this point that one of the ghostly observers decide to become visible along with engage in the conversation. It's the blond that kind of shares a kind of look to Kyoya. Another ring fuses together and begins talking in Old French, pretty much giving voice to his thoughts on the matter. It's like the signal was given and the remaining ghostly observers cause the rings to fuse, becoming visible and very vocal about their thoughts.

Although the moment the one that looked like Mukuro appeared caused the blond Kyoya's jaws to clench before pulling out a set of old looking hand cuffs while surging at the Mist, who's likely Demon. "I'm done. I'm off." He tells Takeshi and Kyoya.

"Hmm... ok, I guess we're good, after all, I did put those wireless cameras around here like you asked." He blinks, wondering when he'd asked his friend to do that but recalls the minor incident last week along with what happened with those mini wireless camera had gone. "I can watch it later."

Kyoya huffs and crosses his arms over his chest. It's clear that Kyoya's staying behind and as he nods. With that, Takeshi and Tsuna slip away without his Ghostly Ancestor or G drawing attention to that fact.

Now... Who was it that I entrusted the data storage too? Tsuna wonders as they get off school property.

| [i _ i] |

He hadn't expected any of what's happening on the monitors to ever come to pass. In fact, Byakuran hadn't known anything about this... 'blessing' that Giotto had arranged on the side with Sepira. Nor

suspected that Giotto could be that sly! *So, that's the secret of the Hyper Mode? That most of the Vongola Skies are Sentinels that are artificially held in the form of Guides?* The holder of the Mare Ring muses.

Unknown to the would be Conqorer of the World, this would be the start of him questioning why his so-called parallel-selves hadn't shared that detail with him. Which would lead to his investigation of said parallel worlds and into the Ten Year Territories that the broken system called the Tri-Ni-Sette got tinkered into creating. Which would lead to the end of said system in turn, but that's another story for another time.

"How interesting... You sure you're getting all of this, Ire-kun?" The ranking five Guide asks curiously, he gets an agreeable grunt from the rating one Sentinel. "Excellent!" He states with a wide smile, watching the first generation Cloud and Mist taunt one another in a familiar fashion.

The End

Familiarity Reflected P 1: Naruto

I don't own Naruto or The Scum Villain's Self-Saving System!

_[^ _ ^]_/

It's a strange world, Naruto finds himself in. It's even stranger then the usual Loop when a strange screen pops up and welcomes him to the **[Proud Immortal Demon Way]** and to the role of Protagonist. The entity called itself a System and informed him that he's currently five years old and his adopted name is Luo Binghe. It hopes he has a good time during his stay in this world and promises they'll get in touch in the future.

With that over and done, the former blond enters into a meditative state to see what he has access to. In the end, he's coming on empty for his usual abilities along with finding his pocket dimension is blocked. There's an energy he can feel flow through him along with noticing another minor blockage, it takes him time to realize it's akin to a Bloodline Seal.

Before leaving his current state, he considers unlocking the Seal before recalling the title of this world and his current role of the Protagonist. It doesn't take much for Naruto to realize what's likely locked behind that seal. Leaving it be, he comes to his senses and begins taking stock of the place he woke in.

He also finds his hair is not only not blond but it's long, longer then it had when he'd Awaken in Hidden Leaf as a child. It takes some time before Naruto gets an idea of what his features are, he still has his blue eyes but there's no whisker marks. Other then the whisker marks, longer hair, and hair color, he looks like he usual does.

Hunger isn't that much of a stranger and so, he walks through the house, it takes him a bit to explore the kitchen. Naruto heads out of

the house and begins making a mental map. It's not long before he learns a number of things from the taunts of the kids.

One, 'Luo Binghe' is a foundling babe. Two, his features mark him as a child of a 'mixed' couple. Three, demons do exist. Four, there's Cultivation Sects. Five, the local written language is 'modern' Mandarin. Sixth, 'Luo Binghe' adopted mother is on the low end of the social ladder. And seventh, his luck remained, so far, his gambling luck is still good, which likely means that his whole luck is the same.

It took much of the day to investigate this world. He'd also managed to keep his winnings and noticed how the native power is a double edge sword. Which means he can't treat it like Chakra or magic from the Harry Potter universe. Naruto figures that he's bound to enter into one of the sects of this world if he want to learn to harness it.

Arriving at the house, he hopes that the winnings will help with expenses. Naruto finds himself hasting from entering the tiny house before finding the courage to enter, it's an odd experience, having a parent to welcome him home. "Welcome home, Bing-er." The woman says and he does his best not to wince at the name that comes out.

"Mother." He greets in turn, his emotions are mixed. Looking off to the side, feeling rather shy already.

In the end, the woman approaches and pulls him into a hug. Naruto isn't sure what to make of this but decides to just... go with the flow, for now.

(: - T - :)

It had been hard, oh so hard to keep Luo Tingbao alive. It had been something of an uphill battle to get her to accept the various gambling winnings he's won through various means but she gives in as she began to get sick. The money that had been stored in a box gets used for her medicine and for groceries instead of being saved for his sake. There's plenty to keep the family of two in descent

shape for a year, that's without him using his very decent bargaining skills or more gambling earnings.

[Congratulations! Congratulations! Congratulations! Good things must be said three times!]

So, he's a bit startled when the System makes his appearance. "Thanks?" He murmurs and the screen vanishes, he runs a hand through his still black hair and it's longer now. He'd have cut it if not for the fact that long hair is more in style then short hair.

[It is no mean feat, keeping Luo Tingbao alive!]

Oh boy, that's not something I really want to hear. Naruto mentally admits, it's been years since he woke in this world and, honestly, they weren't all that bad. Sure, he'd been viewed with hostility by the local kids and the adults murmur darkly about how he's a drain on his poor adopted mother but that changed, it had been fair easier to change their points of view of him then when he's usually living in Hidden Leaf Village.

Then again, there's a far lower population and the memories of a gigantic ass crimson fox Chakra entity sporting nine tails never haunted their dreams. There's always other things to gossip about and he'd long since proven himself more then capable of defending himself. His odd luck had struck a few times over the years but he'd always been able to return with something to show for it.

[Beginning of the plot have begun. Please make arrangements before leaving by the end of this month to Cang Qiong Mountain Sect to begin the story plot!]

"Story plot?" Naruto repeats with a slight frown as he considers if that's a good thing or not. It's not like he doesn't know that there's an anime and manga based off of his universe, which spawned video games and, in one universe, a massive online role-playing game for a virtual reality game system. *That had been one weird fusion*

universe, replacing Sword Art Online with Shinobi Nations Unleashed. Naruto admits ruefully.

[The story plot of Proud Immortal Demon Way! As the current Protagonist, it is up to you to walk the path of the half demon Luo Binghe!]

Blinking, he sighs as he runs a hand through his hair yet again before rubbing his neck. "So... I go join this sect and I'm guessing that Seal comes undone at the worst possible moment which results in my getting kicked out? Maybe imprisoned for the crime of being a half demon?" He guesses, some stories are rather straight forward like that.

[Protagonist is very wise! **^_^'** There is only two story plots that Protagonist can not escape!]

"Oh?" He murmurs, curious about these two inflexible points.

[Protagonist must train to become a Cultivator and Protagonist's Seal will unravel in time for Protagonist to enter the Endless Abyss! This humble System suggests escaping into the Endless Abyss if current Protagonist doesn't wish to be imprisoned!]

"So... I don't need to become a member of... this mountain sect?" Naruto inquires and gets the same smile sweat emoji from before for a few seconds.

"I guess there's no harm in trying to get in..." He admits and he's awarded with a beaming smile emoji.

[Reminder, please leave to journey to Cang Qiong Mountain Sect at the end of this month!]

With that, the System's screen vanishes, leaving Naruto alone once more with a touch more questions about the world he's current in for the Loop then before. Shaking his head as he pulls his hand away from his neck, Naruto considers the plans for the future concerning

how to keep Luo Tingbao from working herself to the bear bone while he's gone.

Going to have to inquire about what to expect becoming a Disciple of a Cultivator Sect. Naruto mentally muses. *And why this mountain sect in particular?*

(: - T - :)

Shen Qingqiu... *Is a bit of an asshole.* Naruto decides as he does his best to mind his manners as he follows behind the Peak Lord and his newest Sensei. It's clear that the man has issues, having seen a simple exchange between Shen Qingqiu and Yu Qingyuan then how the man treats Ning Yingying.

Given how coldly the man had regarded Naruto, it's clear that he's not going to have change the Peak Lord's low opinion of him with a simple meeting. *Which is fine. I'm actually not a teen and I'm not inexperienced with using my words.*

The silence between the three is fine, he's doing his best to remember what he can about how to speak formally, going over how to do that within his own mind. *Speaking third person... Man, what a drag...* Naruto mentally admits to himself.

At least the scenery is nice to look at. The Looper admits to himself as he notices the landscape. It's been years since he's seen the forests of Hidden Leaf or the cliffs that seem to loom over the village.

It's not the first time he wonders about the length of this particular Loop, after all, the longest loop tended to be the Hogwarts one after all, which is more of an eight year Loop then seven year one. *Still, the length might have to do with the setting...* Naruto admits as he considers what little he knows about Xianxia, which is suppose to be more influenced with Taoism and Buddhism then straight Chinese martial arts that is the Wuxia genre, of which Ranma's world tends to heavily lean into.

What he knows about either genre isn't much nor does he recall anyone ever Looping into a universe based off of a Chinese work before... *Well, does Dragon Ball really count?* He wonders as he recalls something about the Journey to the West being what Dragon Ball is based off of.

After a while, they seem to arrive to the correct peak viva a interesting bridge, which is called the Rainbow Bridge. "Ning Yingying, this Lord has other business to attend to." States Shen Qingqiu.

"This student shall prepare her shidi for Shifu!" The teenage girl promises bowing and he does the same. The Peak Lord walks away without looking at him at all.

Given he's unsure if he should address the Peak Lord without being addressed first... Either way, his silence could be put down to any number of causes. Not that Naruto had much time before his, maybe, Yingying-shijie excitedly grabs his arm and begins pulling him away from the spot. She's chatting excitedly as she tells him about the dorms, the lessons, about how great Shen Qingqiu is, and how excited she is to be his shijie.

He's taken to the dorms to get a uniform along with getting cleaned up from having dug a hole in the dirt. In all the number of Loops he's experienced, Naruto never thought he'd be tested by his ability to dig a hole. And yet, in this Loop, in this world, he had been and it seems that his efforts was enough to get him pass the first hurdle.

To fully finish getting accepted in, his next task is to make an acceptable pot of tea. Which he's been practicing once he learnt about how this generally goes upon his Intel gathering during the month he had to ensure his adopted mother's taken care of in both house and income while he's away. Looking at himself viva the mirror, he sighs as he tries to recall the few simple hair style's that look ok on him along with recalling if he's ever been able to do them.

In the end, Ning Yingying helps him get it all into a simple high ponytail with only a hint of a braid. *If only I can keep my hair short...* The Looper thinks to himself in despair.

"Shixiong! Shifu got me a shidi!" Ning Yingying states to the older teen.

"This humble one greets shixiong." Naruto says simply while doing a polite bow, his gaze down in the acceptable manner. He'd noticed the narrowed eyes and the emotion that burns in the older teen's eyes.

"A-Luo! This is just a formality! You're already a member of the sect!" The naive teen states.

"This one doesn't dare make assumptions concerning his acceptance at this time, shijie." He states as humbly as he can, doing his best to keep his emotions off of his face. It's been centuries since he's found himself at the bottom of the pecking order, truly at the bottom with no experience to really fall back on that would allow him to ignore any hostility coming from either teachers and/or older students. Nor can he access his pocket dimension that has any number of resources could rely on to help him in this regard.

He has little knowledge about Cultivation, even less about the world that he's been living in. It's not just demons that prey on humans, nor just demonic beasts but also spirit creatures and, perhaps, deities as well. He's a novice in this regard and he's more then likely got a number of habits that he'll need to break from in order to make full use of what's going to be taught along with harnessing this world's special powers.

Naruto's never read anything that could have prepared him for this Loop and, well, knowing that there is a plot to this whole thing means that there's a series of books that must exist, somewhere, that likely has the information on this world and it's people. Given his two interactions with the System, he's pretty sure that this is getting

recorded too. Which, well, he wouldn't mind getting a copy of what's being written, honestly.

The older teen finally finishes studying him and it's from within the bamboo house that the Peak Lord's voice comes from. "This Immortal is waiting for his cup of tea." The older teen seems to startle, getting a touch pale and that's something Naruto files away.

What follows is just shixiong and Naruto entering the house with Ning Yingying getting dismissed. Both bow before the Peak Lord and he is sure to keep his eyes lowered. Soon enough, he's charged with making a pot of tea and he's sure to thank the man for the honor of doing so. Again, it's a toss up on how Shen Qingqiu takes that statement before he heads for the kitchen area.

It takes time as making tea isn't a fully homed skill of his. Still, he remembers the steps and does his best not to rush it. Given the leaves he's working with, Naruto can only hope that his previous experience helps here.

Then again, given the sour look upon Ming Fan, the two had taken to speaking of business and thus he's been able to gather the name of the older teen, he must have done enough right when it came to the making of the tea. As he prepares the tea tray, he muses on which of the two are going to act as he brings the tray to the table. Doing his best, sets up the tea pot and the cup then filling the cup carefully before setting the pot down. With the tea served, Naruto walks to a position opposite of the Cultivator, and then, as best as he can, sits down, just not right at the table though.

Shen Qingqiu takes a sip of the tea and Naruto waits patiently for the man before him to speak. Silence hangs in the room, it's tense but, well, Naruto's experienced such before, although, despite himself, he finds himself feeling invested in whether or not he's been accepted into this mountain sect, as a student of this particular Peak Lord. Another sip of tea does little to dispel the tension but, previous experience continues to help him from displaying his nerves.

It's been sometime since I've met someone able to make me feel like an inexperienced child. Naruto mentally muses. In some ways, Shen Qingqiu does come off as untouchable as the post is said to be, but life experience means he knows otherwise.

This man isn't unfeeling nor as aloof as expected of an Immortal Master. There's a man, a bit spiteful man, but still a man before him. As the third sip comes, it's Ming Fan that begins to fidget along with displaying his own nerves, not that Naruto turns his eyes from Shen Qingqiu to acknowledge that little fact.

He's not sure when this became a battle of wills but it had. In the end, just as he's thinking of lowering his eyes and apologize for his rude staring, the Peak Lord inquires, "And what does this boy think of this Immortal Master?"

"This one sees a man." *One in a powerful position.* He states honestly and there's a sharp intake of breath from Ming Fan. The fan that had been in the man's hand opens and the Peak Lord begins to fan himself.

"Is that all?" Inquires the Peak Lord and he takes a moment to consider how he's going to respond. "This one hopes his answer did not offend Master Shen."

There's a hum from the man and then there's a change in their conversation, the man drinking more of the tea, the tension lifting. The next topic concerns what he expects from his studying and Naruto's reply is knowledge concerning himself and the world around him, it's both honest and the truth.

There's probing questions from Shen Qingqiu about topics he dimly recounts, doing his best to give an answer within an acceptable amount of time. Yes, a lot of his answers are likely far more blunt and direct then is likely polite but his ability to keep up with this alien polite way of speaking is taking its toll upon him. The cup of tea gets refilled by Ming Fan and another sip taken.

When the probing question touch on his family... "This one doubts Master Shen would like to hear this one prattle on and on about this one's family." While it would be a unique experience to speak fondly on his adopted mother... Even though the mood seems to be more friendly, in the end, he's hear to learn how to Cultivate Immortality and this is an interview with his... boss. His personal life isn't of any importance to Shen Qingqiu in the end and given what he knows about this particular peak, most of the male disciplines come from well off families along with being third or more sons.

"Indeed, this Master would not." Agrees Shen Qingqiu with a clearly approving glint in the eye. Thus ends the interview and the man informs him of how to make a better pot of tea.

He bows as he thanks the Peak Lord for his criticism and swears to get in more practice in the future. Then Shen Qingqiu informs Ming Fan to give him a manual so he can begin cultivating. He's sure to bow in thanks to first Shen Qingqiu and then to Ming Fan, being sure to refer to him as shixiong as they haven't been formally introduced.

As they leave, they both say their farewells to their master and official teacher. It's clear that Ming Fan isn't happy with his acceptance nor did it escape the older teen's notice that he'd left a good impression on their teacher. As they walk away from the house, he does his best to inquire about his sleeping arrangements along with his lesson time table.

Just because he's inexperienced when it comes to cultivation doesn't mean he's a novice in human interaction. So, yes, he can tell when Ming Fan is lying in answering his subtle probing for answers. Given the foul mood of Ming Fan and the slight glee when the other gives him the manual, he suspects foul play concerning said book but easy thanks are spoken. He'll have to seek out a different student to get a new one, it shouldn't be hard as he quickly skims through the book, the things written within won't cut it for his usual modified academy books. Those, at least, had some grains of actual teaching then just meaningless advice or descriptions.

He's to sleep in the wood shed until there's a free room in the dormitories. Naruto merely nods in acceptance, although he suspects there's more to this sleeping arrangement then just that. He'll be sure to look into getting warm blankets for the foreseeable future.

Alone within the wood shed, the System screen pops up with congratulations for becoming a Disciple of Qing Jing Peak. Naruto merely hums as he finds a spot to unroll the bedroll. It's been a tiring experience with Shen Qingqiu and he'll go through the faulty manual for a bit, hopefully its not all garbage, not that he gets his hopes up on that.

After all, fake cultivating manuals can be found throughout this world. The idea of achieving immortality is likely a commonly dreamed dream that many scam artists have profited from. He can only guess how many kids had their dreams ruined by unscrupulous rogue Cultivators as well.

I didn't see anyone I know... Am I the only Looper here? Naruto wonders as he settles down on the bedroll.

It's a very familiar ceiling. There's a highly familiar presence next to him. The thing that bothers Shen Yuan is... it isn't his husband who's sitting next to his bed.

What follows next after addressing Yue Qingyuan is something he hadn't experienced in decades, not since they lived pass the ending of the novel. The System pops up and greets him, welcoming him back to the start of his journey. He's informed that his previous unlocking of the OOC Function will be reinstated in an hour's time but for now, it's active. And so, he takes the fan that's next to him and opens it, questioning his 'friend' about what's happened while he'd been down with a fever.

In the end, Yuan sees the Sect Head off and despite his current looks, he's grieving inside, mourning all that he's achieved and

despairs over the thought that his Binghe isn't with him here. That his Binghe will wake to find himself alone, without his husband next to him. By the time the OOC Function has been reinstated, he's not sure if he can stand to see this world's Luo Binghe.

In the end, there's a knock upon the door frame and a voice calls out, "Master Shen? This disciple has brought teacher tea." The voice is... odd and unknown to him.

"Bring it in." He orders once he's in the kitchen. With a fan covering his face, Yuan watches as an unknown teen enters into the house with a tea tray. It's the eyes that catch his attention, their coloring is fetching, it's rare to see a blue of that shade.

As the tray is set down, the unknown student regards him with mild interest. Walking over, Yuan sits down and the teen serves him the tea. "This master wishes to speak with his youngest disciple." Best not use Luo Binghe's name.

"This disciple is wishes to know what Master Shen wishes to speak with him about." And that startles him, although it likely doesn't show. He already triggered a land mine and now he's not sure how to disarm it!

"Does this disciple know of Luo Binghe's current progress?" Cause, fuck it, he might as well ask this stranger straight out about the protagonist. "This one dares not gossip about such a person." Replies the youth, there's a slight glint in those sapphire blue eyes.

"This Master would like to know his student's opinions upon his shixiong's progress." Yuan reaffirms and a smile breaks out across the youth's face. Silent laughter shakes those shoulders and he glares at the teen, not seeing what's so funny.

"I'm currently holding the post of Luo Binghe." States the teen after releasing a snort after taking in his glare, the teen moving to sit across the table. "So... first time Looping or does this have to do with the System?" The teen inquires and he mentally blanks while doing

his best to wrap his head around the thought this... youth is suppose to be his Binghe's replacement?!

"Uzumaki Naruto, by the way." The teen admits and once more, he's at a loss of words as he stares at the teen claiming to be one of the most popular characters of Japanese animation. "Looper and yea, let me guess, anime and manga right?"

"So... what happened to the actual Shen Qingqiu? Cause, I'm fairly sure, you're not him." Naruto continues.

"Not sure." Yuan finally admits and Naruto sighs, looking regretful, which is odd, then again, it's clear that the original goods hadn't seemed to perturb the suppose to be blond ninja. "Shen Yuan, husband to Luo Binghe."

"Hmm." Hums Naruto and he shifts a bit. "Looper?"

"Not unlike the groundhog day movie, only, the loop contains years instead of hours." Explains Naruto and he mentally sighs, this sounds like a Fan Fiction story. "There are times when the start of the Loop gets pushed back by some years, so, it's not my first time Waking as a child."

He takes a sip of tea and it's good, not as good as his husband's, of course, but decent until this... Loop ends and they're back together. "So, if you are here, then he's in Hidden Leaf village?" He reasons and Naruto shrugs.

"Don't know, there could be more people swapped around. It happens, sometimes, although generally we keep out first name if not our whole name." Admits Naruto. "I've replaced other main characters, like Ranma and Ichigo. Although, generally, first fusion end up attending Hogwarts in the Harry Potter Universe from beginning of First Year to the end of the Seventh Year."

He guesses that the Ichigo would be the main character from Bleach while Ranma would be from that harem anime about a teenager

cursed to change into a girl with cold water and back to a boy with warm/hot water. Again, it's sounding a lot like this story just crossed into Fan Fiction. "So, he's likely attending Hogwarts and learning that system of magic, which is rather straight forward and easy."

"And if not... He's learning to be a ninja." He reasons and Naruto gives a slight incline. "Either way, we won't know until this Loop ends and things get rearranged to how it's suppose to be." The youth admits.

Yuan reasons that everything is going to be fine then. Once things have run their course and thus the Loop ends, he'll be reunited with his husband once more.

And then, the door gets flung open and Shang Qinghua, who's Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky, Airplane for short, begins to blubber on about how Mo Beijun isn't himself. It's clear that Airplane hasn't registered his guest. It's not long before his fan finds a spot upon his shidi's head.

"He's the author of Proud Immortal Demon Way." He explains and Naruto blinks with clear surprise upon his face while Shang finally notices the teen sitting across from him. "..." The author is clearly trying to wrap his mind about this while Naruto just seems content to wait. "Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky but you know him as your shishu Shang Qinghua."

"Bro, who is this?" Asks Shang and Naruto introduces himself, "Uzumaki Naruto, currently taking on the role and post of Luo Binghe."

"So... what's this current Mo Beijun like? Physically I mean?" It's clear that whoever replaced Airplane's husband is likely another Looper and thus, someone Naruto would know.

Airplane shoots him a clear what the fuck look but he just opens his fan back up and fans himself before drinking more tea. In the end,

Airplane gives up the details and Naruto hums, "So, Gaara's here too, huh?"

"We'll have to take your word for it." He sums up and Naruto snorts softly.

"Oh, it's him, by the sounds of it. He's just likely pissed off at being an actual demon more then likely." Naruto explains. "To be honest, I'm not thrilled with being half demon myself." Admitting with a slight shrug, "I'm sure you both can guess why."

Thinking about who the two were and their cannon histories, yes, Yuan can see why neither would like to be demonic in any shape and form. "You've read my work?" Asks Airplane and Naruto states a simple, "Nope, it's a detail the System mentioned. It also mentioned the Endless Abyss and how I should flee into it to avoid imprisonment for when the seal breaks."

"To be honest, I don't know much concerning Wuxia or Chinese novels. Nor am I overly familiar with Xianxia either." Admits the anime character from Japan. "I'm not sure I'm using either of those terms right, either. Most of us have encountered more fusions with worlds based off of Western and Japanese works of fiction and some worlds based off of games then... Well, any other worlds based off of any kind of works of fiction or games. It's likely due to English dubbing honestly."

While honest, it also caused a number of questions to be raised, namely, what changed? And, does this mean that Proud Immortal Demon Way is going to see itself getting fused or cross with other works from now on? Does this mean that they'll be separated from their husbands on a more regular bases? For years at a time?

Meeting up with Gaara had been slightly difficult to arrange but worth while in the end. Naruto got a good look at the changes his fellow jinchuriki, Looper, and friend. In turn, the currently older Looper got

an eyeful of the changes to Naruto as well, what with the lack of whisker marks and blond hair, which is now rather long.

He hadn't pressed either Cucumber-bro, Yuan, or Qinghua, Airplane-bro, for plot details as, well, the System only said he had to worry about the Endless Abyss story plot now that he's succeed in learning to become a Cultivator. The world is different due to both Gaara and himself being Loopers, why else would it congratulate him on keeping his adopted mother, Luo Tingbao, alive?

"So... how's life as an Ice Demon?" Naruto asks once they are in a private room in a brothel, it was more secure then a private room at a restaurant or tea house, given the usual activities that happen at a brothel. "How's life as a half demon?" Counters Gaara.

"Not sure, Bloodline Seal." He remarks cheekily and a wide smirk. Gaara scuffs but relaxes a touch, which turns his smirk into a fond grin.

After a few minutes, with the arrival of a jug of wine, Naruto begins talking about his years as Luo Tingbao's adopted son. Gaara listens and shares a bit about his current father, admitting to having a better relationship with an Ice Demon then his usual, surviving parent. As they empty the jug of wine, Gaara's gotten onto ranting about his current uncle, who's his father's younger brother, and the things guy's done in regards to trying to screw with Gaara.

As he gets another jug ordered, Naruto brings up the few situations that had happened during his own childhood and providing for his adopted mother. They both enjoy having another Looper to talk with, the fact that they're good friends is just icing, really. Then he inquires about the Endless Abyss and, well, the Look Gaara gives him clearly means that there's more to that location then just the name.

This time, it's Gaara who orders the next jug, although, he in fact orders two. *Well... This is going to be a long night.* Naruto realizes as he waits for Gaara to figure out where to begin.

The Loop of the SVSSS World Ends Here.

Author's Comment:

Part 2 will feature Mo Beijun and Luo Binghe at Hogwarts along with meeting other Loopers.

Yea, I'm revisiting Loopers trope here.

Familiarity Reflected P 2: SVSSS

I don't own Harry Potter, Naruto, Ranma 1/2 or The Scum Villain's Self-Saving System!

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It's a strange world beyond his eyelids. He'd been sleeping next to his husband and since Luo Binghe opened his eyes, he's no longer an adult nor is his beloved next to him. In fact, he hadn't been laying down when he woke, but sitting and leaning against the glass window.

Sitting across from him is someone who's features seem similar to someone he knows, but it's hard to pin point the who plus rather short hair. *Perhaps if we were in a different setting?* Binghe muses before it dawns on him to look down at himself.

The cloths were different then the boy sitting across from him. They seem to be a single shirt under a jacket of questionable material. Then he's wearing pants that are clearly worn and light blue in color. The shirt and pants are rather roomy.

Taking in the rest of the small room, he notices chests on a rack above the stranger's head. Getting up, he finds his foot wear to be rather roomy, he wiggles his toes a bit before focusing on checking the rack over his own head for a chest. There is one and as the boy begins to stir, Binghe has the chest down and going through the contains.

The characters on the various covers he can understand, even though he Knows he shouldn't. The titles of the books themselves are strange and yet, he finds other questionable items. So absorbed with searching the contains of the chest, he forgets to keep an eye on the boy across from him.

So he's caught off guard when a stick gets pressed at his throat. "Who are you?" The other demands coldly.

"Luo Binghe." He states and the stick moves a bit before he turns to let the boy get a good look at his features. "Where are we?" The boy finally asks upon moving the stick, that's sporting a carved handle that's reminiscent of snow and ice.

"Mo Beijun?" Binghe inquires and, yes, he can see his second in command and husband of the cowardly Peak Lord in the boyish features. It's clear that, some how, the former Ice Demon has been transformed into a human.

"It seems we've been de-aged, dimensional placed, and transformed into humans." He hadn't thought to check if he had access to his two styles of Cultivation but doubts they had access to it. *Or that it's been replaced with... magic.*

"It seems we're on our way to a 'school' to be taught *magic* ." Binghe expands on as he puts most of what's within the chest back, there's a Property of Binghe Luo on the underside of the lid. "Your chest of belongings is on the rack over where you had been seated." While mentally deciding to see if he has his own stick given it must be of some importance, he thought he spied black wood on his left arm.

Once he's put the chest back onto the rack, he has a book of charms for First Year and checking his left arm, finds a hostler plus a ebony wood stick that sports carving of flame upon the handle. Mo Beijun seems to be meditating while holding onto his stick. Opening the book, Binghe begins reading while leaning against the wall while tapping the stick with his index finger.

The door opens and both of them react, although the former Demon Overlord is faster. A jet of force erupts from the point of his stick and a rush of snow flows seconds through the now empty doorway. "What the fuck? I mean, really, the actual fuck?!"

"Really, Sasuke? You just opened the door without any warning, it's only polite to knock before entering a compartment." Another boy's voice remarks, there's a touch of humor while the downed child, who's hair is rather short and reminiscent of a water fowl's butt.

"Shut it, Kiba." Snaps the boy, who's getting up off the ground. His own stick out and within seconds, the melt of the snow vanishes with a simple flick.

"Yo! I'm Kiba Inuzuka and that's Sasuke Uchiha." The boy sports spiked dark hair but the most notable features is the markings on the face. The cloths look more like Binghe's own then Mo Beijun's, in fact, both are dressed more like him then like his second in command.

"Luo Binghe." He introduces himself to the pair while Mo Beijun does the same. "It's Binghe Luo, although given the jun at the end there, that's more of a title then an actual name." Remarks Sasuke as the boy's gaze settles on Mo Beijun, and, well, thinking about it, he realized that the stranger is likely right, not that it had mattered to him before.

"Might want to share your actual name, we're going to be hearing it come the Sorting Ceremony." Pipes in Kiba. "And given we haven't heard anything concerning Naruto or Gaara, guess we're not going to be seeing them this Loop with these two here." Adds the checked marked boy while it seems that Mo Beijun and Sasuke are having a staring contest.

"What do you mean by... Loop?" He asks as he closes his book after making sure to memorize the page number. The two names they mention don't mean anything. It's also about this time that he realizes that they seem to be moving.

The pair share a Look before they enter into the... compartment as it's apparently called. The door gets closed behind Kiba with Sasuke beginning to explain about Time Loops and touches on the likely hood of Naruto and Gaara likely having taken up their lives in their

Loop. Binghe doesn't like the idea of someone else marrying his Shizun but then, he tries to comfort himself over the fact that maybe it won't be Shen Yuan that's going to be who his replacement is dealing with but Shen Jiu and, maybe, Shen Yuan is here in this Loop with him, only in his original body.

It's not long before the topic goes to Hogwarts and the fact that they've got almost a decade of magic lessons along with a minor civil war, which may or may not happen. It depends on the local native Looper by the name of Harry Potter. They also get visitations from various people that are from the same universe as Kiba and Sasuke but also from another universe that's typically called Ranma one half, named after the protagonist.

Then again, the universe the ninjas come from is also named after the protagonist, Naruto. Binghe considers the idea of said person living his life and is only really calmed down concerning the fact that Naruto is straight, same with Gaara, not that they out right say so, it's mostly what he gets from listening to stories told about the number of misadventures the... blond has gotten himself into and out of.

Feeling more assured that their replacements aren't gunning for their respective husbands.

(: - T - :)

The ratty old hat sings. Binghe has seen many things in his long life but a singing hat? That's something strange, even in his books it's a little out there.

Then the sorting begins and the hat gets placed onto the heads before it calls out the name of a house. Then an almost familiar name gets called, "Mo An."

Scowling, Mo Beijun stalks up to the stool and after almost a minute, the hat proclaims, "Ravenclaw!" With that the former demon heads

for the table that sports blue as a color of the house and its animal is an eagle, even though it's name suggests a black carrion bird.

A few names getting called and them getting sorted before the deputy calls out, "Luo, Binghe." He walks up to the stool and the hat gets placed on his head.

'Well, well, well, another odd case, huh? Hmm...' The voice of the hat murmurs and he can tell that the hat is going through his memories, there's not much he can do to stop it though. *'Hufflepuff and Slytherin would suit you best.'* The hat informs him. *'Any preferences between the two?'*

Hufflepuff please. I rather not deal with self important brats. Binghe informs the hat. Working hard... It's something people had forgotten was a trait of his, once upon a time. *'And being loyal to that Shizun of yours. I suggest not taking anything Professor Snape overly serious though, even if he does remind you of Shen Jiu.'* Then says out loud, "Hufflepuff!"

And so, he walks over to the house that sports yellow as a house color and the animal of a badger. He's greeted warmly by his new house membership and a few more names get called before there's a massive hush when Harry's name is called.

Then, after a few seconds, whispers murmur over the Boy-Who-Lived and he wants to ask about what's up about the title. Then the hat proclaims, "Ravenclaw!"

While most people cheer, he notices the Loopers' reactions along with something getting exchanged. It seems they placed bets on which house Harry was going to be sent to. Noticing the look of a pout on Ron's face, it's clear Ravenclaw isn't the usual house that Harry joins.

The sorting continues until the last person get sorted into Slytherin, then the clearly elderly man in brightly colored cloths stands, says a few things before speaking nonsense, which causes the feast to

appear. Binghe wrinkles his nose at the selection as none of it looks appetizing, not even the mention of pumpkin juice. Still, after watching his house mates pick and chose, he picks what is the least offensive, after all, it's been a long train ride and there hadn't been anything to eat during it, he gently refused the strange candies that various fellow Loopers offered him, although Mo Beijun ate a few of the chocolate frogs and a cauldron cake.

He sticks to water and there's lively talk about anything and everything. Binghe does notice a certain man who does bring to mind the Peak Lord who allowed his fellow disciples to bully him. "That's Professor Snape. He's the potion's professor. Be glad you weren't sorted into Gryffindor, he always has a bone to pick with members of that house." Explains one of the older students and he hums, having been warned by the sorting hat already, although there's more context about the reason why.

By the time the feast comes to an end, Binghe is more then ready to turn in for the night. If he hadn't been told about the usual schedule of events that are typical of Hogwarts, he might be incline to check out this forbidden room that the Headmaster makes mention of. He's already making plans to explore the Forbidden Forest and he'll likely bring Mo Beijun along as well.

He walks with his house to their dorms, making sure to memorize the route and taking note of the moving paintings while listening about what to watch out for when it comes to navigating the school. They get told about no boys in the girls dorms and which is which when it comes to the stairs. Reaching his room, it strikes him as odd that he'll be sleeping alone beginning tonight and for the rest of this Loop.

It's depressing but Binghe does his best to remind himself that it's only for a few years, that then he'll be reunion-ed with his beloved after that. *Although, I'm sure Shizun would like some souvenirs from my time here...* He makes a mental note to inquire of a way to do just that as he lays in his bed, waiting for sleep to come.

(: - T - :)

It's nearing the end of their summer and beginning of their second year, Binghe's spent far more time of that summer studying various subjects and learning to tolerate various quirks of the other foreign Loopers. He's gotten along with a few of them, coming to enjoy their company while others tend to annoy him to no end. Thankfully, by the end of the second week of summer vacation, the shared manor saw most of the Loopers heading out of the United Kingdom for various reasons besides relaxing vacation.

So, besides Mo Beijun, who's family in universe owned the so called 'Looper Manor' they are living at, Choiji, Hinata, Nabiki, Sai, and Shikamaru. Other then putting up with Sai's 'off colored' jokes, most of the others seem content to keep out of his business along with not trying to spar with him or Mo Beijun nor did they invade his personal space. They did seem to raise a bit of an eyebrow at his wanting to do house hold chores without using any magic, he would have been happy with also being the only cook but he's not the only one who finds cooking relaxing so there's a rotation between Choiji, Hinata, and himself.

He's been an experience being able to learn to make various meals along with discovering just what kind of ingredients there are, given he's been unable to convince the House Elves at Hogwarts to let him use their kitchens. Binghe learnt a lot about how to use the various appliances from watching Choiji and Hinata cooking and recipes that they were willing to share along with how things work in a few other universes they've visited like Star Trek and it's Replicators, which sounds disdainful in Binghe's humble opinion. He'd asked about how various magical beasts and plants get cooked only for them to not know, it seemed that said creatures and material are generally used only for potions or, in the case of hides of certain beasts, cloths.

From Hinata, he learns that there are Acromantula in the Forbidden Forests, a species of magic spiders that aren't native to these lands. Binghe wonders if their spider silk could be turn into cloth. It's also good to know that none of the others are incline to overly care if the population decreases as far to many bad experiences have

happened, not that the magical spiders are aware of their previous actions.

There's also other magical species, be it plant or beast, within the forest that interest him, an example is this breed of magical winged horses that can only been seen by those who have seen death called Thestrals. He's been warned of that there are Centaurs, being that sport the upper body of a humaniod and the bottom half that's the body of a horse. that won't take kindly to anyone wandering about. Racial predigest is still a thing and there's far more non-human races to get smeared with discrimination, which is reflected back on humans, although with few avenues to pursue it.

This world is larger then expected. Binghe ruefully admits to himself as he walks through what's called a mall. He's window shopping as it's termed as unlike Mo Beijun, he is still working on creating a dimensional pocket to store souvenirs for his beloved Shizun.

He's wearing a black long sleeve shirt sporting an image of a red sword with a tassel that's creating a circle, it's been transfigured from a bunch of leaves. The pants are dark blue jeans, Binghe only used magic to darken the color of the material. The black with red trim had been a pair of flip flops, which seem to be poor quality sandals. His hair is done in a high pony tail.

The two who accompanied him to the mall are Nabiki and Sai, both had split to go their own way as well, trusting that he's more then capable of fending for himself. Then again, Binghe does still have that cell phone that was given to him at the beginning of summer and is on him, it's Messaging allows for him to contact either if he runs into difficulties plus it's got a GPS, which can lead him to either of their locations viva the Contact List. *This world is so different... I wonder if Shizun's original world as like this?*

Still, he's out of the house that's seeing the return of the others, which is why he decided to explore the non-magical side of this country. *Perhaps next summer, I can't arrange a trip to China? It's suppose to be similar to home.* The former half demon muses as he

enters into what appears to be a clothing store, he has some money so he can purchase what catches his interest. The amount is two thousand pounds and he's been assured that's more then enough for his first trip, he's also been cautioned that bartering with the cashiers is useless as they aren't responsible for the prices listed.

The styles are not all that different then the examples he's been shown by the others, the difference is in 'brand' and size, never mind color or the 'prints' either ironed on or woven into the cloth. For all that the Wizarding World is supposedly backwards, it's style of dress is a great deal more familiar then the mundane styles, then again, he's been told, if he's looking for cloths in his usual style, he just needs to find the right retailer or find a tailor willing to do a private commission.

After a while, Binghe wanders out of the shop and it's not long before his phone vibrates in his jean's pocket. Pulling it out, he finds a text from Nabiki, it's a group text with Sai along himself, inquiring if they're done. Sai tests back that he's waiting in line. Both happened about five and two minutes ago. It takes him a bit to recall how to bring up the keyboard and taps out a reply of his own, mostly stating he's ready to leave. A few seconds later and he gets directions to where Nabiki suggests they meet up at.

Typing a simple reply, Binghe pockets the phone and takes a few seconds to take a look at the store signs. Once he's got an idea of where he is within the mall and general idea of which direction he needs to head, he does so. Not long before his phone vibrates again in his pocket but he ignores it as he is getting closer to the location.

It's not long before Nabiki is within his sight, she's been sorted into Slytherin and the second Looper to Wake to the Ranma one half time loop. She calls to mind a mature Sha Hualing and from some jabs, it sounds like she'd only been concerned with money. There have been some suggestions of watching or reading the various works that relate to their universes but, other then watching Naruto and up to the cliff hanging episode they had when it came to Naruto

Shippuden, they have yet been able to get more episodes for the series.

"Nabiki." He greets the page cut hair girl. "Binghe." The girl returns before her gaze goes back to the phone in her hand.

A few minutes later, Sai arrives while carrying about seven bags, it's hard for him to pick out what the bulk is but then, the bags sport different store logos, which mean that he's visited various shops. "Nabiki. Binghe." Greets the artist ninja, even Binghe admits that the other is talented when it comes to drawing and painting.

"How many more note books and pens plus pencils did you need?" Nabiki inquires curiously, which is a bit ironic given she's running something of a Black Market concerning 'muggle' goods that ranges from selling soda and junk food to novels of various kinds and basic stationary items. He admits, pens and pencils are vary decent compared to brushes and feathered quills, although finding the right amount of pressure to use to write clearly while not snapping the tip or the body of the item.

It's something he's sure that Mo Beijun have been purchasing a lot of to give to Shang Qinghua for the Peak Lord's personal use as the mousy man does have a hobby of writing stories. He'll be spending a lot of money on various book series, that includes the limited selection of fictional books that the Wizarding World have published. Binghe also needs to think of what to bring him for himself, knowing his Shizun, the man would be fussing over him missing this 'opportunity' while worrying over 'this old man'. So far, he hasn't found anything that he considers worth while to bring home with him, he's not sure how many of his newly learnt recipes would be something he could make once he's home.

After a bit of a chat between Nabiki and Sai, which he wasn't really paying his full attention to, they do end up leaving the mall and heading to a secluded spot to use the ability to teleport from one spot to another, it's called... Apparition. Walking before the other two into the alley, he hears a soft meow and curiosity causes him to

wander over, he finds a moving bag in a box. The bag stops moving for a bit before a rush of movement happens.

Binghe rips the bag open to find a dirty kitten that looks up at him with two different eye colors, a blue in the left and a green in the right. The kitten blinks up at him and tries to puff up its dirty fur, which causes a slight smile to appear on Binghe's face at the sight. Kitten isn't the right word for the animal as the feline is over the cute, tiny stage and is clearly in the teenage stage, well, for a cat.

Ignoring the clear threat, he reaches down and takes hold of the feline, ignoring, a quick check, the young tom's angry noises. "Shencat." He decides, he recalls his husband mention a Bingpup and the playful threat of getting an actual dog to give that name to. Ignoring the bites and the scratches, he scratches Shencat's throat with his fingers while holding the young tom.

"Rather feral stray you picked up." Comments Sai with a slight interest shining in the other's eyes. Binghe merely hums as Shencat finally settles down under his scratches behind the ear. "Want to find a pet shop to buy it's things?" Sai asks, there's a slight bemusement hinting in that tone and he notices something going on with Nabiki in that she's struggling to not to grin or laugh.

"No, I'll just use magic to create what's needed for Shencat." He decides, he'd noted that none of the others had pets. As Nabiki and Sai exchange loaded looks, Binghe wonders if he honestly cared to inquire about having missed something. *Maybe there's an unspoken rule about pets? Besides owls, given that they're mostly used for mail and don't seem to be pet pets.*

Well, whatever. He decides as the two finish their unspoken conversation. It's likely that his Shizun will have gotten a dog and named it after him, not right away but certainty once he noticed Naruto and learnt about the Loop, there's no way that Shen Yuan won't be aware, that Luo Binghe is **certain** of.

With Shencat softly purring, he's carried along with Nabiki's Apparition, they arrive outside the front door. Other then giving the pair a raised eyebrow, Sai moves to open the door with Nabiki hurrying in after he does before Binghe does so. Heading for the bathroom in his room, he does note the looks the other Loopers get upon sighting Shencat but they hold their opinions to themselves.

You'd think I brought home... what's the term? Ah, yes, 'a ticking time bomb'. Binghe thinking to himself by the time he arrives at his room that has sports a bathroom.

Cleaning up Shencat, the tom turns out to be an off white with creamy brown markings in the form of stockings on the front legs and shorter socks on the back ones, the tail's tip is that creamy brown with the ears sporting that on their back. He allows himself to coo at Shencat, who's expression seems to read that he's only putting up with this for the coos and ear scratches.

(: - T - :)

Ignoring Ranma's glares, it seems that the pig tailed Looper has a hate/fear relationship when it comes to cats and the other Loopers forgot to mention why none of them had pet cats. While it's an odd phobia, Binghe isn't going to be getting rid of Shencat, which means that his interactions with the other to be tainted with hostility. It's fairly... nausea inducing with its familiarity and something that had been missing during his time at Hogwarts.

Although he's taken precaution concerning Shencat's safety in enchanting the collar and the metal bits with protection spells with the name plate sporting a location tag enchantment for him to find the tom if something happens and the feline gets lost or locked out. Binghe's grown attached to the young tom in the few days he rescued the feline from the tied up bag. There's no problem concerning Shencat coming to Hogwarts with him as cats are on the approval list concerning what one can bring as a pet, though he'd been persuaded to get a professional to check over the tom to ensure that Shencat is healthy.

On another note, it seems that Mo Beijun picked up a husband replacement as well, a hamster sporting brown and black. He's yet to hear what name his second in command has for the magical breed of rodent, given where they'd been when the former Ice Demon suddenly had the little beastie, who had been content to perch on Mo Beijun's right shoulder throughout the rest of the trip. Shencat had seemed curious about the little rodent but his interested waned a few minutes later, when the rodent seemed more interested in testing out the fur collar of Mo Beijun's robe. The fact that the little hamster seemed to have more of a back bone then the usual An Ding Peak Lord displays is rather amusing.

So, with Shencat resting on the rack over his head, Luo Binghe has a novel out and is content reading it, the title is called Dune. Sitting next to him is Sai while Ino is sitting across and next to Mo Beijun, who has the little hamster out and it's curled up in the fur collar, again, disregarding the fact that Shencat is in the compartment as well. Ino had been more then happy to coo at the sight, there have been many pictured taken of both the hamster and the owner since Mo Beijun acquired the hamster.

It's clear, given how many people have taken pictures, that most of the Loopers seemed to find it more interesting taking pictures of Mo Beijun and the hamster then Binghe and Shencat. It's fine, given there is something... bemusing in a charming sort of way seeing the hamster perched easily on Mo Beijun's right shoulder without a care in the world. It's something about 'tough and silent guy' having something as cute and charming as a tiny pet that seems to evoke more interest given how at odds it seems to be.

Mo Beijun does have a cage for the hamster along with the needed items to ensure the health of the little beastie, after all, his second likely can't bring his pet to class with him. Given the inner House relations, it's safer to leave the hamster in the Ravenclaw dorms. The same goes with all pets, well, except for the owls but then, it's due to them having their own place to roost and considering they

aren't always at Hogwarts, given owls are working animals in the Wizarding World.

Glancing at Ino and then out of the corner of his eye, Sai. The pair have cellphones out and Sai is playing a game along with sending messages, both in game and out of it. Binghe can't see what's going on with Ino but given she's got ear buds in her ears, it might be a movie or music.

A single glance of seeing Mo Beijun with his tablet out, Binghe returns to reading his novel. Well, until there's a loud honking and glancing out of the window he spies Ron driving a flying car with Fred and George waving along with doing some exaggerate mouth movements that sum up as they can't hear anyone and up the volume.

"Huh, no Harry." Remarks Sai from behind him. "I saw him on the final car in a sleeping bag when I went for a tour of the compartments." Pipes in Ino.

"Ginny? Luna?" Asks Sai and Binghe glances over at Mo Beijun, it seems that there's another two Loopers, natives if he were to guess. "I've seen Luna... Ah, there's Ginny." Remarks the blond preteen girl.

Looking back out of the window, there's a red haired girl riding a pedal bike that's flying through the air near the back of the car, about thirty feet from the back of it along with a few feet higher in the air. If he's to guess, Binghe thinks about two feet higher then the top of the car. "So, who's turn with the diary? Given Gaara isn't here for his... time." Ino wonders and this is the first time he's heard of a diary.

"Is it important to the events concerning that... basilisk?" He asks curiously. "Oh, it's got a soul sliver of Voldie, a fairly large portion of it too." Explains Ino and Binghe frowns at the thought of someone dividing up their soul.

"It's one of the man's Horcux." Adds Sai as they watch the car and bike speed up, overtaking the train engine. "Horcux?" He parrots.

As they return to their seats, the pair of ninjas explain about Horcux and the many failings of one Albus Dumbledore in regards to how the Headmaster handles Tom Riddle and his merry band of Death-Munches. Which also gives both former demons a better understanding of what's considered cannoned events. The novel forgotten as Luo Binghe listens attentively to the narrative that the two are revealing, just taking it all in, for now.

Ending it Here!

Dungeons and Their Lords: KHR!

I don't own Katekyo Hitman Reborn!

Third party this week. The Dungeon Lord thinks with a sigh as he observes the party of nine Sinners or to use their self proclaimed title, Adventurers. The maximum party limit is fifteen for Entrance Hall into his Dungeon, which is officially named the Tenth Dungeon of Vongola, not that he has any idea of what a Vongola is, and unofficially now called as The Last Hope. Last Hope of what, he doesn't know but then, he knows his Dungeon is the last in the series of Vongola Dungeons so perhaps the last to fall? It's likely given the increase of Sinners trying to Conquer his Dungeon.

He knows there are other Dungeons, the Dungeon Interface grants him some history concerning the reason why Dungeons exist and that those who venture into them are Sinners, that they run Dungeons as Penance, Conquering it by killing him which destroys the Dungeon and causes the Sinners a step closer to Salvation. There's a lack of information concerning Dungeon Lords nor did the Dungeon Interface hint at where they came from. Nor does it ultimately matter, given that his job is clear, once he has Created a Dungeon, he is then to slowly improve it viva DP, Dungeon Points, which are generated passively daily based on what he has within his Dungeon or earned from his Dungeon killing Sinners venturing into it.

The Sinners revive else where after being killed in his Dungeon, as he's seen familiar faces among the Sinners party many times. Like now, he's noticing a familiar silver haired Sinner tossing explosive potions at his fourth floor inhabitants, Kobolds, the scale coated type not the canine ones. With a thought, he orders the approaching range Kobolds to target any flung potions and having the ambush Kobolds to go to the next room, preparing said room to ambush the approaching party. The bodies of the dead Kobolds fade, leaving

behind Loot, not that the party of nine had much time to pick it up as two archer Kobolds slip into the room and begin firing at the nearest two melee fighters while more dart in, rolling to either the right or left of the door before joining the original two in firing at the party, the few potions sent flying viva the Alchemist Sinner are quickly sniped, which causes the Sinner to curse but to use the crossbow that was on the back.

His Kobolds harried the party but can't keep the powerful party from engaging the current Floor Boss, Ire of the Berserking Blade. There hadn't been enough time to grow attach to this Boss, same with the previous ones as well. Thankfully this one got a rare Perk that allows the Boss to get a rather huge boost to hitting the party instead of to damage dealing. He lets out a breath at the sight of a Sinner's death even though they did kill the Boss Kobold, revealing the fifth floor staircase, which leads to a floor that houses two types of monsters instead of just the single type of previous floors.

Leaning back, the Dungeon Lord smiles as the party is shocked at getting attack by two types, Bats and Rats, when the second party of the week had tried to Conquer his Dungeon, the Fifth floor had been home to only a single monster type, Giant Centipedes. Yes, the two new types weren't anything special but once this party is dead, he will use the DP earned from it to begin upgrading the two types. It also means that there's a mid-floor Boss and a final floor Boss. The mid-Boss is a rat named Lots-to-Bite, the size of a medium dog while the final boss is a bat named Screaming Winds, which is the size of normal cat.

Yes, the party did make short work of the various mobs of monsters but by the time they got to Screaming Winds, they seem incline to stop their Conquest of his Dungeon but the Alchemist Sinner refuses and pushing for them to continue on. He watches on, them quiting at this point didn't affect much beyond then a smaller gain in DP really. In the end, the party broke apart and all members are forcefully teleported to the Entrance Hall of his Dungeon.

He withdraws from observing the former party to begin spending his DP to improve the fifth floor. Once his monsters spawn, he upgrades them all before picking a bat for his mid-Boss and a rat for his final Boss, after all, it's best to keep changing it up to keep future parties guessing. The bat mid-Boss is named Taboo Bite and in possessing of a disease Perk while the rat Boss is named Flea Coat and the Perk is pretty much in the name, it'll mostly just cause minor bleed effect on the party whenever they attack it in close quarters.

Moving to the Fourth floor, he spends DP on the basic Kobolds, upgrading all to the various branches before selecting an ambush Kobold to evolve into the floor Boss. Baal of the Shadow Cloak is now the floor Boss and in possession of a Perk that grants the Boss a limited number of smoke bombs. He upgrades the floor Boss before moving to reset the various traps. He visits the other floors to upgrade the monsters there and picking a monster to evolve into the floor Boss, using DP to upgrade them to his satisfaction before resetting the traps.

His DP now low, he rather hopes that there isn't going to be another party tomorrow as he's got a Research Project going on and it'll be done the day after tomorrow. The Dungeon Lord goes through his Dungeon Interface, looking through the shop for better equipment then he's currently possessing before going over the Dungeon Stats. In the end, he dismisses it and gets up off his throne, stretching, his black feather wings arch out of his back and then up. His Race is Fallen Angel.

"I suppose it might be getting to the time I should upgrade myself..." He murmurs as he runs a hand through his long, brown hair, a pair of short horns coming out near his temples. Looking down at his current attire, he shakes his head before willing his wings back into his back. "Nay, best keep my focus on the Dungeon still. None of them have yet to make it to floor seventeen..." The Dungeon Lord reminds himself as he studies the Throne Room, to his right is the Armor Vault where the no-consumed armor gets stored while to his current left is the Weapon Vault, the doorway behind his throne and

a good forty feet up is where his personal Crafting Stations are located, a minor balcony allowing him to land on it with ease.

His eyes take in the pair of stone statues, the featured beast don't fully fit in any descriptions within his Bestiary. Hooking his thumbs into his belt, he glances up at the large orange crystal that's lighting up his Throne Room easily, the various torches that once featured in the room have long since vanished, not needed it seems. "Observe." The Fallen Angel states and the same information filters into his mind, that the Crystal is now fully charged and awaiting the Final Assault upon the Tenth Dungeon of Vongola.

"Hard to believe, almost twenty years..." The Dungeon Lord, a Fallen Angel answering to the name Suna reflects. "I wonder... What should I get myself for my upcoming Twentieth Birthday?" He wonders out loud once he begins walking out of the Throne Room. His Dungeon is in possession of Twenty-three floors, his Room and Throne Room automatically move to the new floor once he evolves one of the floor monsters into a Floor Boss with no cost on his part.

It's not long before he's in his room and with a soft sigh, he heads for his pool for a soak. He doesn't need to be in his Throne Room to attend to his Dungeon, it just helps him get into the mood.

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Hayato marches into the only bar after using his Teleportation Scroll to return to Victor Town, the nearest settlement near the final Vongola Dungeon, where his Sky and Boss is being held captive, at the mercy of the Dungeon Lord. The other nine Vongola Dungeons each had the former Dons as a captive to the ultimate Boss of the Dungeon, the so called Lords and each had a torture chamber. He orders a drink and meal before getting lost in his own thoughts.

The first Vongola Dungeon Lord had been a Flame Dragon by the name of Gooti while the second Dungeon Lord had been a blood red coat with dark orange striped Rakshasa, a demon that looks like a humanoid tiger with backward hands, named Ciro, and so on with

the former Ninth Don had been held captive by a Barghest by the name of Itteo. None know that the Tenth Dungeon Lord is or name and body had every seriously tried to Conquer the Dungeon back when they first found it, not even venturing far into it, these Adventurers formed a group dedicated to Farming said Dungeon, it was a common occurrence a decade ago but now, it only gave said Dungeon Lords time to firm up their defenses, digging more Dungeon levels, and likely spending time torturing their captive Skies.

Yes, all the Dungeons scattered about this strange world are based off of those who once possessed the Tri-Ni-Set and unsurprisingly, those who had once held the Sky Pacifier prove to be far more numerous compared to the Mare Dungeons and the Vongola Dungeons. It's one thing to know that the Sky Pacifier existed before the two sets of Rings but it's another thing to see clear evidence of it. *Not all of them are human either.*

Mentally shoving that thought off to the side, he considers the fact that it's clear that the Dungeon Lord is changing the lay out of the Dungeon, after all, last time he'd been on the Fifth level, its monsters had only been Giant Centipedes and now, now it's got two monster types, Bats and Rats, which brought up the idea that the levels beyond the fifth might also have more levels where more then one type of monster holds sway. Hayato knew that this was a very unwelcome development and one he needs to tell the others.

Pulling out a notebook and begins to update the his information concerning the Last Hope's Fifth level. It's also the first time a mid-Boss monster ever appeared in any Dungeon. Please hold on a little longer, we'll get you out of there soon!

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"Why would I want to Create a Shop?" Suna wonders in bewilderment upon skimming the Research Project and now actually reading it more carefully. "Out of... Why would I want to leave?" He

can't help but find himself bewildered at the idea of leaving his Dungeon.

In the end, he shakes his head and moves to do something else, it's been three days since the last party of Sinners ventured into his Dungeon and he's got some DP to spend on upgrading Traps on the Fifteenth floor. As he finishes the final pit fall and moves to begin upgrading the arrow traps, the Dungeon Interface flickers off as he feels the first Sinner enter into his Dungeon. With little thought, he's now observing the incoming party, the Sinner Alchemist from before is again a member of this party. It's a full party of fifteen, each seem rather grim faced and one seems to Sense him Observing the happenings, a Sinner dressed in white with a purple marking upon the face.

"He's watching." The purple marked Sinner remarks and another Sinner, a trident welder, chuckles while at few seem to smirk in a blood thirsty manner. "Good, the trash and curse as we breeze through his fucking Dungeon." The Sinner that's wearing feathers in their hair states in a confident manner.

"We shall see, won't we?" The Dungeon Lord muses and sits back in his throne. "Let's see you lot make it pass floor Fifteen."

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"VOI! Shit! God damn fucking snake!" Squalo bellows after one of the Spiter Snakes manages to fire venom into his face while Hayato curses while pulling out another Anti-Venom Potion. "VOI!"

They're on the Eleventh level of the Dungeon and this level is crawling with Giant Snakes and demi-human Yuan-ti. It's hard to know what you're dealing with in regards to the Yuan-ti they can transform into Snakes. The level is Jungle terrain and the scales of the two monsters help blend them into the terrain. It doesn't help that they've lost members of their party.

Lambo, Chrome, and Belphegor died to the previous final Boss, an Orc Shaman named Torn of the Phantom Tooth when the Boss summoned Orc Skeletons to fight by his side. The mid-Boss had been a Dire Bear named Demon, it very much did live up to that name, even entering into a Berserk state the moment it reached half of its life, never mind that it possesses the usual Rage Stat when at ten percent of health left. The size of each level also changes with the Eighth level being more focus on Problem Solving solutions then just wipe out all the monsters, a change given it once had been a Giant Ant level, it did sport some Giant Ants by the end and it's Boss had been a Solider Ant named For the Royalty.

It's clear evidence that this Dungeon Lord is evolving his level design, something rather unheard and causing them all to wonder if this Dungeon Lord knew that they Conquered the Ninth Vongola Dungeon about a year ago, thus realized he's next on their hit list. It means that this one is smart and has made good use of the pass almost twenty years. "I'm don't have enough to make more Anti-Venom potions." He says once they finish clearing the room, he's got two hastily made Anti-Venmon Potions on him, none of the Crafting Material could be used to make more without certain plants and Mukuro glares at him but even he can see that the Mist is reaching his limit, they all were honestly.

You'd think with the limit of fifteen members to a party, we wouldn't have this trouble. He thinks sourly as they all pretty much feel exhaustion. The old research concerning this Dungeon is clearly out of date and according to Byakuran, the Dungeon Lord hasn't done anything save for watch their progress.

"Anything?" Xanxus asks the former captive and the other Sky gets a thoughtful look on his face. "Just glimpses of the Sky Crystal in the Throne Room, it feels like its filled right up with Sky Flames and... we've got a lot of distance between us and said room."

His stomach drops upon hearing that, after all, the Ninth Dungeon of Vongola sported only Fifteen levels and no party has completed the Fifteenth level of the Tenth Dungeon of Vongola, few make it to that

level in the first place. The largest Dungeon known since this began had been one of the Pacifier Dungeons, back before the term Acrobaleno was used, of Thirty levels. It had been one of those single theme Dungeons, which hinted that there might be some kind of bonus to sticking to a single theme for a Dungeon, but still, it had been possessed Thirty levels and caused them all to wonder just how many levels Dungeons can have.

"VOI! This fucker! Shit, you mean we have to use That Method? That we need to use that damn fucking coward tactic?" Squalo demands and it takes him a second to realize what method they are talking about.

Mukuro chuckles while Kyoya looks personally offended at the very idea they need to use it. "He's listening in." Byakuran reminds them all before anyone of them could think to comment on that tactic here.

"We're leaving. Scrolls work here, trash?" Xanxus asks and he shrugs, replying, "I don't think anyone tried to Teleport out directly, just at the Entrance Hall."

"Best not to tempt it, we know they have complete control over everything in their Dungeons." Viper pipes in simply and end the end, they head back the way they came. All the while knowing that they were dealing with a very smart and patient Dungeon Lord, who's got the final Don of Vongola captive.

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"What method were they talking about?" Suna wonders as he floats in his warm pool, it's been a day since that party of fifteen Sinners quit on the Eleventh floor, staring up at the Mural overhead. It disturbed him so much that he hadn't slept well that night, curiosity eating at him, never mind the fact that the purple marked Sinner had been able to connect slightly to his Dungeon enough to glimpse his Throne Room.

The warmth of the pool doesn't help so, he calls up his Dungeon Interface and begins going through his Personal Equipment but then changes his mind about upgrading it, wanting to check on his Entrance Hall to see if any new feature got unlocked, nothing new greets him. The party limit is still active, same with the allotment of one party at a time, and so is the weekly limit, which numbers six for a week, almost one for each day of the week, he set it up back when that group of Sinners 'claimed' his Dungeon, keeping the party limit to six and the weekly runs to six as well. The Dungeon Lord mentally counts the tries of this week and sighs in relief.

His worry fades now that he's certain that whatever trickery the Sinners thought up won't succeed, at least, for now. *It seems that I need more information about their tactics and it's clear, they are coming for me.*

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The Wave Method is simple but at the same time, it needs a lot of warm bodies to cooperate as a lot of parties will just be cannon folder, paving the way through the various levels. It's worked wonders with pretty much all Dungeons before, yet now, now it seems that there's a snag to their plan as it turns out, yes, you can limit the number of times a Dungeon could be run for a week and it seems that the Dungeon Lord of the Tenth Vongola Dungeon set the limit to six runs a week. It seems, upon investigating the previous members of that Farming group and found out that the limit has always been six and once upon a time, so had been the party size.

Now... now they're going to have to make each of those first five Wave Parties matter but first, they need to investigate the each of the levels so they can be prepared to defeat each level as fast as they can. Which means that he's going to be dealing with a lot of people he dislikes for the sake of rescuing his Sky and Boss, namely a certain Cloud and a deranged Mist. Kyoya Hibari and Mukuro Rokudo, their relationship hasn't changed much save that they now don't have a reason to get together as much as they once did. Honestly, he doesn't get how the Tenth once managed the two.

Anyway, he's heard about a new shop that opened up in Victor Town, the Adventure is a Mist from what he's heard as the owner sports a pair of short horns and the decor is Biblical themed. Hayato is hoping for a damn better selection of Alchemist Crafting Materials as Mists' Construction allows them to be great at creating stuff but they can be flaky as hell too. Sometimes adding an bonus, unneeded extra feature to said Enchanted Item, like a sword that laughs in a sinister fashion upon being pulled from a dead enemy or arrows that scream as they are fired from a bow of any sort.

The shop isn't much and the new, freshly painted sign that sports in black Dare the Gate? Taking a moment to stares at the sign and yea, the owner is more then likely a Mist as only a Mist would think to use such a name for their shop. Still, he enters the store anyway.

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Glancing up from his new Shop Interface, he finds a familiar looking Sinner entering into the ramshackle building. *Ah, the Alchemist...* Suna, currently disguised as a Sinner by the name of Sai Yasha, also a 'Mist User'.

"Greetings, what brings you into my Shop?" He asks with a hint of curiosity. His current appearance is based on his actual one, the changes were to age, facial hair, color chances to the eyes and hair, plus using layered Illusions upon his horns to give the impression that they are fake. The Dungeon Lord's 'age' is near the late thirties or early forties, a short trimmed beard, a dark gray for the hair color and beard, and a rich green for his eyes.

"Tsk, just show me your Store Inventory." The Alchemist Sinner orders in a gruff tone and he moves to a different part of his Interface to do just that. The scowl slightly fades while their eyes begin to glint at what's being shown.

I guess it's a good thing I focused on buying such a wide selection instead of improving the building. The Dungeon Lord reflects as the Sinner is already marking what he wishes to buy and in what

quantities. This store won't generate any DP for him to use, in stead, it grands him the opinion to actually Buy Crafting Materials that his Dungeon does not produces, which does happen at different rates that depend upon the floor's monsters and theme. Or a chance dropped from a Sinner upon their death in his Dungeon either.

Once the Shop reaches level Five, he'll be able to sell the Items he's made in boredom and just cluttering up his personal Inventory Vault. Also, given that this Shop doesn't generate DP for him, it doesn't cost him DP to upgrade either, just the coins Sinners seem to value so much and, again, is just cluttering up his personal Inventory Vault from chance drops of Sinners or when the Sinners decide to ignore the lowest value coins and said coins end up in getting sent to his personal Inventory Vault. He's only set this up just yesterday, venturing out of his Dungeon right after the Sinner Party exited out of it, following their tracks to this town.

A ding-a-ling signals the purchase going through and it seems that by dent of how much the Alchemist Sinner had bought, he's Shop is now level Three and with a simple promise, "I'll be coming back here as long as you keep such a wide stock of Alchemist Crafting Material."

"Thanks?" He calls after before pulling up his Shop Inventory's Log to see what the Alchemist Sinner purchased. As he does so, another Sinner enters, this one sporting a fake smile and cold eyes. "Greetings."

"Heya, name's Takeshi Yamamoto and I don't suppose you sell swords, do yea?" *Why give me his name?* He wonders as he replies, "Sai Yasha and I have a small selection."

"Are any on display?" The Sinner named Takeshi asks and he turns his head in the direction, "Three on display but I warn you, they are fairly pricey."

"Ok, thanks." And with a nod of acknowledgement, the Sinner named Takeshi wanders off in that direction and he can't help but feel as

though this Sinner seems to be taking stock of him and the Shop he is the owner of. He calls up his own Interface and checks what this level increase means for him plus if anything new has been unlocked.

"Interesting name, Dare the Gate?" The Sinner remarks and he glances towards the Swordsman, replying, "I thought it had a certain... something." He can't help but smile by the end before allowing it to fade.

"Well, there is a Dungeon near here, the last Vongola." Takeshi the Sinner remarks and he hums, recalling, "The Ninth was Conquered almost a year ago."

"Yea, we did, saved Timoteo from the Werewolf Dungeon Lord." Takeshi the Sinner states and he blinks, *Saved?* "Something about that doesn't sound right..."

"Oh? Oh! Hahaha, yea, I guess so." The Sinner remarks with a shrug. "Either way, the Dungeon Lord looked like a canine."

That's not what sounds wrong... He mentally thinks to himself. "I take it he's recovering from his captivity?" He inquires politely.

"As well as expected, then again, even the Primo hasn't fully recovered from his own captivity and he was the first one we rescued." Takeshi the Sinner remarks as he tests the weight of a two-handed sword called Shimmering Star. "His Guardians are having a tough time getting through to him and he relapses ever so often." A trail of stars dripping from the path of the swinging sword, fading away before touching the ground.

Then Takeshi the Sinner proceeds to talk about different subjects, switching between them fairly rapidly and trying to follow the flow of words is... hard, then again, he's never interacted with anyone before beyond his Interface and the fairly short exchange of Buyer and Seller since opening up his Shop. At some point, the Sinner finishes studying the three on display swords and is standing before

the counter, sometimes using his hands and fingers to demonstrate something or as positions of people and/or objects.

Suna just lets the Sinner talk, doing his best to answer any random question the Sinner fires at him. At some point, Takeshi the Sinner's eyes seem to thaw and that fake smile plus cheer also fades, he doubts that Takeshi notices the change but he does and for some reason, it makes the Sinner seem frail. So when the Sinner's chatter dies down, he asks, "So?"

"So?" Takeshi the Sinner's defenses snap into place and he presses, "So the reason your worried is...?"

"Who says I'm worried? Sure, this last Dungeon Lord is sneaky and smart but we got plenty of people who are as well! Also, ah, what time is it?" Takeshi the Sinner asks, clearly side stepping the actual inquiry and it's not long before the Sinner leaves with a simple good bye.

"Your Sky." He answers with a sigh and then shakes his head, trying to clear it. After all, it's best to not get too friendly with Sinners, particularly those who are clearly driven to clear his Dungeon in the name of this 'Sky' of theirs.

Once he closes up, he uses the Teleportation feature of his Interface to arrive at his personal rooms, the persona of Sai fades to reveal the Dungeon Lord Suna and he calls forth his wings to stretch them out a bit before allowing them to fold up onto his back. He glances around his room before checking each floor of his Dungeon, checking to be sure that there's no holding cell before doing a Search for Sinners only to get nothing. "No hidden cell nor are there any Sinners."

Still, he can't shake the feeling that it's true what Takeshi the Sinner said, that the other nine Dungeons of Vongola had Sinners captive and being tortured by the Dungeon Lords of each Dungeon. He's moving out of his rooms and heading for his Throne Room. Once within, he tilts his head and stares hard up at the Crystal, again

trying to get information about the Crystal but other then it now being labeled a Sky Crystal, the usual description remains and even flying up, he taps the surface of the Sky Crystal but other then gentle ripples moving within the light upon his tapping, there's nothing.

In the end, Suna lands on the floor and calls his wings back into himself as he scowls at the Sky Crystal. He doesn't like this, there's something more to this bit of information and the Sinners seem so confident that he's torturing this Sky Sinner yet, there's nothing for him to find to confirm that. Glaring a bit more at the Sky Crystal with his sky blue eyes, he resists the temptation of loading Spells into a Slot and firing it at the Sky Crystal. Looking away, he marches out of his Throne Room, returning to his personal rooms.

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I can't believe someone actually managed to make it this far. The Dungeon Lord admits to himself as he waits for the Sinner, Takeshi, to enter. The one Sinner called Kyoya Hibari had almost made it here along with the Swordsman Sinner but the acid finally ate through that one's neck before the floor Boss died.

For some reason, the only times Takeshi the Sinner would enter into his Shop would be in the company of other Sinners and it's rare that the Sinner talks directly at him either. It's been a good four years since he opened up that Shop and his Dungeon has grown from it's previous Twenty-three floors to Twenty-nine floors. The rapid growth having to do with their sending research parties into his Dungeon and he's had to keep throwing them off in little but surprisingly effective ways, often times, it's as simple as altering a floor plan's layout to selecting monster upgrades he doesn't usually use, never mind the changing of trap locations or just adding Logic Puzzles before facing a mid-Boss or even entering that floor.

Finally it seems that Takeshi the Sinner is ready as the doors open to permit the weaken Sinner into his Throne Room. He wonders just what is going through Takeshi the Sinner's mind upon laying eyes upon him or upon the Sky Crystal that's lighting up his Throne Room.

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He enters once his vision clears upon the bright orange light that assaulted his eyes. There is, of course, the Dungeon Lord sitting upon his Throne but it's the ceiling crystal that he can't help but stare at as it's so much bigger then the other Vongola Dungeon's Sky Crystals and the source of the light for this room. Takeshi knows that the others will be interested in what that means but, to him, it's light is welcoming and calls up memories of his Sky... *Damn it, his name still escapes me.*

He glances about the room but it's rather... bland ultimately nor does there seem to be anyone here save the Lord. There's a pair of Fu Dog statues on either side of the walk way that leads up to the Throne and the occupant of said Throne. As he slowly makes his way deeper into the room, he gets a better look at the Lord, it's easy to spy the horns from some ways off and the hair is oddly longer then expected along with styled differently. The features the Dungeon Lord is currently wearing are of his Sky yet... he's not identical to him either.

Sky blue eyes watch him approaching and the size is different as well. Then again, the door hinted that he's likely dealing with a Devil or perhaps a Demon, which explains the way this Lord looks rather fetching, seduction could be something he has to watch out for. The Rain Adventurer takes stock up the armor and notes that it's leather, meaning that the Lord is a mobile fighter. There's a pair of daggers hanging upon the belt.

He stares at the Lord sitting upon a rather plain stone Throne, standing just before the Fu Dog statues. He's going to die in this room and by way of this Lord but before he does... "Where is he?" He asks in a soft yet icy tone.

The Lord's eyes flash a bit of pity for a second, which he notes but doesn't concern himself with. "Where is who?" Asks the Lord with a hint of curiosity and he uses Observe to get the name Suna and he's

got the race as well, Fallen Angel, which hadn't been what he had guessed but it still suited the hint the door gave.

"Your captive Sky." He states and Lord Suna hums before replying, "It seems you wasted your time traveling here then, as I do not have a prisoner residing within my Dungeon."

Lair almost slips out but... *He's not lying.* Takeshi realizes and he freezes at the realization of what that even means. His focus goes straight inwards as he doesn't know what he feels about that.

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I should attack now, he's clearly not in any state to defend himself. He thinks to himself, yet... He doesn't and for some reason, he feels pity for this Sinner's emotional Plight.

And now he's crying. He realizes and sighs, placing a hand over his eyes. It calls to mind that only time they had been alone together and his insight into why certain Sinners are so driven to Conquer his Dungeon.

A soft sob and Suna rubs his forehead, mentally reminding himself that he's not responsible for the expectations Sinners have in venturing into his Dungeon. It rings hollow though and the sight before him is heart wrenching in all honesty. *This... isn't how it should be happening.* He admits to himself as he looks at the weeping Sinner who's clearly drowning in his own emotions.

With ease, he pushes himself up and he's moving down the stairs that lead up to his throne. He is within attacking distance yet Takeshi the Sinner doesn't seem aware that he's so close. Gently, he puts a hand upon the shoulder and for a few seconds, the Sinner sniffles and looks at him before moving to grip his upper body with arms wrapped around his back while the face is firmly planted in his chest. After a few seconds, he awkwardly wraps his own arms about the Sinner's own body and just holds Takeshi.

He's not sure when it happens but at some point, Takeshi falls asleep, likely a combination of emotional exhaustion and just plain exhaustion. Looking up at the Sky Crystal, he wonders if it would just be faster to slice his own throat at this point as it's clear that he's got a viper in his arms, one that will most likely kill him once he's recovered enough of his senses to realize where he is and who's company he's in. Surprise, surprise, the Sky Crystal doesn't give him an answer to his dilemma.

So, for a while, all he has is a sleeping Sinner and that he ultimately can't bring himself to kill Takeshi right now.

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He's slow to wake up but that might have to do with how comfortable and safe he feels, which is odd, as he can't recall the last time he's felt safe since waking in this world that's pretty much a RPG game. Yet, safe he feels and he opens an eye in a lazy fashion to find a brunette laying a few feet away. Takeshi tries to recall when he got drunk upon reviving after dying in the Dungeon, only to draw a blank and then he realizes a pair of horn buds near the temple of the brunette and he yelps, pushing himself further away from the brunette.

It's then he notices just how big of a bed he's resting on and that he's clothed in a set of sleepwear. Lord Suna doesn't stir or wake from his startled cry and he just turns to regard the Lord with a hint of disbelief at the fact that he's still asleep and that... he's still alive, in the Dungeon too, but mostly alive. Heart is slowing down as he does his best to organize his thoughts and resists the urge to start crying again or reach over to cling to the still sleeping Lord.

His face reddens as he recalls how he clung to the Lord, sobbing into the Lord's chest, and of the comfort the Lord gave. It's clear that he had been rather exhausted and had fallen asleep clinging to the Lord, who could have killed him at any point during his emotional break down. The Rain glances up at the ceiling, wondering what he's

suppose to do now only for his Message Interface to decide he's been awake long enough and shows itself.

It's hardly surprising that it's from the others and the tone of each message changes at different times and it seems that the other did try to re-enter the Dungeon only for the Entrance Hall to keep them from venturing into the Dungeon, dis-proving the whole Revived party members can returner the Dungeon if they still have a member within it. He looks to at the Lord, who still hasn't woken up and wonders why the horns can change sizes before realizing it's likely to keep them from destroying the pillows, bed sheets, and the bed.

I could try smothering him... Takeshi mentally reviews but, well, that would just wake the Lord up and there's a good chance that Suna will easily overpower him. *I could try looking for my stuff and... Or maybe for his daggers...*

He lays back down on the bed and the Message Interface follows him. In the end, he types out he camped out after the Boss and will get back to them later. Dismissing the Interface, he tries to make sense of the situation he finds himself in. His Sky, who should be here, isn't, the Dungeon Lord did not kill him while he was emotionally vulnerable, the self same Lord changed him out of his pretty much destroyed armor into what he's wearing, and finally, didn't put him in a prison cell or bind him in anyway. "This is so confusing..."

After all, does this make him Lord Suna's guest? Or was this an attempt at seduction? *Better yet, what does he expect to get out of this?* He wonders to himself. *What's his angle?* Takeshi frowns with narrow eyes glaring upwards.

Then the Lord yawns and begins to stretch, causing him to break out of his thoughts as he turns his head to watch the Lord sits up and flexing his back, a pair of black feathered wings sprout, also stretching out before they return into the back. Then the Lord turns to look at him with his sky blue eyes and the Lord muses after a second, "Feeling better I take it?"

"Why?" He asks once he sits up and turns to face the Lord with a serious expression on his face. "Why didn't you kill me when you had the chance?" *Because if it had been reversed, I won't have hasted.*

"That's the question, isn't it? Why didn't I?" The Lord muses and he's a tad disturbed to realize that not even the Lord knew the answer to that question. "Your stuff's outside in the hall. You can leave." *I won't stop you.*

He glances down as he hears the Lord move out of the bed, he catches a glimpse of the Lord walking through a doorway, realizing that the other doorways likely where part of this bedroom area. And wasn't that a strange thing to learn? That Lords could have private sleeping quarters, as in, a bedroom to sleep in. *Likely well hidden too.* He muses as he's still not sure what to make of... this...

Still confused, he does crawl the last few feet to the edge of the bed but, instead of heading for the small hallway, moves to check out what's in what doorway. The one Lord Suna entered proved to be a walk in closet that also features a secure Vault Door across the room from the doorway and the next one sports a fairly large pool that he walks up to. The room is rather warm and putting a toe into the water reveals it's a decent temperature.

Then he moves to the final door way on this side of the bed room ends up being divided into a kitchen with a small dinning table and Award Room. *So, they can earn Awards too...* He muses but beyond the ability to see the various Awards in the form of Trophies, Plaques, and Medals, there's no listing of why they were awarded, which might be due to the personal nature of the Awards or it could be because he is not a Dungeon Lord. He does note that this room is fairly dusty and doesn't have anything save for Awards, meaning that this room isn't a place the Lord likes to linger or visit.

Still, there's no point in tempting fate, no matter how... nice this Lord seems to be, they were enemies and all that needs to happen is for the Lord to decide he's changed his mind. Glancing towards the walk

in closet, Takeshi heads for the minor hallway. "Thanks for your hospitality." He murmurs before walking through the door.

His belongings are next to the wall and glancing backwards, it's clear that this door is hidden behind a very good illusion. Then looking around the hallway, he finds it bemusing that the door is pretty much across from the Throne Room, which has open doors. The light coming from the Sky Crystal...

He's standing in the Throne Room before he knows it and gazing up at the Sky Crystal. Glancing backwards, the Lord hasn't arrived nor automatically teleported into the room either upon glancing around. He notices a balcony spot a bit up behind the Throne. Glancing to the sides of the room, he notices a pair of doors. "I don't recall seeing those before..." Then again, he'd been exhausted from the Boss and been fairly focused on readying himself for seeing his Sky all injured and at the mercy of the Dungeon Lord, which hadn't been what ultimately awaited him.

He heads explores the two, one holds armors and the other weapons, the range of armor and weapons are common to exalted just from looking into the room. He wonders if he actually went through the two if he couldn't find a few pieces of legendary equipment. Not that it matters, going through the rooms would likely bring Lord Suna to the room the moment he crossed into either. So, he wanders over to the simple stone Throne that doesn't seem to sport any kind of decoration yet, matches the room's simple nature.

"Should I?" He wonders to himself before smirking slyly and moves to sit down, it's... cold and there doesn't seem to be an enchantment in away way as it's just like sitting on a flat rock ultimately. Calling up his Interface, there's no new option there, which likely means that like them, Dungeon Lords also have their own Interface Menu. Whether they need to be in the Throne Room to access it, he doesn't know and after a few minutes of having the stone's cold try to suck out his own body heat, he gets out of it.

Which leaves him standing before the Throne as he returns to gazing up at the bright Sky Crystal and the gentle comfort it seems to grant his nerves, soothing his Flames, and seem to feel like he's Home. Again, the Lord doesn't suddenly appear in the room and, well, there's something he kind of... decides to try. After all, it's not like it could do any lasting harm, right?

Before he can though, his Message Interface pops up, it seems the number of messages have grown to be too many once again. With a soft sigh, he skims through them and decides to give them something of the truth, which is, he's in the Throne Room right now and that he's looking at the Sky Crystal, along with he hasn't engaged in battle with the Dungeon Lord as of yet, he also gives them the information on race and name, Fallen Angel and is named Suna. After a few seconds, he also adds before sending, there's no sign of the captive Sky anywhere.

The backlash of that tid bit of information is met with disbelief but then, they cut off with a promise that they'll be having a very long discussion about this once he's been revived. With a weak chuckle, he dismisses the Interface and glances towards the open doors, still finding it hard to believe he's still being left alone by the Lord in his Throne Room. *Then again...* He looks down at his attire and could only guess that since he hasn't changed into his final set of leather armor or brought out his last, battle beaten sword, the Lord doesn't feel threatened by him.

With a slight shake of his head, he calls upon his Rain Flames, slowly pooling them around his body. Again, there's no sudden appearance of the Lord nor does it trigger any hidden feature of the room. Feeling a bit more confident and secure, he speeds up the process until he's whole body is covered in Rain Flames. Feeling his emotions become rather numb from his own Tranquility, he moves his right hand up at the ceiling and wills his Rain Flames to erupt to the Sky Crystal.

His Rain Flames fade and it's then that the Lord Teleports in by the Throne, asking in bewilderment, "What did you do?" He watches as

his Rain Flames cause ripples in the trapped Sky Flames, it's kind of beautiful, actually, as the orange slowly moves to break up the rings of blue, causing whirlpools to form where the blue begins to swirl in the orange.

"Not sure but it's kind of pretty, don't you think?" He answers cheerfully as the light coming from the Sky Crystal begins to release some blue light and orange. He half expects the Lord to attack him viva his exposed back, only the Lord seems to lean on the Throne.

He turns his full attention as the Lord seems to be having trouble standing and the sky blue eyes are now flickering orange. Sky Flames also seem to erupt for a few seconds from the Lord's own body. "Tsuna?" He whispers softly in a questioning tone and it's like a dam breaks as black wings erupt from the back as the tiny horn buds grow to be very impressive as they curve back a bit.

Sky Flame erupt all over Tsuna's body, and he Knows this is Tsunayoshi, as the head goes back and the mouth opens to scream but there's no sound, tears do flow from the eyes only they evaporate away. "Tsuna!" He moves towards his Friend, the Sky Flames burn upon him touching them but he refuses to let go. "TSUNA!" He shouts and his Rain Flames flow out of him, moving to mingle with his friend's Flames.

As the two Flames met, the Sky Flames move to engulf him as well but he refuses to let go. His memories of the other fully restored and his heart wrenches at the thought that he'd be made to forget, and that's what the Sky Flames want to so, make him forget Tsunayoshi, that Tsuna is the Dungeon Lord Suna, and about this whole encounter from the moment he entered into the Throne Room to the Now that's happened, is happening, will be happening? But he fights it, he doesn't want to be ignorant of the Truth.

"Yamamoto..." He hears Tsuna whisper, guilt coloring the tone and he can only imagine what his Sky is going through, knowing what he's been doing as Suna. "Call me Takeshi, Tsuna." He says as he manages to pull the other towards him, yes, at the moment, Tsuna's

far taller then him right now plus there's his wings out as well and he can't really see anything, it's all orange and blue.

"So sorry... I... I..." Tsuna says but he shushes him, saying, "Neither of us knew, none of us could Know."

The Dungeons always have a Sky as a captive and it always set things up to torture them, it's just that in this case, the captive also served as the Lord of the Dungeon by being made ignorant of who he was. What greater torture could such a place inflict upon the kind Tsuna then having that Sky be the reason for his friends and Guardians deaths time and again? *How much more devastating for us upon realizing we killed the very person we wanted to rescue?*

"Please don't leave me." He says as he feels Tsuna try to pull away. "Please... Don't leave me."

"But your burning! You'll die if we stay in contact, Takeshi-kun!" Tsuna whimpers but he just does his best to tighten his grip.

"Then I'll die knowing you are with me, please... It's trying to make me forget about this... about you." He whispers and he feels Tsuna stiffen before pulling him close.

And he blacks out a few seconds later.

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Suna lets out a sob as he feels Takeshi's body vanish and their mingling Flames fade, the Sky Crystal's light dims, not that it matters. The pressure in his own mind is gone yet, he still remembers who he'd been but also... Also the number of things done to him throughout his life as Tsunayoshi, intentionally and otherwise, and having been given a insight in the minds of those around him. Takeshi was one of the few who genuinely cared about him, so it hurts so much to know that he'd killed the Rain.

"Your wrong, I didn't have that many objections to being transformed into a Dungeon Lord." He murmurs, he wanted to return the favor after all. His life had been Hell because of the Ninth Don of the Vongola Famiglia Sealed him with that Man's permission when he went Active and then they lied about so many things, never mind Reborn didn't really Tutor him on the important matters that a Mafia Don needed to know, never mind what a Don of the Alliance needed to know but then, Reborn had been an outsider to the Alliance, even if he 'tutored' Dino.

The lack of memories had been a blessing as it was to ensure he doesn't get 'cold' feet in regards to his purpose in this Purgatory. *Then again, what were the odds that Takeshi would be the only one to arrive to my Throne Room?* Suna muses as he then realizes something new in his Dungeon, namely... a new room.

Before leaving the Throne Room, he notices that the Sky Crystal isn't as charged as it had been and he takes a second to re-apply the torches for his Throne Room before heading to the new door that's to his right. It's not that different then his personal rooms had been before he upgraded the door along with placing a Ward to keep Sinners from finding the door. Wings simply folded onto his back and drawing back his horn from their full display to a more manageable size.

As he opens the door, he gets an update concerning this new room and he blinks as he skims it before taking a few extra minutes to read it a few more times. His eyes wide in disbelief at the fact that such a feature even existed. The message fades as he opens the door to find the newly reincarnated being laying on the simple bed, he approaches and a pop-up appears, this lets him give the former Sinner a new name to go with their new life. He takes a bit to come up with a new name, which is Kamiya, sure it's more of a last name but it should work while also leaving the choice of species to the newly named Kamiya, given the number of monsters, the other has plenty of choice.

So, he waits.

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Kamiya? He wakes to find himself in something that wouldn't be out of place in a RPG video game. "Please select your new race." And then he's got the option of picking a demi-human or an actual monster.

Taking a look through the demi-humans, he watches as an example of said demi-human would appear within the circle. As he picks a random types and even finds that he can customize them but, while fun, none are what he ultimately is coming to realize that this is very real and not some dream. That he's not going to be human once he completes this and he's not sure why that is.

Then, recalling Tsuna's race, he decides to find something suitable that matches. In the end, he finds Tiefling, which is a race born from humans who's ancestors made an Infernal Pact with Devils and thus they are born sporting hints of that race, plus, the race is very human like so there's not any big changes to learn to live with. Picking bright blue hair, he decides on warm amber eyes, for skin color, well, bronze works and then he goes through the kind of horns he'll have along with size. Picking short and sweeping upwards with no spiral to them, also decides to have them sport a dark navy blue color.

He adds a foot to his height but keeps the muscles lean, heck, he finds options to actually add body tattoos, scars, and body piercings. He chooses to have a tattoo of feathered wings on the back, he adds colors, namely a glossy black with silver stripes at the primary's tips with an outline of a dark blue. He adds a brow piercing to his right, a simple stud and four fingered scar on his chest on the left side, like somebody had been digging into his chest. It's slightly faded but can be seen if one is looking for such things.

Once he confirms he's likes the changes he's done, there's a flash and he's on a bed. With a grunt, he moves to sit up, which is kind of hard, given he's got a pretty long tail now. "How are you feeling?" He hears Tsuna... no, Suna ask.

"I'm... unnerved." He admits truthfully and as he gets out of the bed, he finds that they weren't in Suna's bedroom. "Your bedroom, you'll be able to change things from being paid for the job of being my bodyguard." His Sky informs him and he snorts before laughing upon hearing that.

"Yea, you do need one, after all, who knows who'll you'll take to your bed in the future, eh?" He says in a teasing tone and Suna blinks before his face reddens. "So... you..."

"I... I didn't... object to being turned into a Dungeon Lord when I was given a new perceptive on my life and insight into how those around me viewed me." Suna admits slowly. "The amnesia... it served the purpose of keeping me from getting cold feet about what the job."

He is all ears and his stomach clenches, after all, he knew Tsuna never wanted to be a Mafia Don, never wanted him to end up taking up the blade and killing in the name of the Famiglia. "Out of the few who liked me for how I was then, you were among that number. The odds that you'd make it here on your own..."

"So, even with amnesia, you kind of couldn't go through with your job when it came to me?" Kamiya muses with a slight hint of fondness. That in the end, you are too kind for your own good.

"It didn't help that we met once, outside of my Dungeon, at my Shop actually..." Suna admits and it doesn't take him long before he connects the dots, although the idea that Suna was posing as a store owner is... worrying now that he thinks about it but then, who'd expect to encounter a Lord outside of their Dungeon? "I had wondered why nobody thought my behavior strange but knowing about Flames, it's kind of funny, looking back."

"Ah... I kind of sent message about your..." He admits and his Boss, Sky, and Friend looks rather bemused. "Well, we'll deal with it once it comes to it, for now, I might as well help you get some suitable gear. Still plan on being a swordsman or did you want to try a different weapon?"

"Maybe I should change something up, you know. How did you learn to dual weld daggers?" He asks as Suna begins to walk out of his room. "I've never actually fought against actual beings, I bought the knowledge as a Beginner Combat Manual from the Dungeon Store, I've bought the more advanced manuals when my Dungeon grew more powerful, allowing me to buy them." Suna explains as they head for the Throne Room, he notices that he can see his own door and his Sky's as well.

"I didn't know you guys could access a store. What currency do you use?" He asks, there's a lot to learn and there might not be enough time to master it, given they have six days before the Dungeon runs reset. While he is a bit uncomfortable about the fact that he'll be going up against familiar faces and old comrades, he can't help but feel like he's were he belongs.

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"You kind of have to wonder..." He hears Kamiya muses in his disguise as Takeru, his Storm shop assistant. Looking over at his friend, he tilts his head in a questioning manner. "You think Chrome..."

Blinking, Suna in his Sai disguise looks towards the front of the store, noting that Chrome is helping a customer. As he moves a few boxes around, he considers Kamiya's train of thought and his interactions with the formerly abused Mist. "It kind of seems like it, doesn't it?" He muses, after all, in someways Chrome's involvement in the Mafia only came about viva Mukuro and there's a good chance she stayed due in part because of him. Given Fuuta hasn't been wandering about this world, he can only guess that she had been approached and given a choice about either moving on or staying at Mukuro's side as it seems that Skies are the ones capable to stabilize a Dungeon.

"She's never *really* run done a Dungeon run, has she?" He asks the disguised Tiefling. "She's joined us when it comes to surface mobs but... You think she sends in a Mist Clone into them?"

"Likely. For her, it was either join the Mafia or die alone in a hospital." The disguised Fallen Angel muses. "After all, Skull isn't here and it kind of sounds like even Viper can't recall who'd been their generation's Cloud."

"Or Fuuta..." Kamiya reflects, it's been three months and the Sinner named Takeshi Yamamoto had been wiped out of the collective minds of the Sinners in the form of a flu. This condition did give them a good two weeks for Kamiya to grow use to a change in his situation, like the fact that his Rain Flames seem to be locked away in the giant Flame Crystal that's in his Throne Room ceiling along side his own. It's kind of interesting to watch how the two Flames move about the crystal and it's an oddly soothing sight to stare at.

"She does seem... a bit more content since she started working here." He adds as he finishes manually collecting some crossbow bolts to move to the front display for the store as the finish selling out of special arrows that can house a poison or acid in a small clay bead that will break upon arrow head hitting something. They're cheaper then actual Enchanted arrows and it's something few merchants stock as making them is difficult without the use of Mist Flames.

He returns to the back to put the crate's lid back on it before moving it back to its place along the wall. There's a number of things to do and for now, he'll focus on being Sai, the owner of this store and employer of Chrome and Takeru. Doing his level best to enjoy the present instead of worrying about the past and the future.

After all, all things must one day come to an end, including his time as Suna and the dungeon that he is Lord of.

Ending it here

Author's Note:

Wow, hard to believe that I kept this in my DArt Stash for over a year... According to the date, I started this on April 23, 2018 and the

time was 2:36 pm.

Hope you like this!

Broken Shackles of Reality P 1: Fate

I don't own Fate/Stay night!

Slowly, oh so slowly, Shirou begins to type out a Character name. It's... not really original and it's part of his actual name. Putting Rou for a name, it gets rejected, it seems that someone has already used it. Adding Shi at the end, RouShik gets accepted, although the nine year old isn't sure how the k got added but lets it pass.

Now, he gets to pick RouShik's Race and Class. Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike has a number of classical Races in Dwarf, Elf, Halfling, Half-Elf, Half-Orc, and Human. Then there's Dragonborn, Tieflings, and Gnomes that can be picked at the beginning of the game. The other Races need to be unlocked during game play with the first Character, it also unlocks some function called Reincarnation that allows the player to start over as the unlocked Race while picking another Class as well. There's benefits that make up for the restart of the Character account.

He'd been told he can't pick Human as a Race and Shirou isn't sure which of the two Half-breed Races to pick, there is a blurb of back story for each Race along with seeing what's offered. In the end, he picks Dragonborn due to the blurb and then he gets to pick the scale color that will also mean what kind of magical breath weapon he can use once a day, until he picks a Feat that would allow for more uses a day. Shirou almost picks White only stops due to the sub-racial features that pop up on picking that.

After taking a look at the difference between color and metallic, Shirou notices that there's only one that gets poison and that's Green. In the end, he didn't want fire nor cold, which leaves acid and lightning, which is bronze and copper. Checking the coloring, doing his best to pick what color he prefers as both are useful. In the end,

Shirou decides on the bronze scales which grants lightning Breath Weapon and picked an dark orange for eye color.

He doesn't mind the Character being the same age as him, which is nine. Which turns his attention to the Class, the only one he realizes would work with he wants is the style is Free Form Style. It seemed that during the Alpha version of the game, Free Form Style was insanely hard what with each Level gained they only get 3 points on their Stats, Stats that had been pre-selected as well. Not so now, they do need to pre-select which Stat will get points but the number is now 5 along with deciding upon leveling up how much goes into which Stat instead of it automatically increasing by a preset number.

What remains of the original version of the style is the Mimicry Skill Feature only it's reset is every twelve hours instead of the twenty-four from the Alpha. It doesn't count towards the five slots that the Free Form Style gets at the beginning and there's an option of adding it permanently to a slot if you have the free spot. It's a change from the Alpha version as they never had that option.

Another change concerning the game from Alpha is the Feats slash Perks. Every 4 levels after level 4, Characters can pick a Feat or cash the Feat in for Perk Points, the exchange of low level Feat equals 2 Perk Points under and at the level of 24. Level 28 to 44, the Feats equal 6 Perk Points but by then there are Feats that allow a Character to almost become a hybrid of another Class while there's nothing to unlock concerning Perks. Sure, Perks can be bought again and again, stacking up their benefits but the increase in said benefits is slower. Then again, for Free Form Style, there's no unlocking level requirement so the price of a Free Style Feat equals 4 Perk Points and stays at that price until Level 80 where it equals 8 Perk Point.

The max Level of any Characters is Level 100 but that's where the Reincarnation is said to be useful. Not that there's any spoilers from the Game Developers about Reincarnation besides the only way to have a Character be one of the unlock-able Races. There's a lot of fan speculation over why the owner of a max Level Character would

want to start all over again but given that the game has only been out for two weeks, none have yet to reach Level 100 as of yet in Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike.

Then Shirou takes a look at the options for the Character, he doesn't mind RouShik growing older with him and other then putting in the Date of Birth for his Character moves on to the next, which has to do with showing scars acquired through getting negative damage before the Re-spawn kicks in and the Character awakes in either a chapel or graveyard. It's not a big deal, there's in game options to heal or hide those scars so Shirou doesn't bother selecting the No Scarring option. The option after is about regenerating limbs and he does select this as there's been far to many Trolls who enjoy hacking off other Player's limbs when they do PvP in Arenas and Guild Battle Fields. The final two concern his Character's Name and Level, with ease, he selects hiding his Level, he can un-select it once the game begins after a week, same with the option to hide his Character's Name.

In Alpha version, Players get to choose the Birth Country but not in the released version. If you want to adventure in a different country, you'll have to earn money to purchase passage on either a ship or air ship. Depending on the Country, you then can apply for civilian-ship or an adventuring license that might need to be renewed.

With everything done, Shirou takes a moment to remember if he recalls the Character's name that he's suppose to send a Friend Invite to. It's Taiga's second Character, the name of said Character is 21Stripes_ofAge2000. Glad to have remembered it, he signs in as RouShik and the first thing he does is send said invite, once he goes through how to do just that.

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Making it to Level 4 sees RouShik gaining a Feat that he can cash in for a Perk Points. Which sees him going through the list of Feats and then looking into the Perks. Torn between the Feat Dual Sword Style Feat and this Perk called Brain Power Multiplier, which combines the

Stats of Int and Wis plus the number of times of purchasing said Perk to help speed up ranking up Skills. As Skills are done in tiers with the max of each tier being 100 ranks to graduate into the next tier. Each tier allows the Skill to widen what passives it grants the Character.

Also, Level 4 unlocks two Skill Slots automatically, with out him needing to increase his Wis, which unlocks a new slot at multiples of five. The Int Stat governs the percentile of how fast those Skills rank up. *Actually, that kind of makes it easy actually.* He admits and sells his Feat for the 4 Perk Points. It's rumored that for Free Form Style, those Stat Points could have once been used to increase Skills.

Free Form Style is very much a Skill monkey as they say. Only combat bonuses come from passives from Skills instead of from new Class Features. Like how Butchery Skill grants a passive when it comes to crits when attacking certain parts of enemies and then there's Achievements that a Character gets that helps unlock those passives or increase their efficiency.

He purchases the Brain Power Multiplier four times, which means that with his Int at 13 and Wis at 15 plus four means his ranking speed is now 32% faster instead of 13%. Which should see his Weapon: Beginner Long Sword Skill breaking into the next tier soon, like, perhaps by the time he levels up to 5. He's not sure what to fill in his new three Skill slots, he put in the 2 points need to unlock a new slot viva his Wis. He'll be looking for Quests that also grant Wis as rewards so he's not always investing Stat Points.

He's only been playing for two days, yesterday saw him getting dragged around by 21Stripes_ofAge2000 so he didn't get a lot of Quests done only saw his Map of the World increase due to getting dragged around once he finished in the **[Starting Area]** . Before leaving, RouShik filled three of his five starting Skill Slots, Weapon: Beginner Long Sword Skill had been the first while Beginner Tracking Skill and Beginner Butcher Skill. He then picked up Beginner Weapon Lore Skill and Beginner Arcane Lore Skill at **[Temple of the Buried Maiden]** 's **[Library]** .

He'd planned to pick up Beginner Search Skill, which, once he's done finishing Leveling up, heads off to find someone to train him in it. He'll have to put some thought about what to fill up those two Skill Slots. In his Mimicry Slot is the Beginner Cooking Skill. He'd had a lot of meat that he decided to turn into steak that will sell for more so he can purchase better equipment and potions. He didn't see the point in investing in spices when he's not going to be keeping the Beginner Cooking Skill so his steaks had been common quality.

There's a number of other Characters about **[Fuyuki Village]** , most of the Characters are Tieflings and Half-Orcs with Elves being the next majority. So, yes, he does get a few people looking his way, which could be because of how young he looks along with being a Dragonborn. A number of them seem to be of questionable character given how some of them have their Names and Level on display while others have neither with a few not having their Level on display. The general Level of the Characters are over Level 20, it wouldn't surprise him if they've been playing since the game came out.

Then again, given the Fujimura Group, perhaps it isn't that surprising that so many would pick those two Races? He muses to himself. It's not long before he finds a trainer for the Skill he wants.

With that, RouShik heads for the local Dungeon which is called the **[Monastery of the Grail]** , it's a Dungeon that can be Soloed for Levels 9 and lower. From Levels 10 and into Level 20, it seems that it a pair of Characters can handle the Dungeon. The enemies within the Dungeon change depending of the time of day, from six am to five pm, the enemies are cultists, mostly Tiefling and Human Races among their number while from six pm to five am, it's filled with undead and demonic enemies.

Given it's eight pm which means it's filled with undead and demonic enemies. Checking to be sure he has at least three more common quality long swords besides the one he already has, RouShik enters the entrance and once he kills the three skeletons and two ghostly spell casters, the Dragonborn begins to use his new Skill on each of

the walls, looking for the hidden switch that should reveal either a pouch of coins ranging that sport a random number of copper, silver, and gold or it will reveal a valuable statue that can sell for about fifty silver, which is five gold or five hundred copper.

His Skill ranks up to 5 and one more try, no switch found, so he moves onto the next wall. He does it three times before moving onto the next and this time, he finds the switch. When the stone panel pops on the ruined statue of a Fu Dog's base, it's neither the pouch of gold or the statue. "A bow?"

Making use of his Weapon Lore to examine it, it takes two examinations over the course of ten minutes each for him to get information on his new bow. **[The Guardian's Bow]** is what it's called and it's a unique weapon as it grants the owner the Weapon: Beginner Long Bow Skill upon binding with it and it doesn't use up a Skill Slot, but will rank up on use. It's one of the few weapons that has a growth system to it but on the down side, it can't be sold at the Auction House to traded to another Character nor can it be scrapped to get materials. It'll forever take up a Inventory Slot unless dropped, upon dropping, it will vanish within seconds of getting dropped.

The option to bind it to him comes up as he closes the information window from his Beginner Weapon Lore Skill. Pressing yes as he knows that there are going to be archers in this Dungeon that he can loot arrows from, the bow gets a bunch of lightning dancing about it for a few seconds before he gets a pop up concerning he's successfully bound the bow to RouShik's Character Account. Putting the bow into his Inventory, he wonders if he shouldn't see if the other wall had an other switch or if he should move on from this room.

He does another search on the final wall but nothing comes from it besides his Skill ranking going up. With that, RouShik picks the right hallway instead of the left as the center hallway is currently collapsed in on itself. The lay out of Dungeons do change from day to day, only one third of a Dungeon lay out is ever on display at a time. This is his second time in this Dungeon, the first time had to do with a retrieval

Quest that only took him to the third room to recover a NPC's **[Heirloom: Jewel Chest]** from the Dungeon cultists.

With his new Skill, he manages to evade traps and he even found a magical trap, using his Beginner Arcane Lore Skill to learn it's name, **[Curse of Undead Marking]** . He might not be able to get any details but the name seems to be aptitude enough of a description. He also doesn't know how it gets triggered given that it's like a sensor at the center of the hallway. In the end, he does his best to take a running leap over the sensor spot and then returns to check if it's still there, which it is.

Breathing a sigh of relief, RouShik continues forward into the next room, which houses five demonic plant things. They notice him the moment he crosses the doorway and charge in his direction. It's a semi hard fight, what with there being five of them but there isn't any ghosts that arrive as one after another, the demonic plants die, bodies vanishing into black smoke, leaving behind plant fibers and puddles of glowing sap, he does have empty vials to collect said sap in, it's used for a **[Potion: Purification of Minor Demonic Taint]** while the fibers can be used for either **[Ritual: Demonic Bug Summoning]** or an ingredient in making **[Hemp Cloth]** .

He fills a good thirty vials from the pools of glowing sap, there's a timer on those and as it ticks away, the amount of sap you can collect goes down. Under five minutes and you can collect six vials, every thirty seconds after that decreases the amount one can collect. He downs a **[Potion: Minor Health]** and then is slow to search the room, he finds another magical trap near the ladder that goes up to the make shift cat walk. No name for what it is, it's clear his current tier isn't enough to identify it.

There's work chests up there but decides it's not worth triggering the trap. The last time he'd been here, reinforcements had arrived with each guy that went down, at least two for each one that died. He'd read that usually, skeleton archers show up when dealing with the five that's in this room. It doesn't take long for him to connect his not triggering the first magic trap with the lack of reinforcements. He's

both relieved but also annoyed as he'd been hoping to get arrows for his new bow.

There's eight hidden stashes that sport pouches of copper coins between six to twenty coins that amount to sixty-three, number of **[Small Minor Ritual Candles]** out in the open that are single use items, and uncut quartz crystals found before a minor shrine. Having decided not to figure out how to get onto those worker catwalks, he decides to check the door leading to the next part for magical trap. There isn't one and he does continue to use his search skill, he finds more traps but also three stashes that sport thumb size jade flutes, clearly meant to be worn as jewelry and the same magical trap from before, only for geared towards demonic enemies.

RouShik does the same tactic and is sure to check to see if it's been triggered, it hadn't so he continues on. This time as he gets close to the door leading into the room, he checks and finds that there is a simple big of magic that's called **[Ward: Minor Alarm]** . It's limit is a foot over the ground, so he does his best to high step over that, this time, he takes the enemies on without them realizing he entered the room. The two skeletons are archers while the rest are zombies armed with weapons, the first has a hand axe, the second a spear, and the third a mace.

Padded cloth armor is universal armor among Characters, if he wants better armor, he'll have to take a Feat, same as magical Classes of Sorcerer, Warlock, and Wizard. There is an number of builds that have become well known, that are still evolving as people try different approaches, it should be noticed that there has been an official three builds that the Game Developers released. The most popular of the three is the so called Artificer is more of a Free Form Style build and it's a primary focus is on crafting during the early Levels. The other two had been the so call One Man Army and the other had been the Mystic.

Still, after ten seconds, the arrows that get pass the armor absorption vanish. The zombies are tougher then skeletons as the flesh absorbs most of the damage. He continues to hack at their

necks, beheading zombies auto kills them, the necks have their own hit value, it takes two slashes per neck for the heads to get cut off, which is hard to do when it comes to you are always aiming the blow. Using the hilt and flat of his sword, he disarms the two skeletons then using the pummel to slam it into their skulls. With the bones being more brittle, a single hit shatters a portion of the skull but you needed to smash the whole skull to down the skeleton.

The bones burn into ashes, leaving their bows and quivers of arrows behind. The bodies of the zombies stick around longer, usually for ten minutes and that's so people who want to, can butcher the rancid meat. Likely trying for an Achievement to increase the Butchery Skill's passive to work better on whatever Race the zombies once had been. RouShik doesn't like the idea of doing that and besides looting the weapons, all of which are common quality, leaves them be.

Checking the long sword over, the durability is fairly low now but hardly matters as he has spares along with being able to use his new bow. He searches the room and finds four stashes of pouches of copper coins, gaining forty-nine coins. There's five bundles of scented herbs hanging around the room that he loots and ignores the two bamboo chests that are trapped with magical traps.

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There's a E-Mail from the Game Developers, Kaleidoscopic Workshop, in his E-Mail Index. It's title is simply Congratulations! Clicking, Shirou opens it and after skimming it for the first time, he then reads it a bit more seriously a second time.

Blinking, the child Magus looks towards the ARI, short for Alternate Reality Interface, System v. 5. The idea that there's going to be a wireless headset that can interface with the ARI System at a greater distance within Fuyuki City, as long as there's an internet connection the wireless headset would have a stable connection to his ARI and his Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike Account. That he got picked

in a random draw to give the beta wireless headsets a go is odd but after thinking about it, the nine year old shrugs it off.

He's only had the game and the system for two weeks now and RouShik's level has increased to 16 two days ago. He has been alternating between weapons, the bow, which comes to him fairly naturally, and any long sword he loots. He's received another three Feats, all of which he exchanged for Perk Points, which went into improving his Brain Power Multiplier Perk which now adds sixteen. Having looked up what Quests there are that grant points in Wis on the forums, one of four of those listed Quests granted him that Stat increase, which he'd been warned about from others. It seems that depending on both your Class and on the number next to the Stat decides if you'll get it.

He'd also picked up a number of Skills but there's two that were geared so he can do a bit more when it comes to firing an arrow with his bow, they are the Beginner Skills of Fletching and Alchemy to create his own arrows with special effects. The only way to pick up actual spell-casting capabilities would be picking a Feat and then improving it viva using Perk Points. Alchemy can get bolstered with other Skills like Herblism, which grants a passive when handling plant ingredients and Blacksmithing, which allows one to create experiment in creating enchanted metal. Alchemy takes hours of game play along with a lot of material along with a secure location in which to work, work that doesn't always produce anything useful or experience for time spent.

Reason why he's paused in his playing has to do with focusing on having his father around once more and trying to get Magus training from him. While the game does give him a taste of what it means to be on an adventure, to being extra ordinary. His course of action concerning getting training from his father doesn't seem to be working very well as the adult seems more... depress and it seems as though his father's body is aching then usual and thus, he feels more disincline to press the matter of Magus training or press for more information concerning Magi.

Pushing the matter of the wireless headset to the side, Shirou closes his E-Mail and then continues on with why he'd been on the computer in the first place, namely, looking through the game's forums for more information about Alchemy, looking for Player discovered recipes or if anyone has come up with a reaction table. He's looking at more how to weaponize the Skill for his use while others seem to be more interested in making Potions that can do anything a Spell can, from healing and correcting scars to allowing the drinker to breath fire and alter their looks. There are recipe drops for crafting skills but the Game Developers have encouraged Players to use them more as a proof of concept instead of the end all, be all that they generally are in other games like this.

The idea of creating an injector arrow flickers through his mind, sure, he can dip arrow heads in poisons that he creates from failure but the effectiveness is on the low end even if the arrow gets into the body. Then there's certain enemy types that are unaffected by poison covered arrows, like Animated and Undead. Shirou's found that using poison also degrades the drops, either in number or it causes a contaminated effect on a portion of the organic parts drops. In his opinion, it makes sense as to why the poison could caused the remains to be contaminated but he's in a very tiny minority in that regards though as most seem to think it's unfair that killing NPCs with poisons and other means to inflict damage could affect the materials one can gain from the dead digital corpse.

With a mental push and an let loose sigh, Shirou refocuses on what's on the computer screen and picking up from where he'd left off reading. Skimming through various rants and arguments over why the Game Developers decisions and those who defend said decisions. He wonders if Kaleidoscopic Workshop is taking any of it serious and have plans to release a statement to sooth over said issues or react in some way to said rants as he presses the back button until he gets back to the main forum.

A few minutes go by with him going through the thread titles but there's not much more to learnt, even checking latest posts of

previously useful threads don't really amount to anything more useful. Shirou glances at the time and sighs at noticing how he's still got two hours before he's going to bed. Closing the browser and then turning off the computer, the child goes to check on his adopted parent. Finding him fast asleep before the TV, that is on, he shifts his weight as he tries to decide whether he should wake the man, turn off the TV, or just leave scene before him be.

Picking his third option, after all, if he did turn it off, he might wake Kiritsugu and he's loathed to do that, Shirou heads for his room. Sighing, he gets ready for bed before he puts on the corded visor device that's connected to his ARI System. Settled on his bed, he uses the tiny remote to turn on the ARI System. Putting it back within the thirty second wait before the machine finishes booting up, soon enough he's interacting with the ARI's Menu and selecting Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike, which boots up about twenty seconds after getting selected.

Within two minutes and he's RouShik, the bronze scaled Dragonborn that's Classless. It takes him a bit to go through his belongings, getting reacquainted with the interface before heading out of the cabin that he found and used as a Log Out spot. Once out, he begins to head towards the nearest farm house to inquire for Daily Quests that should involve physical labor of some sort that should also Reward an increased to either his Con or Str upon completion.

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There's somethings Shirou doesn't get when it comes to Sakura, the least of which is why she doesn't seem to use or own ARI System. He knows that Shinji has one and had played Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike, though it sounds like the preteen hasn't played the game in months, having switched to DxD's Peerage Woes. From what he's found when looking into said game, it's about Devils vying for positions, namely the Four Satans, they are often considered the most powerful of Devils, the Demon of Devils as it were, it's what the DxD stands for.

From listening and reading, most men and some women, use the game to fulfill another fantasy of theirs, something about harems and reverse harems. Given that the Peerage titles are based off of chess and that's how these... Rating Games play out, it seems. Again, there's not much of an interest in finding out more about the game and what little he knows comes from listening to his male classmates discussing/arguments the game in the locker room before and after gym class.

Then again, Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike has been out for three years now and thus there have been more games for the ARI System, the System itself has released a better version last year and there's going to be another version coming out in a few months as well. Given what he's heard from Shinji, the preteen plans to buy the latest one, which means that Sakura could get the old one from Shinji, though when he mentioned that, Sakura merely acknowledge that but it's clear that she's not overly interested in the System or in playing video games in general, which is fairly different from others of her age, heck, of most kids and preteens really.

In the time he's come to know Sakura, she's never shown much incline to speak about much of anything with him or with anyone really. Which makes why she's still coming around after his arm's recovered rather puzzling to Shirou. Sure, he's been giving her better tips when it comes to cooking and often had her stick around to eat dinner with him when it's just him. There's been a few times she's come around during the morning for breakfast, which has been slowly coming to be a weekly happening on Fridays since last month.

There's only a few topics that serve as common ground between them and there's rarely anything new to tread or if there is, it's quickly covered. Shirou knows he's fairly bad when it comes to starting conversations, he's not a talker, not really but then, a lot of his classmates seem to over look that little fact. It also seems that Sakura is also more of a listener then a talker, so, there's a lot of silence that's on going between them, making him concerned if

Sakura finds it awkward or something, with the lack of easy conversation or his lack of ability to speak just to fill the silence that is pretty much a companion when he's alone in the house, without Taiga checking upon on him and mooching meals during that time.

"You play against Onii-chan, senpai? In that Woes game?" Sakura asks softly while she's mixing some batter for the tempura dish.

"The one with the Devils? Ah, no, it doesn't seem to be my kind of game." Shirou admits as he continues to chop some vegetables before sweeping the bits into the bowl and moving onto the next produce to be chopped up. "Most of my time gaming is spent in Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike, I know it's an old game but it's one that the developers seem to continue to support and evolve the world."

"I think Onii-chan mentioned a bit about that game." The purple haired girl admits. "He seemed focused on the magic casting types."

"He kept switching characters I recall. He wasn't satisfied with any Class for long." He recalls as he sweeps the bits into the bowl, taking a moment to study the contains, trying to judge if they have enough or if he should chop up more.

"Have you played any of them? The Classes for magic, I mean." Sakura asks and he blinks, RouShik is his only Character and Shirou has used Reincarnation three times, he's coming up to four times, he's not sure what Race he'll pick for when that comes up though.

The first time he used it for RouShik, he lost all of his Feats but his Perks and Skills remained along with a single weapon, which is **[The Guardian's Bow]** . As for the Skills, they don't start maxed out, but they weren't Beginner ranking though. His Stats proved to be better then when he first created RouShik and the only change had been becoming a copper scaled Dragonborn along with picking Ranger as a Class. The second time saw, again, his Perks and Skills plus the bow remaining with the Character plus at a higher starting tier then before with much improved base Stats, the Race he picked was

Half-Green Dragon Wood Elf and going back to his previous no Class. The last time he'd gone through it, same thing happened again only this time he kept the Recipes for his Crafting Skills and he'd unlocked a feature called Incarnation Inheritance Rank 1, which pretty much gave him all of his previous belongings and money, even though he couldn't use most of it due to being back to Level 1 Character. As for Race, he picked Kobold and kept to the Free Form Style.

"RouShik is my only Character, I've Reincarnated him three times, it'll be four soon." He admits, he's thinking of going back to the Half-Dragon template, curious about what kind of Dragon he'll get from doing so, although it's also a question of what Race he should pick before applying it. It's hardly the only template, he's earned a number of the therianthrope templates, he's only missing the Wererat one and that's likely due to him staying out of urban environment, which tends to have more politically hot Quests and involve in game Factions, either NPCs or Player founded ones.

"Reincarnate?" Looking over to Sakura, he notices her looking a touch clueless and lost. "Ah..."

"It merely means that I've reached Level 100 with RouShik three times, though it's getting easier, given the fact that I get to keep my previous purchase Perks and learnt Skills, although not at max ranking, but better then Beginner ranking, the base Stats are also bolstered after going through it as well." He explains, it's true, it's gotten easier for him to Level up RouShik with each Reincarnation, although his Home Town and Country isn't one he decides on though. It's likely to add spice to his playing experience and he's been learning new languages because of it.

"That sounds impressive." Admits Sakura, there's a hint of something in her tone. Shirou decides it might be disinterest, after all, he's fairly sure she hears enough about games from her classmates.

"I guess it seems so, but I'm sure you're tried of hearing about people talk about their experiences in games." He reasons as he

returns to chopping up another vegetable. "Never mind hearing about Shinji's antics at home."

Silence descends between them once more as they work together to make dinner. As things are getting cooked, Sakura mentions, "Onii-chan's getting the new system that's coming out, perhaps... Maybe you could... If it's no trouble that is..."

It takes Shirou a bit to realize what she's asking. "I'd be happy to show you around, if you're interested in playing Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike." He tells her, given that it's looking like he's going to be keeping his money and what's in his Inventory from now on when he Reincarnates RouShik, it wouldn't be hard for him to purchase passage back to the game world's Japan.

Sakura gives him a slight smile, he notices out of the corner of his eye. He focuses back on his task for cooking the egg noodles and the tempura vegetables that are boiling in oil.

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Standing before the **[Monastery of the Grail]** , it brings back a number of memories for RouShik and reminding him of when he got that bow, that he still hasn't stopped using. It's been with him so long that, well, he's reluctant to part with it, although after a year, he found a special Quest that would enable a person to preform a Ritual that would allow a Item to improve its own stats as he Leveled up but it also means he can't use another Item of said type. Throughout his later Reincarnations, the bow's stats deflate to match his restart as a Level 1 Character.

Next to him, to his left is Sakura's Character, ViteLite, who's a Level 5 Tiefling Druid. RouShik had decided to see what a Minotaur would look like with the Half-Dragon template applied, the Dragon that he's half of is Gold Dragon. Standing at six feet, a bit more with his horns curving up a few extra inches, he's appearance is rather chimera like, a strange mixture of creamy brown fur coat and slightly dull gold scales with a more dragonic cast to his snout then bovine. He's

currently Level 9, if he hadn't been careful, he'd likely have been a higher Level by the time he'd arrived **[Fuyuki Village]** and thus, the Level difference would be greater then it already is between ViteLite and RouShik.

With a flicker of his surpringly long tail sporting the usual fur tuff at the end, he asks, "Are you ready to head in?" The Dungeon looks to be in slightly more condition then the last time he went through it, but that's likely due the progressing of this world's story. There's been repairs, repairs that have altered the outer look of the place, even during the day, he can only guess what it'll be like during the night.

"Yes senpai." Murmurs ViteLite, she'd been surprised upon hearing about the Dungeon, particularly given its location. Then again, the mention of the local Temple did get another odd reaction and her eyes had been rather wide upon mentioning who the Game Developers had been behind the ARI System and owners of the game. In a way, it had been like she'd been afraid...

Pushing that thought out of his mind as ViteLite begins walking towards the entrance, it seems that there's a number of Cultists on guard though, which is another change from when he was last here. With likely surprising speed, RouShik charges to engage them in close quarters, his part of their Party is that of Tank after all. With two long swords in hand, he begins with slashing with his right and defending incoming attacks with his left, in a matter of a two minutes, the Cultists are dead with ViteLite managing to kill at least two while he killed the other four.

Once they get the loot from the dead bodies, he ignores the options that would allow him to Butcher them for meat, he strides up the steps, his hooves making noise upon the settled stones of the steps. Having gotten a feel for the trollish ways of the Kaleidoscopic Workshop, he inspects the door frame and then the next few steps beyond. Sure enough, there's two Minor Wards, one on the door frame's bottom and one about five foot up the door frame. Deciding now was a good as time as any to start helping ViteLite bring up

Skills, he gently explains where to look after having her investigate for anything concerning the door frame.

With some help, ViteLite does notice the first Ward. It takes a bit longer and even with RouShik lifting her up, to find the second one. "How do we disarm them?" She asks curiously. "I'm only a Druid..."

"I'm no Wizard either or a Warlock." He admits with a shrug and noticing the questioning look, explains, "Wizards get a Class only Skill called Disable Magical Device while a Warlock can drain magic from Wards and Magical Traps, at higher Levels, they can even try draining magic from debuffs on themselves and Party Members. Some say that they can do it to enemy buffs but the chances are fairly slimmer then when done to debuffs."

"What happens to the magic that's drained?" ViteLite asks and he answers, "Into the environment unless they have a vassal to channel the magic into, generally, depending on their Pact with their Patron it could be their Familiar Spirit or an Item, like their **[Book of Shadows]** , if they store enough in a certain amount of time, in that book for example, they can use that to quick cast a spell."

"Sorcerers?" Inquires ViteLite and he rubs the back of his neck. "They could try frying a hole in a Ward with their raw magic or causing the Magical Trap to explode from being feed too much magic, but that's about it when it comes this kind of thing."

"So... just duck under that one and step over that one?" She asks and he nods, although from the look he's getting, it's clear she doesn't believe he can do that, given his bulk along with height. Feeling his pride on the line, he backs up and putting the two long swords away in his Inventory, he does a short run then leaps through the space and, using his Acrobatics Skill, does a roll before ending in a crouch. Clapping his hands as he dusts them off, he rises to stand, turning to the door frame as he puts his hands on his hips, waiting for ViteLite to enter.

Soon enough, she enters, her head ducking under the five foot Minor Ward while high stepping over the threshold. Nodding, he pulls the two swords back out of his Inventory before sheathing them. It's empty in this part of the Dungeon and as he scans the room, notices what's been fixed up and what's been replaced. "No enemies?" Murmurs ViteLite.

"I think that's what the Minor Wards are for." He comments lightly. "We should still be able to find hidden stashes in this room though." His gaze shifts to the spot where he found **[The Guardian's Bow]** .

So, going first, ViteLite takes her time and does find two cashes of coin pouches, he'd waved any claims of drops and found loot when creating this Party, so the coin belongs to ViteLite. She does find a lock spot, which is rather surprising and moves to see if he can get it to move. It doesn't, not at all and then he checks the spot more closely, finding a stronger Ward upon the stone panel. "Guess we need to trigger one of the Minor Wards on the door frame."

"Shouldn't you check to see if I miss anything first?" Inquires ViteLite and he glances around the room thoughtfully. "I guess I could." He agrees and he finds another three hidden stashes, nothing helpful as one was a pouch of uncut common gems of eight about half an inch in size, a tiny jade flute, and three jars filled with **[Emperor's Grin Wine]** .

"What kind of wine?" ViteLite asks and he replies after taking a sniff of one of the jars, "Mostly rice based from what I can detect." He offers the jar to her after putting the cork back on, which gets put away in the Inventory.

"So, which one are we tripping?" The Druid asks him. "Let's do the bottom one, after all, not every Race is five foot in height." He decides, nodding for her to go use her quarter staff to trigger that one as he readies himself if there's any incoming NPCs.

Thankfully, none come rushing within the first three minutes, RouShik relaxes and puts the two swords back into their sheaths.

ViteLite relaxes and they both walk over to the panel and finds that it does move, he watches as ViteLite brings out a miniature horse sporting folded wings made out of white gold. "What's it called?" He asks curiously.

" **[Astral Mount: Medusa's Child]** . It's also an unique mount?" While she's uncertain about what that means but he finds himself frowning at the chances that another unique item has been found.

"Huh, what are the odds? I got my unique bow here as well..." He's never heard of an Astral line for Mounts as well, but then, given the nature of the kind of item, it's likely the only one of it's kind. "I am guessing it offers the Riding Skill?"

ViteLite nods, a flicker of surprise lights up upon her face before fading away. "You won't be able to sell it for money nor trade it away. It's going to stay with this Character until you put it down on the ground and let if vanish... Although, if you want to keep it reverent to you, I know of a Quest that could allow it to gain in power as you do, the price is not being able to use another Mount."

"Do you have a Mount?" She asks and he shakes his head. "I prefer traveling around on foot, enjoying the scenery and if I'm in a hurry, I can rent one for a few hours." He admits, it also means he gets a lot more random events along that lead to some interesting Quests and merchants with some unusual stock that way. It also means he has to watch out for PK Parties looking for him to drop something interesting or to Butcher his body for unsavory reasons.

"Why Medusa?" He can't help but wonder out loud. "She's from Greece, right? I'm sure I recall that much about her." *This is suppose to be Japan.* RouShik mentally adds as he stares intently at the white gold winged horse.

"Ye... yes, she is." Agrees ViteLite with a hint of a stammer, which is rather odd as it's been a while since she's stammered in his presence. "So, which way?" The little statue vanishes into her Inventory and he lets the matter drop as well.

Unlike previously, all three ways are free of rubble, showing that the Cultists have managed to repairs to this Dungeon. "It's been some years since I've fought my way through this, there's been changes to this Dungeon, so any of them are fine."

ViteLite nods and after a bit, she heads for the center one hallway. He gently reminds her to be cautious as they walk down it, knowing there's going to be traps and curse markers along with hidden stashes of loot.

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There's an strange mark on the back of his left hand. Shirou isn't sure what to make of the design reminds him of the design carved on the grip of **[The Guardian's Bow]** . It's a design that brings to mind a lantern, in a way, the solid point that's towards his wrist is the pole or tassel. The next part is the bottom that holds the light and the final is the top, the lid.

"What's it doing on my hand though?" He wonders out loud as he sits on his bed. Finally, after some minutes of trying to make sense of what is means, he gets off his bed and begins his day.

By the time he arrives at the kitchen, Sakura arrives as he starts on making breakfast. About ten minutes later, Taiga arrives with a boisterous shout of greeting of both Sakura and himself. The usual banter happens although he does catch Sakura seemingly staring off into space for a few seconds. She recovers and inquires about his hand, he admits ignorance about it, the purple haired teen seems to study his face for a few seconds before murmuring the suggestion of covering it up.

With that, Sakura returns to cooking breakfast and he stares at his left hand's back. *I guess I can get why I should... But, hmm...* Shirou recalls some blush that Taiga forgot in the bathroom. Using bandages would mean he's covering something or injured, perhaps he couldn't Alter the blush to match his skin tone? Maybe see about including a duration of some hours without it smudging?

Shirou excuses himself when everything is just about done, heading for the bathroom, it takes him seconds to find the blush. "Trace On." He states in a calm, clear voice and he feels the tell tale tingle surge throughout his body. With a thought, his vision alters and he gets a lot of information concerning the blush, the case and the chemical compound that makes up the make up. Once open, he holds it on the palm of his left hand and points at the make up with his right index finger.

It takes a few seconds to inject the Alterations he wants into the make up, they are blending with skin color, duration of eight hours of it being water proof and smudge proof, and hiding what's covered from Structure Analysis spell. The magic settles and then he uses his index and middle finger to apply the make up over the mark. Working it over, it vanishes from his sight and then uses Structure Analysis, he gets information on the make up but not about what it's covering.

Nodding in satisfaction, he closes the compact and puts it back where he found it. "Trace On." He murmurs and coldness spreads throughout his body as his Magic Circuits turn off. Washing his hands, the make up remains fine, even as he dries his hands.

With that, he exits out of the bathroom and fast walks back to his kitchen. It's not long before breakfast is ready, they serve it easily and quickly. Of course, the first one to dig in is Taiga and it's not long before she brings up the latest news concerning Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike. "Can't believe they're finally ending their support of the game after almost ten years."

All either Sakura and him does is hum. Their teacher continues on the topic, "I never got any of my Characters to level 100! And now, like, out of no where, it's vanishing!"

"Isn't it kind of your own fault, though, sensei? For not sticking with only one Character long enough to achieve that?" Sakura inquires politely.

"I can't believe you both didn't do more to help me power level!" Taiga counters and, well, it's not like they hadn't tried but, well, Taiga's attention had shifted to new offerings for the ARI System, like Modern Wars of Shadows Hunters, Galaxy Merchants, Historical Accounts of Pern, and, due to an agreement with LucasArts as of last year, Knights of the Old Republic, which came out two weeks ago.

"It's not like you can't create new characters in what's taking its place." He reminds her. "They might be transferring those Character who've Reincarnated but they are also wiping clear those Characters' advantages and Skills."

"What's the new game going to be called?" Inquires Sakura. He presses his lips together as he tries to recall it, it only got mentioned once in the announcement.

"Remnants... Revenants? R something of Shattered thing? It was only mentioned once in that, like, a single sentence." Shirou replies after taking a minute to ponder the name.

"But aren't they also compensating the lost with in game currency? So the two of your Characters should be millionaires!" Accuses Taiga snaps. "After all, Shirou's RouShik has been Reincarnated, like, a dozens of times!" Their sensei's accusing gaze switches to Sakura, only it gets a touch softer as she says, "And your ViteLite's been through it at least a dozen times!"

He bites down on correcting that, the max number of times one can Reincarnate is ten times. After that number, it's mostly just allowing you to change your Race, apply or remove a Racial Template, and switch from your previous Class to Free Form Style of play and back again to the last Class your Character had been. The Level stays at the max that is Level 100 and there is no changes to the Perks, the six Stats, and to the Character's Skills.

RouShik's current Race is Silver Dragon, he unlocked the Race due to the number of times his Race had been Draconic relations. The

minimum needed to unlock Dragons as a Player Race had been five times, the Half-Dragon template does count towards the minimum, he used that template thrice. At six times, it unlocks the ability to choice which of the two types the Dragon will be, Chromatic or Metallic. There's nothing more to unlock from choosing Draconic related Race for the seventh through tenth Reincarnation.

"They never confirmed how they'll compensate for the lost or if they will." He counters simply. "They might even not go through with allowing for said transfer as well." Although, Shirou admits, he would be disappointed if that's what they decide. He's grown attached to RouShik after how many hours he's put in to Leveling him up along with the various Skills he'd cultivated in game.

Taiga's bullied him into trying Galaxy Merchants but it hadn't really engaged him a great deal given it's discussions on trans-humanism story plots with side plots concerning alien cultures plus establishing and maintaining diplomatic relations with said alien races. The space ships and some of the technologies were interesting, if it weren't for the serious tone of the game in regards to its undertone of ethics and philosophy concerning what defines a human. There's also the bit about how realistic could various intelligent species could interact and maintain any kind of contact long term, particularly when humans still have trouble dealing with other humans.

He'd played it once a week for two months, by that point Taiga had moved onto another game, so there wasn't any reason for him to continue playing. Shirou managed to get out of getting pulling into playing other games with her, then again, she apparently reconnected with someone over the internet that had she'd met before the Fire happened. He knows the person by their ARI System Account name of The2ndLordM.

His own Account name is Whitex2=Castle, it was Taiga who filled out his registry information and since he hadn't cared about his Account name, she put that in. He'd been busy in the kitchen when she'd been setting up his ARI System, making lunch for them both. Taiga

had something to do after lunch, so she wouldn't be on until mid afternoon that day.

"When are they closing down the game again?" Asks Sakura as she glances up from his left hand to his fact. "Last day of this month." Taiga grumbles and he nods in confirmation, which is in less then two weeks. "They wanted to... 'rip the bandage off fast'."

"Which means... What game are you two going to use for your dates?" Taiga asks and he mentally sighs but holds back his reply about them not dating. Sakura looks embarrassed and focuses on her breakfast, he does the same.

"Well?" There's a certain edge to Taiga's tone that causes him to break into a sweat. "Ah..." His mind races through the various opinions as he shares a Look with Sakura.

"Proud Cultivator Way." "Galaxy Merchant." They blurt out before they give each other questioning looks, only for Sakura's cheeks to redden as her gaze darts away while his own remains puzzled, he hasn't heard of that one...

"Proud Cultivator Way? Isn't that the one based off of Xianxai works?" Questions Taiga and Shirou look her way, it seems that their teacher's mental gears are clearly moving before eyes light up along with a wolfish grin plus an odd glint in her eyes, which seems to cause Sakura to blush once again and seem to curl into herself.

In the end, a glance at the clock means that it's not long before their meal together is coming to an end, the topic shifts to something else and Shirou does his best to finish eating. So other then memorize the title, he leaves the matter alone.

To Be Continued

Author's Note:

Yea, I used ARI System and the game, Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike in a previous story. This is an updated version from that one as there's been changes to it, think of it as version 2 of that game. And yes, there is a wink to that series in this chapter!

Ended up needing to break this into two part, so it seems at this moment, so the next part will deal with the Fifth Holy Grail War.

I also hope you all enjoy this offering and its second part.

Broken Shackles of Reality P 2: Fate

I don't own Fate/Stay night!

Having agreed to stick around to clean up for Shinji, Shirou puts on the wireless headset and with a simple "Trace On", he logs into the ARI System's Menu. As he selects Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike, a pop up informs him that a scan is needed before he can continue. Then it's a mater of waiting a minute, watching the dots on the pop up swing up and down before vanishing as the message of scan complete replaces it.

He logs into the game no problem and other then him getting a notification that his unique weapon is unavailable. While odd, RouShik's shoulder shrug and proceeds to get some things down before his body finishes cleaning up the room, which should take sometime. While RouShik is a Sliver Dragon, which comes with a number of bonus features, he's currently using one to assume the form of a silver scaled Dragonborn, he doesn't get any of the Racial Features that comes with said Race, as he walks out of the barn's loft he'd logged out in.

As he walks towards the farm house, he's eating **[Honey Garlic Jerky]** , he made a bunch out of **[Dire Boar Meat]** . The type of meat used does alter the kind of boost a Character can get from eating it along with the kind of honey and garlic used. There's at least a dozen kinds of honey one can get throughout the world while there's fewer kinds of garlic, then again, there have been a few who tried to breed magical infused strains of it. Wizards and Druids have a higher success rate when it comes to using Alchemy Skill to create new living entities or in creating magical breeds of generally mundane plants or animals, like this one Character named VonIllya who created a breed of magic infused Walnut Trees which have properties of Lesser Mana Regeneration when eaten raw for fifteen minutes.

It's not long before he gets a number of Daily Quests from the owners of the Farm, the husband being injured, concerning clearing the stalls of the barn, cutting fire wood, milking six of the twenty goats, weeding the herb garden of the wife's, picking a list of seasonal fruit from the orchard, and collecting eggs from the chicken hut. Leaving the cleaning of the stalls for last, RouShik heads for the garden to begin with the weeding. Time flows and he completes each of in decedent time.

Soon enough, he's turned the Quests in and is on his way to town, walking he collects various plants as he wanders through the forest. The local Mobs don't attack him due to sensing he's not what he appears to be. Just as the nearest town comes into view from within the forest, he's left the safety of the road behind a long time ago when he gets 'ambushed', he had noted that the group of ten had been within the forest but also noticed their armor marking them as those not yet pass Level 40, given the Level of Monsters being for Levels 20 through to 30, he hadn't thought they were abnormal to be wandering the forest.

His Level isn't on display nor are theirs, not that it matters given how familiar he is with this game and its various equipment. So, he isn't overly concerned when they start approaching where he's headed. Slowing down, RouShik sighs at their actions as it's becoming clear what it is they plan to do. "Please leave me be." He states as he comes face to face with four of the Players looking to rob and/or PK him.

The Halfling that's flanked with the a pair of Elves, the two were two different types, while the fourth is a green scaled Dragonborn. The Halfling is clearly of the Monk Class with the two Elves being Rangers, the Wood Elf sporting two long swords, pretty much announcing his Fighting Style while the other one sports a single long sword plus a bow resting on the back. The Dragonborn is clearly a Sorcerer, he wouldn't be surprised if there's a Cleric among the other six members of this Bandit Party, never mind at least two Rogues, perhaps Assassin types.

"It's four on one, so, why don't you drop all your belongings? We might let you leave this forest alive." The Halfling states and he sighs, "There's ten of you and I sincerely doubt the highest Level among you passes 30."

There's a slight stiffening from the High Elf Player while the other, a Wood Elf, places her hands on the hilts of the two long swords. "At least two Assassin Rogues among the hidden six, a Cleric, and likely another spell-caster, given the location, Druid. Which leaves the remaining two members to be melee types." He reasons out and from the reactions of all four, he's fairly correct in his guesses, particularly given how familiar he is with dealing with Bandit Parties.

"Trust me, your Party isn't capable of PKing me nor am I incline to fork over anything that's in my Inventory." He states calmly. "So please disperse as I will report you names to the local Militia once I am in town." The Militia will auto-generate Bounty Quests for Players to hunt down said members of this Bandit Party for the next seven days. RouShik notices their Character Names, it's easy given his Level and the maxed out Skills.

The Halfling gets an ugly look while the pair of Elves narrow their eyes at him. Clearly taking that as a challenge while the Dragonborn looks unsettled, but then there's the saying that came from an American game that says, 'Geek the Mage First'. A lot of people take those words to heart as they aren't known for their high Con and everyone knows of their area damaging spells capable of causing a lot of difficulty when it comes to changing the battlefield.

"It's ten on one! We can take him!" States the High Elf as she pulls out her sword.

As combat begins, he sighs as his form shimmers and then stretches into that of a young adult Silver Dragon. The incoming crossbow bolt and arrow bounce off his folded wings and he looming over the green scaled Dragonborn. Their eyes widen and it's clear they just realized just how out matched they were, for not only is he a Dragon but his Level is on display along with the icon showing he's

Reincarnated the max number of times. He sees their Levels now as well but it hardly matter due to the way the game works, given the imbalance of numbers, the Bandit Party has gone pass the Committed to Combat number and even if they disband the Party, it won't end combat, not even fleeing will either.

Further, due to how this locks them in combat, allowing them to flee won't end his current battle state nor theirs. The only way this ends is if the Bandit Party kills RouShik or with him killing each member of the Bandit Party. Even if he were to logs out without killing them all and comes back into the game, he'd still find himself engaged in battled with the remaining Party. Nor could either side try and sign back onto the game with other Characters, they can't even delete the Characters when out of the game either.

According to many Players' opinions, the CEO is a classified Troll. He dimly remembers the article that racked the CEO over for this game feature. The CEO would release a simple reply, "Then don't engage in Banditry." It had been the same update that released the auto-generation of Bounty Quests when Players report other Players for forming a Bandit Party. It was also when the option of hidden Levels outside of combat became an opinion as well.

The ten Players do try to flee but it's futile, even if this terrain isn't helping him in killing these Bandits, he's got other means to attack them. Once he's killed four of the ten, he's able to assume a humoid form, retaking his former Dragonborn appearance, he brings out his bow and selects a certain type of arrows, picking the max exploding kind. Thus equipped, RouShik spends the next twenty minutes hunting down the remainder of the Bandit Party.

He finishes killing the Monk Halfling when he's notified that he's going to be auto-logged out. Before he fully gets out of the ARI System's Menu, he gets a personal well wishes from the CEO of the game, Mr Scweinorg. Shirou isn't sure what to make of that as he finds himself on his knees, it seems that his body had been scrubbing the floor. It takes a few seconds before the slight disorientation fades and then he gets to his feet.

A soft huff, he is quick to finish up cleaning the room before putting the wireless headset away. As Shirou slings his bag on but just as he's about to leave, he hears something that's rather strange. It takes him a few seconds to realize what he's hearing is what he's hearing, he hears a voice.

Lips pressed together, the teen begins to sneak towards where the noise is. Getting a good look turned out to be a likely bad idea once he gets a glimpse of what's going on. There's two men, adults, one wearing red and the other blue. The blue welds a spear while the red is using two swords, one is black and the other white. His gaze keeps drifting to the one in red, the tanned skin plus bright white hair...

A semi-familiar voice of another teen rings out but he's already leaving, the spell or atmosphere is broken and he focuses on getting home. Once he's there, he'll review what he saw and hear, but first, he needs to sneak away. It's not until he's pass the school gates that he finally allows himself to breath fully and to stretch, his shoulders had been tense throughout his sneaking away, he's already jogging home, he might be out of the school but he's likely not out of danger, not until he's home and behind the Bound Fields of his property.

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He'd known that the Bound Fields of the house weren't very powerful but how was he to expect that a giant of a man would be able to shatter them as easily as one tears paper? Shirou sure hadn't and as he murmurs, "Trace On." The teenager finds himself wishing he'd taken steps to set up something in the case that they did fall.

A lot of information comes to him with a simple glance at the weapon that Servant Berserker is using as he murmurs under his breath, **"From the Earth thee came, Refined through the Flames of the Smelter, thou was Shaped by My Hand with Hammer and Anvil, thus thou was Forge into Being."** His mental image of a pair of short swords get Projected. The one in his left is **[Solar's Bright Burn]** , it's a custom sword of the Fire effect series he has created in

game and as the name suggests, as he slices with it, it cauterizes the wound as it goes. The short sword in his right is **[Void Sender]** , one of his first custom sword and slashes from this one have a dimensional effect rift which acts like the condition of Bleeding, its duration is for a minute while also causing Numbness in the area of said injury.

A surprising calmness descends as he raises the pair into a defensive stance, the slight blinding white aura contrasts the light eating black of the other. A lot of what is happening isn't that far off from when he's playing the game, he knows he's not but it hardly matters. Shirou evades the incoming swing from Berserker and slashes the back of the wrist with his left, the cut burning close as the tip of the short sword barely scratching into the skin, it's not all that deep nor long of a cut, given the surprising quickness of the giant before him.

Knowing full well that it would only take one solid blow to at the right angle to knock him out, Shirou finds himself drawing on his experiences within Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike to evade the incoming blows while doing his best to attack when he sees the right openings. It's pitiful against this Berserker but that's not to say that it doesn't have some kind of effect, it's clear that for all that the very shallow cuts that land are only fueling the rage that's consuming Berserker's rationality. Given that he's using short swords, he needs to keep rather close but it also means that Berserker needs to put some space between them in order to use his weapon, which is how they've moved from within his property onto the streets, Berserker pulling back and back as he advances again and again.

Then a bellow sounds and he rolls out of the path, getting to the left and side, he's quick to get in close at the back of Berserker and slashes into the back of the right let. He dimly acknowledges the voice that is young and commanding, a young girl from what he hears, as she yells at him while encouraging Berserker to keep on. He's already dashing back and leaps backwards without looking as Heracles summoned under the Class of Berserker is swinging his

weapon in very quick succession while pursuing Shirou as the teen retreats backwards.

Sighing, he releases the two short swords in both physically and in dispelling them from this world. Focusing on pumping magic throughout his body so keep up with evading Berserker's attacks, Shirou mentally begins to considers the pros and cons of unleashing something that he's only been successful in recreating outside of the game, six out of ten times. *Either way, it might be what I need right now.*

"Draw the String, Aim the Wood, Release the Arrow!" As he leaps high into the air, **[The Guardian's Bow]** is quick to appear in his dominate hand. "Trace On." He murmurs, Projecting the same type of arrow he'd previously used just hours earlier when dealing with that Bandit Party.

In rapid succession, Berserker launches himself into the air while he fires the arrow, aimed for the bridge of the nose and between the eyes. He's already falling as the arrow hits and the giant of a man's grip on that weapon is gone. He's Projecting another of those arrows and firing it, this time at the left knee before he lands in a crouch. Another arrow getting Projected as he stands, he begins moving, this time heading for an alley as he fires the arrow at the same leg, more towards the ankle though.

Feeling secure in the knowledge that his last two shots will slow the giant Berserker down. He ignores the cries from that young girl as he slings the bow onto his back to free up his arms. Shirou is slightly surprised at how easily it remains Projected, typically when he's not using it the few times he's Projected this bow out of the game, it fades after a few seconds. Setting the matter of the bow to the side, the teen is busy scrambling over fences and racing down different streets as he heads back to his home as there's this sense of being watched that keeps him alert and fueling his body with magic to ready for any new surprising that this night can bring.

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With Onii-chan's successful attacks on her Servant, *Who knew that he was such a good shoot with a bow?* Illya isn't sure if she should return to that house to kill her adopted brother or if she should abandon the rest of the night by returning home.

Looking at the scars that mar Berserker's arms, burn marks done by the one sword that sported a white aura and then at the slowly recovering left leg, particularly the knee, she finds it hard that Projected Constructs could cause such damage, let alone to Heracles under Mad Enhancement that comes with being Summoned under the Berserker Class. The exploding arrows does tickle something in the back of her mind but she's not in the mood to focus on that feeling.

No, she's a bit more concerned by Lancer, who's strutting into view with his crimson spear resting easily behind Lancer's head. The other Servant does a whistle as Berserker gets up and turns to face the blue clad Lancer, a deep growling. "Rather hasty, don't ya think? He doesn't seem to be part of this war, given he's had to deal with Berserker himself instead of calling on a Servant."

"Unless you think he's already been chosen as a Master, attacking that kid kind of goes against the usual rules." Adds Lancer as his crimson spear moves from its former position. Her eyes narrow in displeasure at being lectured about her business with Emiya Shirou.

"It's Family business." Illya states far more calmly then she actually feels. "Outsiders wouldn't understand it." She couldn't careless if Onii-chan did get chosen as a Master, she'll have her retribution on the stray her papa took in and under his wing, keeping him from her one way or another.

"What an interesting time to approach him about 'Family' business." Remarks Lancer as the other begins to do some stretches with a playful smirk, clearly taking his time as he does so. Giving Berserker time to claim his stone axe-sword. "Particularly given it's a touch over kill to involve a Servant, who's here for the Heaven's Feel, to act on your behalf."

"Then again, given the condition the kid left in... Maybe it wasn't." Lancer slightly mocks and Illya's eyes narrow as her anger and jealousy flares up within her. She is quick to keep said emotions from her face, plastering a bland, neutral look upon her face while forcing her shoulder muscles to relax, even though she knows what's about to happen.

Berserker pretty much gives voice to her inner emotions as the Servant takes his place between Lancer and his Master, which is Illyasviel von Einzbern. Heracles, who has been summoned as Berserker of this Holy Grail War is moving upon releasing an enraged bellow. Lancer is no longer standing at that spot and there's a ringing of metal.

It's hard for her to follow Lancer's movements and it's clear Berserker is capable of fending off the enemy Servant but also continues to serve as a buffer between Illya and Lancer. She suspects that Lancer is holding back, as the first minute goes by. *Scouting.* She reasons after a few minutes more as her Servant sends Lancer into a vending machine with a swing of the stone weapon.

As a street lamp gets pushed over as Lancer evades a blow from Berserker, a noise causes them to realize their time is up. There's sirens beginning to ring out in the night and all three of them turn in that direction. "Too bad, I was just getting my blood pumping." Remarks Lancer before the Servant seemingly vanishes.

Recovering after a few seconds, Illya states, "Let's go, Berserker." *There's research to do.* She mentally adds as the giant demi-god approaches her and then easily picks her up, they leave the street, heading back to the castle.

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How troublesome. EMIYA thinks to himself as he watches the teen seemingly Project a bow and then an arrow. Try as he might to Trace

that bow, all he gets is **Error: Data Is Unavailable At This Time. Please Try Again At A Different Date** .

"God damn troll." The Counter Guardian spats out under his breath. *This has Zelretch's finger prints all over it.* The current Archer of this Fifth Holy Grail War thinks as he watches as Emiya Shirou manages to get away from his encounter with Berserker and Illya without get hurt by either.

His focus is only on the red head teen that is an alternate version of himself. Getting a bit impressed by this version despite himself, EMIYA is self aware enough to know that if it had been a younger version of himself that had been attacked by Berserker and Illya, he'd be dead after getting toyed with by Illya using Heracles as her cat's paw. Not only did this version Project a pair of magical short swords but then that bow.

As the red head teen arrives back at his home, EMIYA glances back to where Berserker and Illya had been left behind. There's police cars milling about that spot and it looks like another Servant had confronted the Mad Servant. *Either Rider or Lancer.* He reasons as he suspects that Caster is doing her usual thing along with having summoned Assassin and having him play guard dog. Saber hasn't been summoned yet, he's not sure when she's going to get summon now either, given that Lancer is suppose to be the one to assault Shirou to finish the job of killing the witness and once bleeding, Saber would be summoned.

Events that he's use to happen don't seem to be flowing as he expects that they would, first Shirou didn't draw either Lancer's or his attention by witnessing their fighting at the school. Second is Lancer not killing said teen. Third, Rin not resurrecting said idiot teen. Sixth, idiot teen gets things explained to him by Rin.

Looks like I'm going to have to do some research and figure out how that Troll has been influencing this version. The Counter Guardian reasons as he does a quick scan of the city from his current perch

before heading back to the manor that Rin is at, likely getting ready for bed or already in bed.

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Applying that make up over the design on the back of his left hand, Shirou is sure to check that it's Alteration is still in effect. Satisfied, he puts the blush away and turn off his circuits before he fully leaves the bathroom. Not finding Sakura in the kitchen like usual, he searches and finds her staring at the patched up wall.

"Sakura?" He ventures to voice in a questioning manner. He'd spent a few hours last night, after a quick interview with the police, doing what he can to hide the damage and slapping up a hasty Alchemy base trap on the Bound Field's hole. Shirou already mentally figuring out what to do concerning increasing the magical defenses of his property and will by working on the issue once supper is done.

The younger teen seems to blink and then turns to regard him, her eyes seem intensely focus on his face before her eyes seem to travel downwards to his throat and all the way down to his slippers before her gaze returns to his face. "Did... something happen last night, senpai?" Sakura asks with her tone sporting an emotional undertone.

"Just a late night visitor." He admits as truthfully as he allows himself to be. "Seems that there had been some disturbance a few blocks from here too." The teen adds, hoping that she'll let the matter go, he doesn't like lying but his adopted father had been earnest about keeping magic a secret and what could happen if he doesn't do his part in maintaining that secret from others not in the know.

The look on Sakura's face seems to soften and the look in her eyes seem to firm up after a few seconds. With a firm nod, she says, "Hopefully it won't happen again."

With that, the purple haired teen heads back into the building. Shirou stares at her back, not really sure what to make of the emotions he

witnessed upon Sakura's face, the resolve that finally won out within her gaze. With a lingering glance at the wall he patched up, the slightly older teen frowns slightly as he tries to puzzle out what she's resolved to do.

Looking away, he heads inside and heads for the kitchen, he finds Sakura already taking out a number of things from the fridge. It doesn't take more then a few seconds to pick up on what she wants to make for breakfast. And so, he brings out what they need to use to cook said ingredients.

The two fall into their usual step of cooking together, of not getting in each other's way. It's not long before Taiga arrives, a bit late and a touch annoyed about news of what happened not that far from here. It seems that someone caused the destruction of a street lamp and a crush vending machine, like someone got rammed into viva a vehicle slamming the person into it, only there's no blood or tire marks.

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Shinji seems to be limping and also seems to be favoring his stomach area. Shirou couldn't find the other to inquire about what happened to him once school ended. The other hadn't even approached him to comment on his cleaning of the room as well.

He'd try to hunt down the other but he knows he has other things needed to be done, after all, he doesn't want a repeat of what happened last night to happen again. Thus, it's best that Shirou heads home and begins to see if he has what he needs to begin shoring up the Bound Field. *Or see if anyone triggered that trap...* He's specializes in making weapons using alchemy more then anything else.

While the skill is generally associated with making potions, it's more along the lines of transformation, of taking a number of things and blending them into something new from the sum of the things used. Technically, using alchemy, one can do the same with any kind of energy into another kind, well, if one considers the concept of the

principles of the skill. At its base, it's relation to chemistry is very evident and it's how people in game created gun powder and smoke bombs. When it comes to utilizing alchemy on a truly magical energy level, you need to have the right material and array or ritual diagram to help funnel the energy into the steps that would transform it into whatever the alchemist wanted as the end result.

Since this isn't the game, his has limited means... until he realized that's not true. He had materials, and while not inherently magical, it was energy in the end. He also did have the means to create complex arrays, animated arrays as well, that could interact with the energy in more then a single direction, well, in a way. Which lead him to learning programing languages and looking into other means of generating electricity, like windmills and solar panels.

So yes, he's been creating magical batteries, created first from spent batteries but then to him using chemistry to grow crystals to be magical batteries. Sure, they get destroyed upon getting empty, returning to the ingredients that they were created from, but they also don't lose their energy like those spent and Altered acid batteries. Shirou's has plans for gadgets and machines that would use those crystal batteries but hasn't gotten around to making any of them due to the fact that he doesn't feel like they are needed, not when he has Projection that allows him to take those blue prints and Project said creations, sure, they're likely weaker then if he'd have physical examples to use Structure Analysis on, allowing him to see the flaws of said item and correct the blue prints accordingly.

Once he's home, he drops off his bag in his room and heads for the back. The trap is still there and nothing has triggered it. With a soft sigh of relief, he heads for the shed that also serves as his Workshop, as according to his adopted father, that's where Magi are suppose to do their research and experimentation in.

With a flip of the light switch, the shed's only light turns on. Shirou closes the door behind him as he walks around to take stock of the various crystal batteries that line the shelf. A few had fallen from the wall that faced where the hole got smashed in the wall around the

property. With a slight shake of his head, he begins fixing the shelves that fell and putting the crystal batteries back on said shelves.

He cuts his left thumb on something, not that he noticed until one of the ridges of a crystal pokes the tender cut. As Shirou presses the two sides together, blood begins to well up. There's a tingling sensation at the back of his neck that intensifies until it's like his whole back is tingling with electricity. Then, as the teen turns to see what's behind him, a very thing line of red seems to weave through the air, up left, side right, up twice, right up...

Following the thin thread, he finds it's attached to the blood that's welling up from the cut. The thread get thicker as this previously unnoticed circle begins to glow blue and then red, as red as his blood. There's a number of threads now that seem to form a rope, the end frays and the rope's threads spread all around the circle that's now a bright white. As the red threads begin to unravel the rope, causing the threads to create an almost bulb that pulses in time with his heart beat.

The rope begins to fade, starting from the cut on his thumb and as the bulb fades, he gets his first glimpse of someone sporting blond hair. Seconds later, the person is fully revealed and it turns out to be a woman in blue clothing with metal plates sown upon the blue cloth. It suddenly seems very dark in the room and it's then that Shirou realizes that the light bulb had exploded and that the crystal batteries had been what had previously been lighting up the shed.

It takes the woman a few seconds to begin looking around and upon setting sights on Shirou, she seems to take in his appearance before addressing him while turning her whole body to face him, "I have but a single question." *It's like she's holding a sword in her one hand.* "Are you my Master?"

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Letting out a soft sigh as it seems that Sakura couldn't make it this morning like she mentioned last night when she phoned to inform him that she won't be able to make it over to his place. Taiga had a teacher thing happening last night, concerns about fainting spells that have been going on throughout the city. Which meant that it had just been Saber and himself, getting familiar with one another along with Saber pretty much enjoying the supper he made.

Heading for the kitchen once the usual time that Sakura would arrive at the latest has passed, it's odd to see the lap top of his on the table in the dinning room but Saber is clearly reading everything she can about Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike. Something about the company name seemed to have given the blond Servant a start and she seems rather distrustful concerning the ARI System and the games released by the creators of the system. Saber is still rather tight lipped about her suspensions and concerns but given what happened with Berserker and that child from that previous night, he hasn't made use of the ARI System to play the game before bed like he intended to.

He rather not be logged into said game while there's that pair after his head, never mind the fact that someone had been watching that incident but hadn't interfered. Shirou is certain that someone had been watching him head home that night with someone also keeping Berserker and that young girl from pursuing him. Recalling the glimpses of that swordsman and the spearsman, the teen recalls that a classmate of his had also been on site of that battle as well.

"So... How many Servants are to be participating in this war?" He asks as he begins to prepare to make breakfast for the three of them, he's fairly sure that Taiga will be showing up. There's very little that can keep said woman from coming over to mooch food off of Sakura and his hard work.

"Seven Servants are summoned by seven chosen Masters." Saber answers after recovering from him addressing her and, perhaps, about the subject manner as well. "The Servant Classes are Archer, Assassin, Berserker, Caster, Lancer, Rider, and, of course, Saber."

As Shirou ponders the identity of the swordsman, he's fairly sure that the spearsman had to be Lancer. "I saw a pair of Servants fighting at my school." He admits to Saber as he continues to speak as he moves about the kitchen, it's feeling rather empty without Sakura cooking along side of him. "Lancer was a man in blue with a red lance while the other one sported two Chinese swords, one black and the other white."

"I see." States Saber, it's clear that she's considering this news. "Heracles has been summoned as Berserker... Did any of those weapons give you any idea of who either of them were?"

"Lancer's spear is Gae Bolg, which means that he's Cu Chulainn." Shirou reasons out with certainty. "The married blades though... Bakuya and Kanshou. Their legend isn't about being welded but how they were forged. I don't think there's anyone who's overly connected with them, the Servant didn't look Chinese either." It took a few seconds to recall the pair of swords that the Servant in red had used, mentally going over the history of the two for anyone who's well known for using them.

"And the one who used them didn't look to be the one who commissioned or created them?" Inquires Saber and he replies "The welder didn't look Chinese nor was he dress in a way that seemed to be of that country."

There's not much more said between them, so Shirou focuses a bit more on the task of making breakfast.

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There's a lot that EMIYA regrets but right now, he's mainly regretting remembering that little fact about who it was that really summoned Rider. He's not sure how or the why of it, but it seemed that unlike how it usually goes, Sakura hadn't turned over control of Rider to Shinji. It's something that seemed to be a consistent course of events as Matou Zouken has Shinji participate in the war as Rider's

Master, clearly whatever wrench that's affecting Shirou's life is also affecting Sakura's as well.

It's all Zelretch's fault! The current Archer thinks as he waits for Rider to take the bait. He can hear his Master is snipping with Illya as the pair work on getting out of the Bound Field that Sakura created.

Yes, Sakura set up the Bound Field and that's rather mind blowing. Clearly, Zelretch had done something concerning those games his game company created and released to cause such a massive change in Sakura's personality. It's rather embarrassing that Rin got taken under his nose last night, same, it seems, for Illya as well.

He'd freed Berserker from the room with an Enchanted bell gently ringing that seemed to keep the giant Servant out of it. The red clad Archer is trusting that the other would rampage and allow him to get at where Sakura is holding Rin and Illya. EMIYA isn't sure where Sakura is at this moment but he doubts she's gone to school. Even though it's the morning of a school day.

In the end, it's the cry of Shinji, *What's he doing here?!* That makes him realize that his hopes have been dashed.

He does his best to reframe from rubbing the bridge of his nose or his temples as it seems that he's going to have to engage in a fight with Rider. Projecting his favored swords, Kanshou and Bakuya, and leaps from his spot at the seemingly blind Servant. EMIYA isn't surprised at how swiftly Rider reacts to his sudden attack as she uses the chain of her weapon to redirect his two swords.

"I don't suppose you could kindly let my Master go?" The Counter Guardian inquires as he recovers as he takes a defensive position, edging to try and get behind her. In reply, Rider goes onto attempt to attack him with the knife portion of the weapon, even trying to wrap the chain around his legs to trip him up.

Once again, he curses Zelretch before going on to curse out the three Families that set up the Heaven's Feel in the first place and

finally Avenger, cause he's got to have some hand in whatever is going on with Sakura.

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There's no sign of Sakura, then again, there had been no sign of Shinji and Tohsaka attending as well. Having no reason to linger once school comes to an end, he heads home. It's not until he's home that he hears mention of a fire that happened around noon at the local church.

"There was a fire?" He asks Saber once the news cuts into a commercial. Shirou only caught the very tail end of the news concerning a fire.

"So it seems..." Murmurs the blond haired Servant. Walking over to where the lap top is, he finds a web page concerning said church along with the head priest, one Kotomine Kirei. There's other browser open behind this particular one, most of which seems to be about the fire that happened that caused him to lose his memories and to get adopted by his father.

Saber comes back into the room after turning off the TV. "Is something special about that fire that happened about ten years ago?" He asks curiously.

There's something that flickers across Saber's face that he doesn't identify the emotion before it's gone. "It was a magical fire, it was the result of Magi fighting among themselves." States Saber after a bit once she walks back to sit before the lap top.

Accepting this information with a nod, he moves to sit to her right as he considers how to go about asking about her conclusions concerning the ARI System and the involvement of Magi in it. He kind of wishes to see if he can't use it for a bit, later tonight. It had been a great help when it came to his understanding of Magecraft and training in it, particularly as it seemed that his father seemed to be very reluctant with training him.

Which might be due to the involvement of the CEO being a Magus himself. He realizes with a slight stiffening of his pose. *That's rather contrary, isn't it? Kiritsugu said that they hoard all knowledge of magic and it's Arts...*

"Kirei is one of the members of the Church that is in the know and he'd been involved in the fire." Saber tells him and Shirou is a touched surprised to hear that. "He's gone missing." The blond Servant adds.

"Sakura wasn't at school today. Neither was her brother and Tohsaka Rin." He admits to Saber and she frowns slightly upon hearing that.

"There is a place I wish to check out." Admits Saber after she blanks out her face from emotions that had been flickering across it. "I would like to go alone."

"I see." He admits with a frown. "It would be faster if you drove something there."

"I assure you, I am more then capable of driving anything there is within the city." Saber is quick to assure him rather readily. "My Riding Skill is B in Ranking." It's clear she's rather proud of that fact.

"I might be able to Project something for you to drive." He admits, the Crafting system of Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike is very boundless in what people could make, as long as they have the time and resources. There's been Challenges among Players of all stripes, everyone trying to figure out the limits of everything within the game. Some things proved easier then others due to hidden qualities of resources and if there's enough overlap in Skills that would increase the success of bringing 'life' to their visions. "I can't say how long it'll linger when I'm not within a certain radius."

He has participated in some of those Challenges, ignoring the Cooking ones on principle, he knows he's more then a descent cook, bit it out of game and in game as well. Creating custom weapons and armor had been very interesting, particularly when he reframed

from getting help from those Spell casting Classes, relying only on Alchemy. The odds of the result being Enchanted had been low but oh so satisfying when he managed it thrice in a row.

"It'll likely be motorcycle." He adds, out of the various vehicles he's crafted within the game, he's pretty sure that there's only three that he had designed that wouldn't draw the attention of the unaware public. Two of which had Enchantments towards being invisible along with sound muffling Enchantments, although the degree of said sound muffling various between the two along with the weather. One was a flying vehicle that's only good for short distances before it would need to be refueled and the other being something akin to a RV, a mobile house that he'd sold about ten million gold, give a few extra hundred thousand of gold concerning the various Enchantments it came with.

Given the amount of time and resources that went into the RV styled vehicle, it likely would be more like a hundred million gold but it had been a passion project for him. Just creating the plans, the parts, and putting it all together had been satisfying enough on its own. He'd likely would have just disassembled it after the novelty had worn off, so the sale of it hadn't really affected him all that much. After all, it had been far too Enchanted to be shrunk safely to be stored away in the Inventory.

It's hardly the only vehicle he's made that got sold to others, in fact, RouShik has a bit of fame as a craftsman when it came to in game armor and Alchemy created products besides just the usual, common potions and one time use cosmetic consumables that were merely temporary. He's sold recipes for permanent cosmetic consumables and created the **[Enchanted Body Ink]** that could be used to write spells on a person's body like one would create a **[Spell Scroll]** . Losing a single point of health and the ink vanishing when the spell is cast was a very minor trade off to being able to have a spell that wasn't tied up to a bit of equipment.

It's one of the reasons he's hidden his Character's name when he's playing as it's easier to ignore written requests then when people

hunt him down to make such requests in person. There's always some reason for others to seek him out and while some of the commissions were interesting enough to tempt him, generally, Shirou prefers to do Quests and Dungeon runs then spend so much of his playing hours crafting commissions or selling thing's he's created. It's just fortunate happenstance that his in game Alchemy Skill proved to be able to translate into real world Alchemy, never mind learning that any of swords he created in game were ones he can Project using his Magecraft, it took a bit longer to figure out how to Project other items that he had created in game, though when it came to the bow, that was always tricky and, in the end, he found that focusing on the *binding* to be the key to Projecting that bow, even if he's unable to do so perfectly most of the time.

It's hardly surprising that his thoughts had wandered away from him and so, his feet had taken him out into the back of the yard, standing just before the shed door. Reaching out, he twists the knob and enters into the small building with Saber a few steps behind him, closing the door. Scanning through the various crystals, he picks out a good twelve that he'll use to help with the Projecting.

Taking them off their respective shelves, he kind of piles them on the ground, in a random spot. "Trace on." The red haired teenager states in his usual manner and there's a slight surge as his Magic Circuits come alive then a hum as power flows through them.

Standing with the pile of crystals to his left and then extends both hands, his left over the pile of battery crystals and his right has his fingers held up with his palmed aimed at the spot he wishes to Project the bike at on the floor. **"From the Earth thee came, Refined through the Flames of the Smelter, thou was Shaped by My Hand by means of Will and Arcane, I call thee forth once more."** He chants out as memories of the work he put into making this particularity motorcycle plays out in the back of his mind along with the list of materials he used plus the time spent putting it all together once everything had been forged. **"[Crafted Mount: The Shimmering Wraith]!"**

As his magic flows out of his right hand, he pulls the magic stored in the crystals into himself with his left. The motorcycle is the one with the stealth Enchantment and it's outline of its 'skeleton' frame begins to solidify at the spot he's holding his right hand at. Soon enough, the frame fills as the motor, armor plating, seat, and such begin to get hinted at before shimmering into existence. The crystals are gone with their lay load spent and the motorcycle is no longer alight with a magical aura.

Lowering his left hand as his fingers of his right hand curl up, he's done his best to keep control over his breathing but Projecting **[Crafted Mount: The Shimmering Wraith]** had been a touch more difficult then when he'd Projected to previous motorcycles that he'd created in game. *But then, none of them sported the same number of Enchantments as this one nor did they need to exist longer then a few minutes, just to ensure that I could Project such things.* He reminds himself as he begins to rub his right wrist once he brought it to his chest as he eyes the motorcycle with a critical eye.

Saber approaches the motorcycle and it takes a bit of time before she touches the handle bar and leans over the seat. "How?" There's clear emotion in that simple question.

"I've found that I'm able to Project things I've made in game in the real world." He admits. "The swords come into existence faster then the other weapons. Small things like arrows or watches can vary, still, by their smaller size, are faster then a shield or an axe. Armor can take up to a minute if I'm Projecting it onto my own body."

"I've Projected two motorcycles before this but only for them to last five minutes. They were more proof of concept then because I had a use for them at that time." He continues. "If it weren't for the crystals, I think it would have taken longer, particularly given we need it to exist for a few hours."

"Still might be a good idea to put a few crystals into the tank before you ride it though." He admits as Saber settles onto the motorcycle properly, the engine and displays coming alive a few seconds later.

There's a soft look on Saber's face as she gets its engine to roar before she sets it back on its kick stand and get off, the engine and displays die down.

"I best head back to get started on supper. I think Taiga might show up for dinner tonight." Shirou replies as he begins to head out of the shed.

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It took a lot of effort on her part but things concerning the Heaven's Feel are very much under her control. *And it's all thanks to a Magician's game company proving to be able to subconsciously teach those with talent in Magecraft into harnessing Magic viva symbiotic sympathy between a digital representation and the actual person.* Sakura muses as she approaches the current location of where Caster is held up.

She remembers the first time she used the ARI System and, of course, Matou Zouken's quick spiral into insanity with the loss of his Soul, which he'd 'entrusted' inside of her. It had been very satisfying upon coming to research and accept what that *Worm* had gone through for his pursue of immortality, trying with all his mind to put off his death. Separation of Body, Mind, and Soul had been tried before and it always caused a kind of degradation on the user. Sacrificing the Body might have bought the *Worm* some decades, maybe even a century, but the cost to both the Mind and Soul for the lack of natural bridge between them caused changes within the user, changes that weren't going to be temporary by any means.

Did binding himself to those parasites hasten his degradation of his Soul? Why not just commission or create a Homunculus body to house his Soul and Mind in? One created using material from the discarded Body? The Master of Rider wonders, it's hardly the first time she's mused over the situation concerning the *Worm* that was the decayed being of the one who was once Zolgen Makiri.

The sight of the gates that lead to her destination can be seen more easily. Sakura's thoughts discard the well worn mental musings of her previous abuser to re-consider her various approaches to Caster and to Assassin. She's unsure if the two Masters have an alliance or if Caster found a way to transfer the Command Seals from Assassin's former Master like what Father Kotomine had done concerning Lancer's former Master.

Well, there's only one way to find out, isn't there? She mentally muses before coming to a stop. "I wish to speak with the Caster of this Holy Grail War. Would you mind passing along my intentions?" She calls out.

"I believe I have an interesting gift that might peak her interest." She admits after a few minutes and Assassin doesn't appear. Moving the bag she's brought, she takes out the boxes and places them on the ground, one by one, including a wireless headset.

"They might not look like much, but I am sure that Caster can figure out just why the system and the games are of interest." She states. "I'll be going. I'm sure that you have means to contact me." With a polite bow, she turns and leaves, Rider follows after a few seconds later.

As she catches sight of the dimly lit moon, she can't help but scuff at this so called Holy War, particularly after what the Einzbern pulled during the Third incarnation of this 'Grand' Ritual. "Introducing an unknown element... What stupidity." *Particularly given that they're suppose to be the best Alchemists alive.*

Putting the matter of Avenger's lingering presence out of her mind, Sakura considers how she's going to approach her beloved Senpai concerning the War. She's certain that once he's been told about what lurks within the Grail, he'd be willing to put the War aside and if the Saber he had summoned was the decent sort of Hero, they likely would agree that purging Avenger and putting a end of the War would be for the best for the world.

What was once tainted... The memory of the taint would only linger, long after you scrub it clean.

The End

Author's Note:

Ok, sorry about the late update but real life happened, besides Canadian Turkey Day (AKA Thanksgiving). My mother works at one of the Crown Companies that went on Strike in the province early this month, so, that was fun... Never mind upcoming Elections...

So then, it was a matter of how to write up the War only to realize that I didn't feel like coming up with a bunch of battle scene. So, I went a different angle that likely does follow one of the routes of the game but not doggedly, cause using the ARI System does have beneficial effects on the user, particularly when the user is magic capable!

Yes, this does relate to that previous story where I made use of the ARI System and Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike.

FYI, I totally couldn't fully decide on a good name for the motorcycle that I was having Shirou Project, for a bit, it was The Pale Wraith or something like that.

And yea, I couldn't really think of a better way to end it then having Sakura trying to reach out to Caster by getting her interested in the ARI System. I had known Caster would be very interested in said system, so much so that she'd accept a Peace Agreement just so she can fiddle around with this very interesting device and the potential solution about her situation in peace, without worrying about completing a Mystical Ritual that's become Tainted by the Element known as Avenger.

Also, Happy Late Thanksgiving my fellow Canadians and Happy Early Thanksgiving to those south of the boarder!

Broken Shackles of Reality Epilogue:Fate

I don't own Fate/Stay night!

The events of the Fifth Holy Grail War were kept under wraps this month viva blackmail, bribes, pulling in favors, and, of course the old classic of threats. It wouldn't do for the technophobile that is rampant among the various social tiers of the Magus to flair up and disrupt his experiment in the name of their preserving their pursuit of the Root. Few members of the Church seem incline to interfere with this experiment and, given the nature of his fellow Dead Apostles Ancestors, it's been flying under their radar as well.

Staring out of the office window of the headquarters of Kaleidoscopic Workshop in LA. Kischur Zelretch Schweinorg, mostly called Zelretch, finds the view to be rather picturesque as he stands before the window with an empty wine glass in his right hand. Behind him is a number of computer monitors that sport four profiles, the fourth one is the latest one and belongs to a certain Witch of Betrayal. It's rather interesting development, the fourth one, given he doubted that Caster of this current Heaven's Feel came across the potential of the game system and games on her own.

Given that out of the previous three, only one had been active since she summoned a Servant, Rider in fact. Illyasviel von Einzbern had stopped playing a good four months before the tainted Grail flared up more prominently and picked out four other Masters. *It's a question of how long young Sakura has been planning to put an end to the total of the Heaven's Feel, hm?* He muses.

There's a bit of a timeline that's been recorded viva server activity and, of course, the purchases of that system, wireless headset, and games. Then there's the reports of a destroyed lamp post and vending machine along with the fire set to a certain church, where the investigators are keeping quiet about the child bodies in the wine

cellar of said church, never mind the statue that the priest commissioned of himself. *It's a question of what happened to the King of Heroes though.*

Things have resolved themselves in a rather quick manner, all things considered when one considered certain personalities involved. Zelretch muses to himself as he turns his back on the window and walks over to the open bottle of wine to pour himself a bit more to celebrate such a positive development. Upon walking back to his desk, it seems that not only has the Einzbern logged into the game, but also that she'd been joined by the other two plus four new others.

Three are Servants and the fourth is the Tohsaka Heiress. *Wood Elf for Rider, golden scaled Dragonborn for Saber, and Archer's Character Race is that of a Black Dragon...* It takes him a few minutes to investigate why the Counter Guardian is able to even pick that Race. Finding the answer, he lets out a snort of amusement, one Emiya is a Silver and the alternate Emiya is a Black... *Or should it be black and white?*

"No point in fixing it either, it's not like this version of the game is going to be active much longer..." He mutters out loud to himself with a glance to the calendar, which shows there's going to be twenty four hours before the game Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike shuts down its servers, give or take an hour and half. Thus, he easily puts the information windows away, he checks to see what the Tohsaka girl's first character was and is rather disappointed that she stuck to Human, never mind the Class that got chosen was Wizard. The three Servants forwent picking actual Classes, picking the Free Form Style, not getting boxed into the safety that picking Classes bring.

He does mark the latest three Servant's character to be available for the transfer into Remnants of the Shattered Era, the game that's his version of a sequel to the modified version of the aforementioned game. After all, the true owners of the system and certain titles for said game system have finished gathering the desired information about this world and have given him warning about how the original

version is getting withdrawn when they leave, which means that the modified version won't function like it should.

Hence the need for a new title to carry on that game's legacy. Zelretch had plenty of time to study the fundamentals of said title and the other ones, those that he chose not to pick to 'develop' for sale. There's likely going to be some twitching, he admits, but the secondary function should work just find, might even be a touch better, without the primary function taking priority.

The ARI System that's been created to function in this world remains untouched with the departure. Same goes for certain titles that his company created. The loss of those titles he didn't chose weren't a big loss either, as he's the only one who had access to them.

With a sigh at the sound of a pager buzzing, Zelretch prepares to head back to the Clock Tower, which will take him but seconds for him to arrive there.

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Plenty of worlds.

Plenty of ways to see change ripple about in the lives of various inhabitants.

Time is nothing for them. Never mind space.

It's just a matter of picking the next 'Nexus' point of another 'branch' of reality.

It's a matter of which of the selection they should offer.

How strong is the Milestones of a reality compared to chaotic forces that is Free Will?

Which 'Nexus' are they going to influence next?

The End

Author Note: Here's the Epilogue for this story and also, Happy Halloween! This chapter took a while due to trying to figure out how best to end this. The portion after Zelretch almost became game oriented for the Remnants of a Shattered Era, which was the sequel game to Broken Shackles of Strife and Strike.

I'll say this about it, it would have been eight months after Broken Shackles shuts down and upon logging into the game, everyone save for Rin's Characters have been moved, given that RouShik, ViteLite, and VonIllya have used the Reincarnated system at least twice and with them managing to be Level 10, three day countdown to change their equipment, their Skills being only two Tier Ranks, certain Perks are gone or been redone, a large sum of money plus empty Inventory, and the keeping of said Unique Items, namely the Mount and the Bow.

Changes to Archer and Shirou's Characters would be the size of their Dragon Characters, with Archer's ShikRou being the largest at being on the larger size for a medium size dog and Shirou's RouShik being the size of a normal size house cat. (Yes, Archer thought it a fun poke at Shirou's Naming sense.) Them still being a Black Dragon and Silver Dragon respectively.

Changes to the game itself have to do with the Messenger function in game and with most of the Characters not spawning at the same continent. Certain Characters spawned at the same location, giving a buddy feel due to what their Character's Race was.

So, it was likely just a lot of in game PoVs and mentions of changes since the end of the Fifth Holy Grail War. Nothing that none of you couldn't think up on your own, more then likely.

Flame Cultivation: KHR!

I don't own Kateyou Hitman Reborn.

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With Aki No Sora at his hip, Tsunayoshi walks out of the Spirit Bones Cavern and is thankful that it's a night sky that greets him. The stars are gentle on his eyes and the rogue Cultivator stretches his shoulders for a bit before glancing around the location. He'd been twelve years old when he'd enter into this particular spirit rich location, it's well known that few if anyone who enters it to Cultivate ever exit.

He'd entered fully expecting his remains to join the numerous bones that make up the floor of the vast cavern system, it's how this location got its name after all. A nameless sword, several Cultivation Manuals (only two of which provided any helpful advice on how to Cultivate), a single set of too large kimono in black, and two years worth of Food Pills in a cheap *Qiankun* Pouch. Tsunayoshi's Cultivation can't advance further by staying in the Spirit Bones Cavern, leaving him to leave the place that he believed to be his tomb only for it to become a safe refuge from the world.

He's got no money to his name, having spent it first on funeral arrangements and then a month of living at his birth village. They villagers had been more then happy to see the back of him and he couldn't find it in himself to care what became of him. *Which lead to said questionable merchant and being easily convinced to purchase said items in the first place along with the location of a spot to begin Cultivating.* He mentally admits as he begins to walk away from entrance.

Try as he may, he doesn't rightly recall what had been the date he'd entered. His feet are bare but Tsunayoshi hardly feels the chill of the rocks nor the bumps of the pebbles, he's grown use to walking

around barefoot. His unruly long hair is tied up with a strip of cloth from his old clothing, a simple ponytail while his bangs he keeps moving off of his face, he use to use Aki No Sora to shave off said bangs... Then the sword refused to be used that way, which was how they began their dialog with one another, once he accepted that the sword had transformed into a Spirit Sword from all the time he'd channeled energy into it.

Who put that Spirit Seal on me? Tsunayoshi wonders to himself as he takes in the sounds of the field once he's further down the mountain path and walking away from the mountain that houses the Spirit Bones Cavern. Once out of those Food Pills, he'd been far too close to starving to death and due to the nature of the Spirit Bones Cavern, he either exits with a Spirit Core or he doesn't exit at all. "I can't believe I mustered up the will to live..." His voice is but a whisper, the sound of it is still rather strange to his ears, it's a lot deeper then it once been.

The world seems to have either gotten smaller or he'd grown taller then he expected. "I wonder if I will recognize my own face?" Tsunayoshi wonders out loud to the starry night.

There's no answer but the rogue Cultivator hardly expected one, after all, Aki No Sora is slumbering and he can hear the Sword Spirit's gentle snorts in the back of his head. Placing a hand on the hilt and stroking the pummel of the Sword Spirit. He's awarded with a sigh of contentment and a feeling of getting pulled closer to Aki No Sora. He doesn't bother to keep a wide smile from his face and he picks up his pace, he has a mirror to find after all.

With Aki No Sora in a defensive pose, the incoming blow of the masked child doesn't budge either himself or the sword in his hands. While he's untrained in a formal style of using a sword, he's done his best to practice to grow comfortable with welding a sword, it was do that, read, or try to meditate. After all, falling into depression was something he'd been trying to break himself of doing back then and once the Spirit Seal had been destroyed and it's remains burned up

with his own Spirit Energy, he found it so much easier to keep his thoughts spiraling downward as they once did into depression.

The twin wooden weapons move into a protective grip that cover the child's forearms as the child seems to growl. It's likely one of the reasons why the locals think this child is demonic, there's no way that a normal human child could make that kind of sound. *That's what they said about my screeching, once upon a time.* Tsunayoshi mentally admits to himself.

He's unsure of the age of the child in question, he's not really sure if the gender is truly male, but he's incline to peg this child as male. The mask is that of a crow or raven while the child's kimono is a ratty with rips and tears, it had been gray in color once, maybe even white. The wooden weapons seem to in better condition then the child's kimono and the mask doesn't seem to see the touch of age upon it.

"Are you certain we can not come to some peaceful resolution?" Tsunayoshi asks for a second time since he met this masked menace, which had been less then ten minutes ago. He done his best to keep on the defensive, not fully trusting in his ability to attack with Aki No Sora.

"Herbivore..." *Oh, so they are capable of speaking.* Tsunayoshi mentally muses as he goes moves into another defensive stance and keeps the child before him as the masked child tries to circle around him, trying the other direction while also in a defensive pose.

Following the urging of Aki No Sora, he manages to block the next flurry of blows that he hadn't fully been expecting. Tsunayoshi trusts the Sword Spirit and knows that their relationship is strong. There's no doubt about following the lead of the Sword Spirit, he trusts that the Sword Spirit knows its business when it comes to being used.

So, he doesn't overly react when he has the tip of Aki No Sora pointed at the now exposed throat of the masked child. From his bond with Aki No Sora, he knows that the Sword Spirit is very

satisfied with this outcome. "I believe a point has been made. Please lower your weapons." He states as calmly and collectively has he can while staring unflinchingly into gray blue eyes...

Where did the mask go? The rogue Cultivator wonders and it seems that the child seems to realize that the mask is gone as well. The child huffs but the wooden weapons are put away and he allows the boy to take a step backwards.

With that, he sheaths Aki No Sora and introduces himself, "I am Tsunayoshi." He does a polite bow and upon coming up find that the child is recovering from him bowing.

"Hibari Kyoya." The boy states with a huff and the child looks away from him, arms crossing over the chest. The body turns away from him and he glances around in search of the mask but doesn't find it on the ground.

"Might I inquire why Hibari-sama was attacking travelers upon this road?" He asks politely, he's been out of the Spirit Bones Cavern for two years now and he's still trying to come to grips dealing with other people, it's not just that he's rusty, it's just that he's never figured out why anyone other then his mother seemed to see him as trash. Being a rogue Cultivator isn't easy but it's better then what could have happened to him, *Like getting captured and sold to a brothel as a male prostitute.*

Hibari-kun doesn't seem to be willing to answer his question. The fact that the child has a Clan name could mean anything at this point. "Was it related to the mask that you were wearing, Hibari-sama?" There's a slight stiffening at the mention of the mask in the shoulders but the child clearly wasn't going to cooperate and, well, he had heard of a Night Hunt taking place near here. He rather wishes to participate to earn funds to purchase a bestiary or two to better know how to defeat either Spiritual Beasts or Demonic Monsters along which which parts he can sell.

Watching the way the child acts, he takes a moment to look at the sun's position. "If you need an escort home, I can lend myself to that after tonight's Night Hunt." He tells the child, although it seems that the topic of Night Hunt perks the child's interest.

"Where?" Demands the child and Tsunayoshi gets this odd feeling that there's going to be a lot of this in his near future.

"Kyoya-kun." Tsunayoshi looks up to find Hibari-kun glaring heatedly at someone who is clearly shares similar features with the ten year old, it took months to get the boy's age from him and only got it due to his Birthday had been the next day. "I see you are maskless." There's a hint of mild interest in that tone.

Then the elder relative turns to regard Tsunayoshi and he notices that instead of the gray blue eyes of Hibari-kun, this man's eyes are hazel gold. The other's hair is far longer then Hibari-kun's and is braided. There's no weapon at the man's side nor does the cloths look to be common in quality. *Silk?* He wonders to himself.

"I'm Lan Fon." The other introduces himself, giving a minor bow. He gets to his feet and introduces himself before returning the bow, although without the fist in the palm of the other hand. "Tsunayoshi."

"So, you are the one to defeat my grandnephew." Comments Lan-san as the other gestures for him to sit down once again, joining him at the table while Hibari-kun remains at his own table, doing his best to ignore them both. "Grandnephew?"

There's a slight uptake of a smile as the other hums in confirmation. *Given how young he looks...* "I take it you are a Cultivator?" He inquires curiously and is awarded with another positive hum.

"The same for yourself, I would say." Comments Lan-san and he nods in agreement. The other's eyes flickering towards Aki No Sora, which rests beside him, the Sword Spirit is currently slumbering before returning to his face.

He's not sure what to say about the fact that Hibari-kun has been in his company for these pass five months. *It's not like I haven't tried to get the location of his family from him. It'll sound like I'm putting the blame totally on him... Though if someone would just stop being intimidated by him when they're trying to give me information needed to return him to his parents... That's not much better...* He mentally admits to himself.

"Well you be returning Hibari-kun to his parents?" He finally asks after a waiter arrives with a pot of tea for Lan-san to drink. "He's been rather tip lipped about where his home is." Tsunayoshi admits, it's not like he's got much pride to deal with. *Plus, he should know his grandnephew well enough to know what kind of behavior the kid engages in, right?*

"You know his name?" There's a touch of surprise and he notices out of the corner of his eye that Hibari-kun bristles at the tone. "He told me after I introduced myself." He admits and the smile seem more genuine then before.

"Omnivore..." Hibari-kun growls in a warning tone and he doesn't acknowledge it. "I only learnt his age two weeks ago and the day before his tenth Birthday at that." He informs Lan-san and the other glances towards Hibari-kun with clear interest while he feels Hibari-kun glaring at the side of his face.

"Omnivore, huh?" Lan-san muses and there seems to be more interest in those hazel eyes then before. "Perhaps you won't mind if we have a spar?" Inquires the other adult and he merely inclines his head in agreement, unsure if he's done the right thing by agreeing, but then, Aki No Sora should be happy with him sparring with someone new, right?

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"You should head home, your parents are worried." He informs his grandnephew while Tsunayoshi is off bathing after their spar. Kyoya-

chan merely glares at him, which only makes Fon mentally coo at the adorable expression on the child's face.

"It's been nearing four years since you put on the Tengu Mask." He states calmly. "Politics have changed since then and others have looked else where for a **Cloud** as a Cultivation Partner." The Storm Cultivator informs the child.

The tension in Kyoya-chan's shoulder lighten up and he is very thankful that Tsunayoshi had managed to defeat his cute grandnephew as he wouldn't see Kyoya-chan's face for another six years, at which point he'd be sixteen years old and thus, a young adult. Tracking down his grandnephew had been slightly hard given the time between sightings of the 'Demon' child, it had been trying to find information concerning the young man who defeated Kyoya-chan that proved harder to come by as none have claimed to have mentored him nor knew of him beyond his sudden appearance coming to be three years ago as a rogue Cultivator. *For someone able to cultivate a Sword Spirit and create a Spirit Core, he's skills are rather basic, likely self taught from a Cultivation Manual.*

Throughout the spar, Tsunayoshi's eyes remain their hazel color, not a flicker of other color bleeding into those brown hazel eyes. The other had stuck to defending for most of the spar and it took some time to finally press the other into counter attacking. Throughout that counter attack from Tsunayoshi, he could see that the other had plenty of potential. *Aki No Sora.* He isn't sure what to make of the name, particularly the Sky portion of the name, in some way, it's a taunt and in others, it's a poorly made joke. After all, only certain families were allowed to use sora when it comes to naming their swords, cultivating them into Sword Spirits.

It's too late to get him to change the name. Fon mentally admits as Tsunayoshi comes walking back to the spot in a different kimono, this one is brown when the first had been a dark blue, while carrying his sword with his right hand. The long hair isn't bound up in a simple ponytail and it's still a bit wet, not as wet as he expects but assumes

that the rogue Cultivator likely used some Spirit Energy to dry it a bit faster.

So much potential... Fon can't help but mourn that it's only a matter of time before Tsunayoshi winds up on the butt end of Sect and Clan Politics. For the over a hundred years, there's been fighting over the vacancy left behind when the last bloodline heir of the Globally powerful Vongola Clan died and the fourth son turned out to be the adopted son instead of the actual bastard son. There had been a search for an heir, a descendant of the founder of the Clan, but, rumor has it the kid died with his mother during a Demonic Monster attack of their village, here in Japan surprisingly enough.

When the head of the Clan finally died, everyone expected that the world would come to an end due to the Spiritual Treasures, a set of Rings, having not been passed along to a blood relative. The world didn't end as it seems that the Treasures didn't up hold life on this world but it was some ancient system that held back another set of Spiritual Inheritance of another seven Flames. The Immortal that had been dead set in keeping said ancient system alive had been devastated over the revelation and had entered seclusion.

And so, with a vacant power gap of the Vongola Clan left behind the various Clans and some Sects have been jockeying for the position of who's to fill that gap. The Vongola Clan had fractured into small families without a clear family head to keep them united. The adopted son is still alive and had taken over a Demonic Sect called Varia, it specializes in assassinations, who many have tried to get support from in their efforts of claiming that vacant throne.

Of course they have different practices and traditions. Fon recalls, not that he pays much mind to the Countries besides China and Japan. He's sure they use other names in place of Sects and Clans, the only thing that unites them have been Soul Fire and an incline to kept the knowledge from the general public. Spirit Energy was something all possess but few had the potential to reach beyond that pool of energy to touch upon Soul Fire, fewer still had, once upon a time, been able to fully harness their Soul Fire.

Times have changed. He muses as he watches as Kyoya-chan and Tsunayoshi interact, his cute grandnephew seem to be getting the younger Cultivator to make his favorite for supper. The brunet seems to be getting Kyoya-chan to ask instead of just giving an order and expecting him to do it. It's clear that Tsunayoshi is highly familiar with his grandnephew's anti-social behavior but stands firm instead of giving way despite the murderous glare from Kyoya-chan.

He can only guess at the reactions his in-laws would have about how Tsunayoshi treats Kyoya-chan but they should also know that if Kyoya-chan wanted to, the Cloud would have long since departed from the Cultivator's company. It says a lot about Kyoya-chan's feelings on the matter that he's still with Tunayoshi for so long. *Going to be half a year.* Fon muses to himself.

His gaze goes towards the sword and it's hard to control his jealousy over the successful cultivation of said weapon. It's hard for those who burn with Soul Fire through their Spirit Pathways to cultivate weapons to house their own Spirits. Skies and Mists had it the easiest due to their properties. *Mist is likely Kyoya's secondary.* The Cultivator thinks to himself, the clue is that the pair of wooden tonfa seem to be the same pair that the child took off with upon putting the Tengu Mask on.

He had brought a pair of metal ones for Kyoya-chan, a Birthday gift, but he'll admit, he got distracted by the Cultivator that Kyoya-chan is keeping company of. He's also here to bring Kyoya-chan back to his parent's home to continue with his studies, once more trying to round out the child's knowledge and interests. Japanese Cultivators are different then Chinese Cultivators but they do share certain values when it comes to the pursuit of Cultivating Spirit Energy, namely prowess on the battlefield and, to a degree, capacity in pursuits outside of the Martial Arts, although that's where the differences ultimately lie, for example Chinese Cultivators prize Musical Art highly while Japanese Cultivators prize their Tea Ceremonies.

Subjects that Kyoya ultimately holds in disdain... The Storm reminds himself.

[TT_TT]

It's like overnight, he's become a teenager. Tsunayoshi muses to himself as he notices just how much taller Kyoya has become in the years he's known the formerly surly child, now an unruly teenager. *Hard to believe, three years... Where has the time gone?* The brunet wonders to himself as Kyoya is clearly getting annoyed with the child that's chatting with him.

Soon enough, Kyoya catches sight of Tsunayoshi and something softens within the younger Cultivator's stance but particularly in the teen's eyes at the sight of him. It's been long since made clear that Kyoya is fond of him, mostly by those who saw Kyoya grown from a babe to a toddler and then into a six year old who put on a Spirit Treasure called Tengu Mask just to get out of some kind of political arrangement. Nobody ever expanded on what kind of arrangement it had been but he doubts it was a marriage arrangement, given how the whole matter got dropped upon the use of the Tengu Mask, which would have dropped off of Kyoya's face after ten years had passed if none defeated the child.

"Omnivore." Greets the thirteen year old, it's only been two months since he'd been on a mission that lead him into one of the cousin realms, namely the Spirit World. While the matter isn't resolved, there wasn't any new developments in it either. Which is how he's been returned to the Human Realm, Nagi promised to bring him news if the matter looks like it's able to be unraveled, the young half kitsune did owe him and thus, there's a tie between them, started off due to a life debt but has become something like a friendship.

"Kyoya-kun." He returns with an easy smile as he gives the higher stationed youth a polite bow along with said greeting. The other huffs, but he is a rogue Cultivator and without a Clan, he's low on the social scale. There's little in way of connections between himself, Clans, and Sects, which means he doesn't have much weight in political matters in the social circle he is associated with.

"Oh? He's not a herbivore?" The younger boy inquires and he gets a view of the Mon upon the kimono. There's a lot of curiosity in the boy's eyes but there's also something...

Kyoya glares at the child but the boy merely goes through the actions of being affected by such a look. "I am Tsunayoshi, I often serve as Kyoya-kun's bodyguard." He introduces himself, bowing respectfully.

"Ah, Yamamoto Takeshi, member of the Asari Clan." The boy introduces himself after a few seconds to recovering from the idea that Kyoya likely needed or wanted a bodyguard. "I didn't think Hibari-kun would ever need a bodyguard! You must be impressive if he hasn't chased you off yet!"

There's a clear glint in Yamamoto-kun's eyes, particularly as they flicker to Aki No Sora that's resting at his hip. Kyoya moves to stand between them in a very deliberate and threatening manner. It's clear that Kyoya doesn't like Yamamoto-kun's manners towards him.

"Kyoya-kun seems content with my company." He replies in a calm and mild manner with a polite look upon his face as he brings his hands together in the front. "It was nice to meet you, Yamamoto-kun." He states before turning and beginning to walk away from the Arts Academy, they had the whole day to spend together and he doubts that Kyoya would want to spend any more time in the shadow of the Arts Academy.

Once they are safe enough away, he slows down before coming to a stop, giving Kyoya the opportunity to take the lead. The other does so without halting and he follows in the teen's wake. It's clear that Kyoya's mood is sour rather then foul. Once they arrived at a tea house, he gets them a private room. Then, once lead there, he takes out a number of security Spells and places them about to ensure their privacy.

Their order of tea and snacks arrives, once they are alone again, he begins to speak of the events of the mission that lead to time in the

Spirit World. Kyoya is content to listen and to drink some of the tea. There's often reactions from the teen at certain points, there's rarely a comment voiced throughout the telling. "Cowardly Scavengers." Rules Kyoya sometime after he's finished recounting said events and happenings.

He can only merely hum, the foreign had been rather cowardly by Kyoya's standards but over all, they had been smart to tactically retreat in the end. *Although that doesn't explain how they found their way into the Spirit World in the first place.* Tsunayoshi muses to himself. "It was just ill luck on their part that the portal hadn't closed fast enough for me to not follow after them." He states. "Though, I didn't know what kind of Cultivation they practice to cause such effects with mere wood."

"Not Cultivation." Kyoya informs him. "Witchcraft."

He blinks a few times at the statement. "Witchcraft?" He repeats, yes, there's something about the whole matter that did bug him, he just didn't know why it did.

"Witchcraft uses wood as their medium and they call those lights spells." Explains Kyoya. "Their practices do no yield them youthful, powerful bodies like our practice of Cultivation does but they do gain the ability to warp the world around them instead. Lazy herbivores." The teen states with a snort of derision.

"That explains the exploding head." He murmurs as he recalls throwing a punch at one of the Witches' heads and watched as the head just shattered into a bloody, fleshy mess. There's a slight blood thirsty smirk on the teen's face as Kyoya seems to hums in a very pleased fashion upon hearing that little detail. "They're teaching about foreign practices at the Arts Academy?" Tsunayoshi inquires once he gets more tea for them to drink.

Kyoya merely gives a simple grunt and he kind of wishes to ask if he couldn't borrow the teen's notes concerning Witchcraft and the Witches. *Then again, Kyoya might not have bothered with writing*

anything down. He muses to himself. Tsunayoshi wishes to know more about this foreign practice, he also wants to pass along information about Nagi's dark blue Spirit Energy. *Never mind my own orange fire like Spirit Energy...* Tsunayoshi reminds himself.

A comfortable silence settles between them and they enjoy the tea plus snacks. By third pot of tea, Kyoya is ready to leave and they settle their bill before they leave. After returning to the Arts Academy, they spend some time in one of the Dojos sparring against one another, hand to hand instead of them using their respective weapons. They get cleaned up before grabbing something to eat at the Arts Academy's Food Hall. They then spend the last of the afternoon in one of the gardens, where Kyoya finds a nice spot and takes a nap.

He leaves at supper and it's clear Kyoya isn't happy that he's going, but there is a policy concerning visitation hours. He'll be in Namimori for a week before heading out looking for requests from civilians or Night Hunts to participate in. Tsunayoshi heads to find a place to eat before heading to find an inn in which to stay.

Things seem to be going smoothly during the pass few days of his stay in Namimori, he's learnt that the founding being lead by a Witch some centuries back, his name had been Giotto and he married a local woman, going so far as to take her family name as well, her name being Shimizu Kikyo. The man had, somehow, had the backing of the Asari Clan, one Asari Ugetus had been the primary supporter. Then again, it seemed that the Cultivator had left Japan back then, gone traveling beyond China, had been gone for a few decades before returning with Giotto in toe.

A few other foreigners arrived later, during the construction of the then town. Another Witch named G, a Catholic priest known commonly as Knuckles with his sister plus her orphan children, a pair of daughters by the name of Elizabeth and Samantha, a visitor, who would visit either one every two years for a month, he'd also a Witch named Alaudi, and then a series of messages getting send to

and received from some Vongola Famiglia once a year for as long as Giotto been alive and was living in Namimori. It's clear that the Vongola Famiglia had, back then, invested some money in the founding of Namimori, it seemed that Giotto had some kind of relation to the head of the Vongola Famiglia, perhaps they'd been cousins or maybe half siblings.

The Vongola Famiglia's interest in Namimori had waned by the fourth head, leaving the Asari Clan to claim the young city as theirs, leaving it in the care of a branch of their Clan, the family is now called Yamamoto. The Yamamoto family had personal assimilated some Witchcraft practices, creating unique style for their family to practice when it comes to Cultivating. There's not much in the way of finding out much about Witchcraft teachings but the locals of Namimori do tend to have the influences of foreigners imprinted on them as Namimori has always been open to those who come from beyond the shores of Japan.

There's a larger variety when it comes to alcoholic drinks, there's imported kinds along with local creations using foreigners brewing techniques, and while hard to import food ingredients, they've modified foreigners' recipes to fit with what's grown within Japan. There's influences seen in some of the clothing from visiting or immigrated foreigners, the materials used have been imported along with weaving techniques. There's some interesting weapons that he's been able to find, pistols and rifles, good on fellow people but aren't that effective when it comes to Demonic and Spiritual entities. There are a few horseless carriages, which stink, that roam about Namimori, huge things that are used to carry large loads between the nearest sea port and Namimori's warehouse depot.

In learning what he can about foreigners, Tsunayoshi has heard about chemical powered flight carriages, they are similar to the horseless carriages, he learns, only for traveling in the air. Which is unlikely to be getting imported any time soon given that there's no need for them. There's plenty of ways to fly about within Japan, ones that are known to be safe along with cheap, and that's not including

Teleportation Seals, based on Teleportation Talismans from China. *It's like their guns, clever but impractical.* Tsunayoshi muses to himself.

The only reason that the horseless carriages were being use has to do with trade deals with foreign sellers, they don't seem to trust the various means of flight travel and seem very skeptical of the safety of Teleportation Seals. There's also been attempts at laying down metal tracks for something call a railway for a train to use to ride upon. While the foreigners who never visited Japan might think that was a good idea, it really wasn't as that's just inviting trouble from the local Demonic beasts and Spiritual creatures but a certain phenomenon that's still unknown how to prevent. Travel routes change over time due to this phenomenon, which is the creation of a rift that will begin to open up on said road at certain times in first a yearly schedule, then during a certain season, then monthly, and if it people continue to use the road, weekly.

From the sounds of things, the Cultivators have kept the construction of said railway but for how long is unknown. After all, they had stood against the introduction of the horseless carriages some decades ago only for that stance to be relaxed. He generally concludes that it's likely some combination of brides and politics that lead to that relaxation.

Which makes how those Witches figuring out how to create a rift rather bewildering. Tsunayoshi thinks with a soft sigh escaping out of him. *And worrying, after all, what's stopping that meadow from having that rift open up again? Without prompting? Will it develop like the road rift phenomenon?*

There's a lot of questions but few ways to get the answers. *Never mind trying to find any reference about Spirit Energy that's colored. Or sports characteristics of fire...* He muses to himself as he sits in the local public library.

He suspects that he shouldn't be surprised over the lack of findings in a public library. Tsunayoshi had been rather optimistic over the

idea regardless of his gut feeling and Aki No Sora's own agreement with said gut feeling. He'd hoped to find a clue, a lure, but found none at all. *Should I be surprised?* Past experience should have taught him to be skeptical when it comes to getting easy access to Cultivation, he still remembers how five of those seven Cultivation Manuals he'd bought had been a waste of paper and money.

In the end, he puts the various books he'd collect to read away, returning them back to their respective shelves. As he exits out of the library, he finds a pair of Cultivators, the Mon on their backs are of the Asari Clan, the main Clan Mon at that, there's no individual family Mon like with that Yamamoto-kun had on his front of the kimono. The pair are late teenagers, still gangily in their limbs and not yet filling out their kimonos.

The one to his left sneers after giving him a glance while the one to the right asks, "Tsunayoshi, owner of Aki No Sora?" Inclining his head with his face carefully a mask of polite disinterest.

"Your coming with us. It's beyond time for you to learn your place in the world." The one to the left states with a very ugly sneer, a glance at Aki No Sora, which gets both the Sword Spirit and himself very alarmed and already suspecting that they're not going to like what this meeting is going to be about.

"I see. Please, lead on then." He says and the one on the right takes the lead while the one to the left moves to walk behind him.

[TT_TT]

He's more then pissed off at the insolence of this fake carnivore and would very much like to break more then a single arm bone. *Which would be more painful, the thigh bone? Or the two in the legs?* Kyoya wonders to himself.

He's not paying the bleating coming out of the fake carnivore's mouth any mind, his focus is solely on the Omnivore. There's little of the man's true thoughts on display but he Knows that there's

numerous emotions playing out below the Omnivore's carefully crafted mask. Particularly given that the issue of Aki No Sora is 'finally' getting 'addressed'.

There's a sour taste in his mouth at how these lowly herbivores are offended by such a simple name of a Sword Spirit. He'd love to break up this crowding that the fake carnivore set up but he has a number of distant cousins surrounding him to ensure that doesn't happen. Their excuse had to do with if the Omnivore couldn't deal with this without Kyoya's interference then he's Weak.

He knows that the Omnivore isn't weak. He knows that appearances are deceptive. He knows that none are bothering to See what Kyoya saw back then, what Kyoya Sees in regards to the Omnivore.

His twin colored Soul Fire has long since found a powerful and kind Sky to wander about in. It makes him wonder if they are being willfully blind as well, given that there's been paintings of a man who's features the Omnivore clearly takes after. Sure, the Omnivore is a practicing Cultivator and the other had been a practicing Witch, then the minor details like coloring and, of course, the length of hair. *If his hair is short like that, would they See? Or would they still ignore it?*

And yet, there's not much he, a Carnivore, could do as he knows his strengths and talking with others isn't one of those strengths. The Omnivore demanded that if he wishes for something of him, he's to ask, to verbalize what it is he desires. *"It's to ensure that I know for sure what it is you want, Kyoya-kun. Not just guessing which could lead to us misunderstanding each other."* He recalls the Omnivore telling him once.

It was the annoying smiling small animal that pipes up and the building tension seems to subside. "A honor duel then. Death or surrender." He snorts at the assiduity the fake carnivore speaks with.

There's a few eyes flicker his way while the Omnivore gives him a mild smile, one he's learnt from the Dragon Carnivore. His gaze

goes to Aki No Sora before turning, the crowd migrates to one of the Dojos to get the so called honor duel over and done with. He hopes that the fake carnivore doesn't surrender after first blood had been drawn, he wants to see if red could improve the look of this fake carnivore.

The duel begins with them bowing, although not to the same degree, the fake carnivore still thinking he has a chance of winning. Their respective swords are out and the fake carnivore is the first to attack, not that it matters, the blows are all blocked with ease. The fake carnivore continues to try to match his strength and skill against the Omnivore but it's very lacking, for all that the Omnivore is on the defensive, none of the strike have managed to touch any part of the Omnivore save for Aki No Sora.

Again and again, the fake carnivore attacks, the strikes aren't as fluent, they aren't as emotionless. Insecurity is the first emotion besides unwarranted pride that gets displayed. It's soon converted into anger laced with fear. Spirit Energy begins to flow in the fake carnivores veins but do little to aid in landing a blow, the edge getting within a centimeter of touching but that's it. His Omnivore, his Sky, is taunting the other, enraging the fake carnivore, causing the fake carnivore to lose himself to his anger, forgetting the fear that laced that anger.

The herbivores and small animals seem to have finally become silent, a few seem to get the dawning realization that the fake carnivore is going to lose. The fake carnivore finally loses his head fully and calls upon his Soul Fire, proving himself to be a Rainy Storm, Soul Fire coats the sword, flaring mightily as well, the edge will be ruined but the fake carnivore doesn't seem to care. As the fake carnivore slashes the sword and sends a crimson tainted energy slice at the Omnivore, orange glimmers along the very edge of Aki No Sora and orange bleeds into his Omnivore's eyes and with ease, the Sword Spirit slices through the incoming Soul Fire slice, dispersing it with easy and then the blade is at the fake carnivore's throat.

"Surrender." Orders the Omnivore, the orange gone from both the edge and from his eyes. The others murmur in shock at what just happened, of not sure if they should believe their eyes.

He's smug at his cousins' reactions. "My **Sky** ." He sings out, not that they seem to hear the musical nature of his declaration but he does get a flicker of eyes his way for a brief half a second, not that the fake carnivore was in a position to take advantage of that very minor distraction, not in the right state of mind to do more then gawk at his Omnivore.

"Your... How... What..." The fake carnivore stammers out as the remains of the sword falls from his hands. The edge having been eaten away at by the Soul Fire that had been flaring about the sword's blade wildily.

"Sora Tsunayoshi is the winner." States the duel officiator, who's one of the senior combat teachers, Sora in lieu of an actual Clan name, their Soul Fire primary will be used. The Omnivore withdraws Aki No Sora from the fake carnivore's throat, he's disappointed by the lack of blood drawing and he'll be sure to make his Omnivore aware of that fact when they have time to themselves.

He remembers how his own first encounter ended, of having glimpsed orange in the eyes and upon the sword's edge for such a brief moment. The weight of the mask fading away with his defeat. His own disbelief of being confronted with a Sky Cultivator, one that he would learn was unknowing of Soul Fire and not sure how to begin explaining the subject. Of thinking, upon learning the Sword Spirit's name, how fitting the name was, particularly when he learnt of the Omnivore's birth season.

He had his guesses concerning his Omnivore's origin and it seems that confirmation of his suspicions will be coming up in the coming weeks. *Over a hundred years in seclusion... Hundred years of Cultivating with barely acceptable manuals...* He's going to find out how it was that they couldn't divine the Omnivore's location to retrieve him and pay his respects to said place for keeping his

Omnivore from fake carnivores and herbivores until he'd been able to meet him.

[TT_TT]

Well, I thought it would have happen sooner. Fon mentally admits upon reading the letter from his sister. Then there's mention of the revelation of Tsunayoshi being revealed to be a Sky along with the results of a Witchcraft test to get the names of his parents.

The results don't lie, they tested Tsunayoshi twice more and the results all revealed the same bit of information again and again. Tsunayoshi is a bloodline descendant of the founder of the Vongola Clan, he's the son of the exiled and disowned Sawada Iemitsu of the Shimizu Clan and one Nana, who's father had been of the Asari Clan, of a family that had one of Giotto's great granddaughter married into, she'd been a bastard child and had died which resulted in Tsunayoshi leaving a month after the funeral.

According to Tsunayoshi, he'd been conned into buying a number of things from a questionable merchant along with the location of a place to go into seclusion, it's the infamous Spirit Bones Cavern. Which people found had gone 'dormant' but couldn't figure out why. *Well, we know why now.* He muses to himself. Tsunayoshi had been taught how to read and write from his mother, who learnt from her own mother. Which explains why he's literate when most people in his situation would, generally, be illiterate, particularly back then.

Nobody seems to know how to take the news, particularly the two Clans in particular as the Shimizu Clan had disowned Iemitsu when the Sky had been trying to learn Witchcraft instead of learning to Cultivate, which was expected of him. For the Asari Clan, it was the fact that Nana was never legitimized as her father's daughter. Which also made it hard to figure out just where Tsunayoshi should fit in Japanese Cultivator Circles as a Sky, he's highly valuable but due to his parents, he's something of a disgrace.

There's plenty of pros but the sticking point is always going to be the identities of his parents and their status. Lineage has always been an important part of social circles, with the right lineage, lots of things are a lot easier, often regardless of talent or temperament. Which was how Iemitsu got his position among the Italian Clans and Sects, by confirming his blood connection to the Clan's Founder.

It hardly matters that Tsunayoshi does have a Spirit Core, he wouldn't have been able to leave that location until he had possession of one, and had succeeded in cultivating a Sword Spirit, it boils down to his parents and the lack of teacher. Fon sighs, feeling older then he looks. *Over a hundred years old... I never would have guessed.* He's spent some time with the Sky Cultivator over these pass three years and his lamenting over the waste of the others raw talent never really went away.

If only he weren't already so old, I wouldn't have minded stepping into that role. He thinks to himself. *Then again, for someone of his age, he still has gaps in his knowledge... Not that he'd been well versed in Cultivation before entering the Spirit Bones Cavern.*

He finds his place once again and snorts softly at how the Hibari Clan stepped in to help 'fix' that particular issue by enrolling Tsunayoshi in the Arts Academy while arranging for one of the students to aid in tutoring him. Then there's information and a request to fetch a half kitsune by the name of Nagi, who's a Mist, it's seems that during his time in the Spirit World, Tsunayoshi saved a young half kitsune who had Awaken her Soul Fire, which is actually rather odd as half breeds might be carriers of Soul Fire but they rarely able to access it.

The mention of Witchcraft is brought up along with more details of what Tsunayoshi had experienced when it came to pursuing the foreigners, of these Witches, about the Spirit World and the hints of experiments they've been up to. He isn't happy with the thought of these foreigners toying with forces they aren't familiar with, he finds it rather rude that they thought they had any right poking their noses in their cousin realms that are the Demonic Underworld, Endless

Abyss, and the Spirit World. Nothing good will come about ignorant foreigners touring around any of those realms and, sadly, it seems that enough of them manage to survive encounters with the natives to develop misplaced pride and confidence in dealing with those natives.

Fon skims the letter a few more times before putting it aside and begin writing out a reply to his sister, accepting the request to look into said matters. It's clear that Tsunayoshi would like to deal with this but he's not going to be able to do so for the time being, not when he's got catching up to do. *Never mind the political mess he's found himself forced to deal with.* The Storm Cultivator muses privately to himself.

The fact that Kyoya claims Tsunayoshi as his Sky wasn't really that shocking. His grandnephew had always shown a preference of who's company he enjoys the most. *I'd thought it was just a childish crush.* He admits as he muses how to word his reaction to the news the letter had for him.

Ending it Here

Body Alteration Flu, is real?: FateStay

I don't own Fate/Stay Night nor A/B/O.

Emiya Shirou does kind of recall the day when the world seemed to... Well, even at seventeen, he's pretty sure that the panic that went through the population was unwarranted, then again, as a *Beta* , he 'wouldn't understand'. That he's still closer to what was 'normal'.

Tapping his pencil on the desk, he's trying to come up with what to write about this essay concerning the topic of what happened about eight years ago. The wide spread fever that affected teens, adults, and elderly that caused them to develop an increased sense of smell, the developing four scent glads with two at the back of the neck and one on either wrist which meant that most teens and over were giving off more dense body odor with a cocktail of pheromones from said areas, change in a certain percentile's sex drive, and alterations to their sexual organs, some men and women becoming fertile hermaphrodites while retaining their usual, previous' gender's dimorphism traits. It's only these past three years that they classified the people into three categories besides someone being a man or a woman, the labels, becoming more common place terms used are *Alpha* , *Beta* , and *Omega* .

Still have no idea what became of Daifu... The young man muses to himself with a slight frown as a flash of frustration fills him for a brief few dozen seconds before fading away. His frown vanishes with the emotion, leaving him, once again, trying to get his mind back on track concerning the essay concerning this almost decade phenomenon that's still classified as the most bizarre and world altering change to happen in the Twentieth Century.

Reaching a hand towards the cup of water, he drinks as he decides to write:

Date 199X is when the Japanese Government decided to address the concerns that have been going through the population concerning the strange fever that caused those it infected to under go changes to their biology. It was the day that made it official here in Japan that there is a plague of a sort going throughout the world. It was one that focus heavily on the teenage, adults, and elderly population for generally a month as it caused their bodies to alter in subtle but profound ways.

With lips pressed, he rereads that paragraph and while there's nothing truly wrong with it, he wasn't sure if it was how he wants this essay to begin. *Might as well call this a rough draft.* He decides and that seems to help ease up the 'pressure' to get this right.

As mentioned, this fever that caused alterations to the biology of those afflicted. Their bodies at their back of their neck, on either side of the spine, would develop a glad that is the primary release point for pheromones of a sexual nature. At the wrists, glads of a similar nature would develop and they would produce a unique scent from person to person, a individual, personal scent. In some individuals that would be placed under the categories of *Alpha* and *Omega* , these scent glads are more active and thus, gives them a stronger body odor compared to those who would be placed into the category of *Beta* .

On that note, the sense of smell in all those affected also became more sensitive and once more, there were those who had a more developed sense of smell then others. Those that are given the *Alpha* designation are recorded to have a larger scent range and pick up on who's designation is *Omega* the fastest. Those classified under the designation of *Omega* are noted to have a better memory when it comes to picking up individual scents and seem to notice emotional states of those classified as *Alpha* by their scents alone. Given the more developed scent glads those with said designations have, it would make sense that the two designations would develop such a keen sense, particularly given the alterations to their

respective sex drives that causes what's termed Ruts in *Alphas* and Heats in *Omegas* as changes in their scents are often the only warning of the on set of said sexual behaviors, generally, within twenty hours before the individual in question will experience either condition.

His own sense of smell is fairly good, only he had to train himself to pay more attention to the scents of other people. He's fairly good at picking out *Alphas* from crowds as they have a very bold scents for their personal scent plus sporting a far more steady amount of pheromones compared to *Omegas* , who's scents are subtler for their personal scent and who's pheromones only become thicker before they experience their Heats. Betas' personal scents range between the boldness of an *Alpha* 's scent to the subtle one of *Omega* 's.

Shirou's heard from others that his personal scent is akin to smoke that seems to sport a heavy dose of ash smell with subtle hint of roasting meat on charcoal fire. It's a smell that likely play homage to the Fuyuki City Fire, the one that saw him saved by his Daifu. He's quick to push the matter of the Fire from his mind as he refocus on what he's suppose to be writing about, reading the three paragraphs before thinking over what to write next.

The likely most talked about change that came about from the fever has to do with alterations to the sexual organs of those that have been given the designation of *Alpha* and *Omega* . For those now getting called *Alpha* Men and *Omega* Women, the changes weren't that overt as said genders already in possession of the correct organs, but for those now getting called *Alpha* Women and *Omega* Men, they experienced the growth of a new and more fertile set of sexual organs. They would also experience changes to certain portions of their brains, particularly the regions of the brain that controlled the production of pheromones within the human body to produce a chemical pheromone cocktail for the rather changed people who had become functioning hermaphrodites.

As mentioned, these new sexual organs are more fertile then the original set that the *Alpha* Woman or *Omega* Man previously possessed. It's far easier for the Omega Man to get pregnant during their Heat then it is for them to be able to impregnant a woman of any of the new designations. It is the opposite for the *Alpha* Woman, she has an easier time impregnating another woman of the *Beta* and *Omega* designation as well as an *Omega* Man then getting another *Alpha* Woman or getting pregnant herself. It is also noted that Alpha Women's impregnating ability is greater during the *Alpha* Rut then outside of it, it is unknown if this means that outside of *Omega* Heats, *Omega* Men can become pregnant. Perhaps we'll know more about this in the future as more case studies are brought to light.

He recalls how Ryuudou Issei had been when he came back from the week off, his friend ended up as an *Omega* , having gone through what's being coined Presenting. It had taken a lot to talk Issei out of giving up his position as Student Council President, it hadn't only been Shirou who'd talked him out of it during that month. Issei came out of his depressing mood after his first Heat, which occurred four weeks after he'd Presented and only lasted three days, although he wasn't back until it had been a count of five days, the first Heat/Rut is said to take a lot out of an *Alpha* / *Omega* .

It seems that *Omega* Heats can very from person to person, some people experiencing it only twice a year while others thrice a year. Stress can also cause an *Omega* to enter into a Heat, this kind of Heat is the shortest kind, being only a single day but it's far rougher on the *Omega* 's body. Stress Heat occurring in *Omega* Men are far harder then when it happens with *Omega* Women, it's likely due to the lack of preparation the body has when it occurs.

Alpha Women don't get the usual monthlies that Beta and Omega Women do. *Which is likely why they have a harder time getting pregnant.* Shirou reflects as he stares at the wall as his pencil taps on the desk once more. *Getting it either once every two months or*

once every three months... There's a bit of envy on that particular matter.

The hormone indicators in Alpha Women and Omega Men are rather messed up. He admits as he reaches for the glass again and finds it's empty. Getting up, he stretches a bit and despairs a bit upon noticing the time. *I thought more time had pass then that!*

With a soft sigh, he heads out to fill up the glass once more. Leaning on the counter of the kitchen, he gulps some of the water from the glass before filling it again, trying to untangle this topic to get at why he's having so much trouble with particular essay. His thoughts keep circling back to the disappearance of his Daifu and finally mentally admits that, yes, when the plague did get it's press coverage, he'd become concerned over his Daifu's health, which hadn't been that good, for all that he tried to hide it from Shirou and, looking back now, had likely been getting worse instead of better.

The thought he'd done his best to hush, to ignore, had been... Is... *Could this fever have been the tipping point?*

Looking down at the cup's semi still surface, Shirou's eyes burn and blinking seems to see something wet begin to roll down his right cheek before a slight chill settles at the edge of his cheek's bottom. Leaving his left hand holding the cup, he wipes the wet trail from his cheek. Another tear falls down his left cheek and he wipes that away with his left hand as well.

Putting the cup down, he walks over to the back of the yard and stares up at the sky, the moon is waning from crescent phase into the new moon phase. There's merely a sliver of the moon to see while the sun has yet to fully set. All the emotions he set aside, ignored rising to the surface, breaking through the previous barrier to flow through him and out of him in the form of tears, wet leavings from his nose, and soft sobs. For the first time in... Well, he doesn't know, maybe since the Fire, he felt so... lost, helpless...

He'd only Presented just two months ago and he's found his previous emotional numbness to be a thing of the past. His Presenting as a *Beta* had taken almost three weeks, which had been rather odd and the fact he only ended up as a *Beta* was... Odd and yet, everyone seemed to notice that his Presenting had changed something in him.

Something had been restored one might say...

Shirou's emotional storm finally subsided with the sun fully down and the sliver of the crescent moon hanging in the sky with the light pollution keeping most from seeing the stars that share the night sky with the moon. With his sleeves sporting wet spots and mostly breathing in from his mouth, the seventeen year old finally finds it within himself to head back inside. He felt lighter, some how as he decides to put off working on the essay for tomorrow.

He has a quick shower before going to bed.

Calling it here!

Author's Note:

So, one person voted and, yea, Shirou would be a Beta. And yea, I did something different by focusing on something more character focus and Shirou learning to deal with his emotions cause Presentation help heal his brain from the Fuyuki City Fire, which had a magical start and fueled with a certain intent.

Also, I used Daifu, which is another Japanese word for Father, instead of the typical Tosan or Otosan, which means daddy or dad.

The italic words are meant to be some Latin term that's being used for Alpha, Beta, and Omega and I just wasn't going to try to find said Latin words to use, so, yea.

Check out the Poll for Week 2!

Error Detected: DxD

I seriously don't own High School DxD or A/B/O!

Go... away... Sleeping... Issei thinks in a distant, distracted fashion as the shaking begins to rouse him from his blissful rest. There's murmurs but he ignores the voices as he tries to grasp the slowly vanishing blankness that is sleep.

In the end, his thoughts became more organized as he begins to breath in and out as he tries to move from his back onto his left side, away from the sudden brightness that's taking over from behind his eye lids, only to feel something preventing him from doing that. Eyes open and he lets out a yelp at the sight of a face far too close to his for his liking, he couldn't back away as his arms sport straps that are anchored to the railing of the hospital bed.

"Why... A Hospital?!" His voice is rough and he is suddenly aware that his mouth seems to be dry. Thirst comes next as he tries to pull his right hand to touch his face, it doesn't move much and it's then as he realizes out sore his body is.

Issei's fairly sure that he'd been fine before he went to sleep Saturday night, the next day being Sunday and the day of his date with Amano Yuuma that afternoon. So wrapped up in his own thoughts and the strange emotions that surge on the thought of Yuuma-chan, which causes a phantom ache in his chest that's like a burn. As he tries focus on his memories, his thoughts get derailed by the smells around him, particularly of one of the people wearing what appears to be a lab coat, marking them as either a doctor or scientist.

Said man smells... The nearest Issei could think of is sweaty from a work out with undertones of spicy chili sauce. He doesn't know why

but he already dislikes the likely doctor, after all, this was a hospital, right?

There's three people besides said doctor, one is a tall man with red hair, a woman in a maid outfit with silvery gray hair, and a woman dressed up as a nurse. Other then the nurse, the three seem to be engross in a talking with the doctor. The nurse seems vary wary of him, almost skittish, there's a slight jerk of her head when their eyes meet, she's quick to look away and that doesn't help him at all, after all, how could he be danger to her when he's arms are strapped to the railing?

He finds himself yawning as the adrenaline rush fades from his system. Issei is beginning to feel aches of his body more keenly and it's not like he's able to really hear what's being talked about. He occupies himself with noticing the various smell that seem so much more keen, it's the absence of that sweaty chili smell that alerts him that the doctor is gone.

Glancing around Issei finds himself alone and, well, he settles as best as he can, there's something about this that's fishy and he's not sure why but he kind of feels like his date didn't go as plan. He's not sure why, but the phantom ache in his chest is courtesy of Yuuma-chan and he can almost feel like how it happen evade his attempts to recalling it. After a while, he finds himself drifting off to sleep due to boredom.

-{ = Error = }-

When he woke up the next time, he finds himself at a gate that goes into a park that he had planned to visit for... *Oh yea, for the date.* Issei recalls and slowly begins to look around before he walks down the path.

There's a feeling of being watched as Issei goes through the park, it's an eerie feeling that causing a lot of different feelings to whirl around within him. He walks off the path and for what feels like five minutes, finds himself arriving at the path once again. Getting kind of

alarmed by this, he tries to veer off in a different direction only to arrive back at the path minutes later. There's a feeling of lack of control slowly creeping up on him as he keeps trying to walk everywhere but on the path.

Fed up, Issei finally just follows the path and after a bit, he spies ghostly images of himself and Yuuma-chan walking just a foot before him. The images are still shoots and flicker away as another comes into being. Reaching out, his hand goes straight through while it seems like he catches snip bits of conversation, mostly him talking and he gets this feeling of lead in his midsection that doesn't get better when he keeps his hand to himself.

Once at a certain spot, things change and he watches as the formerly ghostly images seem to become more solid, more real. Then, things play out and he tries to deny the scene as it plays out, the reveal of the request for him to die and then the transformation that Yuuma undergoes before she kills him viva some kind of spear of light. But the memory doesn't end there, even as he feels cold and numb, he watches as something from his pocket glows and how Rias-senpai arrives.

He and whoever is watching as well, witness the number of attempts with chess pieces on his cooling corpse. In the end, it's the seven normal looking pawn pieces plus the one odd ball piece seem to work but he watches as his left hand changes seconds before the past him begins to scream and a green glow erupts from his eyes as they open up to reveal them being wholly green in color. Issei feels warmer with every second and then the memory begins to glitch then the him of the memory is gone with Rias-senpai vanishing half a minute later.

"It was like that." A voice rumbles, it's deep in an inhuman way. **"Dead by Fallen Angel."** The voice states with a snort as the park scenery begins to break apart as it vanishes until he's in a black space.

"So... are you suppose to be my partner? Or my *Partner* ?" The voice rumbles and he's not sure what kind of inflection to be had concerning the second partner. There's a bemusing tilt to that voice and he's not sure if he really wants to know what kind of being the voice is.

"Who... Who are you?" Issei's voice is rather shaky as he asks.

A huge head that is that of a reptile with dark red scales with green eyes. *Dragon!* He realizes as the voice answers, **"Ddraig."**

With that, the head vanishes and his whole body jerks as he opens his eyes, his hands aren't strapped to the railing so he's able to put his face in the palm of his hands. It's not long before he remembers how he died while getting bits and pieces of his body being too hot along with impressions of snarling at various people, echos of anger and of outrage at some... **[blank]** Darning to Command Him! He feels something happen to his left hand then see it and bites down a yelp as he stares at the crimson gauntlet with an emerald gem.

"What the fuck?" His voice is harsh as he stretches his fingers, curling them one after another before turning it so he can look at the palm of his hand before balling the fingers up into a fist before relaxing it once more. He's not sure what to make of this gauntlet and it's connection to the dragon called Ddraig.

Issei isn't really sure of anything any more as he does his best to organize certain things into a list of sorts. What he knows is this, Yuuma was a Fallen Angel, Yuuma wanted him dead, Yuuma asked him out to do just that, Yuuma left after killing him, that hand out summoned Rias-senpai, and she tested out a number of chess pieces before using seven plus an odd pawn to revive him. There's plenty of question he would like answers to, like, why does he have this crimson gauntlet? What's it's connection to Ddraig? What is he to Ddraig? What is Ddraig to him? And, what's the date?

What brings him out of his thoughts is a familiar pressure and looking around, he does spy a slightly open door. It takes him a lot of

effort to stand and using the walls, manage to get to said door, finding the light, he let's out a soft sigh. Issei is glad he had guessed right about where it led and is sure to close the door plus lock it.

As he walks pass the mirror to get to the toilet, he notices how pale his skin is along with how his eyes are now a dark green instead of their previous dark brown. He stills before the mirror for a few seconds, his hands still before he begins to lower the rim of his underwear before moving to stand before the toilet. It's not long before the pressure is gone and he's before the mirror once more, washing his hands and finally moves the hospital gown to see his chest and winces at the sight of discolored skin, which is a darker shade then the rest of him.

He lets it go and his chest is once more covered. Issei makes a number of faces but, in the end, he checks his back and moves the gown to get a clearer sight of the same discoloration on his back, directly where the front one is located. He turns his head away from the mirror and lets go of the gown, finding it hard to really think that the person reflected back at him in the mirror is himself.

Looking at the door and then about the washroom, he moves to sit on the toilet and manages to bring up a single leg to hug to his chest. Issei's emotions are a mess and he can't find it within himself to try and find the silver lining in all of this. "I died... I should be dead..." His voice cracks at should and dead.

Tears take their time pooling in his eyes and he just lets them flow freely. He sniffles wetly as his fingers curl into the hospital gown as he feels his throat tighten up. "Mom... Dad..." He whimpers and let's out a sob as he tries to bury his face into his knee.

He's not sure if he only imagined it because he wished for some form of comfort but he swears it felt like someone covered his back and there had been weight on his shoulders at some point as he broke down crying. Wishing for his parents to be here for him, to comfort him, to lie to him about how everything is going to be alright.

= [- Diagnosing -] =

Issei isn't sure what to feel about Rias Gremory, never mind her... Peerage that proved to be members of the Occult Research Club either. He's back at living with his parents and living in Kuoh Town after spending two months at that Devil run hospital due to the aftereffects of the Booster Gear becoming fully awake, the lingering residue of the Fallen Angel's spear's energy getting purged, and the use of the Evil Pieces on him, like his strictly male body needing to undergo changes to match his new Omega status, namely, growing certain formerly woman genitalia.

He's not sure what to feel about not being strictly male now, particularly given he's got to deal with Heats, although he can expect dealing with that only twice a year unlike Omega females, who experience it once every three months, aka four times a year. Issei also has to deal with keeping track of his stress as he gets too stressed and he'll experience a Stress Heat, which will be only a day but far rougher then his 'natural' Heats. He hasn't experienced a Heat as of yet, although he apparently had five weeks after his new genitalia fully formed, not that he'd been aware as there had been a conflict between the Booster Gear taking offense to the presence of the Evil Pieces within him, which is what caused Ddraig to wake within said Sacred Gear and that had its own effects on his new biology status as an Omega.

Letting out a sigh as he lays on the grass, staring up at the sky as he's mentally chews on the changes to his life, the information dump he got pretty much the day before he'd been returned to Kuoh Town by the Alpha doctor that had been charged with his care during his time at the hospital. It takes him a few seconds to relax his lips from the snarl that formed on his face at the thought of said doctor. He can't help but feel nothing beyond disdain and distrust towards the Reincarnated Devil who's an Alpha.

"How am I kind of a Reincarnated Devil?" Issei wonders, not even Sona Sitri seem to know why he's not a Reincarnated Devil and those who might be able to explain it aren't anyone he's met as of

yet. "I have the so called Secondary Gender that happens when a human becomes one..." Not that he's complaining all that much about not being a true Reincarnated Devil as Ddraig had filled in some of what that means, like being considered property of the Pure Devil who bound the Evil Pieces to him.

"Secondary Gender comes from their trying to increase their birth population by trying to preserve a human's natural fertility, brat." Remarks Ddraig, who seems incline to talk to him and not keep napping. **"It's has nothing to do with applying the state of Reincarnated Devil to a person."**

Issei blinks as he reviews this news. "I'm guessing that it's obvious if I had more experience in magic?" He asks curiously with a slight frown.

"Given I doubt majority of the other beings have given it much thought so it's unlikely they figured it out. They might not even care much either." Remarks the dragon who's soul that's housed in the Booster Gear. **"Never mind the odds of an extreme case like yours."** Adds the original Red Dragon Emperor.

"Point." He admits as he recalls the short explanation he'd been given concerning Secondary Genders. Alpha, Beta, and Omega were the titles given to the certain traits of that get displayed in humans who have become Reincarnated Devils. Majority of the time, being a man tends to equal being either an Alpha or Beta while being a woman tends to equal being a Beta or Omega. Beta status isn't all that different from normal humans, only an increase sense of smell and body odor, it's also the Secondary Gender that is simplest for newly Reincarnated Devils of humans to adapt to.

He hadn't been told but he'd been able to figure out that he's the first Omega male case to have occurred since this Secondary Gender became a thing. The reluctance of releasing him from the hospital was just one of the clues, the first and foremost had to be when a pair of nurses had been gossiping while straightening out the room while he'd been 'asleep'. How they referred to him as 'the first of his

kind' and other, similar titles but also mentioned how its a shame that he's already 'Bonded', which he now makes him think that there's more to his relationship with Ddraig then he ultimately is aware of.

He does his best to not think about the other remarks he'd heard the nurses talk about, he wasn't ready to consider the implications. He really doesn't want to think about what that means for Reincarnated Devils, of which he might kind of fall under the category of. Issei isn't sure what he'd do if he's forced to acknowledge just what it means for a person to be considered property when it's in regards to himself. In fact, he has long since packed away any of that kind of material references within his room, he's kind of incline to burn it instead of selling it in fact.

Wrenching his thoughts from that direction by grasping the first other topic to cross his mind. "So... How many other possessors of the Booster Gear have there been?" Issei raises himself from laying on the grass, waiting for an answer, he sits cross legged now with him gently rubbing his left hand's knuckles with his right hand's index finger.

". . . Wasn't keeping track." States Ddraig in a flat tone. **"It's not like I wanted to keep track of them either."**

"Well, at least your honest." He states in a dry tone. There's a feeling of depression in his chest and he frowns as he moves his right hand to rub over the spot where his heart rests. "Guess I'm not all that special..."

"Oh, I highly doubt I'll ever forget about you." Remarks Ddraig and he blinks, it's not long before the dragon continues on. **"Never had a possessor who ended up being both a man and a woman! Usually it's one or the other, never both."**

"Are you talking about trans?" He asks curiously with more prominent frown. "Like, someone who was thought they were born the wrong gender?" He explains when he gets the feeling that he lost Ddraig.

"There are people who think like that?" The crimson dragon inquires. He nods as he tries to think of a way to explain it, if this had been before he'd died and been resurrected, he might be-mourn the fact that there are women out there who think they were men.

"Transgender is what it's usually called. They often dress in the cloths of their 'proper' gender and use the right pronouns." Issei does his best to explain. "I know there's medication and surgery available for them to help their bodies feel more like they should."

He still considers himself male, Issei grew up thinking of himself as a boy and can't really see that changing just because he can now become pregnant. His nose wrinkles at the thought of giving birth as he's not sure he really wants to know how that would work given he doesn't have the hips for it. "I doubt that surgery will do anything about..." He trails off, it's not the first time he'd thought of inquiring about getting said parts removed, only reason he doesn't has to do with dreading of the answer he'd be given.

"What's usually created by magic can only be removed by magic." Ddraig remarks before adding, **"Of course Curses are in their own class but that's not what ultimately caused your Secondary Gender to be what it is."**

"So... You think it's something inherit to me?" Issei muses thoughtfully. "That I might have certain traits that proved more dominate when compared to the usual traits of the other genders?"

"Sure... Let's go with that." And he snorts before shaking his head. Getting up off the ground, he dusts himself off and takes one final look around the park before heading home with his book bag.

He's been out of the hospital for a whole month now and in some ways, his life hasn't changed all that much but in other ways, he never could go back to how he'd been as he can't find the same drive he had to do the same things, like spying on the girls locker room or looking up images of naked women. Which has resulted in straining his friendship with Matsuda and Motohama, given the two

had continued their usual antics of peeping on girls as much as they had before. They haven't been happy about him not wanting any part of it any more, even if he'd been disinterested in peeping, they seem to think he could be their sentry while they enjoy the sights.

Why hasn't Sona done anything about those holes though? I mean, they shouldn't be that hard to find, right? Plus, she's loaded, she should be able to spend the money to get someone to do something about the holes... She could even, I don't know, do a bit of magic to make sure nobody finds them in the short term, if she doesn't want to disrupt the students during the meantime, until there's a break... Issei muses to himself as he heads home.

"In the here and now, brat. We're got company." Ddraig states to him in what he knows to be a private way. With a slight frown, he does notice that it's not that busy on the street, in fact, he isn't where he expected to be as this isn't the street he walks to head home.

"Well, well, well, what do we have here? A Stray Devil by the looks of it." And some guy with a tiny cowboy hat in a trench coat makes his appearance.

"Oh god fucking damn it." He curses, he'd learnt rather early that invoking god causes Devils to wince and when this guy doesn't, he discards the idea that he's a Devil. He's not sure what he is though, given that human could be an opinion.

"It's just a lowly crow. Nothing to get your panties in a twist." Remarks Ddraig and the guy seems to freeze up, with the mouth open like that, it's kind of funny.

"A crow? So, he's what, a Youkai? A Tengu?" He asks and it seems that Mr Trench Coat gets all offended.

"I'm not some lowly monster." Snaps the guy while Ddraig replies, **"Just a grunt of a Fallen Angel, same with that girl that thought you were dead."**

"Ah, so, a Notice Me Senpai grunt?" He's pretty sure that's an accurate summery of the lecture he'd been given on the subject of Fallen Angels, which he'd been given at least three different versions of from three different people, namely Rias, Sona, and Akeno, in that order in fact. "Who thinks I can't invoke god because I'm suppose to be a Devil now, right?"

"Pretty much and yes." His left arm and hand are soon covered in the crimson gauntlet that's called the Booster Gear. **"Roast his feathery ass, I'll give you fifteen minutes in which to do so or else I'll assign you some magical course work that will take up this coming Sunday."**

"You heard Ddraig. So, yea, I'll be sure to give the locals your ashes." He pipes up as he holds up his left and before flickering it so his palm is up, uncurling his fingers and a white hot fire ball gets summoned.

"You think you can kill me, you fucking brat?!" The grunt in trench coat snaps as a pair of light spear get conjured up, but he's already sending the fire ball at the guy with simple flick of his arm, not unlike how one would throw a Frisbee only in this case, it wouldn't have gotten very far given the lack of force in the 'throw'.

The grunt tries to dodge while sending one of the two spear at him, which he blocks using the Booster Gear. The fire ball follows the guy around as he moves, trying to not get hit by the fire ball. Which proves to be a mistake as he conjures up a bunch of tiny ones behind him, about three and waits for the second spear to get sent before using one of those to block the spear and the other two to hit the nearest leg.

The white fire ball hits the guy squarely in the chest and it takes three minutes before there's nothing but ashes of Mr Trench Coat. "So... How do I create a jar? And how do I get the ashes into it?"

"Just inform them of the location when you get home." Ddraig suggests instead of answering his questions. **"It's not your problem**

as you aren't one of the two owners of Kuoh Town." Reminds the dragon.

"So... You'll go over how to conjure inanimate object this Sunday?" He asks as he takes out his cell phone and takes a few pictures to send to Rias and Sona.

"Don't see why you wouldn't just focus on perfecting your natural incline with Fire Magic." Remarks the dragon. "Because I can conjure up cloths that I accidentally burn or get destroyed?" He counters.

"Humans and your fear of nudity." Ddraig huffs and he counters, "Oh, yes, sorry for not having a god damn fur coat."

"Your forgiven." Remarks the Red Dragon Emperor in a rather smug way. They bicker as he continues heading home, only switching to their telepathic bond instead of allowing people to hear him curse and snipe at thin air.

Switching from out door runners to in door slippers, he calls out a greeting to his mother before heading upstairs. He still has school work to catch up on and assignments that he needs to complete. Issei likely shouldn't have spent so much time at the park but, he felt to be in the right mood, not when he realized that he'd been back in Kuoh Town for a month, that it's been three months since he died. Not that he can share that information with his parents or classmates and teachers.

The matter of the Fallen Angel does get reminded as his cell buzzes with a text from Rais. It seems that another Fallen Angel had confronted her and her group, taunting them about him being in danger. He sends the photos he took of the ashes plus the photo of the street signs. Then does a selfie with him holding up a peace sign to send to show he's alright.

Once he gets a reply from her, he puts down his cellphone and considers what to do next. It's like Ddraig said, he's not one of the

owners of this town nor does he have much weight, as of yet, in the Supernatural World he's been dragged into. *If they didn't want Fallen Angels around, then maybe they should set up something to alert them when they enter into Kuoh Town.* Issei thinks as he decides to have a shower.

"Just take it one day at a time." He recalls Ddraig telling him on more then one occasion. Issei despairs that it's often all he can ever do, that he's not fully in control of, well, anything right now. That he's at the mercy of events and schemes of people he has either only heard of or have yet to be told about.

I'm not alone though. He reminds himself as his gaze flickers to his left hand. "One day at a time." He reminds himself.

Ending it Here

Author's Note:

So, yea, I figured out a different angle for A/B/O to take and yes, Alpha females and Omega males aren't overly affected by the enchantments of the Evil Pieces that cause them to be classified as Reincarnated Devils. They've seen about five cases of Alpha females over the fifty years the modification had been added but Issei is the only case of an Omega male and yes, Ddraig is considered to be Issei's 'Bonded' Alpha as far as Issei's Omega instincts are concerned.

Thanks for the votes and hope the next Poll will prove to be interesting enough for people to vote on!

Reforged Through Flames: KHR!

I don't own Kateyou Hitman Reborn!

Minor Warnings **:** non-consensual body modification, mentions of gore, and side character death.

TI [- _ -] IT

Few people pay Tsuna much attention and he's too wrapped up on the report card that's in his hand. He's chewing on his lower lip as he despair over the marks he got from this year of school. Given his inattentiveness, he finds himself stumbling and ends up leaning on someone, their regal blue feathered wings sporting an odd set of inner secondary coloring made up of emerald green with ruby red barb markings.

"I'm so sorry!" He exclaims as he is quick to pull away from the other boy. Tsuna bows deeply to the other.

"Err, it's no trouble! It was just an accident, right?" The other says while the two boys that had been chatting with the owner of the blue wings glare spitefully at him, their feathers on their own wings puff out, showing their annoyance. "Scram." States the one sporting mousy brown with creamy white markings akin to dapple on the outside of the wings, he notices that the other boy sports dark yellow feathers and very small wings that weren't unlike his mother's small, bluish purple colored wings.

He's quick to bow again, once more apologizing to the boy and walks quickly away, doing his best to ignore the comment from behind him. "You should have smacked him, Takashi! He likely did that on purpose! He's wingless after all, maybe he wanted to grab a feather off of you!"

"Hahaha, it's fine, he's known to be clumsy! I think I saw him once trip on thin air once, when nobody was around."

It's far enough away that he doesn't hear more from that trio and he does his best to stir around people as he walks out of the school gates, he only stumbles thrice more before he's out onto the street. There's murmurs of people sighting the Demon Prefect and he mulishly keeps his eyes on where he wants to go, trying to ignore the desire to see someone flying with their wings. It's rare for people's wings to be strong enough to allow the owner to actually fly and there's plenty of theories about why some are able to fly while others can't, there's myths about it having nothing to do with the size of the wings either.

As he manages to make it home, Tsuna looks at his report card and his previous despair returns along with the soreness of the bruises he got from this morning when he got bitten by the Demon Prefect for being late. He'd forgotten his lunch bento again, so he hadn't eaten anything since breakfast and yet, he finds he doesn't have much of an appetite. Tsuna stares at the front door, he's hunches over at the thought of his mother's reaction to his report card and wonders why he even bothered to bring it home, he could have found a way to get rid of it, after all, she might not remember what day today is.

Tsuna sighs as feels his eyes burn already from tears wanting to fall but they don't. He finally swallows and takes a deep breath before entering the house. Calling out the usual greeting, he closes the door behind him and switches footwear with ease.

He listens for an answering call but there's nothing, in fact, the house is darker then usual. "Mom?" Tsuna calls out from the bottom of the stairs but there's no answering reply.

Searching the house reveals that his mother isn't home and it's not until he's in the kitchen does he find a reason for why that is. He wrinkles his nose as he does his best to read the characters on the note. Closing one eye and turning it slight to the right, he then closes

his right eye and tilts the note to the left, it takes him some minutes to figure out the gist of the note. "Second... honey pot? Honey... pot..." He murmurs before realizing that he got it wrong and it's honey moon.

"Second honey moon." He murmurs and turns the note to see the back but there's nothing else written on it. Tsuna reviews the front but there's not much more information written, most of it is likely well meaning wishes or maybe reminders to take care of things while she's gone.

Rubbing the bridge of his nose, the eight year old isn't sure if he should feel relieved that she's not here to give the report card to or if he should be distress over being left alone at home. Putting the note on the fridge using a magnet, he pulls out a carton of juice and closes the door before grabbing a glass. Once he's poured himself a glass of juice, he puts the carton back into the fridge and then wanders over to the couch in the living room, leaving the report card on the counter.

Grabbing the remote, he turns on the TV and begins channel surfing. Finding something he wants to watch, he stops with his channel surfing. Tsuna slowly relaxes as he allows himself to merely watch what's on the screen, for a time, he forgets the aches of his bruises and his concerns about his mother's reaction to his report card.

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Groaning, Tsuna isn't sure where he is, nor does he seem to see very clearly either. Everything is a fuzzy light and no amount of blinking clears up his vision, nor does he really understand what the voices are saying once the loud ringing in his ears dies down a bit. He's on his stomach with his hands behind his back, tied up and there's a binding on his ankles as well.

His vision is beginning to black out and he finds himself trying, and failing, to remain awake. The voices sound angry and Tsuna dimly notes that he likely should worry about his own safety but that... that

seems to be took much of an effort on his part. As he gives in to his urge to sleep, Tsuna dimly wonders if he'll wake once more when there's sounds... No, screams.

Not that it matters to Tsuna, really, all he wants is to rest and his vision is fully black now. His eyes close, it's more of feeling his eye lids over his eyes then seeing the back of his eye lid. Something keeps him from fully falling into sleep, into resting. He dimly realizes that he's on his back, that his hands aren't tied but there's still the bindings on his ankles.

He kind of hears sounds, but it's the odd warmth that's beginning to seep over his skin that he finds to be nice and focuses on it. It tries to sink in but something keeps it out. Tsuna can't recall the last time he'd felt warmth on his skin, never mind within his body. When he'd been younger, he recalls dreams of warmth engulfing every bit of his being and of the feeling of down on his back.

Then the nightmares of follow on those dream's heels and recalls the fluff falling out until it was just skin touching skin. Of painful aches and an urge to scratch an itch. Of no amount of scratching every being good enough. Of liquid on his finger tips, under his nails... Of how it felt when lifeless appendages finally just fell off, bones, muscle and all... Of the itch that remained long after the appendages had fallen off leaving gaping wounds that bleed and bleed.

That warmth seemed to find that itch that's been with him and can't help the sigh that comes from his lips at the feeling of something rubbing up against that infernal itch that he's gown so use to having. The warmth continues against the itch, it's rather soothing to feel. He's not sure but there's this pinching feeling of pain briefly but then, then that warmth begins to sink past his skin, through his muscles and into his bones in his upper back.

The warmth's temperature begins to climb as he feels the itching get worst now. It's like the itching is trying to cut off the warmth but he tries to cling to the warmth. And so, the temperature goes up and up while the itching becomes more of a chill, becoming to feel much

colder as the heat raises. Despite how hot it becomes, he wants that heat, he can feel it stocking his own body's heat that had become barely burning embers that could keep him warm.

As the itchy cold begins to win and he can feel the withdrawing warmth beginning to fade, Tsuna reaches out in as many times and in any directions as he can through the cracks in the itchy cold. He finds something, something that's so much *MORE* and **Pulls** on it blindly. He doesn't want to feel that itch any more nor does he want his inner warmth to begin dying back down to what it had been.

Even though what he's **Pulling** on is far too great for him to handle, there's something lingering from the previous warmth that he uses to **Make Himself** able to handle it. It's slow at first but it's pace increases and then overtakes the now easily channeled *More* . The *More* causes more cracks in the itchy cold and then it causes those cracks to begin breaking apart around the edges becoming bigger and bigger. Some of the cracks join together to create large openings but he doesn't care, he wants all of the itchy cold GONE from him, to never be able to reform and it would, if even a tiny bit of it is allowed to remain on him.

He's not sure when but he **Remade Himself** to ensure that there will never be a way for *ANYONE* to take his warmth from him without his approval nor interfere with his warmth without him knowing it. The last bit of itchy cold is finally gone, melted away by the *MORE* that now can flow into and out of him very easily. With his wishes fulfilled, the *More* flowing into him dies down and he releases the *More* from his grasp.

Comfortably warm now, Tsuna lets himself fall asleep. There's nothing more to be done and feels SAFE for the first time since that itch had been affecting him.

i ! i _ v M v _ i ! i

Arriving in Namimori, he begins to set up a temporary hideaway in order to scout the city. Regardless of how prepared he'd been,

Reborn spends about three days setting up things around Namimori before visiting the Sawada Residence to get his first glimpse of his next project. There's not much for him to pick up coming from the house and when it's usual time for the soon to be Tenth Don of the Vongola Famiglia to arrive home, nobody approaches.

Deciding that something must have come up, the Sun continues to wait. It's by eight pm local time does he realize that there's no lights on within the residence nor had there been any indication of anyone being home. And so, he lets himself into the house, it's clear from the layer of dust that nobody's been living in this house for years. There's mail piled up by the door and another collection of envelops on a kitchen counter.

A few tests show that the water and power have been turned off. Finding the rooms upstairs show that one of the rooms have been packed up, although the cloths in the boxes remain. In the master bedroom, there's little evidence of anyone doing anything within it. What valuables in the form of jewelry weren't around in this room, likely the whole house had been searched for anything value and taken before whoever took such locked up the house.

Before investigating further, the Cursed man makes a phone call to the Young Lion of the Vongola Famiglia, one Iemitsu Sawada. "When was the last time you spoke with your wife, Sawada?" He demands in Italian the moment the idiot and clearly incompetent Mafioso, particularly one that's so high ranking as the CEDEF Boss is positioned.

"Eh? Why would you ask that?" The Young Lion asks in a clueless tone. "Has anything happen to my darlin' wife?" Gets asked in a slightly curious tone that sports a slight underlying edge, not that it bothers Reborn in the slightest.

"Would I be calling you if everything was dandy?" He inquires with a load of hostility. "Given this gross of an information error, perhaps I should consider my contract void as I don't recall a clause of having to track down my future student, never mind figuring out your *wife* 's

fate..." There hadn't been any kind of watch, it seems, over the External Advisor's civilian family, which makes him rather pissed at the clear signs of neglect concerning this Mafioso's responsibilities to his 'darling' wife and his 'cute' *Tuna-Fishy* .

"Who...? Damn it, how much do you want to not cancel the contract?" It's clear that the man is getting some of his act together. *Too little, too late.* He mentally thinks as he gives a number while mentioning that if his future student isn't found within twenty-four hours and he's not in Namimori within that time, he's canceling the contract.

With that, the call ends and Reborn heads out of the house in a foul mood. He's a professional so he doesn't 'disturb' the house all that much. There's a sushi chief he can speak with to get an idea of how long the house has been empty. His wings twitch under the illusion hiding them from view as children his 'age' only have fluffy down on their wings. His bright plumage's base color is a warm yellow with varying shades of a darker shade with a creamy white feathers on the inside of his wings, a simple row of feathers that continue with black feathers for the two rows below it.

i ! i _ v M v _ i ! i

Sitting across from not only his fellow Acrobaleno but the elderly Ninth Don of the Vongola Famiglia, plus his equally elderly Storm Guardian, and, finally, one Sawada Iemitsu. Three of the four are sitting across from himself and his niece, Hibari Nee Song Qing, mother of his grandnephew Hibari Kyoya. This meeting is attended by a single Vindice, acting as a neutral party to put a stop to any attempts at physical violence.

Fon suspects that Reborn found a way to contact Viper as what happened to the former Sky child had long since 'dried up' as it were. Tsuna had been nine the day of the kidnapping occurred, from what they learned, Sawada Nana had been dead within a month of their attempted ransoming. Killed when it was clear that she was of little value to the CEDEF as nobody came looking for her nor did they

ever get through to contact Sawada himself. They only moved onto Tsuna when the blood tests confirmed that the child at the time had indeed been Iemitsu's son.

Both Skies sport orange among their plumage, which is a typical when it comes to wings, although it looks like the Ninth's feathers are going gray, which is likely why he's actually going through with naming an Heir. Generally, there does tend to be a tell tale hint of what kind of Dying Will Flame possesses when it comes to a person's wings. He's a rather uncommon example as his wings had been stylized after a crane's own, but also included the white plumage through and through. Not a single crimson feather could be found among his plumage or non-white feather of any kind.

His great nephew took after him, with sleek black feathers through and through but the style is after an eagle then a crow or blackbird. Wings made to soar through the sky with ease. Fitting, for a Cloud, in truth.

"Where is **MY** *Son* ?" Sawada finally demands after the usual polite pleasantries are had. He ignores the idiot while his niece glares at the rude Sky, who seemed to think he could get an answer to said question by lacing Sky into his question.

"Safe." A-Qing states stiffly, her lavender marked primaries of a golden brown hawk shaped wings raise up a touch before resettling with a bit of a shake. His niece likely finding the oppression in the room getting a touch heavier, a simple rattling of the Vindice's chains causes it to stop.

Flexing his own Storm Flame, he eliminates the Flames that are trying to press into his A-Qing. Compared to Tsuna's Sky Flame, it was like cutting butter with a hot knife. Trying not to think of his Sky, he adds, "And at this point, it's rather debatable if you still have a claim to Tsunayoshi." He is sure to switch his gaze between the two Skies, which cause Coyote to bristle in offense on his Sky's behalf.

"I'm his father!" Snaps Sawada and there's three snorts in reply to that declaration. Two from A-Qing and himself with the final one coming from Reborn, which isn't all that surprising given whatever respect the Sun might had held for Sawada had taken a large hit, it wouldn't be surprising if some of the 'splash' also brought down Timoteo's ranking in the infamous Sun's eyes by association.

"You were a husband who didn't realize that his wife had been taken to be ransomed for a month before they killed her when they couldn't get in contact with you." Fon states in a deadly calm tone. "Given what we learned about what happened to cause Tsunayoshi's wings to rot away enough before they fell off." He couldn't stop his anger, his rage from showing beyond keeping it to only his eyes flashing crimson before returning to his normal coloring.

There's a stiffening from Coyote's pose and the Vindice's own at the mentioning of what became of a child's wings. "You pretty much disinherited him." The Storm states. "Disowned the moment you choice to Seal his newly Awakened Sky Flames instead of training him."

"I wanted to keep him out of the Mafia!" Defends Sawada and he resists the urge to sneer while it seems that Reborn hadn't known that little fact, given the slight narrowing of his eyes and the way the head dips down a bit, hiding the Sun's eyes from view for a brief few seconds. "I wanted him to live a normal life!"

"You didn't even keep track of what happened after you retreated upon Sealing him. If you had, you'd have known how his feathers fell out and never grew back. How he'd feel an itch and would scratch the skin of his wings to the point of breaking through the skin, to exposing raw muscles." A-Qing growls out before he comes up with a rebuke to that claim.

There's a bit of a wince from Timoteo who looks away for a brief few seconds before schooling his reactions. Sawada's reaction is to glare at A-Qing and to flare his Sky Flame once more as he stands up in a threatening manner, only his niece reacts in anger and

defiance as she continues on, describing the condition of Tsuna's wings before they fell off, ripping skin, tearing muscle, and popping out of the bone from its rightful socket. It's a gruesome description and not for the first time he wonders if they had been informed of Tsuna's circumstances, could they had done something to alleviate the symptom of receiving that Flame Seal?

He takes out copies of the medical history of that time in Tsuna's life, being sure to hand the Vindice official a copy as well. Reborn opens his envelop up and skims while Coyote takes the copy on Timoteo's behalf. Sawada pretty much pulls it towards him but doesn't open it. He returns to his former position as he notices Reborn's eyes narrowing, no longer skimming the information printed upon the papers, the subtle signs are there that shows that yes, Reborn isn't happy with the information provided.

Fon isn't sure if this would be enough to cause Reborn to cancel his contract. *Not that Tsuna is any shape to ever be a Mafia Don.* The Storm thinks as he recalls the last time he'd seen Tsuna.

Dull orange scales with streaks of brownish red about the head, neck, and the back of the wings. While capable of assuming a more... human vintage, Tsuna can't be classified as human any more. The changes the Sky had undergone when he tapped into something beyond human imagination... A human couldn't properly channel or really forge a permanent connection with it, not without dying or coming close to that state.

There's a number of pros and cons for what Tsuna had become, the teen, although that's debatable if he's still aging the same way as before the transformation, is something of a power house, able to reshape things to his satisfaction, well, when he feels motivated to. On the down side, the Sky has a hard time realizing that not everyone possesses the ability to see the world as he does and in turn, makes it hard for them to understand any explanation he'd give about his insight.

Given the size of Tsuna's body, they are rather thankful that the other doesn't need to eat to maintain his body weight. *Might be some kind of conversion going on when he's basking in the sun though. It's unusually cool around him, particularly when it's sweating hot out...* He reflects as it seems that the Skies are awaiting Reborn's judgement.

Sawada and his niece sit down, Fon can only guess it depends on how bored and how much of a challenge Reborn thinks trying to 'whip' Tsuna into a 'respectable' Mafia Don. Fon highly doubts that Reborn will have any success, not when they're still trying to press the importance of cloths on Tsuna on a monthly basis when the Sky shouldn't have any trouble relearning that aspect of human behavior and yet, in almost five years since the transformation, he has trouble remembering that cloths are important when he's plans to be around humans in a humanish shape.

While it would be amusing, he rather not witness the mess Tsuna would make of Reborn once the Sun pushes pass the Sky's personal boundaries after a certain point. Though, that would only bring more trouble to their door and cause more people to become aware of Tsuna's situation. Given the base 'values' of the Mafia underworld, the odds of their greed and lust for power overwhelm what little sense they have...

The Icy Flow Under Bamboo Triad were gone after that group attempted to gang press Kyoya into their ranks. The evidence of there ever having been a Triad of said name had almost been totally erased until A-Qing managed to talk Tsuna into stopping the eradication of said Traid, mentioning how they can't serve as an example if nobody remembers or have evidence of their existence. *No group has yet to take over the former's territories or businesses.* He recalls and that's likely a side effect that Tsuna hadn't meant to have happen either.

Realizing that his hand had gone, he forces himself to let go of the pacifier. Fon isn't sure if he's desperate enough to make that request yet, but, he doesn't want to die and for his legacy to be swept under

the tag of Storm Acrobaleno, to be forgotten when the pacifier is given to the next chosen Storm Acrobaleno.

Ending it Here!

Author's Note:

I'm not sure why this turned out to be as dark as it is only that it did. Can't really see why all three of these see the MC going through some emotional trauma...

The next poll should be up and I wonder how many of you will vote?

Here's hoping I'll write something a little more... bright?

Settled Dreams: Digimon Tamers

I don't own Digimon or these Daemons are kind of based off of the ones in His Dark Materials trilogy.

There's a strange phenomenon that occurred nearly fifteen years ago. Spacial Rifts began intruding throughout the world and caused certain people to go through a process called Dividing, in which caused a entity that became termed Daemon to appear next to said person. Once more, these Daemons could speak and were generally the opposite gender of their human.

The Dividing also means that the humans could enter into these Spacial Rifts, nicknamed Dungeons, and found they interacted within said Dungeon in a game like fashion. Only within these Dungeons could the humans be able to use unusual powers and access a feature called Inventory without limit, outside of the Dungeons, there is a limited times that this Inventory could be accessed outside of Dungeons, which refreshes every two days. As the Governments of the world would learn, only these Divided individuals, these *Players* as it they could be called, could deal with the monsters that lurk within the Spacial Rifts.

Through tragedy called the Raid Wave, a month after these Dungeons appeared and those affected by the Dividing, in which a lesson was learnt as those monsters lurking within those spaces surged out under the so called 'leadership' of a **Boss Monster** . Many people lost their lives in the ensuring event and the usual weaponry welded by Man-kin proved to be able to dent or scratch upon the monsters. It was in Japan that the means in which to counter the Raid Wave was *officially* discovered when one Kita Nariko, a sixteen year Kendo student who experience Dividing, ending up with a Daemon by the name of Koji that would go through the phenomenon termed Settling in the form of a wolf-dog.

None know how, but in the end, Kita Nariko managed to get her hands on a live steel katana and succeed in defending a group of panic civilians who had been in the process of robbing a mall. Someone had the presence of mind to bring out their cell phone and would record the famous four minute video of Kita Nariko and Koji causing not just damage but death to large, spiny shelled turtle monsters about the size large dogs.

This video of her and her Daemon's success in killing said monsters went viral within a minute of it getting uploaded on YoTube.

Thus the beginning of the end of the Raid Wave would begin, with anyone who had gone through the Dividing had been given weapons of any sort. It was soon proven that weaponry of older times prove to be more effective against the rampaging monsters along with the attacking Daemons being able to cause damage, perhaps more damage then their human partners. Swords, axes, hammers, bows, daggers, crossbows... All proved themselves invaluable and would come to staples of a Player's armory.

In this counter-defensive it would become known that if a Daemon dies, so does their human but it is also flipped, if the human dies, the Daemon vanishes in a cloud of golden dust. Each country mourned the dead in their own way while the intellectuals would toss around the cause behind the Raid Wave. It from sending in Divided, as they had been mostly been called by then, and their Daemons into the Spacial Rifts that would give the investigation much needed answers. Which is why these Rifts would earn their nickname of Dungeons due to how game like the nature of it proved and, in particular, how to close them.

Time marches forward and there have been babies born with a Daemon, their age tend to match their human. One in three babies have been born with a Daemon and it's unknown if the other two thirds would go through Dividing when they are older. There's varying degrees of discussions about what this means for the future, particularly the ethics of raising these born Dividers, these future Players, as defenders of humanity, as child soldiers .

Regardless how much people wish it, Daemons and Dungeons seem here to stay.

x _ W v W _ x

With Chinbo weaving about his ankles, Henry does his best to not step on the current ferret Daemon who's clearly excited over the idea of a field trip through a Rank 1 Dungeon. He almost stumbles when Chinbo shifts into the form of a large house cat and he can't help but send an annoyed glare at her. Not that it seems to deter his Daemon as she leaps up at him and he manages to catch her in his arms, the fuzz ball is purring while rubbing her head about his chin and jaw line.

The permission slip that he'd been holding onto crumpled under the weight of the current feline Daemon in his arms, who's being overly affectionate towards him. "Chinbo..." He sighs out and she replies, "Yes, Hen-kun?"

"Can't you be something... smaller?" He asks after looking at the face that Chinbo gave him along with her use of her nickname for him. The Daemon chuckles before turning into a more leggy feline that sports a coat is a dark yellow tan with black markings upon the fact along with spots upon the sides. So much longer and harder to keep in his arms, it takes him a bit of effort to keep his balance while Chinbo's head moves along his right side of his jaw before getting a face full of furry shoulder as the Daemon moves to his shoulder, rubbing her body against his face.

Chinbo continues on showering him with affection on his right side of his face. With a soft sigh, Henry reaches up and scratches behind one of her ears. "Must you be so contrary?" The teen mutters and gets a tail hitting him near his left eye.

And so, he makes sure that he has the letter concerning the announcement of the trip. With his Daemon purring in his left ear, Henry makes it to the apartment door not long after a few minutes. Unlocking the door, he finds his father seated at the kitchen table

with a number of papers on either side of a laptop. "We're home!" He calls out as he closes the door while Chinbo leaps from his shoulder, shifting into the form of a Snow Monkey, she races to the table, pulling out a chair before getting up onto the table.

"Welcome home, Henry. Chinbo." His father says upon looking over at him and then at the clock. "I didn't realize it's... Ah, what do you have there?" His father notices the letter upon pushing up his glasses.

"There's to be a field trip in a Rank 1 Dungeon." Henry tells his father as he approaches the table. "It should have the needed information within it." He adds, offering the letter to his parent, who takes it from him.

He walks over to the chair that Chinbo pulled out and sits in it, watching as his father pull out the contains of the envelope. He notices Chinbo peeling an lychee with draft fingers before taking a bite out of the fruit. Although Daemons don't need to eat, it doesn't mean they can't. Chinbo consumes food for the experience of the taste of it then because she needs too.

Noticing his attention on her, Chinbo puts down the fruit and goes through the fruits in the bowl. Then she hands him a Dekopon, with a slight smile from him that the Daemon returns, she returns to eating that lychee while he holds the fruit in his hand, turning it around as he tries to find purchase of where to start peeling the Dekopon.

Henry waits for some reaction from his father and a slight sigh does escape from him. He knows his parents have come to terms with him being born with a Daemon, with him being Divided, a Player, and given that Suzie had been born with one as well, the Daemon has been given the name of Eiji. It doesn't mean they weren't worried about him or for Suzie. With the danger of Dungeons and the dangers of another Raid Wave happening...

The world doesn't work the way it once did when his parents were kids themselves. Henry looks at Chinbo as he tries to picture his life

without her and finds it rather impossible. He knows his schooling is different then those who aren't Players but he's found parts of it to be enjoyable. There's plenty of kids who are envious of him for just having Chinbo at his side, always there for him, keeping him company.

"I'll inform your mother later." His father assures him and Henry does a single nod before he pushes the chair back. Once he's standing, he walks over to retrieve his book bag and as he heads for his room, waits for Chinbo to enter in first, her form that of a corgi sporting white with dun blue splotches.

x _ W v W _ x

With Yoshimi sitting at her left side, Rika looks at the entrance of the Dungeon, often called a Gate. Her Daemon is in the form of a wolverine, which means that most of the milling students and their Daemons take as a warning of her mood, thus giving them both a wide berth. Everyone is either sticking to kids they know from school or are busy trying to get to know some of the newer faces, after all, this trip sports students from three schools.

"Eh? Huh? Oh? OH!" Blinking at the masculine voice, Yoshimi snorts and she looks down to find a reptile Daemon looking up at her with seemingly wide eyes.

"Tatsuo? Tatsuo!" And a boy comes into her buffer zone, going right for the geko, only the Daemon shifts into the form of a barn owl, taking to the air. "Tatsuo!"

She can't help it but stare up at the now circling Daemon before looking down at the boy. "Tatsuo?" She can't help but voice in a flat tone.

"Yea, I know, I know, but he's a he and he is mine." Admits the brunet that sports reddish hazel eyes. "Takato." The boy introduces himself after taking a few seconds to stare at her then back up at the

now Raven Daemon. "Nevermore! Nevermore!" Getting crowed out softly by the flying Daemon.

"Never seen anyone with a Daemon the same gender before." Yoshimi remarks and she glances down at the wolverine Daemon, rather surprised, after all, Yoshimi rarely talks when there's others around, let alone to another human besides her. Not that she doesn't agree with her Daemon but she didn't see the point in talking further with this boy.

Takato smiles softly and for a second, she finds her cheeks heating up at the sight. He's not looking her way, so she is certain that he doesn't notice her reaction. Looking away from him, Takato replies to Yoshimi, "There are some rare cases reported, they have proved themselves to be rather unique? Like, having a longer stretch distance..." The boy trails off.

Rika's gaze lands on Takato before looking up at the crowing Raven Daemon. The Daemon shifts into a butterfly before coming down to land on Yoshimi's nose. "Hey!" She shouts and finds that Takato seems to jerk before looking to see where Tatsuo is.

The butterfly Daemon moves off from Yoshimi's nose before turning into what appears to be a crimson fox, only it's far too big and sports a black mane. Tatsuo walks in a circle around Takato as Takato seems to study Rika. She isn't sure what to make of the emotion that seem to shine in those hazel red eyes.

"You... might want to pick a staff out." The boy tells her. "I think it'll suit you plus it's got a lot of uses, like triggering traps from a distance!"

"What...?" Just as her brain catches up to what he suggests, the kid and Daemon are quick to say, "See you later Rika! Yoshimi!"

"We didn't give him my name." Her Daemon comments and with pressed lips, Rika watches as the brunette vanishes into the crowds of students. "Forget about them. We won't be seeing them." She

states, although her thoughts linger on what he meant by a staff being suitable.

Never mind that she's had minimum training with one. Yes, she hasn't picked out any particular weapon to focus on but she never thought about staffs being something she'd find to be her thing. "We're... not getting weapons for this... Right?" Yoshimi voices and she frowns as she looks towards the Dungeon Gate.

"We're students. We aren't going to be doing any fighting." *We shouldn't be expected to do any fighting.*

The strangeness of the meeting with Tatsuo and Takato causes her to feel a bit concerned but also kind of excited. Then she does her best to push the matter and the feelings from her mind, after all, there's been plenty of field trips through Rank 1 Dungeons before. She doubts that this one will be any different.

x _ W v W _ x

They're different. Takato and Tatsuo are both the same gender, it's a rare occurrence and kids never really accepted either of them, once the fact that it's far more common for a Player and Daemon to be of opposite genders. They're freaky in the eyes of their classmates, almost unnatural, even in their eyes while the adults are wary but also sporting expectations of studying them, of gathering data about why they are who they are.

"As if such studies could ever help them understand, never mind explain us!" Tatsuo scuffed when they'd been eight. "We're who we're meant to be." He'd agreed back then.

'We're growing into ourselves.' Tatsuo chimes mentally when they'd been on the bus heading to this Dungeon. They've had this Feeling ever since the announcement of this trip and then dream snippets, lingering impressions of a weight in his right hand and something heavy resting upon his left arm. Savings spent on supplies such as bottled water, food, and medicine, any he can find.

They'd sneaked through a Dungeon Gate just to put all of it into his Inventory. With Tatsuo having been the one who had packed up a bunch of his cloths along with some towels and blankets. Tatsuo had given him a very flat look and he felt sheepish about having forgotten such important stuff but the other had huffed softly at him. He's thankful his parents were busy with the Bakery, else they'd have noticed how empty his dresser drawers have become along with missing a number of other things, minor things but a lot of it having been packed up by Tatsuo in the end.

Before leaving in the buses, Tatsuo had them run into Chinbo and Henry. Before entering this Dungeon Gate, Tatsuo had stumbled upon the final members of their 'Trinity', Rika and Yoshimi. He doesn't know why he thought it a good idea to mention her picking the staff before they left, maybe to nudge her into picking it when the time came? It hadn't mattered all that much, at first, if she hadn't chosen it at the beginning?

Shaking his head in an attempt to clear it, he notices that Tatsuo is in his favorite form, a Maned Wolf. The grips of Knowing fades away and it's not long before Tatsuo shifts into a red squirrel and climbs onto his right shoulder then begins to move about his shoulders, excitement surging within the currently tiny Daemon. An excitement that he shares, in fact, as everyone around them is excited about this trip through the Dungeon, although they know that this is the beginning of something different for them and for a few others, neither Tatsuo or him know the exact number of people who'd end up with them besides Chinbo, Henry, Rika, and Yoshimi nor if any of them will be counted among the adults escorting them into this Dungeon.

Soon enough, the adults begin to exert control over the mass of students. While Tatsuo shifts into the form of a red panda and with a paw upon his head, the Daemon listens while Takato's attention is on the adults wearing protection and carrying weapons out in the open. It's the sight of such protection upon their person along with weapons that's meant to cause feeling of safety and security. They

didn't need to have it out as they weren't through the Dungeon Gate as of yet and it would be a simple thing to Equip it all, the swapping of gear within the Dungeon is rather simple for those that are Players, after all.

As they get into line, Tatsuo's form shifts into a far more imaginative one. Crimson scales cover the body, bat like wings, a long neck and tail plus black spines and a set of black curly ram like horns. He doesn't need to see the white scaled belly to know the bio-like hazard symbol is affixed there as a warning. There's a number of people looking at Tatsuo with a bit of awe and bewilderment, after all, dragons don't really exist, never-mind why it would be a western dragon of all shapes.

'Nether did Dungeons, once upon a time.' He mentally remarks to Tatsuo as he reaches up to scratch under the tiny dragon's chin. *'Indeed.'* Tatsuo agrees as they move with the crowd of students towards the Dungeon Gate to enter the Dungeon proper.

They are eager for their adventure to begin, to come face to face with what they've dreamed of for these pass two months. As they enter through the Dungeon Gate, he wonders what kind of condition they'll find their starting weapons in along with which routes they'll take. The future isn't set in stone, only the past is. Some things are more certain to come to pass while not so with everything that they've caught glimpses of within their dreams or linger periods of Knowing.

Ending it Here!

Happy New Years people!

Curses that Vices Bring: KHR!

I don't own KHR!

Dying Will Research Entry # 94:

It's the Winter Solstice, a day feared by every Dying Will Flame user for it is commonly known as the Eve of Judgement. Where ever they are, they gather together, some at grand functions that the Vongola Famiglia hold for their Allies to attend in witness to who is found guilty of which of the Seven Vices, or called the Deadly Sins. There are Families that prefer to keep such an events private, leaving those outside of the Famiglia to create a rather impressive betting pool concerning whom among those closed off Famiglia affairs would be affect and by which of their Sins out weight all the others.

As the Winter Solstice is feared, the Spring Equinox is a day of hope, yet, it's also dreaded in its own way. It's known as the Eve of Return as those who finish serving out their punishment are returned to their rightful physical forms, what's dreaded learning what cost to the Returned's mental state their time punished had been done upon them. After all, the minimum punishment endured is the time between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox, it's often a taste for first time offenders but the time spent in an inhuman shape, forced to live a life far different then the one a human is born to lead, leaves it's marks all the same. Recovery takes time and a lot of patience with those that Returned.

There's plenty of regional tales concerning the origins of the two events, Eve of Judgement and the Eve of Return. The fact that few dispute concerns that the first to ever experience the Eve of Judgement is Giotto, who is better known as the Primo of the Vongola Famiglia. It's well documented that the event that

likely caused the Judgement to settle upon the man has to due with the Massacre of the Sinclairs that saw not just the men put to the 'Flame' but the elderly, toddlers, children, teens, and women. None fully know why Giotto had been so vengeful in the regards of the Sinclairs but, come the Winter Solstice at the Inn they'd been staying at, its said that the Sky had sensed it coming, for throughout the daylight hours, Giotto had been filled with nervous energy and found it hard to stick to a single activity.

As the sun goes down, Giotto seems to collapse upon the floor in the middle of pacing before the window. Before his Storm Guardian and fellow vigilantes eyes, they witnessed the Sky's hair and teeth fall out before his head began to alter, a beak beginning to grow out of the mouth. Giotto's finger nails did as well before the arms began to warp into wings. Giotto's body began to shrink, warp as it goes, with the beginning of feathers spreading about the skin that the men could see. Within minutes, where there was once a man, there was a peacock struggling to get out of the cloths that the former man had worn.

Giotto wouldn't regain his birth form until that Spring Equinox but the effect of having witnessed the Judgement saw many men leaving Giotto's band of vigilantes. It also wouldn't be the last time Giotto would experience Judgement for his conduct in pursue of his justice for the common people. Giotto would undergo the losing of his humanity three more times, his second Judgement would see him transformed into a horse for roughly two years, his third would be a magpie for roughly three, and his final recorded Judgement would see him transformed into a stag for roughly five years. The Sins he committed would be Warth, Lust, Greed, and, finally, Pride.

Among his Guardians, they would all end up receiving being Judged at least once in their time at Giotto's side. Although the most well known member of the Primo's Guardians would also

serve to show that some Judgements can be final, it would be Deamon Spade, who's second Judgement saw him transformed into a stag, it had been the year that saw the passing of the reigns of the Vongola Famiglia to Ricardo, more commonly known as the Secondo.

Looking away from the page of information, Skull rummages around until he finds a section documenting the species of animals that Flame Users have been transformed into. "Elk... Mule Deer... Reindeer..." Beyond the listening of deer is snakes.

He wonders if he'll find the answer to his question among these old reports and entries. He might have been looking for a week but already, it seems nobody knows the answer to his off handed idea of if they would still be Cursed if they Returned after experiencing Judgement. After all, surly they can't be exempt from getting Judged, right? There has to be documents concerning previous Arcobaleno committing Sins and thus receiving Judgement...

"There should be records of previous Arcobaleno at least?" The Cloud murmurs to Oodako, who's clinging to his back like a backpack. The Octopus gives him a light hug, clearly getting the downward spiral of his thoughts and emotions at the lack of answers or records of former Arcobaleno.

"Envy, Gluttony, Greed, Lust, Pride, Sloth, and Wrath. Rabbit, snake, magpie, horse, deer, squirrel, and peacock." Skull mutters as he frowns as he considers the off handed idea of his that's become something of facial point for him six days. Since none of the other Arcobaleno answered that simple question, which should have been easily answered with either a yes or no.

It's been six years since they've been given the title of Arcobaleno, that they've been Cursed into their current looks. For all that they look like toddlers, they weren't. They kept their adult mental state of minds, that's never changed, not like those who are Judged and are transformed into beasts.

Not that I know what that's like. Muses the Cloud as he gently causes the stool he's sitting on to slowly turn around in circles. "Never did anything that warranted getting Judged for." Skull admits with a sigh.

"Not that I actually want to do something that bad, of course, but..." *Is it something I want to gamble my humanity over? And if it doesn't work... Will I still be me?* It's something that Skull has observed over his time pre-Arcobaleno and post Arcobaleno.

What's the point in getting free of the Curse if he won't be fully himself? Fully human? Skull gets the feeling he's at something of a crossroads, he can roll over and accept that he's Cursed into the shape of a toddler or he can do something desperate but could affect him.

"Although, it kind of feels like... I'm missing something? That it's kind of..." Skull knows himself fairly well and suspects that in hindsight, it'll be something he'd curse himself for overlooking, that it's something so simple...

He stops himself from spinning the stool one way only to begin having it spin the other. All the while, he has Oodako keeping him company as he sits upon a stool in Verde's paper archives.

] - = Time Passes = - [

"I received a request that might be something you'd be interested in." Viper's voice states upon him picking up his phone. Skull blinks at the blunt statement before asking, "How much is this going to cost me?"

"How about wager? I heard of your little inquiry concerning Arcobaleno and getting Judged." The Mist remarks and he blinks before nodding, stating, "Well, it's not like I could find anything saying we're immune."

"What would the wager be?" He asks after a few seconds of no reply to that little statement. It's early in the morning and he's pretty sure that the sun is only beginning to show itself given that the alarm clock says it's a bit over four am.

"Two parts, one, you can create a Mist Contract that would be the effect of a Scapegoat or Sin-Eater. The second would be answer your question of, what happens if an Arcobaleno was to undergo Judgement." Viper explains. "The odds of the first one working would be one in a hundred while the other would be one in seven."

He tries to figure out just what it is Viper means by those odds. "So... if I accept some guy's Sin, I'll get...?" The Cloud asks.

"Upon signing it, you'll get twenty-five percent of the payment up front. You end up Judged, you'll get the rest." Viper states before continuing on. "And if you do get Judged, I'll fork over seven times that upon seeing the results."

It might be due to how early it is, but that doesn't sound like a bad deal. Mostly, he'd be getting money for doing something he'd been thinking of doing away way. Even if this contract fails, he'll at least have money to fund whatever dubious crime he kind of plans to put into action at sometime in the future, even if he's still not decided on anything. "Any idea what Sin it is? And the duration?"

"Also, I'd want Oodako looked after if I end up an animal." He states. "I'll be happy to make those arrangements, I'll have a contract ready for the meet up for my services." With that, Viper ends the call before him verbally agreeing to any of it.

Skull lies on his back as he stares at the phone in his right hand, blinking a few times as he mentally tries to figure out just what the hell happened. In the end, he puts the phone back on its receiver and moves onto his other side. "Too early for this shit." He murmurs as he then does his best to ignore how wide awake he is and tries to let his mind drift off into lala land.

] - = Time Passes = - [

"Huh, it's been a while since we'd have an Arcobaleno seek a cure viva being Judged." Remarks a man with fairly dark skin with black hair in corn braids and yellow hazel eyes. "Never mind one who never committed any of extreme acts in order to do so."

Skull tries to speak but his body seems rather... unresponsive. "I believe you'd call me a Cloudy Mist? We're in a Territory of a sort, more pocket dimension then a step outside of time." He does manage to blink and then, he's on the floor.

Looking around, he finds everything smaller... "So, explanations... I assume you want to hear a few of those, huh? Like, who am I? Perhaps, what's up with this Eve of Judgement? Maybe even asking why we never did anything about stopping you and the others from getting Cursed?" The man muses while he's busy staring at the body that's in the middle of transforming into a magpie. There's still a few teeth in the air while the arms were beginning to grow feathers.

"Well, I and nine others, we're fairly old and well... The Eve of Judgement thing is more aimed at the last surviving bastard, it's been that way since he'd set up the Curse on those pacifiers, you see." The man rambles on for sometime on the subject and Skull just lets it wash over him as he does his best to collect himself from the experience of what had been going on, at the sight of proof of what had been happening to him.

"I'm sorry, but what?" He focuses in on the man with a frown, he couldn't have heard what he actually did, right? "Hmm, which part? The fact that in two months, some clone will 'hatch' and he'll never make the connection concerning the Eve of Judgement? That he'll start the process of cloning himself like he'd been cloned?"

"The original Checker Face has been dead for...?" Skull knows Mist Flames are a capable of a lot but the idea of a series of clones living less then a year... That each of them end up transformed and often times killed by the succeeding copy...

"Before the creation of this criminal empire composing of Soul Fire welders." The man admits and it's clear that he's doing some mental counting. "Let's see... That civilization fell to inter conflict about mid way into Julius Caesar's reign of Emperor... The survives would cut up those stones... Oh, about, three hundred years after... The Betray of Trust happened with the thirteen generation of what would become Arcobaleno... Leading to that generation and all after getting Cursed... Not sure if the Mist ever fest up to his temper getting the best of him on hearing that refusal from two of the selected candidates..."

"It sounds like that's over two thousand years, give or take." Skull decides to comment and the man blinks before looking at him. "Sure, that sounds like a decent estimate." The man agrees and the Cloud finally gets up off the ground, taking in the fact that he's got nothing covering his upper body.

"So... the pacifiers weren't always Cursed?" He asks and the man nods. "The Curse is the caster fuelled type instead of having an ending clause, which means you'd have to kill the caster or, in this case, the whole line of copies. Not that I can't get why most find it hard to kill them, the Curse affects pretty much all of humanity, after all, and the nature of Curses being what it is..."

"I am confused..." He admits and the man seems to smile in an understanding fashion. "Yea, I would assume so. Let's just say, the so call Flame system that you were used for? It's a degraded privilege system, it's purpose is to allow only a select portion of mankind access Soul Fire, it's also only allowing half of the Soul Fire aspects be available as well."

"Not that some of that other half hasn't slip out into the world, the dam as it were, has it's leaks since it took a while for them to get around to designating a group who's authorized to possess Soul Fire. Which, I'm pretty sure, you know what kind of people have been given access to it." He nods, it makes a kind of sense, in a out of left field way as to why Dying Will Flames users all seem to drift into the criminal underbelly.

"So... now what?" He asks his... Host? The man hums a bit before beginning to walk away from the sight. Skull follows after a few seconds.

"Now? Whatever you want. You're free, I really do mean it." The man explains. "People are going to forget that there ever was a Cloud Arcobaleno by the name of Skull. In fact, that Contract you sign is going to vanish and the actual person who committed those crimes is going to be receiving what they sowed."

"Unlike the others before you, you won't be spending any time transformed as you didn't commit any crimes." The man explains. "Oh, yea, I totally forgot, I never gave you a name to call me by, huh? Suna, it can be translated into Time but also into Desert. Just call me that!"

"Why not just call yourself Chronos?" He asks Suna. "Best not invoke powerful Titles, after all, you never know what you find yourself settled with. Relics of bygone eras aren't just in the form of items, someone powerful likely inspired certain myths, were the base of legends."

"Once the system is gone, it's going to be chaos and having ancient Titles waiting around for people to claim them? Not going to be helping overly much." Suna remarks with a shake of his head.

"It's lasted this long." He points out. "I might hold strong for centuries to come." Skull points out as they continue to exit out of the Iron Fort.

That provokes a chuckle from Suna for a few minutes. "Ah, yea, I didn't mention how the other half of those stones ended up, huh? I mean, the pacifiers were created from half of the stones that had been used as... Ah... Oh yea, hardware? The concept that they are whole is more... Software? Like a program?"

"Ok, other half ended up getting made into these rings. One set of rings were given the concept of Time while the other was given the

concept of Parallel? The Parallel is like a balancing pole to help make it exist without swaying over and having it all collapse downward as it were..." Suna does try his best to expand on the Parallel concept and mentions these Mist Territories that make up the 'pole' that's being used to balance out the system.

It's... rather descriptive and he does find it easy enough to imagine how hard it must be to try and simplify just what this Parallel function is. They are out of the Iron Fort by the time he finally asks, "What of the Time rings?"

"Those? Oh, yea, those. Yea, Giotto's pretty much the one responsible for why this system is going to be crashing soon." Admits Suna and he blinks as he tries to wrap his head around that statement. "How?" Skull asks.

"Oh, that's simple, he cut the effect of the Time in half. The concept of Time isn't operating at its fullest. Never mind the fact that they tied it up with a Blood Seal with a set of requirements when it comes to who's allowed to take the post." Suna explains. "Families end all the time, officially documented bloodlines came be wiped out in any number of ways. The requirements for the Vongola Rings are generally, have the Second in their family tree as an ancestor and be legitimized, with documented record of tracing their connection to said man."

"Don't they need be a Sky as well?" He asks and Suna snorts. "No, as long as the descent of the Second is wearing one of the rings, it'll function. Being a Sky wasn't an issue, I doubt they ever could have coded that into the Blood Seal in any case, that's more tradition then actually how it works. It was likely hard enough coding the rings to accept the Blood Seal."

"I'm hoping that I win the pool." Suna changes the topic once they have come to an inn. "After all, I doubt he thought he needed to set up a back up Cloud."

"Eh?" He pauses ever so slightly. "You didn't do crime, remember? He likely didn't see how that Sin-Eater Contract was a threat to this age old system. He couldn't get a warning from the simulations about it going through, after all, this animal Vices doesn't register with the clones but that doesn't mean that it doesn't give warning that an Arcobaleno did something that threatens the stability of this system."

"And he just became an animal himself." Suna adds and Skull very much pauses at the thought. "And there's not going to be a Checker Face around until..." Skull trails off and Suna nods.

"Still, won't know until some point next year. Never know if there was an old back up of some kind just waiting around to come into play." Suna admits with a sigh. "You'd be surprised at how often we think it's going to come to an end only for something to pop up. After all, that system use to do a heck of a lot more then just block access of Soul Fire outside of the designated group. At least, once upon a time it did. They had to create some kind of pressure control for that dam."

Skull recovers enough of himself to continue to follow Suna up the stairs of the inn. He's found a information source and answers, there's a lot of things for him to think on, none the least of which is... *What's the world going to be like if everyone has access to Dying Will Flames?*

This is the End

Author's Note: Yea, no internet on my computer and I end up writing this... The idea had been kicking around in my brain since reading a story called Medicine from the Moon by Felinis, which can be found on AO3 and, well, it's rather... Well, the story possesses Body Horror tag along with You get horrific body transformation, And you get a horrific body transformation, Everyone gets a horrific body modification tags. It's written in the Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation world and... I can't seem to not check it daily to see if there's been a new update.

Just a list of what cause which:

Envy = Rabbit

Gluttony = Snake

Greed = Magpie

Lust = Horse

Pride = Deer

Sloth = Squirrel

Wrath = Peacock

History of Divergance: Grandmaster

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation.

**/ Y [O | T | O] Y **

There's a pair of ghostly wings upon his back when ever he gets a glimpse of his reflection from buckets of water or rain puddles, or the very rare time, a really polish panel of metal. The wings he spies are bare of feathers and the only reason he knows they are wings has to due with having seen naked bodies of various birds, generally chicken but there's been a few times he's seen duck flesh and, rarely, tiny bodies that were wild pheasants. The sight of them always cause him sorrow so he doesn't linger long to stare at them as he promised to always smile and if he stares long enough at the sight of them, then he is reminded that he's alone, that his parents aren't with him any more.

A-Ying does his best to put the sight of those ghostly, naked wings from his mind as time marches on without any head to the wishes of a single street urchin, once a beloved son of a pair of Rogue Cultivators. As autumn begins to rob the trees of their leaves is when he encounters Wu Hui, not that he knew who that was besides a well dressed person compared to the usual people he's seen living in Yiling and that it had been midday, so he'd been hoping to find something burnt or spoiled that's been tossed out. As evening nears and he managed to get some scraps, he had been wandering the alleyways to find a warm and dry place to spend the night when a hand gets placed upon his shoulder.

Yelping, A-Ying is quick to shrug the hand off, take a stumbling sprint forward with his heart beating rather fast within his chest as he moves to bring his body around to see who it was that touched him. "Little nephew, you are the child of Cangse Sanren? Wei Ying?" He blinks before nodding as he blinks rapidly to keep from crying. "I am

your martial aunt, Wu Hui and I am here to offer you a place in my household as my student."

"You knew mama?" The almost six year old asks, not sure if he believes the person about them being his aunt, given that they look to be a man. The cloths don't look like ones that women would wear.

"Not personally." Wu Hui admits. "We share the same Master, although, when descending from the mountain, I choice the profession of Alchemist instead of that of a Cultivator."

"Alchemist?" A-Ying isn't sure what that entails as he gets up off the ground while sporting a slight frown. He's not sure if he should believe her.

"It's a way to use Spiritual Energy to create pills and potions, although that's not all it's limited to creating." Wu Hui explains. "It's an Art that the majority of Cultivators see as lesser as they believe that those who take it up are in it for worldly wealth."

"The Wen Sect were once the foremost Sect that counted Alchemists among its numbers and were proud too." Wu Hui states with a slight smile. "Back then, they were putting most of their time and effort into medicine, of which Alchemy is a big help in as it allows more potent medicines to be created."

"It's different now." Wu Hui admits with a slightly sad hint to her smile now. "They place more empathise on martial Arts like the Sword and Bow these days, choosing to combat threats with a blade and leave then to sheath the sword afterward and lend their aid in the aftermath towards the common-folk, be it in removing rubble, helping with attending to those injured, or just helping to perk up their spirits with telling stories or playing music."

He frowns as he does his best to think on what he's just been told. "Ok..." A-Ying isn't sure he knows how else to respond as he is aware that he's legs and feet are beginning to ache.

"So then, will you come home with me? You don't have to become an Alchemist if you wish to follow in the foot steps of your parents by becoming a Cultivator." Wu Hui states and he blinks.

"Ok." He states and begins to approach Wu Hui. "But, you don't look like an auntie, more like an uncle."

There's a soft snort from the adult. "Alchemy has been mistaken for sorcery at times." Wu Hui remarks and offers her hand. "I do go out of my way to dress and act like a man for my own reasons."

A-Ying takes her hand and asks, "Then, what should I call you when we aren't alone?" He's smart enough to know that this is a secret after all.

"Master Wu will do, Ying-er." Wu Hui tells him as they leave the alleyway.

His body is covered in sweat as he's been on his knees for some time without any thing covering his upper body. Wei Ying can only imagine what the skin of his back looks like at this point as he recalls the lumps near his shoulder blades and how the skin over them plus around them were rather discolored. Wu Hui had offered to help him with getting his wings out but he had refused, wanting them to come out naturally on their own.

A year ago, when he'd been eleven, Wu Hui had informed him of the changes that he'd been noticing concerning his back and the odd behavior of his Spiritual Veins. Wei Ying winces at as his fledgling wings try to stretch out under layers of, now useless flesh, and skin, wondering if, perhaps, he should have chosen to allow his Master to his wings come out by slicing into the area, shallowly at that. Yet, he wanted to go through with doing it without aid besides some medicine balm to cool the skin on his back.

Falling forward and having his forehead resting on the chilly stone floor that usually serves as a secure storage room to store priceless

alchemic ingredients. Some of which are stored in specially created crates sporting time halting Spirit Arrays, to keep them fresh as the day they'd been put into the crates. It's been emptied, it would be the easiest room to clean up after his wings breaking through as they'd just need to use water directing Spirit Arrays to wash the resulting mess of blood and the fleshy bits that will be falling out of him.

He can feel his fledgling wings stop trying to stretch out to their fullest and he finds himself panting as his hands move to engulf his head. His hair is in a tight bun with a bit of cloth helping to secure his hair so it doesn't fall out. It takes him a few minutes before he's gathered up his strength and can feel the itch of his wings wanting to stretch out once more.

Moving more onto his kneeling legs, his bum is on the heels of his feet with his hands gently moving up and down on the thin pair of pants. Moving his upper body into a proper pose, Wei Ying closes his eyes as he focuses on the feeling of Qi that's circulating within his Spiritual Veins. Doing his best to focus on the more alive Spiritual Veins on his back then the fading ones, he, again, tries to force his wings to burst through.

Grinding his teeth, he forces himself to keep breathing steadily as pain on his back slowly becomes unbearable but he just wants this over and done. Then the pain becomes more overwhelming then before and something seems to be trailing down his back as he begins to pant while curling up once more, his head getting fairly close to touching the floor once more as he reaches back to check his back, which involves twisting and causing prig pricks of pain.

Pulling a hand back, Wei Ying stares at the red that's staining his pinky and the finger next to it. It's uneven before he rubs his thumb through the blood that's on his hand. He mourns the fact that there isn't a polish metal mirror for him to look into to see the stat of his back but, he finds himself smiling at the evidence that he's getting close to having his wings come out. The feeling of liquid trailing down his back does cause his fingers to twitch as he would like to use something to wipe it off.

He's not sure how long he's been in the room but, hopefully, it won't be long before he successes in having his wings burst forth. Wei Ying tries to imagine what it'll be like, having a pair of fluffy wings on his back. He knows it'll be a week before the fluff will grow in.

"Heya Senior Xie." Murmurs Wei Ying as he greets the lesser kestrel as he reaches out with his fingers to gently stroke the breast feathers. The kestrel's left eye opens just a bit before closing upon making sure he's the only one before him.

Xie, or Senior Xie, has been with his aunt and master for over a century, the kestrel had been fed various pills to help cultivation and been exposed to an experimental Spirit Array to help speed up the creation of a Golden Core, although in non-humans, it's generally called a Spirit Core. His aunt has created many a Spirit Array for unspoken communication so that Senior Xie didn't need to manipulate his own Qi in order to voice his opinions and requests.

The kestrel doesn't react much as he begins rambling his thoughts concerning the latest news concerning which Sect the Wens had targeted for 'merger'. There's little reaction from this Senior of his but there's little hints that Senior Xie is listening to his thoughts as the red stained bird's wings would shift slightly or eyes opening to pin him with stare before staring off at the window. As he quiets down, Senior Xie places foot upon his index finger then gives it a gentle squeeze.

"Nothing for it, Shidi." Senior Xie informs him. *"It's for the best that you do not join a Sect, less you get dragged into the political firestorm that's going to be happening among them."*

"I know, Shixiong, I know." Wei Ying lets out a sigh as Senior Xie lets go of his finger. "I just don't like the thought that none of the other Sects seem to care about curbing the Wen's now instead of letting them gain more and more confidence along with practice against fighting their fellow Cultivators."

"It's likely they don't see it that way. That it's unlikely going to touch them, particularly the other four major Sects." His Shixiong muses to him. *"They likely think that they are avoiding conflict by not confronting this trend that's going on with Wen Rouhan's current 'hobby'. It's sad that the other, smaller Sects also seem to be of the opinion that it can't happen to them. They are all looking at their own self interest and it's working in Wen Rouhan's favor."*

"I only worry about the common people." He confesses, really, it's not like he's overly invested in any of the Sects, in the end, he's more investigated in what it means to be a Cultivator then being one. "If all of the Sects go to war, the usual protection for the common people won't be there. Never mind the thought of undead Cultivators wandering around without anyone giving them their rites."

"I can see it now, Rogue Cultivators getting pressed into joining a Sect one way or another." Wei Ying says with a sigh. "I know that the smart thing is to keep to my studies and leave such deep thoughts to our Master, but, it just doesn't seem right not to... But I don't want to kill another person."

"You are only fifteen, you are far too old to still think that the world revolves around you, my silly Shidi." Senior Xie remarks with a clear mental huff. *"Are you a God? No? Then what makes you think you can control the actions of other people? Particularly those of the power hungry or blood thirsty?"*

He feels his wings shift as he manages to not shift his body's weight. *"Think of it like this, when it does come to a head, it will also come to a messy end. Whatever the aftermath is, you'll be ready to help clean up from the mess. As long as you continue with your studies and keep yourself safe from harm."*

"I know it's a human trait, this worrying about the future." Remarks Senior Xie. *"Just leave the future of these Sect to sort itself out. Best focus on sorting yourself out instead! I seem to recall you wish to research and investigate Resentful Energy."*

Wei Ying chuckles as he feels some tension ease out of him. "Xie-shixiong is very wise, this Ying-shidi will do his best to follow through with such wisdom." He makes sure to bow very respectfully once he takes a few steps back from the perch that Senior Xie is resting upon.

"Brat." Senior Xie states at the sight of him bowing. *"Now then, how's your feathers coming along?"*

Wei Ying smiles at the change of subject and is happy to chat about the few feathers that are starting to grow as the now dark gray fluff falls off. By the time he's twenty, he'll have adult feathers and coloring but, until then, he's going to have bright plumage along with very long, broader feathers, it's shows just how young he is and is suppose to make it easier for his seniors to spot him easier. The few feathers coming seem to be a bright teal. His wings have grown larger then they had when they burst out of his back and he doesn't feel their weight anymore or are overly aware of them against his back.

The ending of the Sunshot Campaign was and wasn't that surprising, then again, Wei Ying had been fairly deep in studying how Resentful Energy compares to Spiritual Energy along with aiding in creating plenty of various medicines and the odd, specific order. Under Senior Xie's watch, he'd gone around to help when the problems of a supernatural nature went pass a certain point and none of the Sect Cultivators seem incline to deal with said problems. Then, when his Shishu came down from the mountain, he had in partner as Xiao Xingchen, who had been the third who descended down to join the Cultivator Society.

The number problems that went unattended during the war cost many lives of common people, mostly small and/or isolated villages, never mind those places that had been near various battle fields. Even those of noble birth outside of the Cultivator Society had been getting nervous about the idea of a Cultivation Sect raising to power, to simply take the position of Emperor and there would be nothing

that they could do about it, fearing for the lives of their families and their livelihoods. So, yes, the collection of three major Sects that once made up the five major Sects received a lot of side funding and children, typically third sons or daughters and such, to train in their ways so they might help boost their number in the war.

With the end of the war, his Shishu has decide to make his presence more well known along with promising to keep silent about Master Wu and concerning Wei Ying himself. All that really meant has to do with not consuming Disguise Pills and letting his wings be seen. His Shishu's wings are modeled off of an golden eagle, even in coloring. The coloring is rather at odds of the usual cloths his Shishu prefers to wear, which is white, Wei Ying wonders how many will almost mistake Xiao Xingchen for a Lan or some other Sect that prefers to wear primarily white cloths as a Sect uniform.

So, yes, the first thing he thinks of upon seeing the white uniform in the crowd was of his Shishu, only upon noticing the lack of dark golden wings along with none of the usual black upon the cloths does it register that the Cultivator he called out a greeting to was a stranger. The headband that's tied up on the forehead means that the man is a member of the Gusu Lan Sect. So, yes, he did stop trying to get through the crowds to approach the man and calls out an apology about mistaking him for someone he knows, Wei Ying turns his back on the rather beautiful man and returns to moving the crates filled with liquor into the shop, he'll take it to the cellar once it's all within the building.

With the seventh crate in the building, he hears the store front door open. Wei Ying heads to the front, he doesn't find his Shimei, one Mu Liling attending the counter. He does blink at the sight of that Lan Cultivator for a second before putting on a polite smile. "Greeting Respectful Cultivator! What can this humble one help you with this day?"

Golden hazel eyes seem to look coolly at him before his eyes flicker at the shelf behind him. While he does have the urge to tease the stern looking man, Wei Ying easily suppresses the urge. Just

because the Sunshot Campaign is over doesn't mean it's safe to let down ones guard, particularly given that Master Wu has been in operation for a few decades and his aunt hasn't aged much in that time. Like Cultivators, Alchemists seek Immortality, the difference, in the minds of the non-trained populace, is that one can pay an Alchemist for the Elixir of Life, if they have enough money.

The Elixir of Life can only be utilized by those that have trained to wield Qi. Those that have not been trained to use Qi, drinking the Elixir won't be of any benefit to the majority of them. Then there's the rare few that could end up running into negative issue with drinking it. While there are ways to diluting the Elixir could grant the untrained an extra decade or less to their life span, that's all it could provide and that's generally not the answer or result that many want.

It's likely why there's so many different ways to disguise oneself viva pills, elixirs, and potions. So that they can evade the general ire of the world at large who would allow their envy and jealousy to overwhelm them, killing said Alchemist and burning any research or Alchemist manuals they possess as well. It's a sad that none of them would accept the truth of why the Elixir of Life can not be utilized by the majority of the world at large. It's a harrowing lesson concerning the nature of people and how truth is easily discarded if it doesn't fit in the world view of the people.

The Lan Cultivator doesn't seem to be incline to speaking and after a bit, Wei Ying breaks the silence, "Master Wu is a master of his craft. We have many kinds of pills that could aid in Cultivation! Or is it that you are looking to commission a special perfume for a young maiden?" He wonders about the woman who'd have catch this man's attention, *Is it a love match? Or a political one?*

There's a slight stiffening of the shoulders and the lips seem to frown a touch. "Many apologies Honorable Cultivator! I just can not see how such a handsome man as yourself does not have a special someone in their life!" He admits. "Given the end of conflicts among the Sects, it just seems that there would be many match makers

being called upon to help speed up the recovery of the various Sects!"

He can see that he's not helping his case in anyway, so he changes the topic. Turning his back, it takes him five seconds to pick a jar off the shelf, the label upon the jar declares that the pills within are Marrow Cleansing Pills. Wei Ying finds himself rambling about what they do and about his own efforts to make acceptable pills.

"You are an Alchemist?" The Lan Cultivator inquires as he keeps himself from diverting into personal stories, keeping to his effort in learning pill recipes at this point. It takes him a second to realize that yes, the man had indeed spoken.

Wei Ying blinks before beaming at the man, "Well, I've had training in that profession. I'm not sure if it's how I see myself as fine Spirit Arrays to be rather interesting."

"I kind of want to see if I can't do something with the Qiankun bag Spirit Array! Like, make a tent that's larger in the inside! Or apply it to a field?" He muses, he knows that his aunt has figured out how to apply it to room made out of stone. She maintains that she's helping him by not just teaching him that Spirit Array, that he needs to learn to use what she's taught him in order to work out how he could go about doing it his way.

He's had success when it comes to creating an effect on his back for his wings. Which, he's rather proud of and had shared with his Shishu, so that the man could modify his own cloths if he has need to hide or protect his wings. It's unlikely that this particular discovery is his alone, given how his various aunts and uncles have managed to stay hidden among the common people.

After all, everyone knows that Boashan Sanren has wings, which are that of a male mandarin duck at that, and all of her students end up with wings as well, Wu Hui's own wings are that of a common kingfisher. Then again, they are only aware of Yanling Daoren, Cangse Sanren, and, recently, his Shishu, Xiao Xingchen have

descended down from the mountain. It's unlikely they need to know of those other students that have descended from the mountain and chose different profession then that of Cultivator, that they pick out personal disciplines that have the potential to do so, of which his Shimei is in the process of doing, nor do they know about said students' own children are also capable of growing their own wings if nurtured correctly, like how he grew his azure winged magpie style wings.

Silence hang between them once more and Wei Ying take the jar of pills off the counter, he puts it back on the shelf. With his back to the Cultivator, he does his best to regain his composure. He isn't sure why he's been so free in his manners towards the Lan Cultivator, regardless how handsome he finds the other, he's had years of experience of keeping himself from talking about himself when he's with customers. As he turns around to regard the Cultivator with a polite and friendly smile.

"So..." He trails off as he considers a safe topic to inquire about. Wei Ying had heard about the burning of the Cloud Recesses that marked the one of reasons that started up the Sunshot Campaign. *How many years has it been since that fire?* He wonders while the Cultivator's gaze sweeps the shelf beyond him, it takes him a few seconds to realize where on the shelf the Lan is staring at.

A quick flicker of his eyes out of the corner of his eyes has him confirming that Shimei's study material resting on the shelf, in clear view for customers to see. "It seems my junior forgot to take her books with her." He walks over and collects the three manuals from the shelf. "Not for sale, although if you would like copies of beginner Alchemist tomes, perhaps you should check out your Sect's infamous library? Although, the editions you have might be out of date by... Some decades?" He ventures to remark, given that he's not sure if any of the Sects ever keep up with Alchemist teachings.

There's a slight hum from the Cultivator and it's then that he realizes that they hadn't exchange names. "Ah, forgive me but I'm Wei Ying!"

He introduces himself with a beaming smile and the air seems to change, like it's now charged.

"Wei... Ying." The Cultivator says. "Wei Wuxian."

His spine stiffens upon being called Wei Wuxian as a beginning of a headache sets in. "Lan... Zhan?" He inquires in a puzzle tone. "Lan Wangji." Then in a fond voice, "Hanguang-Jun." There's a bubbling of emotions swirling within him and impressions of a life never lived.

Tears threaten to fall as he begins to ramble, "I guess it work, huh? Only, things didn't play out like they did... I don't even have crow wings this time! Can you believe that?"

At some point, he's moved out from behind the counter and is hugging his former... future husband. It's then that he notices how much taller he is, even compared to when he'd been in his own body. It's not long before they are kissing and their hands wander about one anothers' body. It's when a throaty cough for the fourth time causes them to recall where they are and that they were suppose to be stranger to one another.

"You left your post at the counter, Shimei." He states to the young teenager. "Never mind that your books were on the shelf."

"You... You... Shixiong!" The thirteen year old exclaims with both out rage and likely in embarrassment of what she just witnessed.

He counters with a, "Shimei!" It's not long before he has a teasing smile and can feel the urge to chuckle.

"I'm telling Shifu about this!" And with that, Mu Liling stumps back into the backroom, likely going up the stairs to fetch their mutual Master. Once more, the books are left behind, although, in fairness, she hadn't been near them in the first place.

"My martial aunt, Wu Hui." He explains before he gives his Lan Wangji a mischievous smile. "I need to introduce you to Senior Xie

too!"

There's a clear questioning look in Lan Wangji gaze about both. "It seems that in this world, there's a number of students who descended from the mountain, only, they pursued other walks of life instead of that of a Cultivator." He explains. "Auntie Wu chose to posse as an Alchemist but she's been teaching me a lot more besides that."

Comparing his current life under Aunt Wu's care and lessons verse his previous life with Madame Yu, Uncle Jiang, and lessons at the Yunmeng Sect... He finds that, while guilt does eat at him, his preference between the two would be with his aunt's care, that there's something very appealing about a life where he wasn't the cause of marital issues between Madame Yu and Uncle Jiang. "There's something comforting to know... I wasn't the cause of the Wen's burning down Yunmeng Sect." He confesses.

"Not Wei Ying's fault." Lan Wangji states calmly. "Wasn't then either."

He's pretty sure that, given a few days, he'll have sorted himself out more and he'd find that his... future husband to be right. "The war went on far longer then it did." He reflects, three years verse nine years, it's a rather big difference.

"Wei Ying." His Lan Wangji states softly and pulls him in for a hug. "Was not involved."

Letting out a sigh, Wei Wuxian allows himself to be cuddled to Lan Wangji's chest. That's how his aunt and Shimei finds them in. "And this gentleman is?" Master Wu inquires after a minute had passed while Mu Liling seems slightly smug but also uncomfortable.

"Lan Zhan! Courtesy name Lan Wangji." He introduces once he's left his future husband's arms, giving a respectful bow at his aunt. "Err... It's complicated... We were married and only just meet in this life just now?"

There's a slight look of thoughtfulness before Master Wu gestures for them to follow. "Mu Liling, please hide your study material. We are not book sellers." With that, his Shimei murmurs apologies and heads for the counter to put the books behind the counter.

Wei Wuxian takes his time when it comes to taking off his top cloths. Having his wings folded upon before taking it off, his eyes glue to his husband's face as he slowly reveals his wings. Once the last of it falls to the ground behind him, he stretches his wings, ensuring that the wings come into a hug so he can show off his plumage, he's rather happy at how much more color there is on display then his previous set of wings, that had been fair smaller, the feathers in a poor state, and they never felt a part of him, he'd always been aware of their weight at his back, that he'd been different compared to his martial siblings, from all of the Cultivators that make up the Sects.

Even when they grew when he'd been given Mo Xuanyu's body and had a bit more experience with the process, they had been about the same size as before. Although, with Lan Wangji's efforts, his feathers had been far healthier and better groomed. He'd still be self conscious about them and about a particular ability that popped up once the feathers had come in, the ability to see ghostly wings at the backs of children and some teens, be they count among the common folk or Sects, it had been something he'd written off as an after effect of Mo Xuanyu's body becoming his.

"Wei Ying." Lan Wangji murmurs with a great deal of fondness and a ghost of a smile gracing his lips. Moving the wing to show off their length and show the underside, he moves forward and then, holding his husband close, bring the wings down and wrap them about his husband's shoulders and resting upon the back.

"Lan Zhan." He murmurs before he kisses his husband. It's not long before their hands wander about one the other's body. Soon enough, Lan Wangji picks him up and he uses his wings to help steady him while he laughs as he's carried to their bed.

"My my, so eager, eh Lan-Gege?" Wei Wuxian says in a teasing tone. All he gets is a hum in agreement and a few kisses about his neck and collarbone.

It's not long before they move on from being groping and kisses. There's something about the fact that they both weren't scarred from their previous experiences that also sends a thrill through him as his feels Lan Wangji's back and find it bare of the scars, never mind that there isn't a brand on either of their chests

Ending it Here

Author's Note:

So, yea, there was an accident involving a supposed Time Traveling Spirit Array only, it sent their souls to a different reality where they are reborn as themselves. Only in this dimension, things went differently, particularly regards to the number of people that left Boashan Sanren's mountain, only, they didn't get involve with the Sects, just the cannon three. Hence, when Cangse Sanren died, it wasn't Jiang Fengmian the one who'd take Wei Ying in nor did Wei Ying spend years as a street urchin either, just a few months.

I also took liberties when it came to Alchemy and the Elixir of Life that grants Immortality. That only those that have trained to use Qi was able to benefit from the elixir, that it also means that there are other kinds of Alchemic concoctions that could be fully utilized by those trained in Alchemy, while those trained in Qi could gain some benefit but not the full benefit.

I also figured that the Sunshot Campaign would be fought for longer if Wei Ying wasn't around being a Necromancer and I also figured that the common people would become invested who won. I think that those nobles would also realize that their way of life was under threat as Wen Rouhan didn't care about whether or not he kills non-Cultivators or toss them into his torture dungeons to kill in a drawn out matter.

The Lanling Jin Sect, under the management of Jin Guangshan, played at trying to have a foot in both sides, but it's also what got him killed five years into the Sunshot Campaign and saw Jin Zixuan ascend to leadership, which saw them finally join the other three major Sects. Not sure if he did marry Jiang Yanli though or that Jiang Cheng lost his Golden Core during the attack on Yunmeng Jiang Sect, never mind if both Madame Yu or Jiang Fengmian died during that attack either.

Concerning the marital problems between Madame Yu and Jiang Fengmian, yea, they still existed but that's because Wei Ying was never the true source of the trouble of their marriage. Adults involving children or blaming them for the actions of grown adults... It was never any of the kids' faults for their problems but, that didn't spare them. So, yes, Jiang Cheng does still have an inferiority complex, it's just that it's not focused on Wei Wuxian as he wasn't around to be compared against. The Wens also didn't use Wei Wuxian as an excuse for their attack on their Sect.

A Gift Beyond Compare: Grandmaster

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation.

! i - v T v - i !

Coming out of the Burial Mounds, Wei Wuxian's herald is a black bird, one might mistake it for a crow from afar but it was far too large once one sees it upon the Demonic Cultivator's left forearm and the beak sports the hook of a predator. Bright crimson eyes that glow the same shade as the infamous mischief maker often sports when making use of his new path's energy. Few can find it within themselves to match the bird's gaze for long, for they can not help but feel unease concerning the bird's presence.

Gossip spreads like fire that consumes dry tinder. Murmurs of its origins range from some ghost fusing with a carving that Wei Wuxian made and due to a foul ritual, the wood has become flesh... How it maintains the transformation is widely discussed. There's others who suggest that it hatched from a crow's egg that's been absorbing Resentful Energy for decades, waiting for the right person to hatch for, one who would be willing to feed it's infant form at the expense of that person's own life, their blood, or, perhaps, their very own Golden Core.

None have felt confident enough to approach the subject straight with the mercurial Cultivator concerning the monstrous bird. Nor would they likely trust any answer that the man would offer, given how they might not get the truth out of the man. It's clear, though, that there's something between the bird and the man, some kind of agreement or binding, for, there are many a times that Wei Wuxian would stare into that bird's crimson eyes without seeming to be aware of others.

Lan Wangji isn't sure what to make of the presence of the bird, after all, it's not as though Wei Wuxian has a prominent bloodline with a

Family Guardian nor is he the heir of his Sect, which is the Guardian of both, the Sect and the main line, which is a Spirit Kingfisher. The bird with Wei Wuxian is far too fleshy, too much mortal to be a Spiritual Beast. The bird has been seen attacking and being attacked during battle, which isn't proper, most of the Spiritual Beasts appear on the battlefield to lift the moral of their charges, helping to keep their spirits up. They do not attack enemy Cultivators, nor do they get harmed upon the battle field.

The Spirit Crane that watches over the main bloodline of the Lan Clan is also the one that watches over the Sect as a whole, is transparent with the feathers seemingly made out of clouds as it seems that the edge of the feathers seem to become clouds, these clouds seem to float away, vanishing away less then three centimeters from the Spirit Crane. The body is primarily white but instead of sporting red, the Spiritual Beast sports a very particular shade of blue.

Where the Crane is, generally, is where his brother is. According to Lan Xichen, the Crane appeared during the Full Moon after he'd been on the run, after the burning of their home. The Crane is not the only Guardian to become manifest, then again, given the danger that the Wens represent, there were many. There had been sightings, back when the Wens had been focusing on the smaller Sects but few of those Sects' Guardian had been very powerful.

The only relief that the Sects find in the manifestation of so many Guardians is that the Wens' own, which is a Spirit Tiger, one said to be black as coal with bright red stripes, has yet to descend to the Mortal Realm. If the gossip isn't cycling over the various rumors concerning Wei Wuxian's black bird, then speculation circles around the topic of Sect Guardians, those that have descended and those who have yet too, and whether there will be ascension for new Spirit Beasts as bloodline Guardians as various Cultivators prove themselves as worthy of such attention, of such note.

The black bird that accompanies Wei Wuxian is an unknown and Lan Wangji isn't sure what he should feel towards the bird. Envy,

perhaps, for being at the other's side so easily. Concern, as the very presence of the bird is gaining negative attention. Relief, that, at least, Wei Wuxian isn't alone. Fear, that, there might be truth to the idea that Wei Wuxian has made a deal with a Monster of some sort, that the price will see the dead of Wei Wuxian once this war has been won.

Catching a glimpse of the man in question, Lan Wangji notices that, yet again, Wei Wuxian doesn't have his Suibian with him. The sight of the dizi that's hanging there instead, his gaze travels up to the man's face before trying to make sense how the bird can be carried so easily upon Wei Wuxian's left shoulder. He gets a headache just looking at the bird as he tries to make sense of how something so big can so easily fit on the shoulder space.

The bird seems to notice him staring and he does his best not to look at the bird, feeling the gaze of the bird upon him regardless, focusing on Wei Wuxian as the other walks through the camp, heading for the woods. A mass of whispers surge around him once they believe Wei Wuxian is out of ear shot. The topic has to do with what business Wei Wuxian has or if there had been another argument between Sect Leader Jiang Wanyin and his martial brother.

An ethereal brightly colored Kingfisher darts towards the tent that Wei Wuxian had exited, confirming that Jiang Wanyin had been speaking with Wei Wuxian. It's not long before murmurs circle around what they'd been arguing about before Wei Wuxian's leaving the tent. He's unsure what he should do, follow after Wei Wuxian? Or try and get answers from Jiang Wanyin about what had been discussed.

He reminds himself that he has no grounds to interfere with Jiang Sect business or relationships. So, he considers his reasons for being at this portion of the camp and then, heads back to the Lan portion. He'd come here mostly to see Wei Wuxian.

As he stands in the cave that Wei Wuxian is now living within, Lan Wangji wasn't expecting to be addressed. **"You will regret it, you know. If you do not learnt to speak the words you wish to say to him."**

Stiffening, he finds the black bird now perched near him, he hadn't heard the tail-tale wing beats or felt the air alter like when the other Spirit Beasts move about. **"Time is running out and it's will not belong before they find a way to lure Ying-er to walk the trapped laden path. He will be caught, for they have had the time and resources to create so many of them."** The black bird states in an almost matter of fact way.

"Ridicules." Lan Wangji states firmly, doing his best to believe that reply but, finds that, in his heart of hearts, that it confirms his fears. His thoughts stray to A-Yuan and recalls the lunch they'd had recently.

"You have seen Hei Taiyang just moments ago." The bird states simply and he is slightly startled at how easily this bird says the name of the Spirit Tiger of the Wens. He had seen another two Spirit Guardians along side the Tiger Spirit as well, a green furred Stag and another had been pale blue winged Moth. **"You should know by now why Guardians descend to the Mortal Realm."**

He recall having seen the Crane ascend at the head of the other Lan Guardian of various bloodlines within the Sect follow after. The day of but before news of Wen Ruohan's death had spread to them. The threat of the Wens ended that day and all of the Guardian Spirits had ascended.

There had been much celebration and the fact that Wei Wuxian's bird remains only reignited the gossip and theories surrounding it. Which turned to consider what should be done with the matter of Wei Wuxian's Demonic Path. His heart speeds up at the thought of a future without Wei Wuxian. "Will help." He states.

"Can you kill human envy?" The bird inquires with a hint of bemusement. **"No, you can't win. If it were so simple, Ying-er wouldn't be living here."** The bird adds, **"If the Sects were interested in doing what's right, then Ying-er would not have been the one these Wens look towards for safety."** The bird's head turns to face out of the cave.

He thought he heard a hint of sorrow. As Lan Wangji walks to stand next to the bird, what he sees is a specter of... something. There's no sound to the vision that he witnesses and the attackers' uniforms are ever shifting, but it's clear that all Sects were among the attackers. The dirt huts are being destroyed and the Wens killed by Cultivator blades. Fire burning the fields, it's a heart wrenching vision that, after a few blinks, fades.

"What Righteousness they will display." There's scour in the bird's tone. **"What grand victory they will think they achieved."**

"Wei Wuxian?" He asks after and the bird turns to regard him with crimson gaze. **"Death. And, perhaps, Rebirth."**

"He is my Chosen Candidate." The Phoenix states and it should be an earth shattering revelation but Lan Wangji is far more concerned with the certainty that this Fallen Spirit says is his beloved's fate. **"It depends on how he faces his death."** Adds the Phoenix that has long since fallen from it's previous grace and position of power.

It's not long before the man in question is coming up the path with A-Yuan clinging to his robes while Wei Wuxian carries a tray with a tea pot and cups. "Lan Zhan! I told you I was coming with tea! Didn't I tell you to made yourself at home?" There's a slight pout and he merely hums in agreement with that statement, for that is what Wei Wuxian had requested of him.

As he does his best to recover from the revelation of a future that is coming, Lan Wangji makes plans to try and save Wei Wuxian. He will do his best to protect the man he loves, he does his best to take

in Wei Wuxian's everything. Lan Wangji is his father's son, in the end, all he can do is hope that his efforts will be enough, even if he's setting himself up against the very Heavens themselves.

It is the Phoenix that guides him to the tree where A-Yuan rests. In the toddler's hands is a crimson ribbon and a black feather that almost seems to be made out of shadow and Resentment. As he picks up the child, he finds the Stag and the Tiger seemingly appearing from out of no where. Both look so faded, but their gaze is upon A-Yuan.

"He will not remember his time here." The Stag states in a soft, wistful tone. *"He is still ours, when he is grown, you will tell him of us, of what happened here."* The Tiger orders at Lan Wangji while the gaze doesn't move at all from the feverish A-Yuan.

There is not much he can do besides nod in acknowledgement. *"Wen Ning still exists."* The Stag adds and that startles him, particularly as the Stag gives him a Look before stepping forward, the nose touches A-Yuan's forehead before the Stag vanishes in a green mist. *"Justice, Vengeance... How similar they are, in the end."* Huffs the Tiger before stepping forward and licking A-Yuan's from the tip of his nose to his brow, then vanishing away as ash being carried upon the wind.

"I have strength enough to get you out of this place." Says the Phoenix. **"The rest of the way, I leave to you, Lan Zhan."**

Then, the Phoenix leaps onto his shoulders and as the wings cover him, there's a dizzying sensation. As the wings move back and the weight upon his shoulders fades away, Lan Wangji takes a few seconds to orient himself. His back is oddly numb as he moves to stand up, it's not long before he is flying back to the Cloud Recesses with A-Yuan held close to his chest.

His brother and uncle are who waiting for him at the Gate. Lan Wangji stands as straight after he gently takes the red ribbon from

the toddler's hands, the feather has become something rather mundane, it's then that he can find the strength from within to confront the pair. As calm and collected as he can, projecting a finality into his voice, he declares at the pair but also to the Sect that birthed him, raised him, and punished him, "This is A-Yuan. He is my son."

Then he begins walking pass the pair, for there's a storm of emotions that rage within his being. Lan Wangji is feeling far too much right now, there's so many emotions that its hard for him to keep them all straight, so he resorts to being silent. There's so many things he wishes he could say, to shout but, in the end, he can't help but remember that conversation he had, back when he had lunch with A-Yuan and Wei Wuxian.

He very much regrets having been too late to speak the words of his heart, of his feelings to Wei Wuxian, for it seems he had, in the end, pick the wrong time to spoken them. Wei Wuxian hadn't been in his right mind and he regrets allowing himself to be removed from his beloved's side. Lan Wangji isn't sure if the next time he encounters Wei Wuxian if it'll be the incarnation he's familiar with or if it'll be someone different, for to be reincarnated, they drink the tea before reentering the cycle.

! i - v T v - i !

As he comes to, Guiwang let's out a sigh and open his eyes. Finding that he's curled up, he begins to try and stretch his body, but it's hard as it seems as though he's trapped in something. He begins to feel alarm at this and thus begins to thrash about, to break out of this trap.

Something cracks and instinctively, his nose towards the spot. It takes much shoving to get his nose out but the fresh air tickles his sensitive nose. Guiwang takes some time to try and work out how he got himself in this position. He'd been... Human, a man born under the name of Wei Ying, courtesy name of Wei Wuxian.

The memories aren't that sharp but then, just causing that crack exhausted him. Feeling tired but still safe, Guiwang falls asleep. It's the gentle tap upon his nose that startles Guiwang awake and pulls his snout back for a few minutes as he tries to make sense of his current predicament.

Feeling energize from his restful sleep, Guiwang focuses on making that crack larger. Using his fore-hooves to beat on spot, his efforts are rather clumsy but then, he's not even a new born just yet, so, of course he's clumsy. Still, having a hoof break through causes him to yelp in startlement of this happening. It takes him sometime to recover and he sways the hoof a bit before pulling it back.

He pushes his snout at the hole and continues to press until he manages to get most of his snout through. Then he yawns but is intent to get his head out before taking a break. It's hard and he's had to pull back to once more stomp his fore-hooves at the edges of the hole. There's light now, coming into the space from the outside.

With the hole much bigger, Guiwang manages to poke most of his head out, there's only one ear out and it takes a bit for his eyes to adjust to the world beyond the egg. There's a trio gathered around, he knows Hei Taiyang and Taixian Senlin from when he'd been Wei Wuxian. It's the Spirit Crane that he doesn't really know personally, of yes, from his previous life. Yindao Huoyan hadn't spoken much about the Spiritual Heavens nor about her time there.

"Wei Ying." And he snorts before correcting the trio, "Guiwang now." His voice is young and soft sounding, which causes him to huff while Hei Taiyang cuffs in a chuckle.

"A Qilin." Murmurs Taixian Senlin with a hint of disbelief upon examining him and checking his meridians with a gentle touch of an antler to his stubby horn upon his forehead. He yawns as best as he can, given that his whole head still isn't fully out of the egg.

"I imagine Yidao Huoyan would be proud." Comments the Crane, which he's fairly sure if the Spirit Crane of the Lan Sect. Still, he's

young and it had taken a lot of effort to get his head out of the egg.

"Who you?" Guiwang inquires as he tries to fight off the urge to sleep. "I am Yun Zhinan, the Guardian Spirit of the Lan An's blood line."

With one last yawn, Guiwang allows sleep to overtake him. With Hei Taiyang, Taixian Senlin, and Yun Zhinan watching over him.

Scales of shades of red, furry mane and tail being golden, bright blue eyes, black hooves, and a silver antler like horn. Head takes after a bull, the antler horn growing from his brow, there's a beginning of a mane at the point between between his ears, the neck will one day be hidden by the said mane that comes to the end at the front by his shoulders but for now comes across as a horse's mane. His body takes after that of a stag with the hooves of one as well, about his hooves, his forelimbs sport feathery fur growing from the back elbow down the back of the leg but begins to circle around his forelimbs near the hoof. His back legs are beginning to sport the same, at the moment, the fur mostly covers the back of his legs with it primarily seen when it's circling where his hooves are. His tail is like a lions with only the final fourth of its length sporting the fur that's going to be doing its best to grow about as long as a horse's own or, perhaps, like a donkey's.

Guiwang is certain that it's been a decade since he hatched out of that Spirit Egg and he's still considered a child by the standards of the world he finds himself living within. Although he does have his memories of having lived as Wei Wuxian, there isn't as much weight to them, it's kind of freeing, really. If there's been cases like his in the past, the lack of written records ensures that such cases have been lost to time.

It's something that's bemusing and a bit irksome, in Guiwang's opinion. It's also rather understandable as well, given the lack of hands among the various Spirits, be they Guardian Spirits with ties to the Mortal Realm or those without such ties. His own classification

is confusing as he does have a proper name, one that only Guardian Spirits receive but, he hasn't step foot onto the Mortal Realm since his hatching.

Then again , Guiwang muses to himself, *there are a few and fairly minor shrines to the Yiling Patriarch.* The number of which seem to reach nearly a dozen at once before the number decreased, likely due to them getting destroyed, and then there's the attempts at Summoning his ghost, either by Rituals, Arrays, or Musical cultivation.

Of course the prayers he gets from those who visit said places aren't ones he's able to answer, after all, he's only now getting his Spiritual Foundation to form up. It's nothing he can rush either, unlike when he'd been a man, Qi Devastation is different as a Spirit. Among Spirits, it causes age regression in both appearance and in behavior, if it's major, the Spirit ends up in hibernation until their bodies settle down.

Given his age, any Qi Devastation he would experience would be the hibernation one as he's far too young for the age regression to affect him. So, seeing as he doesn't want to sleep for a few years, Guiwang has done his best to be careful when he's learning, or is it relearning, how to pull in Qi and have it move throughout his meridians. It'll take decades before his being will be ready for him to start pooling Qi permanently in his body to create the Spirit Beast equivalent of a Golden Core.

Realizing that he's not really meditating, he does his best to banish contemplation of any thoughts besides feeling out his Qi. He's not sure how much timed passed before he's whole being gets a giant sensation of a yank. Guiwang can't help yelping and then moving onto a side as he tries to calm his breathing, which has sped up. Then, there's another yank and it hurts him so much that for a bit, his vision goes black with a ringing in his ears.

The sensation returns and there's not much he can do as he's already off kilter from the first yank on his being. There's rhythm to it

and it wears on him as he's not sure he's powerful enough to survive this assault upon his being. Unsure of when it finally happens but there's this sense of falling, of being deaf and blind to everything.

Then, there's light, it's blinding to his eyes after having experienced so much darkness. Guiwang twists his head and body just so, allowing him to see a village that he's falling almost towards. Time is an odd thing for him as it seems to go so slow and yet, before he knows it, he's slamming through a roof of some small building, landing on a warm body that's likely a mortal given there's clothing involved.

They are a tangle of limbs, clothing, and hair. "Watch it!" Complains his summoner and he's sighs because his limbs feel far too weighty along with there's a lack of something around him, something that had been far more abundant in the Spirit Realm.

There's a rush of feet out beyond the tiny building along with shouts. By the time Guiwang is standing on his own hooves, he gets a look at his summoner, who's face is painted like a hanged ghost, which is bewildering while the young boy? Young man? Either way, his summoner seems to be at a loss at the sight of him. The mortal, his summoner, is fairly tall... *Or I'm just smaller.*

Yip, smaller, after all, I am fairly young for a Qilin. Guiwang decides as he lifts his head a bit more in hopes of seeing pass his summoner to the mortals at the door. "You summoned a Monster?! You ungrateful wretch!" A voice yells and it's then that his summoner realizes that they have company.

He's not overly impressed by the person that is attached to that voice, after all, he's not a Monster, he's a Spirit, a Qilin and for another, he's not sure that the mortal has much room to be speaking about who's a Monster given the mortal's overlapping looks. It takes him a bit to realize that no, the mortal isn't that deformed, well, not physically, he's seeing the degradation of the mortal's 'soul' due to unrepentant crimes and a reflection of the mortal's morality.

Taking a look around, he realizes that there's a bit more as to why he's seeing it, as there's cuts on his summoner's arms and looking down, there's a blood created Array. Guiwang does his best to puzzle out how he'd been Summoned and the conclusion he reaches by the time a group of Lan Disciplines arrive is that his summoner had attempted to sacrifice his body to an evil ghoul, likely wanting the ghoul to kill his enemies in order to truly take possession of the body, the soul of the summoner scattered to the four direction for a time, which would take centuries before the soul would pull itself together to reenter the Reincarnation Cycle in such a way that it might as well register as a New Soul from the experience. *And that's why I'm seeing that overlap despite my age.*

There's an argument over what to do about him and Guiwang can't help but snort, for all that he's rather physical at this point, he's still not something that can be easily killed with a swing of a Cultivator's sword. Young as he is, he's pretty much immune to most methods of killing, at most, they could try and Seal him away, but that would only result in him getting set free once a Guardian Spirit intervenes upon the matter, after all, he's just a child, might as well be a baby when compared to most Guardian Spirits. So there's really nothing for him to be overly concerned about this, in fact, given that at least one of the Lan Juniors seems to be of the main line, it's likely that Yun Zhinan will be alerted to his predicament soon enough.

"Well... what do we do now?" Asks one of the Lans towards the one sporting the main line forehead ribbon after silence descending now that they've managed to get the target and co away from the shack.

"I guess we send for help." Admits that one. "It's not registering on the compass, right?"

There's an agreed hum from the one of the Lans and he finds himself rather curious about what compass they're talking about. "Just what were you trying to do? To, you know, end up with... That!" The more outspoken Lan asks of his summoner.

"It wasn't... I didn't... I just wanted everything to end!" It's clear that things haven't gone as his summoner has planned but the Lan juniors seem rather startled by that out burst. He can smell the depression rolling off of the older, yet younger man.

He gingerly walks over, nudging the summoner with his nose. It takes a bit before there's a hand going through his golden mane. It's like the collection of juniors blink, look at one another before staring at him once more, like it's the first time they are seeing him.

"Is... is it a...", "A Qilin?", and "It's doesn't look right, right?" Other such murmurs circle through the crowd as his summoner doesn't pay them any mind, focusing on something Guiwang can't see. The stroking is done at a rhythm while he's getting gawked at with expressions ranging from bewilderment to awe.

Silence again descends among the Lan juniors, they all seem to be at a loss as to how deal with either his summoner, one Mo Xaunyu, and himself that none of them seem incline to try and snap the man out of his thoughts. He finds it odd that there's a weak Golden Core within Mo Xuanyu, yet he isn't part of a Sect, nor does it seem that he's a wandering rogue Cultivator either. There's something about this that just wasn't adding up.

And then Lan Wangji descends from the sky. It's then that Guiwang is very certain that things just got complicated as, well, he'd thought a heck of a lot more time had passed during his incubation in the Spirit Egg. *None of them said it had only been a few years!* The juniors greet the much older Cultivator and the junior, Lan Sizhui, gets asked to report on the situation.

Just how long have I been dead? Guiwang wonders, it seems that him stiffening at the sight of his old nemesis and comrade caused Mo Xuanyu to snap out of own thoughts. The man stammers at the sight of Lan Wangji, "Haunguang-jun!"

Golden eyes sweep over Mo Xuanyu and he feels rather self conscious all of a sudden, he kind of tries to hide behind Mo Xuanyu

before Lan Wangji could look at him. It's foolish impulse, after all, Mo Xuanyu isn't that bulky nor tall enough to hide his total body. Echos of emotions washing over him, they are surprisingly hard to reign in.

A bit lost in memories from his last life, Guiwang jerks his head when he realizes that Lan Wangji is crouching down before him, almost looking at him on an equal footing. His heart is pumping and he wonders if Lan Wangji can tell who he'd been, that he remembers his life as Wei Wuxian. It's irrational, after all, he doesn't look human nor can he really speak to them, he lacks the Cultivation to do so.

"A Qilin." States Lan Wangji. "Young." Those golden eyes and face turn away from him, Guiwang shakes his head as if that would dismiss the feelings warring within him, of disappointment of Lan Wangji not looking at him and of shame of the mess he'd caused as Wei Wuxian.

He moves out of the shack, moving to where Mo Xuanyu is, wanting to stay close to the only one who might be as lost as him. Guiwang is doing his best to gain control over the pounding of his heart along with his own thoughts. He's not above seeking comfort from Mo Xuanyu, demanding it even, as it's what he craves at this point. While not his first choice, Mo Xuanyu is all he has at this point, and, perhaps, he's all Mo Xuanyu has as well.

All he knows is that Mo Xuanyu tried to shatter his soul due to the tragedy that has been his life up to this point. And part of Guiwang can very much relate to that. To just wanting it all to just... end. The Yiling Patriarch's life by the end, it had been filled with despair and so much heart break. So many died because of... Wei Wuxian and it's something that Guiwang had managed to put to the side, after all, everyone Wei Wuxian had known was surely dead, right?

So, why would Guiwang need to linger on all of Wei Wuxian's regrets? He'd been in the Spirit Realm, there's no humans there nor did there seem to be much of an issue about him recalling his last life. It's not like there's a great deal of pressure for him to get

powerful as quickly as possible. Nor did it seem likely that he'd encounter Resentful Energy at the Spirit Realm either.

Feeling a certain someone's eyes on him, Guiwang looks back at Lan Wangji, who's back is towards the shack. There's something in those eyes that puzzles him but the elder Lan turns his attention towards Mo Xuanyu. "Come with me to Gusu Lan Sect." It kind of sounds like a request and Mo Xuanyu is startled by being addressed.

"Ah... Are you sure? After all, you should know why I was kicked out of Lanling." Is Mo Xuanyu's response.

"Eh? You were part of That Sect?" Guiwang can't help but exclaim out loud. He doesn't get the how of it, particularly given the clear poverty that Mo Xuanyu seems to be living in.

A few of the juniors also have their own verbal exclamations at this offer. There's a familiar hum and he tilts his head to see Mo Xuanyu's reaction and isn't disappointed by the various emotions that flicker across the face nor in the eyes. There's clear desperation but a wariness.

Then his summoner looks down at him, as if expecting him to decide for the both of them. Guiwang isn't sure why he's getting pulled into this, it's not like he's sticking around in the Mortal Realm for long. Someone is going to becoming to fetch him, so, in the end, it's Mo Xuanyu who's going to be living with this decision.

"Yes." Mo Xuanyu states in a surprisingly firm voice. Then, as if realizing how that answer sounds, the younger adult is a bundle of nerves and stammers, "That is... This unworthy one would like to accept such an offer." Complete with a proper bow of respect.

Lan Wangji gives a slight nod of acceptance before eyes flicker towards him, clearly gagging his reaction to this. Guiwang does his best to look undisturbed by any of this, after all, it's not like he's here to stay, right?

- Ending it Here -

Strength of the Pack: Grandmaster

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation.

Jiang Caihe watches as his Shifu, Lan Jizhi, who is the head of the Zhuanbian part of the Sect speak with Jiang Fengmian, who is the head of the rest of the Sect. His Shifu came to into his position about the same time as Jiang Fengmian's father took his own post and has yet to name his replacement, after all, it's not a post that gets past from one family generation to the next. Lan Jizhi's an old Zhuanbian, he's animal shape is that of a fox, which is held up as the most common animal shape among Zhuanbian and Jiang Caihe wouldn't be that surprised if that's his own animal shape. *Or a civet.*

Glancing to his right, he notices Jiang Yanli studying him. They are nearly the same age, he's the elder of them by two years, which makes her eleven to his thirteen. Unlike him, though, she's capable of Cultivating a Golden Core, but she's not very talented in that style. In fact, she's far more suited to the Cultivation practices that the Zhuanbian have developed in order to keep up with their non-transforming 'siblings' or 'cousins'.

Although, once he experiences his first transformation, it's more then likely that he'll out pace her by leaps and bounds. After all, it's been developed by Zhuanbian for Zhuanbian, but that doesn't mean that there haven't been humans who developed a style using the basics that most Zhuanbian are encouraged to learn. The Jiang Sect does, in fact, have it's own, human techniques and style, which is what Jiang Yanli is likely going to be mastering in. In the end, the Yunmeng Jiang Sect is the only Sect that has membership of both human and Zhuanbian, a hybrid of both a Zhuanbian School and a human Sect.

His Shifu's position is that of a School Header in the social circles of the Zhuanbian as he represents the Yunmeng Jiang Sect at all

Zhuanbian functions and School tournaments. Most Zhuanbian Cultivation practices use the term School instead of Sect, they are also a bit more lax about who they'll accept as students compared to Sects. Not that they are more open minded then the Sects when it comes to accepting human students, but then, there are a few Schools who's membership is all human.

"Your elder siblings are Jiang Xuan and Jiang Feng?" He blinks in surprise at the question before giving a sharp nod, Jiang Caihe is the only son of Jiang Xing who can't Cultivate a Golden Core, which is a sign that he was born a Zhuanbian. "So, we're cousins then as well."

Jiang Caihe finds it rather nice that she thinks so, his parents and siblings are rather uncomfortable around him, so what relations he has with them have deteriorated to the point that he mostly addresses them by their courtesy names and him getting addressed by just his name. "I guess?" He admits, it's not like his blood relations ultimately matter among the Zhuanbian branch of the Sect, it's not like it means he's automatically going to be Lan Jizhi's successor, given his Shifu's Cultivation and the natural long life expectancy that Zhuanbian have simply due to their transformation abilities, old age isn't likely to claim his Shifu's life.

Looking away, he takes a bit to find the right words to explain things. "When it was proven that I couldn't form a Core, things changed." He admits slowly and softly as he finds himself looking up at the sky. "Out of my brothers... Out of my siblings, I am different. I'm Zhuanbian."

"It's cause problems between my parents." He admits simply as he tries not to wince at the memories of the various fights between his father and mother. "They don't have any problems with Zhuanbian, it's just... They never expected to have a child who was Zhuanbian." Jiang Caihe admits with a bitter smile and a slight shrug of his shoulders.

"It must be hard." Jiang Yanli says with clear sympathy and he glances a her before looking back at where Shifu is with Jiang

Fengmian. "With my lack of affinity with typical Cultivation, I think my mother's starting to put a lot of pressure and expectations on my little brother."

"Won't know until he gets to that age." He murmurs, Jiang Caihe had been nine years old when it had been discovered he couldn't condense the Qi within his body into the typical space where one creates a Golden Core. Some don't learn to do that until age eleven or twelve.

Given how capable he'd been with Qi manipulation, he's parents had been rather proud of his potential as a Cultivator. That he'd out strip both of his elder brothers and had a bright future as, maybe, serving as Jiang Cheng's second in command and being the eldest martial brother of the Sect. *Four years and a lot has changed in that regards.* Jiang Caihe thinks to himself as Madam Yu approaches with her hand maidens.

The wife of Jiang Fengmian came to Lotus Pier with certain opinions about the place of Zhuanbian in the world and didn't like the fact that Lan Jizhi stands as Jiang Fengmian's equal when it comes to matters within the Sect. So, things changed and not for the better, as far as the Zhuanbian of Lotus Pier is concerned. Yes, the other Sects never particularly liked how Jiang Sect was organized but the previous leaders had been firm about it not being any of their concern, that the head of the Zhuanbian part of the Sect should be given the same respect as the human head.

"Maybe you should go." He murmurs softly at Jiang Yanli as the hand maidens give them a look. They had been sparring earlier but then, they were given leave to take a break while Shifu noticed Jiang Fengmian's approach.

"Grandmaster Lan Jizhi hadn't dismissed me." Is her reply and Jiang Caihe gives her a particular Look before flickering his eyes towards the clearly angry Madam Yu. "She doesn't have the authority." Jiang Yanli states but he gives her a skeptical look.

He gets a look of resolution in return, so he drops the matter. "Have you read Jiang Song's treaty concerning Spirit Infusion with living plants?" Jiang Caihe asks. "I think it's not that dissimilar to how Zhuanbian can infuse dying animals that inhabit areas around Sects and Schools so that when they die, their souls linger around to be transformed into Spirits, which are then generally used as messengers or sentinels of the School."

"Wouldn't that bit a touch harder? Plant's aren't the same as beasts." Jiang Yanli reasons.

"Point." He admits. "But it's been noted that the local plant life around Sects and Schools are in possession of more Spiritual Energy then those that generally grow elsewhere."

"The lotuses do seem different then those found in Yunping City." Jiang Yanli muses. "We have more white flowers, they are larger, and look more green."

"He Xin's suggests eating their seeds to help with replenishing ones' Qi." He adds. "Which makes you wonder if we internally infuse crops with Spirit Energy if their produce would have the same tendency to do the same."

"But that might take generations to occur, after all, the lotuses of the Sect have been exposed for centuries." Jiang Yanli points out. "They had time to adjust to the local Spiritual Nature that Sects and Schools create."

Then Lin Xiu comes padding over in her animal shape, which is that of a Pallas's Cat. The size is gigantic when compared to the actual feline, which is typical for Zhuanbian. The animal shape of a Zhuanbian might be either a foot shorter or bigger then their human one. Jiang Caihe resists the urge to reach out and pet the fluffy coast that Lin Xiu sports when she comes to where they are standing, then she bows to Jiang Yanli before a shimmer then blur that signifies a transformation, then Lin Xiu moves up from the crouch, looking

strictly human without a hint of feline feature and clad in the Zhuanbian uniform.

"I think it's best that we take this as a dismissal." His elder martial sister states, he glances around to see that the other students have been slowly stealing out of the training yard. Many of whom are in their animal shape, thus his elder martial siblings. The trio of bears are very eye catching, the black furred one is the most eye drawing one compared to the two sporting brown coats.

There is several canines Zhuanbian grouped together, three of whom are dholes and the remaining four are wolves. There's no other feline Zhuanbian besides Lin Xiu nor are there any of the foxes and civets. Exchanging a look with Jiang Yanli, he agrees with that, after all, it's clear that Madam Yu is just getting started from the still frosty look upon her face.

With them heading out, so do his elder martial siblings. He wonders if they'll receive punishment for leaving without getting an actual dismissal from Shifu. As his elder martial siblings head off, most assuming a more human shape, although there are plenty who flaunt their control of their shape by keeping features of their animal shape while human. Typically in the form of hair color, eye color, or having their finger nails look different, either sharp or just the color matching the claw color.

It's a display of control, a visual way to show how well they can control their Cultivation achievement, a mark of pride for a Zhuanbian who's a member of a School. Untrained Zhuanbian typically can transform completely between their animal shape and their human one. Their cloths often victim to the process.

During the tournaments he's visited since he'd turned twelve and have participated in a few underage matches, Jiang Caihe recalls the ultimate display of control mastery that a Zhuanbian can show. It's when a Zhuanbian kind of looks like a uniformed hybrid, with the stance of their human shape but with their head and arms displaying their animal shape. Of course the hands are the hardest to mingle as

having fingers instead of paw toes seems like a tricky thing to maintain.

That level of control, there's not many who've achieved it among the Zhuanbian of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect outside of Lan Jizhi and three of their instructors. Those three are Su Heng, who's animal shape is that of a Small Indian Civet, she teaches history, Mu Chao, his animal shape is a Binturong, he is their calligraphy teacher, and, finally, Qing Gou's animal shape is that of a Corsac Fox, he's the Core Library's caretaker, Lan Jizhi's fox shape is that of a Tibetan Fox.

"You'll be experience it soon, right? You're thirteen." Jiang Yanli assures him and Jiang Cai is a bit surprised at her deciding to assure him.

Guess it must have shown. He mentally admits. "It comes when it comes." He parrots out the various words of reassurance he's gotten from his elder martial siblings.

As they begin walking towards the public library, it's one that allows civilians to enter and read the contents, although most of that are novels as the Cultivation books and scrolls are located else where, never mind the Core Library that's protected by various means and methods, not all of them orthodox by either traditions. To be able to freely access the contents, you need to be keyed in by both heads of the Sect.

"Are you worried about what your animal shape will be?" Inquires Jiang Yanli, it's clear she's a touch wistful. "I know that they say that foxes are common but, well, this is Lotus Pier."

Jiang Caihe can't help but grin, he knows what she means. "Civets don't have that rich... history to them, you know?" He continues, "Everyone knows that it's easy for Huli Jings to walk among the population due to how many fox shaped Zhuanbian there are!"

The eleven year old snorts and giggles a bit. Likely humoring him a bit, given how dramatic he tried to make that sound. Just as they reach the public library, a certain seven year old comes sulking out of it with his hand wrapped around the collar of one of his pet dogs.

"Really A-Cheng? You know better then to let one of them linger out of their kennel." Jiang Yanli says as she speeds up to stand before her younger brother.

"Sorry sister, but I thought I closed the door properly!" Jiang Cheng states.

He's not sure which of the three dogs this one is but she does try to raise up to lick Jiang Cheng's face. It's not long before Jiang Yanli leads her younger brother to the kennel. Jiang Caihe continues on, entering into the library, he's hoping to finish reading The Flute's Calling, he'd stopped reading with just two chapters left of the novel. He's hoping to finish it before supper.

It's October when Jiang Caihe catches his first glimpse of the stray that Jiang Fengmian brought home, Wei Ying is the son of a Zhuanbian by the name of Wei Changze and one Cangse Sanren, who had been a discipline of one Baoshan Sanren. The boy is scrawny and still rather shy when it comes to people outside of his adopted father, Jiang Fengmian, and his adopted sister, Jiang Yanli. Things between Jiang Cheng and Wei Ying seem to be strained due to the new family member having a deadly fear of dogs, which has caused talks concerning giving up Jiang Cheng's three dogs.

The kid is seven, will be eight come the end of the month, which will be in about a week's time. Rumors, of course, run wild about the topic of Wei Ying, his parents, and about how Jiang Fengmian's relationship was with the pair, although most seem to be leaning that he's still not over the crush he had for Cangse Sanren. Although, from what he's ease-dropped from some of the older instructors, people might have the wrong idea of which of the two Jiang Fengmian is pining over.

Wei Changze's animal shape had been that of a Raccon Dog, which bring into question if Wei Ying could be a Zhuanbian due to that. It's hard to say, given that the kid only started learning new techniques a few days after arriving, which had been by the end of September, beginning of October. What little Cultivation Wei Ying had been taught by his parents and he'd been practicing, doesn't really mean anything as it's a mixture of Zhuanbian practices and very simple Cultivation practices.

According to Jiang Yanli, Wei Ying had gotten very upset when Jiang Cheng wished he's a Zhuanbian, then he should be dog shaped. Jiang Fengmian have gotten more particular concerning the kennels due to Wei Ying's fear, although he figures its a matter of time that they are given away, after all, Jiang Cheng doesn't have the greatest record when it comes to keeping the dogs within the kennel. It had taken time for both Jiang Fengmian and Jiang Yanli to reassure the boy that there haven't been a Zhuanbian with a dog shape, just wild canines, like dholes. Neither brought up mention of wolves for fear that Wei Ying might lump them in with dogs.

Shifu has been asked to discourage those Zhuanbian with canine shapes to be discrete about where they wander around in their animal shape. Which means, keeping to the Zhuanbian training portions of Lotus Pier. It's something that had already been happening, the Zhuanbian staying out of the public eye when it comes to wandering around in their animal shapes, Madam Yu didn't like the sight of or reminder that Zhuanbian made up a decent portion of the Sect.

"Isn't that a little too advance for you?" Jiang Caihe inquires upon catching sight of Wei Ying in the shadows of the more private library, the one that holds copies of books for Golden Core Cultivation style. *It's something he must have seen Jiang Yanli practice.* He reasons to himself.

The kid seems to be rather startled and, maybe he imagined it, but there had been a hint of fear, though it vanished as an easy, earnest smile crops up with eyes getting closed. Suddenly a stream of words

come pouring forth from Wei Ying, there's a bit of a dialect to them as well, but that's expected given he hadn't been in Lotus Pier long. It's rather overwhelming and he wonders just how the kid can breath, only it does seem that Wei Ying does, in fact, need to breath as the kid begins gulping for air, panting and does try to make a run for it, only for him to stumble and fall forward, he is quick to steady the kid.

"Calm down, take deep and steady breaths, ok?" His errand wasn't that pressing as he moves to crouch a bit down while moving so that Wei Ying is before him. With both hands on the kid's shoulders, he adds, "Like this." He inhales in showing how to do it, holds it, before releasing it. "See?"

It's clear that Wei Ying is nervous but does breath as he's shown. The slight redness fades and he pats the shoulders gently before taking his hands from the shoulders. "Also, don't try techniques without a senior's supervision, ok? Cultivation takes time and a lot can go wrong if you over use your Qi or end up channeling it wrong." With that said, he raises from his crouch and heads on his way.

Jiang Caihe brushes off the kid's whole demeanor as something like embarrassment of getting caught and him being a stranger. Wei Ying is still shy and Lotus Pier is a rather big place, never mind the visitors that come through to make use of the public library. He does wonder why Wei Ying is already wearing a near duplicate of the offical human uniform of the Sect, generally, kids under twelve wear either a brown, for boys, or gray, for girls in a style that's a bit similar to the Zhuanbian uniform as it's a very simple to change into and out of.

Not even Jiang Cheng was allowed to wear a bit of purple with his uniform, a uniform who's style did share a bit more then that of the human uniform of the Sect.

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His eighteenth Birthday approaches, his ascension to Zhuanbian leadership is approaching far too quickly, at least in his mind it is. So,

hearing knocking on the door, it startles him, not enough for his shape to alter all that much, just his claw nails lengthening. Being gentle as can be, he puts a book mark between the pages before closing it. He awkwardly moves back from the table then walks gingerly towards the door, ears flickering back as he mentally debates reverting completely back to his human shape, he's been both studying and practicing holding his current hybrid shape, after all, given he's now Lan Jizhi's appointed heir, he knew it's something he needs to it to seemingly come across as effortlessly and feel that it's natural.

His nose twitches as he catches the sense of Instructor Mu Chao the closer he gets to the door. Straightening his pose and doing his best to cause his shoulder muscles to relax, Jiang Caihe opens the door, being sure to be gentle with the handle as he opens the door. "Instructor Mu." His voice is rough sounding and his ears flatten in embarrassment.

Mu Chao takes a moment to study him and he resists the urge to run his clawish nails through his mane. "Grandmaster wishes for your presence." The older Zhuanbian states before adding."It's about Wei Ying."

Giving a nod of acknowledgement, the Master turns and walks away, leaving him some privacy to do some clean up before heading off to meet with his Shifu, the Zhuanbian Grandmaster of the Sect. Closing the door upon deciding to take on his human shape, with thoughts going through what he knows. The fact that it's Wei Ying instead of Wei Wuxian says a lot, given both Jiang Cheng and said child in question have been using Courtesy names since age ten.

With his notes and writing set settled in his personal space, he picks up the books and the scroll. Carrying them out of the room, he puts them on the shelf that's by the door that leads out of the study suits. Taking a moment, Jiang Caihe uses his Cultivation to alter his eyes, not just their color but also taking on the ability to see in darkness at the cost of seeing certain colors. It's fairly dark out and he is very much aware that he skipped dinner now.

Walking casually through the Zhuanbian Cultivation library, he once more allow his thoughts to wander over the subject that is Wei Ying. The child is eleven years old, turning twelve come autumn. He's considered the main reason for why Jiang Wanyin's dogs had been given away when the last straw had to do with how he hadn't locked the door of the kennels properly, thus the three ran rampant in the human Cultivation library, if not for the tradition of having a secret, secure, and core library that contains both human and Zhuanbian records and Cultivation manuals, scrolls, and the like, it would have been harder to replace what was lost to the trio of dogs.

Wei Ying has proven himself to be very talented in the beginner practices of both Cultivation styles. He's bright as he's been able to catch up and out pace disciples of his own age group. The only thing that's been uncertain has to do with if he actually Cultivated a Golden Core or not as there have been tests done that suggest that he's able but it's telling that he hasn't.

He's clever and I know he's accompanied Jiang Yanli into the core library. Jiang Caihe thinks as he cross through the grounds, heading for the building that's for both leader's offices. He knows that there's books and scrolls in the Sect collection not meant to be added to two Cultivation libraries. It's not hard to believe that there might be a Zhuanbian technique that could trick the usual tests, after all, there have been periods where Zhuanbian have been singled out for 'special' treatment by various Sects for one reason or another, though the general reason has to do with not wanting 'animals' among the 'civil' folk.

Carp Tower has those Zhuanbian hired as servants wear collars. Even have them spend time in the gardens in their animal shape. Jiang Caihe reflects. *Never mind the Zhuanbian ghetto that's a few miles east of the tower, with a wall around it.*

Jiang Yanli is betrothed to the heir of Jin Sect, one Jin Ming, Courtesy name Jin Zixuan. He does his best to steer his own thoughts from Jiang Yanli as he's suppose to be musing over Wei Ying. He knows Jiang Yanli's feelings for Wei Ying and everyone

knows how Madam Yu's feelings, never mind opinions on the kid in question. It's likely why Jiang Fengmian pulled away from Wei Ying, in the foolish hopes that it would keep Madam Yu from... Well, it didn't work as all it did was make it so that nobody could contradict her conduct towards the child.

Thankfully, as long as there hadn't been a Golden Core, Madam Yu wasn't in a position to have any private lessons with Wei Ying. *Now it looks like she never will have any authority over him.* Jiang Caihe thinks as he feels a thrill of satisfaction at the thought. For all that something have changed, in the end, there's little the woman do when it comes to directing Zhuanbian members of the Sect as they fall under a different command hierarchy. Not even Jiang Fengmian could give Zhuanbian disciples orders or assign punishments, he would need to go through Lan Jizhi and it's the same for his Shifu, he can't give orders or punishments to the human Cultivators of the Sect.

Once through the entrance of the building, Jiang Caihe takes a moment to alter his eyes, returning his full range of color while keeping the yellow green that is his lion shape's eyes. It's not long before he arrives at the Zhuanbian Grandmaster's office. He knocks on the door before calling out, "Shifu, Instructor Mu said you wish for my presence?"

"Come in and meet your newest martial sibling." Calls his Shifu and he does just that. It's then that he catches sight of the individual in question, who's eyes are a rich blue along with movement in the hair, a pair of yellow ears flatten against the head.

He raises an eyebrow at the sight, doing his best to keep his curiosity from causing him to voice any number of questions and the like. "Elder martial brother greets his new younger martial brother." He manages to say in a very even tone, which is surprising to himself given the excitement humming through his whole being. He wonders if Wei Ying's animal shape will keep that blue or if, once he's older, they'll take on a more traditional coloration that felines have.

Wei Ying gives a nod but stays silent. There's some fidgeting in the chair, but that's likely due to the tail that's swing behind him, which shows that Wei Ying's animal shape is that of a leopard. Given how fluffy it is, Jiang Caihe assumes that the kind of leopard is that of an Amur Leopard. He can only assume how uncomfortable the uniforms must be, particularly around the likely hole that got created when the tail forcefully grew.

"This is Jiang Caihe, he's going to be taking my position come summer." Shifu explains and it seems that Wei Ying has heard of him, likely from his adopted sister. "Now then, you know where the Zhuanbian dormitories are?"

Wei Ying nods, the kid stands up from the chair. Shifu takes out a Dormitory Token that also sports the room number upon it. "This is your assigned room and your Token. I believe Jiang Yanli will have your things ready to be moved into said room at some point tomorrow." With a nod of understanding, Shifu offers the Dormitory Token and Wei Ying walks over, taking it. With a murmur of thanks, the kid bolts from the room.

He walks over and closes the door before moving the chair from where Wei Ying had put it. Once before the desk, he sits in it, waiting for his Shifu to recollect himself. "They tried to Seal his heritage." Lan Jizhi states after reheating the tea cup and downing it.

They, huh? He muses to himself, given who's Wei Ying's usual partner in crime is... "It wasn't one of the actual techniques recorded in the library. Just using basics along with some highly theological texts that he likely read while in his adoptive sister's company."

"They've been using Talismans to give false positives when it came to testing." Shifu continues. "It's a good thing we set the line at having a Golden Core before graduating the youngsters into the classes for human Cultivators."

"How furious was Headmaster Jiang?" He inquires after the silence drags on, in which his Shifu pours himself another cup of tea before

reheating it. *How satisfied was Madam Yu over this development?* He silently wonders.

"A fair amount. heir Jiang Wanyin will be rather busy in the coming months, as long as a certain party doesn't interfere." Lan Jizhi answers and they both suspect that Madam Yu will put her foot down, cutting it short.

"So, likely not the full six months." He murmurs as he recalls the typical minimum time using Talismans to trick testing. "What did they get wrong to cause it to raise up like that?" He inquires.

"Inverted the characters for human and Zhuanbian." His Shifu states, then gestures at the papers before him. Getting to his feet, he collects them and reads through them along with the copy of the Array set up.

He hums at the various reasons and the quotes for how the Array should be set up. He finds himself impressed at the framework that Wei Ying managed to set up, framework that did mirror at least the beginnings of one of the Zhuanbian Suppression techniques. "Almost looks like the beginnings of the medical Suppression Array, if I'm not mistaken."

Putting the papers back down, he returns to his seat. "Wei Ying is quite the talent." He remarks.

"The Jiang Sect is blessed with another genius." Jiang Caihe feels his face heat up at the compliment. "Though this one is far more reckless then the one before me at this moment."

"We'll speak more come the morning, you best go grab a snack then get some sleep. We've got a lot to deal with come tomorrow." Lan Jizhi states and he nods, his stomach making itself known about how empty it is.

"Why can't I go?!" Wei Ying snaps as the fifteen year old paces his office. "Jiang Cheng and plenty of other discplines are premitted to go!"

"The Gusu Lan Sect refuse to premit Zhuanbian from entering their Cloud Recesses under normal circumstances." Jiang Caihe explains yet again. "Lan Cultivators have a very rigid view of how the world should be and are thus bigoted when it comes to the matters when Zhuanbian are involved." He adds, "Grandmaster Lan Jizhi had been born there after all but he'd had been 'politely' asked to leave when he'd been ten and he was tested."

Wei Ying pauses a bit in his pacing to turn his head to stare at human shaped protrait of Shifu that he's hung in the office. "They never welcomed him back." He finds himself remarking. "They seem to pretend he didn't exist during the times he use to attend Sect Discusion Conferences when they'd at least stare at the previous Zhuanbian leadership, a Zhuanbian woman by the name of Zhou Nuan."

"Animal shape?" Wei Ying asks curiously and he replies, "Small Asian Mongoose."

"Died during child birth of their third babe." He recalls, rather sad at when he'd read her entry in the core library along with a note about how it could have been avoided if they'd waited a few years before trying for a son. "Lin Xiu is one of her grandchildren actually. Her father was the son she died giving birth to." *The only son.*

Jiang Caihe studies Wei Ying, the Jiang group will be leaving tomorrow and the younger Zhuanbian. He'll have to speak with Jiang Yanli about making sure Wei Ying doesn't follow after the group. It wouldn't due to cause a strain between the two Sects due to the willful disregard of someone who does, in fact, know better. *Or should.* He thinks to himself.

The current political climate among the Sects is already bound towards the path of conflict, the four major Sects are being willfully

blind to how the Wen Sect have been treating the so called minor Sects. His elders among the Zhuanbian have sent reports about how Wen Cultivators are being encouraged to behave as they want when it comes to the targetted Sect. The local Schools had already closed up ranks in Qishan and the few times their students have gone missing near Night Hunt locations, well, so too have Wen Cultivators. *Night Hunts are dangerous, aren't they? Can't always trust the word of civilians, they wouldn't know the difference between a possessed animal and a Resentment fuelled Monster.*

The Schools have become more careful as have various communities of strictly Zhuanbian population. The tournament arenas security has seen increased by many means, old Arrays are being powered up and updated to travel plans needing to be submitted so to set up temperary Arrays along those roads. History shows that it's not paranoia when there are people out there who wouldn't mind seeing dead Zhuanbian skinned and their pelts turned into trophes.

Which reminds me... "How goes your training? Particularly your control over your shapes?" Jiang Caihe inquires. "Tournament season is going to be starting come this autumn and I want you to sign up for it."

Wei Ying frowns as the young man regards him. "I'm not interested in participating in that." The other states but he merely shake his head.

"All Zhuanbian of the Sect has at least one circuit of Tournament participation once they achieve a certain level of control of their shapes and mastery of Qi manipulation." A circuit is two years with a year of casual, friendly matches among the School before the Tournament begins to be about rankings and presitage. His own circuit had been when he'd been eighteen, as he was sixteen when his first transformation happened. Shifu had still attended as his role as Grandmaster but not as his previous post of leader of the Zhuanbian portion of the Jiang Sect.

He managed to achive the second rank postion during his first and, ultimately, last circuit participation. The one who out ranked him was one Liu Zhen, she's of the Onyx Serpent School, it had been her third time participating in a circuit, and she really did have something to prove given how unusal she was, her animal shape being a prey animal, a Sambar Deer, which is a very rare happening among Zhuanbian, a replian animal shape is pretty much legendary, something that's like a, once in a thousand year kind of deal. Liu Zhen's two previous rankings had seen her in the top ten, her second saw her at fourth ranking and her first at nineth.

"You know... your sister has fought in the Tournament matches in the off years." He decides to go from a different angle and sure enough, that catches Wei Ying's interest. "There are a few strictly human Schools and while they do things differently, they do have their own system for Tournaments."

"Yanli's placed fifth, I think, in that system." He manages to keep a smile from his face at the look of outrage at the thought that Jiang Yanli fighting. Of fighting in Zhuanbian style Tournaments, in using the Jiang human style at that.

He personally doesn't understand why Jiang Yanli lets her younger brothers think she's meek, then again, he does get why she never mentions it with either parent as it would likely bring up memories of Wei Changze with Jiang Fengmian and Madam Yu likely scoff at how that should be something to be proud of, given it only matters among the Schools and Zhuanbian, likely would have preferred her focusing on her Cultivating a Golden Core and sticking to that style of Cultivation.

Jiang Yanli is also the only human in the Sect that's mastered the human style of Zhuanbian Cultivation. So, yea, there's not many besides the Zhuanbian members who know just how lethal she can be. *It's depressing that she's marrying out. She could have taken the post of Instructor to teach other humans who lack incline towards the Golden Core Cultivation in the style.* He thinks to himself.

"There's going to be a off circuit Tournament happening in two weeks. Her name is already on the participates for matches." Jiang Caihe says in a off handed way. "I'll have to ask around to get a final list for those who want to go ready." He has plans to send it in two days time.

So far, Wei Ying's name has never been on that list as the young man does his best to ignore that he's actually a Zhuanbian instead of a Golden Core Cultivator. He still has the sword that Jiang Fengmian gave him when he'd been ten, when he also began to go by a Courtesy name. Suibian is often worn when classes were done for the day along with Wei Ying figuring out how to Cultivate a Sword Spirit though various means, he'd been keyed into the core library so he's had free reign to go through the texts without any supervision.

Majority of Zhuanbian styles are all unarmed as with control over their shapes, they are never without weapons, be they fangs or claws. Weapons don't alter to fit the transformation of the body and fingers are opinional. It's rather impracitial for them to Cultivate a weapon, although there have been examples of musical Cultivation, the creation of musical instruments becomeing their Spiritual Tools. It's not something that the Jiang Sect practices, musical Cultivation, like the majority of Sect, it's martial Cultivation that is practiced, although there have been studies into Talismen and Array design in the past.

"Your lying, elder sister isn't someone who fights." Wei Ying declares in a very childish manner and he merely hums. "Well, it hardly matters what your thoughts are, Yanli's name is on the list of those looking to particpate in matches for that Tournament."

Without a by your leave, the younger Zhuanbian leaves his office, the door doesn't close all the way, so it rests on him to close it. With that, Jiang Caihe begins again reading the duplicated report concerning how the Wen Cultivators dealt with their latest target. The observers being members of Wings of Reeds School that was situated near the now destroyed small Sect, there had been a rivallry

when it came to who the locals spoke with concerning their troubles of a spiritual nature.

"She won?!" Wei Ying exclaims and he can't help himself by replying, "I thought you refused to watch such 'barbarity'."

There's a few humorous snorts from the School representatives within earshot, he knows their Schools by their uniforms but not who, in particular, is in attendance. None of them sport the hybrid shape, the most features on display are at least four; hair color, eyes, nails, and teeth. Jiang Caihe displays a completely lion head with a mixture of features concerning his upper-body, leaving his hips and lower completely human.

Wei Ying's displaying a leopard head but only fur covered arms, but there's a clear look of destain being given. He merely raises his cup of rice wine and down it in a single shot as his eyes focus back on the sight of Jiang Yanli helping up her defeated opponent who's name he had already forgotten but is a member of Gem Sparkling Star School. As he reaches for the jug, hearing a gulping sound but didn't think much of it, at least until he finds his jug of wine there and he glances back at Wei Ying to find the younger Zhuanbian gulping it down, much to his annoyance.

"If you were thirsty, you should have bought your own wine." He states in a flat tone and there's another round of chuckles. Wei Ying is, at least making an impression, a bad one, but one none the less. He wonders what odds they'll give him when it comes to betting come autumn.

"But, sister is..." Whines Wei Ying once the jug is empty and the young man lowers it to address him. "She's so gentle! And kind!" The younger Zhuanbian whines.

"You can be both, kind and gentle but also able to defend yourself." Jiang Caihe states in a slightly annoyed tone. With a sigh, he glances around the School Representative Section for a wandering

vendor or someone looking to earn a bit of coin to fetch things for the attendees. "Those traits are not exclusive, you know."

Not seeing anyone like that, he considers sending Wei Ying before deciding he could also buy something to eat plus be the first to greet Jiang Yanli, who'll be joining them as that was her last fight of the day. "I'll be back." He says as he gets to his feet and walk off the bamboo mat and onto the still cool stone floor of the arena. He also makes a note to deduct the amount for that jug from Wei Ying's allowance as he walks for the stairs that will lead down to the ground, where the vendor stalls are located.

He takes his time as he wanders the stalls, some of the stalls sport School sponsorship signs or the insignia of their favorite Schools. Not for the first time, he wonders if they shouldn't sponsor a vendor stall, after all, he's now got the authority to do so, but knows that it'll be a lot of work, to find someone he trusts to be honest about the profits and quality product to be sold. It's a very cut throat business venture from his observations and he's seen some stall owners get into fights of their own.

"Jiang! Hey!" He turns to the person who's calling out his name and is rather surprised to see a woman wearing a Wen Sect uniform, although his gaze slides from her to the panda headed young man that's a few paces behind her. While the woman clearly has a Golden Core, it's the young man that's puzzling as he doesn't Sense much Cultivation about him, yet his head is in his animal shape.

"Maiden Wen." Jiang Caihe's attention returns to the woman, he's quick to note the design of the uniform before speaking. "Can we talk?" The woman asks in a blunt way. "Privately." She adds.

"I don't see why not." He admits and gestures for them to lead the way, guessing they had something set up for a private discussion. There's a glimmer of something in the woman's eyes while the younger Zhuanbian seems more nervous as a result.

He manages to catch sight of one of his Sect's disciples, asking them to deliver a message to Jiang Yanli about seeing her soon, that it seems he had unexpected business to attend too. The way the trio glance at the Wens, they seem to know where it originates from. With that done, he continues to follow them to the desiginated camping area and follows the panda headed young man into the tent with the woman coming in behind him.

They go over the usual host and guest pleasentries as they size each other up. The young man fidgets with an amulet that had been under his cloths. A flick of a ring and the head shimmers to the human shape, he blinks but otherwise isn't overly concerned about the item in question, there's plenty like it for sale if one knows who to ask. It's something for those who want control over their shape but don't have the patience or want to put the work into learning the old fashion way.

"You need to warn your leader that Wen Ruohan." Wen Qing, as she introduced herself, states bluntly and he allows his own shape become almost completely human, save for his hair. "Maiden Wen, I can assure you, Jiang Fengmian won't listen."

He hold up a hand to stop her in her tracks. "He didn't listen to Grandmaster Lan nor believe the reports that I duplicate for him to read." There's a look of startlement and he gives her a bemused, bitter smile. "The Schools aren't blind to Wen Ruohan's aims but you should know that the four great Sects are turning away willfully from his treatment of minor Sects. None of them want to hear from the survivors, nor do they question how those survivors vanish into thin air after they try to raise a fuss over the Wen Sect actions."

There's a deflated look settling on Wen Qing's face and her shoulders slump downward as well. "The Schools?" She inquires after a bit, having recovered from her previous mood.

"Have long memories." He states simply. "You came to the right place but I can only suggest you find ways to get you and yours out of the Sect before all out conflict occurs."

"You say that as though you expect the Wen Sect to lose." Wen Qing muses and he gives her a smirk. "He might get the Sects but the Schools will get him in the end. It's an old agreement between the two, if a Sect or all Sects endanger the civilians with their power struggles, then the Schools are within their rights to break up the Sects involve by any means. The same is true in reverse."

"And all out conflict would involve the civilians." Reasons Wen Qing and he nods. "It's more of a matter of degree, really. I'm sure there's likely various outlines or timeables that dictate the details of it all, but such documentation does exist in the Capital and should be held within the various libraries of the great Sects."

"You suggest I ask for sanctuary among the Schools for my family and those who also don't want to be involved." Wen Qing states and he nods. "But there's going to be a price for that help." She adds and he nods yet again.

"Is material possessions worth a life?" Jiang Caihe inquires and Wen Qing glances towards Wen Ning, her gaze softening. "What is the cost to get the Jiang Sect's help?" She asks.

What indeed. He muses as he considers the matter. Wishing his Shifu wasn't in wilderness seculsion so he could send a Spirit Messanger for advice in this matter.

"I think it depends on whether you can deal with the location, actually." Yiling's Burial Mounds have been something that have seen many a School wishing to tame but the Sects have always taken responsiblity for the area. At the moment, Yunmeng Jiang Sect have possession of them but none of the human membership have the incline to try to solve the matter. Nor had Jiang Fengmian offered to let the Zhuanbian take a crack at the problem.

"Yiling's Burial Mounds have been passed around among the Sects for a rather long time." He muses out loud. "The Sects are like a dog with a bone with it. None of their efforts have done anything but they refuse to give it up to someone else to try."

Neither of the two Wens seem to get what he's talking about. "It's getting to the time where it's going to slip from Yunmeng Jiang Sect's hands into the Qishan Wen Sect's hands." And the pair stilled as it slowly dawns on what he's kind of implying.

"Your uniform... How closely related are you to Wen Ruohan?" He inquires curiously and there's a bit of a wince, which means they were close enough relation that they'll likely experience blowback when this upcoming conflict is over with.

- S K I P

He arrives back at the arena with three jugs of wine and a wide array of snacks plus three meal dishes. While they now had an outline of a course of actions, with nothing set in stone, it doesn't mean that he isn't in a good mood. The Burial Mounds had been something he'd wanted to try and solve since he heard about it.

Now, he's got a chance to do so, sure, he'll need to have stand ins since he won't be able to do anything in person. *It's better then nothing.* Jiang Caihe reminds himself as he approaches the mat where Jiang Yanli and Wei Ying are.

"Your business went well, Caihe?" Jiang Yanli inquires once he settles down and begins to pass out the meal dishes. He hums in agreement, his features are mostly human but his hair, eyes, and a touch of influence to his teeth sport his lion shape's traits. He knows he's smiling and it's clear that Wei Ying doesn't seem to know what to make of it.

"Hmm." She hums at him, studying him as he begins to eat of the meal he bought. She knows him well enough to likely guess what kind of business it was, given the few times he's been this smilely and cheerful.

"Is it a girl?" Wei Ying bluntly guesses. "It has to be a girl... Right?" The younger of the three asks, looking at his adopted sister for support.

"I'm sure we'll learn more about it when we're back at our camping ground." Jiang Yanli informs Wei Ying simiply, evening isn't that far off, he had spent a bit too much time in discussion with Wen Qing, Wen Ning had proven to be rather shy and more content to leave his sister do the plotting and talking. There's a few night matches they could stick around to watch, those are doubles though, where combantants are paired off and the pairs decide roles of attacker and defender. Such roles are self explanitory, one is the attack and one is the defender, it's a tricky trust issue as it's more then likely you can get paired with a previous opponent or fight against another member of your own School.

Four members of their Sect signed up to fight in the pair battles. It's unknown if they'll be fighting tonight as today is the first day of the three day Tournament. *They'll at least get assigned a partner tonight.* He muses to himself.

"Did they tell you who you are facing tomorrow?" He asks Jiang Yanli as the arena is finished getting cleaned up for tonight's matches. That includes Talismen torches coming out to light up the arena grounds by one of the three hosting Schools. They are the Night Blended Cloth, Spider's Silk Trappings, and Starry River Schools. The lanterns around them are given an Artifical Spirit Stone, the lanterns are called Ghost Fire Lantern and these ones off a light that is a soft green.

Wei Ying's attention isn't on the announcer that's down at the arena floor but on the lanturns. "That's not fire." Remarks the younger Zhuanbian.

"No, Ghost Fire Lanterns never use actual fire." He tells the other. "They use the Qi that's stored in the clay stones to create that effect."

"There's some stories about Cultivators trapping fresh ghosts in lanterns. They get their names from them." Jiang Yanli explains. "The stories say that the ghosts would be like silvery blue balls of fire

and they were so weak, they couldn't free themselves from the lanterns."

"They say that a Huli Jing feel in love with a soldier and when he died, his soul was captured before it could leave for the after life." He says. "No liking the fate of her love's soul, the Huli Jing schemed about how to get the lantern that held his soul."

"She created a duplicated lantern but she refused to capture another soul to exchange for her love." Jiang Yanli recounts. "She tried to create an permanent illusion of fire eminated from the lantern but the moment she stopped feeding Qi into it, the illusion would end."

"But she wasn't the only one who didn't particularly like the practice of catching fresh souls, so Horse-Face and Ox-Head appeared before her with a solution." Jiang Caihe continues on. "They mentioned how some stones would, over centuries, absorb Qi."

"They directed her to a location where to find one of those stones." Jiang Yanli picks up from where he left off. "With the agreement that she free all souls trapped within those lanterns."

"Thus, she created the first Ghost Fire Lanturn. Tricking the peddlar out of his wares and saving her beloved from the fate of being forced to linger far pass his time on earth." He finishes and Wei Ying just seems to be entertained by the tale or, perhaps, how they picked up the story from one another. Wei Ying's gaze shifts back to one of the lanturns, the look isn't very readable, but Jiang Yanli does reach out and gives him some comfort.

It's clear that something about the story seem to have struck a cord with Wei Ying. It's clear it's a private matter between the two. So, he decides not to pry, it's not like either Wei Ying and himself are overly close to one another.

He does note how motherly Jiang Yanli is towards Wei Ying though. It causes him to also realize that, perhaps, Jiang Yanli might be more of a mother to her younger brothers then her being an older sister.

It's rather depressing realization that, perhaps, if things were different, Jiang Yanli could have been more like his elder and younger martial sisters and not have the weight of a family weighting her down. That she would be able to complain about the two instead of bragging about them like a mother does.

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"You aren't going." He snaps at Wei Ying after dragging the younger Zhuanbian to his office after Jiang Fengmian made his announcement. "No! You are not a Cultivator of the Golden Core, Wei Ying! You are Zhuanbian and you are keyed into the core library at that!"

Wei Ying stiffens in the face of his anger and his use of cold hard facts. "Jiang Wanyin hasn't been added to the list but you have! You know of it and know the importance of it." He continues on to say.

"Between Jiang Wanyin and yourself, you are far more valuable!" He snaps, it's true, Madam Yu has never really allowed Jiang Wanyin to learn the important traditions of the Jiang Sect, the very Sect the young man is suppose to take over. "And there is no way that this indoctrination camp is going to end well! The Wen's are not fond of Zhuanbian. If they get their hands on you, you'll be feeling the compilation of years of anger concerning the Schools that will be on your lonesome head."

"And don't say that Jiang Wanyin won't let that happen because he won't have a say in the matter!" He continues. "He's just another prisoner, another hostage. He'd have no power, none at all and they won't be incline to listen to him either! Jiang Fengmian's heir or not!"

"If you don't crack, then they'll put him under once they realize what effect it'll have on you!" Jiang Caihe snaps and Wei Ying goes pale as the weight of that particular idea finally settles into his mind. "I don't mind you volunteering for the School Wide Wen Watch, but this, this isn't doing I can trust you not to foul it up!"

"Cause I know you. You should know yourself as well." He adds as he pulls himself to his full height. "You think your life is worthless. You think that you are replaceable."

"You. Are. Not. Replaceable." He growls out. "You. Are. Mine. You serve under Me, Wei Ying. Not Jiang Fengmian, not Madam Yu, not under either of the Jiang siblings. Me, who is Jiang Caihe."

"And you know that this Wen issue didn't come out of no where." He finally manages to say in a much calmer voice after a period of silence where neither of them spoke. "You've spoken with Maiden Wen and I know you've been exchanging letters with her brother."

"Which is another reason why you can't get in any amount of feet of this indoctrination camp." He rubs the bridge of his nose, it's been three years since he'd meet the Wen siblings. Wei Ying's been a great help with unraveling the issue of Resentment Energy of the Burial Mounds, the creation of that hide away for various dissatisfied Wens is a secret that he's not even shared with Jiang Fengmian and his second in command.

"What can I do?! How am I suppose to repay them?" Wei Ying demands.

"Prepare for the Wens invading Lotus Pier." He replies and Wei Ying's eyes widen while he looks like he'd just been slapped. "You think they're satisfied with burning the Cloud Rescesses? You think they will stop with only destroying one of the five great Sects' home?"

"They will burn Lotus Pier because we are closer to their boarder and Jiang Fengmian is a passive Sect leader." He reasons out. "The Qinghe Nie Sect isn't going to comply, they are likely very happy with these turn of events as they'll have the excuse needed to kill the man who is responsible for their father's death."

"Lanling Jin Sect, well, you know what their Sect leader is like." Its because Jin Guangshan draws the line at bedding 'animals' that

there's so many Zhuanbian servants hired by Madam Jin. But, he figures it's more of a matter of time for him to turn his lustful gaze onto Zhuanbian population, particularly given he's toured the various brothels more then once and likely is getting bored in bed.

"We did get reports about a massive force moving near Lotus Pier." Wei Ying says in a be grudging tone. "The civilians had mentioned them having the Wen Sect uniform."

"And we both know how Jiang Fengmian reacted to the news of so many marching through Jiang Sect territory?" Wei Ying looks to the floor while his arms get folded in front of his chest. "So? Do you know why you can't go with Jiang Wanyin?"

"Yes." Wei Ying admits in a soft voice. "It's not fair."

"Life isn't fair. Life doesn't owe it to us to be fair." He rebukes. "Only those that have strength can invoke their view of fairness upon the world."

"You might owe Jiang Fengmian for bringing you to Lotus Pier but it wasn't because of you." He mentions after a bit. Wei Ying perks up at hearing that. "People say it's your mother he's longing for."

"It was the love he held for your father that caused him to bring you home." Jiang Caihe informs Wei Ying. "They were very good friends, very close."

"He brought you home because he was selfish. Because, in the end, he regrets letting your father just... wander off." He can tell this was rather mind blowing revalation.

"You can question the various Instructors but, they all seem to be incline to that observation." Jiang Caihe adds. "You don't owe Jiang Fengmian anything once you became an offical member of the Sect."

"'Live well, live free'." Wei Ying quotes the Zhuanbian's motto of the Jiang Sect. "There is much for me to think about."

He nods and Wei Ying leaves his office. He's still not sure if he trusts Wei Ying to not run off after the Jiang Cultivators, but, he at least knows that he's given Wei Ying a new perspective on the matter between his parents and Jiang Fengmian. He's a bit angry at himself for losing abit of his self control by verbally claiming Wei Ying as his.

Lions are social animals, from what he's learnt, brothers form coalition that last their lives. Out of most of the other members of the Jiang Sect, Wei Ying is the one of the two who doesn't really tread lightly around him. It's depressing to remember that Jiang Yanli's marrying out, he hates himself due to the fact that he knows how much Jiang Yanli cares for her youngest brother, but that doesn't keep him from secretly wishing that something would happen that ends with Jiang Wanyin death just so that she could take his place, being the only child of Jiang Fengmian would have left, she'd have to inherit. He knows that anything could happen in the coming months, that none of them are truly safe from the violence about to become common place.

He's never spent much time with Jiang Wanyin and his only relation towards the Cultivator has to due with his relationships with Jiang Yanli and Wei Ying. In the end, Jiang Wanyin might as well be an idea then someone real, even though he's seen him around the Sect. In a lot of ways, they should have gotten to know one another years ago, given that they'll be co-leaders of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect. It never happened so, he can only guess what kind of working relationship they'll develop in the future, it's unlikely to be all that close of a one.

It's hardly the first time he's resented Madam Yu's presence as Jiang Fengmian's wife. It's unlikely that he'll never not resent the woman and how passive Jiang Fengmian was towards her wishes on almost everything. The only thing she never did get her way has to do with Wei Ying's presence in Jiang Sect and in the lives of their children.

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The irony. Is all Jiang Caihe can think of when he gets word of what happened concerning the situation that he sent two member of the Sect on. He tries to find humor concerning the idea of Wei Ying ending up in a cave with a member of the Lan Sect for company. The details of how it came about are a jumble, but he did know that Wei Ying, Lin Xiu, and two members from Crystal Flute School had been hunting around for the entrance of the Tortoise of Slaughter to seal it up so that the Wens can't find it and cause the Monster to wake up.

The Crystal Flute School had done used a Divination Technique about the subject and it gave indication that involving 'Those of the River Lotus' would cause success in dealing with the Tortoise of Slaughter. He's had the duplicated readings tested by Jiang Yanli and wanting to an excuse to have Wei Ying out of Lotus Pier, mostly just to get him away from Madam Yu. He approved for Wei Ying to be part of the expedition and Lin Xui volunteered to go with.

Lin Xui arrives with Jiang Wanyin and some of the Cultivators that had been part of the Wen camp. Jiang Wanyin refused to be left behind by the rescue party, not that it mattered as he'd already dispatched a group after getting the location from Lin Xui. It's not like he hadn't set up preparations in case something happened, so his response had been set up days ago.

He manages to pull Jiang Fengmian to the side and inform him that he'd already sent a group of Zhuanbian. "How did you know this would happen?" The older man demands and he raised a bit of an eyebrow.

"It's an age old practice of planning for the worst while hoping for the better." Jiang Caihe states in a matter of fact tone. "They were to find the cave entrance and put Sealing Arrays to keep it from being found by Cultivators."

"It was risky endeavor but at least we were prepared to something like this happening." He adds and it's clear that Jiang Fengmian isn't

happy to learn just what assignment he, Jiang Caihe, had sent Wei Ying on. "None could have expected that the Wens would have decided to hunt down the Monster themselves, never mind take along their hostages on such a Night Hunt." *Without their Spirit Swords.* He mentally adds.

It's clear that Jiang Fengmian isn't happy with that particular reminder. He'd done his best to keep the other leader informed about the threat the Wen Sect was posing to be. That conflict with them was going to happen one way or another. The difference had to be about doing it on their terms or on the Wen's terms.

Then the man deflates, his anger leaving him. The man looks so old and sad, but he knows he can't do much for the man. "They are going to come here with intent to burn down Lotus Pier, either by punishing us for allowing the 'runaway' disciples safety here or for some other imagine slight." Jiang Caihe tells the older man.

"Send the human members off and leave the defense to we, Zhuanbian." He advises the man. "This is the worst possible place for them to be blooded, they won't be in the proper mindset to kill the invading Wens. They will freeze and they will die."

There's clear horror at the very idea. "We could bargain..." He interrupts with a snort, "There's no bargaining. There is only might and Wen Ruohan's Cultivators have been exercising that might on the minor Sects."

"They are well and truly blooded warriors, they have been for years and you all ignored the plight of those Sects, their survivors tried to warn about them but the Sects, one and all, preferred to be willful blind and deaf." He presses on. "And in the night, after they were allowed to try to alert you all, they died under the blades of those that slaughtered the men, raped and killed the women, bashed the heads of children and infants alike upon the stones of their Ancestral Halls."

"There is no reasoning with those drunk on success and bathed in blood." He states in a finality tone. Looking pass his fellow leader's

shoulder, he gives a slight nod before walking away. He has things to check on, namely the state of the bunkers he's had built in semi-secret throughout Lotus Pier for the civilian population to flee into. Double checking, triple checking, the various Arrays that would keep the smoke out along with the heat as people's lives will depend on such things, never mind the Arrays to keep noise from being heard from within and, likely, without the bunkers.

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Looking at the face of the whore of the youngest son of Wen Rouhan, he wonders if she is aware of how he's already imaging what kind of look she'll have on her face upon death. It's clear that the whore didn't seem to get that he's doing his best to keep her and her escort talking, delaying them as Cultivators get the civilians to the prepared bunkers while the Zhuanbian get in position, unseen due to various Qi Techniques.

He does his best not to draw attention to how each of the escorts now have their killers now standing next to them. He's killing the whore himself, regardless of what Madam Yu thinks. Jiang Caihe wonders why they thought it a good idea to send such a valuable asset as Wen Zhuliu along with the whore, particular given it's well known that Zhuanbian can't Cultivate a Golden Core, thus the whole point of the man is rather pointless when fighting a Jiang Zhuanbian Sect member.

The whore wants Madam Yu to whip her own son, to 'prove' her loyalty to the Wen Sect. It's another stupid move, as Madam Yu might not have minded if it had been Wei Ying, but her own son? Particularly given that she knows that the second son hadn't bothered to return Jiang Wanyin's sword for that disaster of a so called Night Hunt?

He'd made contact with Zhuanbian that are in seclusion about that particular disaster and that he's using his position's power to call them home in defense of Lotus Pier. So, when a Wen flare explodes from where the first wave of Wens are, he's moving, his nails

becoming claws and through the whore's throat they go, with greatest of ease as he's using Qi to ensure their sharpness.

The group of Wens are all dead within seconds and Madam Yu along with Jiang Wanyin seem shocked at how suddenly there's more people in the room then there should. "I suggest you both head to where Jiang Yanli is waiting at the kitchens, she has decided to be the one to escort you both to a safe location." He states flatly. "This isn't an order, just a suggestion that I strongly think you should heed."

Then he walks out of the building, his shape altering, mostly his upper body taking on characteristic of his animal shape. They had in coming ships to deal with and a post to assume. It's time for the Wens to realize how much harder it is to deal with prepared and well trained 'prey'.

That the Zhuanbian of Yunmeng Jiang are not destined to be their prey. Will never be their prey.

While the Cultivators of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect join the so called Sunshot Campaign, the Zhuanbian of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect pretty much stepped up to deal with the usual problems that have always plagued the civilians along with guarding Lotus Pier itself. Few were happy with sitting out the Cultivator conflict but Jiang Caihe bowed to wiser, cooler, and older members that he called home. There were many predecessors to his post among those that came back to the Sect and he's smart enough to know that he's young and newly bloodied, never mind that he hadn't the same experience when it came to participating in the Tournaments, which, surprisingly, got his Shifu some flake for appointing such a 'green' member to the post.

There's reasons why the Tournament circuit was a bloody affair and it wasn't just to train the right mind set into those that participate, it was to help young Zhuanbian work through emerging instincts. While being entered into a circuit of the Tournament was minimum threshold, it's generally suggested for Zhuanbian to participate in the

circuit between three to five times. It's a little too late for him to do so, but he can ensure that Wei Ying does it properly, which the younger Zhuanbian submits himself too, it seems that his younger martial brother very much does have something he needs to prove, if only to himself.

He's been given the suggestion to take a week every two months to go off on hunting trips on his lonesome, taking his animal shape to hunt his food during said week to himself. He's learnt a lot of things during that particular time away from Lotus Pier, mostly, just how hard it is to sneak up on deer of various kinds, never mind how he's begin eating what he does manage to kill. Still, it does help settle something in him when he gets back from said trips.

Members of the Sect had gone to the Burial Mounds to continue with the project of settling it enough to create a retreat home for those Wens who don't approve of what their current Sect leader is doing. It seems he hadn't been the only one who'd yearned to give the Burial Mounds a try. He can't help but trust his elders concerning the project along with dealing with not getting a steady stream of updates. It's clear his elders very much approved of the plan he'd devised with Wen Qing about how to go about getting access to it.

Concerning the Wen siblings, they were safe and doing their best with their smuggling operation concerning getting those who want out, out to the Burial Mounds. There's be a lot of digging through records about techniques that can influence the dead of humans. They've found records of at least two Zhuanbian and almost a half a dozen humans who've figured out the hows, just not a safe how, although it was recorded that one of the Zhuanbian had been recovering steadily before dying in a fight with Cultivators, who thought that said Zhuanbian was an undead due to the high concentration of Resentful Energy hanging around them. It's unknown if the reason for the recovery was due to his animal shaping being that of a prey, a Woolly Hare the records have noted down, his name had been Bia Zhuang and his School had been Celestial Cloudweaver, which is an extincted School now.

Yunmeng Jiang Sect has become a well protected respite for Cultivators from the alliance of Sects fighting against the Wens. It's a place where the injured are sent to recieve treatment and for those that have battle fatigue. They might grip about the fact that the Zhuanbian of the Sect not committing themselves to the fight against the Wens but it's clear that they've found it within themselves to relax while they are within Lotus Pier, trusting that the Zhuanbian were more then capable of keeping the Wens out.

The Schools have also seen an increase of business with civilian coming to them about their supernatural problems. Which is expected, the only difference has to due with before, it had only been the Schools that occupy the same location as a destroyed Sect that became the only option. Not so now, not with the Cultivators openly fighting with the Wens and there have been minor attempts of civilian settlements seeing a battle, if not for the Schools starting to spread out their numbers, doing mix group to come across as socializing, they've been able to help save lives that get caught in the crossfire.

It's not enough for the Schools to step in to put a swift end to the conflict but, this war is young yet. As the Wens get desperate they'll be more incline to burn the world kind of strategy. Which would signal the end of the conflict anyway.

So, as he watches a group of young disciples under the age of ten go through clearing up after a storm that came through the night before, Jiang Caihe wasn't that surprise to see an adult in a different uniform. No, what gets his attention is the fact that Wei Ying seems intent on grabbing the Cultivator's attention. Taking an interest in the Cultivator, he realizes that he's of the Lan Sect and he's unable to see the ribbon to confirm but, he knows that the so called Second Jade was coming to pick up some medical supplies that the Langling Jin Sect dropped off a while back.

Medical supplies that were suppose to be taken straight to the front line at that. He's unsure if the Cultivators buy whatever excuse the manwhore gave about how they ended up in Lotus Pier but none of the Sect members were amused by the mix up. It's clear that the Jin

Sect leader is engaging in long term politics, even now, where lives were more at risk for such an 'error'. It's just the beginnings of one drop in the bucket of evidence that the Zhuanbian are collecting concerning the Jin Sect's actions during this time of turmoil.

There's observers keeping tabs on all the Sects, documenting their actions and decisions. The originals will find their way to highly secure libraries that the Zhuanbian maintain, duplicates will be sent to the Capital with summaries complied handed out to the Schools into the form of a history textbook that covers the Sunshot Campaign. The first edition will likely be rough and the following editions will also likely cover the years following the end of it, which will likely include the spin the various Sects put out about the conflict in question.

He's not sure when he started to walk towards the pair but then, he'd been a touch lost in his own thoughts. "Jiang Caihe." Wei Ying greets him and the Lan Cultivator gives him a slight look over before adverting his gaze, which was very irksome to be honest.

"Wei Ying, I see you're guiding our visitor around Lotus Pier." He muses and there's a split second of slight bewilderment before Wei Ying nods very enthusiastically. "Yes, yes, that's correct! It's practically Lan Zhan's first time here!"

Lan Zhan? Jiang Caihe couldn't help but muse as he does his best to take in any tiny change to the man's pose, given the face seems to not have changed in the least. "I take it this is who was in the cave with you? I recall them reporting that you were with a Lan Cultivator."

Wei Ying hums a positive as he rocks his body as his weight shifts about his feet with arms behind his back. He does his best to recall the incident in question, after all, those he sent not long after those people coming to Lotus Pier were ones he trusted to deal with the rescue. "Didn't he collapse after trying to walk away on his own? Particularly after you two killed the Monster in question?"

"Yip! That was Lan Zhan!" Wei Ying confirms and there's a touch of red to the ear tips. It's faint but there.

Humming, Jiang Caihe says, "As much as Lan Zhan missed your company, Wei Ying. I suspect he is here for the medical supplies that ended up here by some clinical error on the Lanling Jin Sect's part." He add, "Supplies that are likely desperately needed some days ago."

There's a slight shift in the Lan's gaze towards him but he's a bit more focus on Wei Ying. There's a slight poute but there's a hint of anger at the reminder of that particular delivery not reaching its actual destination. "Right! It's to the point where it would just be safer to sent people to collect it then to trust those air for brain Cultivators to not get distracted by something sparkly on their way out of Carp Tower."

"Wei Ying!" Lan Zhan hisses with underlying out rage and shock at such disrespect along with looking right at said man. "Lan Zhan! It's true though! How is this any where close to Yingchaun? Isn't fairly close to Lanling Jin Sect?"

"They literally had to make a longer journey coming here then taking it to Yingchaun!" Wei Ying concludes. It's clear that Wei Ying seems to just have the talent of getting under this Lan's icy exterior and he can only wonder at the reasons for that, after all, given he'd grown up in a Sect that sports over three thousand rules, that have been carved into a mountain side, they grow up in a very strict environment and thus end up rather unbend-able in their view of how the world works.

"Wei Ying, give him time to recover his bearings." Jiang Caihe says. "I seem to recall how hard it was for you to swallow just how capable your sister is when it comes to combat."

The Lan Cultivator has a tiny shift to his weight as he does his best to not look at either of them, yet again. "Just escort him to the supplies, please. It's a certainty that he'll find his way back here, in

one state or another." Jiang Caihe adds and Wei Ying huffs but nods in acknowledgement.

"Safe travels, Second Jade." He says before giving a polite bow, deciding against using his birthday, and then, upon straghtening, he walks away to resume supervising the kids. Trusting that Wei Ying will take the Cultivator straight to the supplies, whether he'll allow the Lan to leave right away, likely managing to get him to eat something first... Well, it's not really his problem as he didn't say anything about letting Lan Zhan leave right away, after getting the supplies.

The next time Jiang Caihe encounters the Second Jade of Gusu Lan Sect, the Schools had joined in ending the conflict after the Qishan Wen Sect intentionally set fire to half a dozen villages and had tried to masscare the civilians trying to put out the flames. It had been something that took even those observers by surprise, it was also clearly planned as it happened within the same day. It had been about four days since the confirmed death of Wen Xu, the first son and remaining son of the Wen Sect leader, Wen Ruohan. The second son died during the assualt of Lotus Pier, he'd surrender only to try to kill the Zhuanbian who he surrendered too with a dagger, the back hand snapped his neck, it seemed that he'd been weak, never having much strength in regards to Cultivating, rumors had it that he'd only achieved a Golden Core due to Qi Pills and Spirit Infusion Exilirs.

The young man is looking rather loss as a hawker is aggressively selling what looks to be knotted pendants. Jiang Caihe almost continues on his way to the former Supervisor's office when he realizes the subtle look the hawker sends to a young woman, who then begins to make her way towards the Lan Cultivator. It's a very subtle and low level technique that she employs, it's clear to him that she's got no training and is relying on natural talent, likely having had the basics of Qi manipulation explained and, maybe, having had someone demonstrate the technique for her.

Given how beautiful the young woman is, it was likely someone or many someones trying to impress her or recruit her. Jiang Caihe finds himself moving to intercept the pick pocketing operation. "Lan Zhan." He greets the Lan. "I hope you still have the money Wen Qing gave you for your purchases."

There's a clear twitch from both the Zhuanbian woman and the hawker at the casual use of the former Supervisor of the Wen Sect, who's post is more clinic owner now. Blank face is what greets him as the golden hue eyes seem to study him intently. "Ah well, best come along with me back to the clinic, who knows how long you were expected back." He takes hold of a sleeve, tugging the man to follow.

He does so and once out of range, "You were going to be pick pocketed by that man's accomplace." Jiang Caihe lets go of the sleeve without looking back, not stopping either.

Having saved the Lan Cultivator from getting his money pouch lifted from his person, he doesn't see any reason to stick around and visit with the Cultivator, even if Wei Ying seems strangly fond of the man. He has business with Wen Qing concerning plans concerning the involvement of the Schools. So, when he is before the clinic that once served as the Supervisor office, he is surprised to note that the Lan had followed him instead of going on his way.

Giving the Lan Cultivator a bit of a questioning look, Jiang Caihe notices the slight downward turning of the lip corners along with the seemingly guilty way the eyes slide from him. "Leader Jiang." Wen Ning greets upon opening the door, he's helping a woman getting out of the building.

"Second Jade." Stammers Wen Ning after catching sight of the Cultivator. "Were you not..." It's clear that Wen Ning's voice fails him before completing the sentence along with the stammering being worse before it did.

"Does Second Jade of Gusu Lan have business with either Doctor Wen or another person?" Jiang Caihe inquires as he takes on pity of Wen Ning, thus deciding to question the Cultivator on Wen Ning's behalf. He's fond of the Wen, who's doing well in learning various healing techniques that Zhuanbian have developed, it's clear he's wanting to help his sister in her clinic. Not everyone has the same drive to learn everything they can in regards to Cultivation and studying various means to manipulate Qi within and outside of the body.

"Thanking Leader Jiang." The Second Jade finally manages to voice after a bit. Jiang Caihe found it a bit confusing as to why it seemed like the Cultivator found it hard to speak or, rather, perhaps he's unused to speaking a lot?

"It wasn't any trouble on my part to keep them from succeeding in their scheme." He says calmly. "I suggest next time someone acts like that hawker, you push pass them and keep a hand on your money purse afterward."

"Just because you are a Cultivator, doesn't mean you are immune to being a target of pick pockets and bandits." Jiang Caihe thinks to add as an after thought. That's from personal experience as he's encountered bandits and pick pockets during his travels on his own, never mind poachers or mercenary hunters trying to set up ambushes if he frequency a certain location beyond twice. It's something he's been fustrated with, even if he turns them in for arrest, not thing seemed to really happen to them and it usual means they are out for vengance on him.

It's a reminder that Zhuanbian are discriminated against and, well, he's not proud of tricking them into triggering their own traps, of leaving them to deal with the aftermath of the reality of dying by something they set up. Jiang Caihe does make sure to put their spirits to rest before giving their bodies funeral rites. Telling himself that in their deaths, he's saving the lives of less capable Zhuanbian from dying by these people's schemes/grudges.

There's a sound of acknowledgement from the Lan Cultivator, Jiang Caihe also admits he also owes the other an apology. "Forgive me for using your birth name, I don't think I know your Courtesy name." Nor have we been properly introduced.

"Lan Wangji." With a slight nod after taking a few seconds of studying Jiang Caihe, the Cultivator turns and leaves. He wonders if it would be a good idea to mention this incident to Wei Ying before he turns to apologize to the woman for his impoliteness. They chat in an apologetic fashion before she waves it away, in the end, being sure to grip Wen Ning's hand and lean on him. Moving so that the pair can go on their way, he then enters the building, having a general idea of where to go.

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Things seem to develop between Wei Ying and Lan Wangji over the years, not that Jiang Caihe pays it much mind, after all, he's got a duties to attend to along with his own personal problems. Personally, he's happy for Wei Ying but, also, a touch sadden concerning Lan Wangji's pretty much in exile from his Sect and it wouldn't surprise him overly much if the Elders find an excuse to write him out of their Sect's records, well, in time. Although he's not sure if the First Jade, Lan Xichen will let that happen, given that the Sect Leader is clearly has a good relationship with Lan Wangji and loves the man despite him deciding to marry a Zhuanbian, in particular, the son of the infamous Cangse Sanren.

Jiang Caihe does recall hearing his Shifu remark about Lans loving deeply and, sometimes, tragically. Given the scowling glare that earned him from Lan Wangji's uncle, he is pretty sure there's a story, likely a scandal, but it's none of his business and it's unlikely to be his business. He had merely gave a neutral hum while the younger Cultivators, namely Jiang Wanyin and Lan Xichen both having varying reactions to the sudden spike in tense, with Jiang Wanyin scowling at the glare directed at a member of the Sect and Lan Xichen seemed to keep a smile upon his face while studying Shifu a bit more intently.

Then Jin Ling got fussy and Jiang Wanyin did his best to calm down the child in his arms, the four year old, somehow, ended up in his arms and calmed down while seemingly fasinated with his different colored hair and his eyes. It's clear that Jiang Wanyin isn't happy with how easily Jin Ling calms down with him but, well, he's got some experience with Wen Yuan, who's seven going onto eight. Children, he finds, can be easily distracted by the littlest things, like someone having not just a different color for their hair, but also eye color, sporting a light dusting of hair on the face, nail color, nail shape, different looking teeth, or someone having a tail.

Jiang Yanli is rather busy nappy with her daughter, Jin Zhong, who's being fussy due to teething, causing a distruption to their sleeping patterns. As for Jin Zixuan, he's doing his best to be there for both mother and daughter and Jin Ling didn't want to stick around with his parents and with Wei Ying busy, with none of his father half brothers here in Lotus Pier, Jiang Wanyin gets to babysit his nephew, giving them time together. It's clear that Jiang Wanyin doesn't have a single clue how to deal with kids, which is a bit understandable but also depressing that it's rare for Jiang Wanyin to go out of his way to spend time with the younger disciples.

"Mama says your great grandfather and my great great grandfather were brothers." Jin Ling states being proud at remembering that. "So, you're my cousin! I think you're my favorite cousin now." The four year old states in a very serious manner, which seems to cause Jiang Wanyin jerk a bit, looking at him as if reconsidering who Jiang Caihe is.

"It also means I'm your mom and Uncle Jiang's cousin too." Jiang Caihe says. "That my younger brother, Jiang Zhuang is also your cousin." His younger brother is six, he's got four sisters, three of whom are already married with Jiang Nuan being twelve years old, but none of them are interested in being Cultivators and his parents' aren't pushing them to either. They are already looking for a husband for her.

He's still not close to his parents and it's unlikely he'll be close to his younger brother. His elder brothers died during the Sunshot Campaign, although they had been married although they didn't get around to having a son, his eldest brother had twin girls and his second brother died before knowing his wife was pregnant nevermind seeing or holding his daughter. Jiang Caihe isn't sure if he should be relieved that they are doing their best to forget he exists, thus meaning he doesn't have to worry about them trying to find him a wife or insulted and despressed that they are ignoring his existence, that everything he's done, that he has achieved, and position within the Sect means nothing in their eyes simply because he ended up being a Zhuanbian.

"Hmm..." Jin Ling hums but clearly refuses to consider that Jiang Caihe might not be his favorite cousin forever. "Kitty?"

"Kind of." He admits after taking a bit to reason out where that came from and could mean. "Lion actually." He says after having his head take on his animal shape and Jin Ling's eyes widen.

"Cool!" Jin Ling cries out, hand already moving over his muzzel and fingers pinching his whiskers before forcing his mouth open to see his fangs. "I want to do that!" Jiang Caihe's ears flicker slightly as he hears Jiang Wanyin cough a bit at the sudden declaration.

"Won't know until you're a bit older." He informs the child and Jiang Wanyin, who's listening in, then again, they are still in Jiang Wanyin's office. "Not sure if you'd like being away from your family if it turns out you can." Jiang Caihe adds, not that Jin Ling seems to care about that, then again, it's not what's happening right now, so, it's something of an abstract concept to the four year old.

"You won't be your father's heir if you end up transforming into an animal." Jiang Wanyin states and he's pretty sure Jin Ling is now giving his uncle a pouty look while busy hugging his neck, he feels the tiny fingers playing with his mane on his either side of his neck. "You can't be a Sect Leader if you're a Zhuanbian."

"Mean! I can be both cause I want to be both!" Jin Ling declares and he hums.

"True, after all, I share the post of Sect Leader with your uncle and I'm a Zhuanbian." He states. "If you end up a Zhuanbian, you can be my heir, how does that sound? You'll get to spend a lot more time with your favorite cousin!" He really didn't want Jin Ling to throw a temper tantrum right next to him while his head is in it's current shape.

Jiang Wanyin snaps, temper getting the better of him, "It's not going to happen! Neither of his parents are Zhuanbian! They both are talented Cultivators!"

Jiang Caihe closes his eyes and gingerly shakes his head while Jin Ling does his best to keep calm. He remembers the Divination Jiang Yanli did back when she'd been seventeen and a bit tipsy. He'd been present as support along with ensuring that the Array was set up without any errors. As he does his best to comfort Jin Ling over the angry tone that his uncle used, Jiang Caihe feels despair over Jiang Wanyin's reaction, for it kind of brings to him his own parents and siblings, his own situation really.

"Jiang Wanyin, please. Jin Ling is just a child, his future isn't set in stone." Jiang Caihe says as he turns to regard his counterpoint in the Sect. "Might I remind you that neither of my own parents are Zhuanbian yet here I am?"

It brings to mind the stunt with what happened with Wei Ying and how it lead to Wei Ying unlocking his ability at a younger age. It causes him to wonder if Jiang Wanyin ever got over the experience or over the fact that Wei Ying 'left' him behind. With Jiang Yanli marrying out, which he'd known in an abstract manner since childhood, but Wei Ying, well, children make all kinds of promises due to how simple the world seems to be. Not all of those promises can be something to be held onto once reality sets in and the reality is, Wei Ying is a Zhuanbian and thus, can't be Jiang Wanyin's second in command.

Doesn't mean he still can't be your brother. He thinks at Jiang Wanyin. Unsurprisingly, Jiang Wanyin doesn't pick up that mental statement while having a sour look upon his face along with a clear look of hurt.

"Wei Ying is a Zhuanbian and is he not still your brother?" Jiang Caihe inquires. "If Jin Ling ends up being a Zhuanbian, he'll still be your nephew."

It's clear that Jiang Wanyin wants to argue that but, well, Jin Ling has stopped hugging his neck to peer at his uncle while leaning against his shoulder, looking at Jiang Wanyin. There's a look of various emotion fluttering in the man's eyes but, in the end, Jiang Wanyin realizes that to keep Jin Ling from getting further upset is to agree with his statement, even if it's not something the Cultivator is sure he wants to do.

Walking over to the desk that Jiang Wanyin is, allowing his head's shape to return to its previous state, Jin Ling reaches out towards his uncle. Jiang Wanyin takes the four year old and he says, "Life isn't something anyone can really plan out. It's best to learn to take things as they come, when they come. Be it in accepting them or learning to operate around them."

"I'll see you both later, at supper." Jiang Caihe states as his way of farewell and then walks out of the office. He's not in a good place at that particular moment, but that doesn't mean his duties are going to wait for him to be in a better place either.

Jiang Caihe takes his time upon returning to his own office to calm his own mind and remind himself that the Divination had been rather hard to understand. The strangeness of the answer had been unreadable, even when handed around to various experts in said Art. The nearest translation seems to be incline that there's a good chance that Jiang Yanli's future children or child will be Zhuanbian but also that they won't be as well.

Jiang Ling manages to dodge the incoming strike from the walking corpse by transforming fully into his animal shape, which is that of an Asian golden cat. Wen Sizhui flows into the gap, the sword piercing through the corpse' head. Lan Jingyi manages to block a sword strike from the Cultivator that's responsible for the situation at Yi City.

It's rather hard to believe that such a situation had been allowed to develop under both the Sect and School's noses but, well, it had and now they have to deal with this Xue Yang and his 'Sect' of dead using Cultivators. It's hard to believe that a Cultivator managed to get this far without any help, which likely means that there's going to be a huge investigation concerning if there hadn't been a backer at the earliest founding of this so called 'Sect'. Jiang Caihe does his best to reign in his own thoughts, he's one of the four adults that is capable of fueling the various shielding Talismens from a distance, the group of Juniors need him to keep his mind on his current task.

Lan Wangji, Wei Ying, and Wen Ning were doing their best, although Wen Ning is acting more as a battery to help the other members with their efforts. They can only hope that reinforcements will be coming soon, what with Ouyang Zizchen managing to get out of Yi City before they became surrounded by living and dead corpses. Particularly before Xue Yang showed up in person to taunt and gloat over their situation.

It's going to be a long day. Jiang Caihe thinks to himself.

Ending it here

Birth Name: Jiang Cheng, Courtesy Name: Jiang Wanyin = Age at beginning 7, Birthday Nov 5

Birth Name: Wei Ying = Age at beginning 7, Birthday Oct 31, Animal shape - Amur Leopard

Birth Name: Jiang Yanli = Age at beginning 11, Birthday May 2

Birth Name: Jiang Caihe = Age at beginning 13, Birthday Apr 16, Animal shape - Asiatic Lion

FYI: Zhuǎnbiàn, AKA Zhuanbian, it's suppose to translate into Transform. At least that's what Google Translate says it does at any rate.

Nature of Beasts P 1: KHR!

I don't own Kateyou Hitman Reborn!

(_ T _)

'This chapter is dedicated to the rumors, history, and current welders three swords that were forged to be used by those Youkai that are of Kirin Nature in either both the Body and the Heart or of Body/Heart. These three swords' names have been passed from one welder to the next and they are Kirin no Ikari, Kirinzuresuto, and Reijingukirin. At the time of this book, Kirin no Ikari rests within the Hibari Clan, the current welder is one Hibari Kiman while Kirinzuresuto is passed from one Grandmaster of the Nakamura Sword Style to the next. As for Reijingukirin, the last known welder had been one Sone Chuya, who had been sighted in *China* battling a horde of Monsters native to that land, which had been, at the time of this printing, over a hundred years ago.

The names of the original welders of these three swords have been lost to time, the same with the other forty-two who fended off the invading Youkai from *China* during their human's own attempts to conquer *Japan* .'

The light he'd been reading by gets blocked and he's already resisting the simple urge to sigh. Yoshi had managed to read the previous six chapters of this book in peace, he didn't see why he can't finish this seventh chapter in peace as well. *For such a supposed bastion of civility, I haven't experienced much of it.*

Not that Yoshi doesn't get why he's given the bare minimum when it comes to hospitality. It's just depressing that it's due to having been born to a family of farmers in a remote village. Without the 'right' connections or training in this particular field, he might as well be a farmer who didn't 'know' his 'proper place'. That he's also a Tengu in Body and a Kirin in Heart doesn't matter given how lacking he

ultimately is in a political sense. Which isolates him from those around him, even those who possess dormant Youkai Natures are better respective then he, more due to who they are related to then their own merits, he might have once been sympathetic but their treatment has long since cause him to feel rather numb to their 'plight'.

"I didn't know you can read. Did you learn it from your parents?" Nara Toshiko asks in a very fake inquiring tone. She's dormant but her father, Nara Yuu, who's an Orochi, is the *Steward* of the current reigning Tengu of this hidden Spirit World, it's called Imori, it's clear it was a Kitsune Youkai who set the foundations of this Spirit World with a name like that. He'd known she'd never have her Youkai Nature surge forth the first time he'd met her, which had been a month into his stay at this Spirit World.

It had taken a second encounter to learn how bitter and resentful she was. Upon learning of his humble origins from a remote village, she's lashed out at him, first verbally and then slapped him. Yoshi flared his Tengu Wings and his Kirin Mane, falling into the trap she'd set. She'd played the victim but, as he hadn't touched her but she him, she'd been scolded about provoking an 'ill bred' Youkai. She's been hostile to him since.

So, when face with her once more, he merely tunes the thirteen year old brat out along with the echoing sentiments that the eleven to twelve year olds parroted. It's more likely just the same old taunts and Yoshi finds it tiring, in the end, of hearing them. He's been in this Spirit World for six months, before he'd been working at an inn that caters only to Youkai, and before learning of the hidden society of Youkai, he'd tried to find work at the Capital, it took him almost a year before he left due to... things. He learnt through experience just how well deserved the caution Youkai are regarded with.

He's going to be eighteen come the spring and Yoshi is finding just how similar Youkai Natured humans are to simple humans, as in all of the wrong ways. He's already considering where to head next as he don't plan to stay in this Spirit World any longer. As far as Yoshi is

concerned, none here have earned any kind of right to him and he's rather glad of that. *It's so tiring... They think I'm so easily bought? That I'm still an ignorant farm bred idiot?*

Yoshi ignores the group of six as he draws upon his Heart to get around the issue of how little light there is for him to read by. He does his best to keep it under his skin, his Body helps ensure that nothing shows as he goes back to reading the book. When the book gets slammed on him and the Nara brat demands, "Are you even listening?!"

"You were talking?" He inquires as he looks up at her, tilting his head just so. There's a few giggles from the other five children while the Nara brat's faces goes crimson and she tries to kill him with her eyes alone.

They don't leave and he can't have his Youkai flaring visibly, Yoshi also knows he's unable to take the book out of the library but it's clear they won't let him continue reading. He refuses to retreat, it's only made the Nara brat bolder and he gets snide remarks about finding a mere child intimidating, never mind that they wouldn't follow through with their own suggestions due to who her father is and his position in Court. She knows she can't physically touch him, that would give him the excuse needed to flare his Youkai Natures out, and as long as it's just flaring but not doing anything else, he'd get away with it.

His face should show how bored he is before he picks up the book, he walks to another table, being sure to walk at a slow but confident way. The fact he just, turned his back on them, it shows that he doesn't feel threaten in the least. As he's about to sit down after putting the book down first, it's then that he hears a cry of frustration and anger.

Something gets slapped on his back and his Youkai Nature flares as he fights against whatever it is that's trying to dig itself into his body. Yoshi isn't sure what is it that he fully did, he dimly recalls something sticky upon his fingers, there's screams, and shouts of anger that

became pained screams before going silent. Not that he's aware of what he's physically doing as he's far too busy fending off an Enenra's attempts to hollow him out. There's hints of Yato-no-Kami along the edge but between his Body and Heart, he does manage to keep up a good defense, even pushed it back but, well, he'd been unable to do anything about the weight on his back, that's allowing this Youkai access to his body and attack him.

So, when something slices it, it takes Yoshi a bit to realize he's not in the library along with the various smells. He slowly blinks then a bit more until his vision clears. It's then that he realizes that he's got blood on himself, particularly his hands. Holding them up, he tries to think about why he's got blood on his fingers, on his hands, although it looks like his nails seem...

It's then that he looks at his surroundings properly and notices that there's a lot of dead bodies, some of whom are those Youkai he'd seen during his time in Imori but there's also a number of strangers. Glancing to his left, he walks over to the woman and knows that she's the one who'd been trying to hollow him out. It's then that he notices the marks upon her skin, the irregular burns that hint around the edges of the slices. "I killed them?" His voice is soft and deceptively calm.

"Court politics." Yoshi hears a man's voice answer his question. "Rather impressive that you're not a hollowed out puppet. Ueno Mana's had decades perfecting that particular application of her Youkai Natured."

"Her favorite targets have always been those possessing Tengu as either Body or Heart." The man continues. "And you killed her, of course, she then had to redouble her efforts to take over you or you'd just destroy whatever vessel she claims as her new body, out of pure survival."

Yoshi does his best to recall what he'd been doing before... "I had been in the library... I think I was reading chapter six about the History of the Forty-Two Ancient Swords..." He mutters out loud.

"Does the name Nara Toshiko mean anything to you?" The man asks and it takes him a bit to recall her. "Daughter of the *Steward* . She didn't like me, envy, I think, that some random son of a farmer ended up having his Youkai Natures surge to the surface while her own never will." Yoshi admits, he's fairly sure he's missing something in regards to her, to everything that's happened.

"Ah, that would explain how she smuggled *that* **item** through the Spirit World's boundaries." The stranger states with a snort. "The envious are always easily preyed upon with the right bait." There's a sound of a sword sheathing, not that he's looked away from the woman who'd tried to destroy his very mind and spirit.

"Ueno Mana... Rogue? Or..." There's this word at the tip of his tongue but for the life of him, Yoshi isn't sure it's the right word.

"Mercenary. She'd been hired by Kuge Genji Shinta, who's Body is that of a Wani and Heart of a Tsuchigumo." Explains the stranger. "Daimyo Fujihara Danuja's nephew, his sister's son not his younger brother's, went through the courting gestures to get Kuge Genji Shinta's youngest daughter to bed him, then declared her nothing but a whore and cut all ties with her."

Given he doesn't know the names, it's likely that said people are likely possessing dormant Youkai Natures then surface ones. "For the past decade, Kuge Genji Shinta has tried to force a marriage between the nephew and the daughter with the brother in law and sister." Yoshi closes his eyes as he already can guess that the sister involved her brother, either on her husband's behalf or the son's.

"The sister involved her brother." He murmurs and there's a humorless chuckle. "Indeed, the son found someone he wished to marry but couldn't as long as Kuge Genji Shinta was pressing for a marriage. As the girl in question wasn't involved in Youkai in any shape or form, the family didn't know of the disgrace the son had caused."

"The daughter took her own life upon hearing Daimyo Fujihara Danuja throwing his weight around to end the matter, not even offering anything concerning that the nephew courted with no intent of following through with marrying her." There's a pause before the stranger adds, "She died almost two years ago."

Yoshi finds himself nodding in understanding, he'd been nothing but an afterthought, collateral or a useful tool. "The nephew was visiting with his wife, likely introducing her to Youkai Society." He guesses, he doesn't really feel anything, oddly, for having been used to kill any number of these people, these Youkai.

It's then that it clicks, it's his emotions that had suffered the most. That they likely had been allowed to be attack while keeping the more 'core' of himself safe from the assault. Yoshi wonders if the wife had been pregnant or they already had a child. "How many survived?" How many will paint me as a heartless murder, ignoring that I hadn't been in the right state of mind to be in control over himself.

"Most ran the moment the Tsukumogami made from Hollowed out Youkai breached the Boundaries." The stranger assures him. "She's rather infamous for not being picky about who she turns into Tsukumogami."

Yoshi can't find it in himself to actually speak, so he hums in acknowledgement. He's not feeling overly energetic and he can't find it within himself to care about what that means for him. His eyelids are growing heavy and so is his body.

With a sigh, Yoshi gives into the exhausted sleep that feels like a long time in coming.

T /|\ T

There's a sphere made out of some kind of transparent material around him. It obscures the clarity of his vision and what sound reaches him. Trying to break free... There's no weakness for him

to exploit, there's no *weight* to his pounding on the material either.

There's nothing he can do and nobody who'd help him get free. Then, he's not sure when but something, for a short instances, manages to pierce the material... Only, it doesn't set it free, no, it causes him to produce orange energy all the more and that newly produced orange that leaves but it's not... right. It's tainted by the yellow, it's not really *his* .

And this sets the course of pattern of things to come. The yellow forces him to create new orange, but it's not the same, it's not *his* . There's some holes in the transparent material but around those holes are shards and they hurt when he tries to get near the holes. The new, tainted orange passes by harmlessly these shard.

There's a slight change now, he gets glimpses of a world beyond and a hollowed out body that should welcome him. He never manages to Harmonize with that outer body, it's slowly changing, accepting the tainted orange as if it was him. There's little context that he gets from the few glimpses, only that the outer, slowly tainted him doesn't want to be a *Mafia Don* , whatever that is. None seem to listen, for all that they hear that outer him.

He's not sure when parts of that outer him began to crawl and merge with that which is trapped. In the end, it's merely a puppet beyond the transparent material, answering to the Will of others. None seem to notice the difference. Then, at the age of twenty-four...

Yoshi jerks awake all of a sudden and his left hand going to his gut, searching for... Looking down upon sitting up, he's not sure what it is he thought he'd find. There's no blood staining his hands let alone his fingers.

"These aren't my sleeping cloths..." He murmurs to himself before looking around to realize that he's not in the room he'd been allowed to stay at upon arrival at Imori. It had been rather small by the standards of the Youkai living at Imori but he was just happy to have a space to himself.

He's confused as Yoshi recalls being at the library, he'd been reading a book. With brows furled, he tries to recall the title. *Something to do about those special swords. The ancient ones that number over forty.* Is all he can recall at the moment.

His memories are hazy and it's then that he realizes that he's rather thirsty along with... Blushing, he focuses on the room along with noticing that it's night out. Yoshi isn't sure what to make of the sight as it had been morning, last he remembers. Getting up, his legs are a bit shaky but he takes it slow, he notices the aches in his back muscles, then again his limbs seem to ache as well.

Once at the door, he glances about, it takes him a bit to realize the room he woke in was in the actual guest wing. *Which means...* Yoshi does in fact manage to find a kitchen that's connected to this particular wing. Grabbing a cup, he fills it with water after pumping it five times.

The water hits the spot and it's not long before he visits the area meant for certain bodily functions. With that, Yoshi does his best to fight back a yawn. He isn't sure if he should return to that room or seek out the small room he'd been assigned.

In the end, he goes for the nearest room as he's tired and wants to go back to sleep. While confused as to why he's been placed in that guest room, Yoshi decides it a problem for him to solve in the morning. Along with other little issues he's sure he'd be questioning if not for how tired he is. Once he's back upon the bed, Yoshi has a very restful slumber without any strange dreams.

Grandmaster Nakamura is watching him and Yoshi isn't sure what to make of it. His four students have only been polite but clearly preferred to stir clear of him. Out of the four, only Chiba Miki has a Kirin as a Youkai Nature, which is Body while his Heart is that of a Nekomata. The other three are dormant Youkai and their names are Aoki Ryu, Hori Uta, and Iida Doi. What little he's learnt of the four, they were learning different sword styles from Grandmaster Nakamura, which is surprising as he'd thought that Chiba Miki would be groomed to take over the mantle and thus weld Kirinzuresuto, after all the current Grandmaster is going to be three hundred years of age, give or take a small handful of years.

The youngest of the four is Hori Uta, at age sixteen. The eldest is Iida Doi at age twenty-three. Between Aoki Ryu and Chiba Miki, Aoki Ryu is older at age twenty with Chiba Miki being eighteen. He's not sure of what kind of backgrounds they came from but, he's fairly certain that Iida Doi is the only one who didn't come from a household that could be scholars or higher classed. It's just how Iida Doi carries herself, he's also sure that she's hiding her gender as well.

There's been a few Youkai that have returned since Grandmaster Nakamura sent out word of Ueno Mana's confirmed death. It also sounds like one Kuge Genji Shinta is being held accountable for the deaths of the Imori Court as well, it seems he's the one who hired her to avenge slights against his family by the previous Daimyo of Imori and his sister, who's nephew had courting Kuge Genji Shinta's daughter with the pretense of just bedding her and not wedding her. It's a mix blessing that those that return don't know of his role in killing various Youkai, be they members of Court or the Tsukumogami created out of Hollowed out Youkai.

It's still something that he finds hard to come to terms with, the idea that he killed so many older, more experienced Youkai without getting overly hurt. The Tengu Daimyo fell to him along with various guards, those that had training for years... Yoshi doesn't have any hints of purple upon his body, which would indicate he'd made use of

his Heart to heal injuries. So it's a mystery as to how none managed to fend him off or kill him.

He recalls the bodies and the slices that hint at odd burns about the edges. Yoshi's nails weren't any different then when he took the time to look at them. There's neither sharper nor does there seem to be any blood under them either. They seem perfectly normal, clearly incapable of slicing through flesh and yet, evidently, they were. Which, again, is weird, after all, they don't have any signs of having been altered by either his Body or Heart.

Blinking, he finds Hori thrusting a bowl with chopsticks into his face. It seems he's zoned out, yet again. "Eat." The dormant Youkai growls roughly at him, he takes the bowl, muttering his thanks along with a polite bow.

As Yoshi eats the stripes of deer meat that's on top of the rice, he notices that Hori hadn't retreated from him. It's puzzling behavior, honestly but it's clear that Hori does have something to say or ask of him. "When are you going to make the announcement?" Hori finally asks and his body freezes.

"Announcement?" Yoshi asks helplessly once he puts the bowl down a bit along with the chopsticks. "Why would I need to make an announcement?" After all, what power does he have? He's got no connections, no money, and everyone knows about his back ground.

"Your a Tengu." States Hori as if that explains everything. "And?" He asks after a minor period of silence.

"Don't you want to be Daimyo? Rule a Court?" Hori asks in a very impatient voice and he merely blinks owlishly at the younger man.

"Isn't there a better candidate then I? Or candidates, I guess." Yoshi inquires and it's Hori's turn to give him an owlish blink.

"But... Your here and they aren't." Hori states and once again he doesn't see how it matters.

"I'm the son of farmers, Hori." Yoshi states calmly. "It's been made clear by many, **many** Youkai of what I lack in the areas that make one a proper Tengu, or to be a proper Youkai in general."

"My whole time here?" He gestures with his chopsticks. "I grew tired of it. I was pretty much bullied by a child who I couldn't even discipline due to who her father was and if I tried to intimidate her, I'd be cast in the role of villain."

"I was going to leave Imori, not sure when but I knew I was going to." He explains. "I'm tired of how human everything ultimately is when it comes down to it. If not for the strange magics that we possess, everything wouldn't be any different then how regular human operate."

"It shouldn't matter who my parents are, but it clearly does. It shouldn't matter concerning my lack of formal education, except it does." Yoshi continues. "Only one of those can be corrected while the other will always be seen as a weight around my neck."

"People are only 'friendly' until they learn that I lack any kind of political connections. They look at me and they are already trying to judge how much it would take to 'buy' me." He adds. "I don't care what they think I owe them, they have done nothing for me that didn't have a price tag attached. I wasn't housed in the guest wing, I wasn't invited to eat with the Court, I wasn't invited to sit in on the monthly meetings, and I sure as hell wasn't given leave to deal with an unruly child who should know better then to aggravate a Youkai with their nature surfaced."

"So no, I could careless about creating or managing a Court filled with back talkers and kiss-asses." Yoshi states, he's not sure when anger had crept into his tone but clearly, it has along with stirring up a lot of emotions and memories. He returns to eating his lunch and walking away from Hori.

Feeling eyes on his back, he glances backwards only to find the Grandmaster Nakamura being the one who's eyes he's felt. They

were very weighty eyes and there's a slight incline of a head before the man continues on his way. Hori seems to be a bit pale, upon the quick glance, but he focuses back on eating along with looking forward.

T /|\ T

Alive... He's alive? How?

How could they have managed to save his life? It had been a [blank] wound in his gut. The [blank] clearly been altered to do so much more then just piece his body. He kind of recalls the general sensation of a lot of burning and at some point, he's pretty sure he recalls what it's like to suffocate.

The world isn't cut off from him and, time was meaningless. His mama was there, alive, and far more lively then he remembers. Sure, he can't talk very well or walk but as time goes, that changes. He forgets, it's easy to forget as everything from before was just surreal. It's a nightmare that he hadn't, for the longest time, woken from.

Then, then a familiar face arrives in the company of a man he doesn't trust. "Call me Grandpa." The elderly man says but soon enough, he catches sight of a certain ring. A ring from that nightmare and dread sinks into his whole being.

He's not sure when he started screaming, trying to run but, in the end, he's trapped, Sealed , away once more. Only this time he knows the name of what's trapping him, it's . . . called . . .

Yoshi surges to a sitting position, panting. His throat is rough and he dimly realizes that not only had he been screaming in his dream but in his sleep as well. A hand reaches up to his forehead, rubbing one particular spot in particular.

Getting out of bed, he heads to get a drink and hope that by moving around, it'll help clear his head. Soon enough, he's outside at the

well and waits a bit before pulling up the bucket. Yoshi couldn't recall the dream he'd been experiencing. It's been about three months since he accepted Grandmaster Nakamura's offer of becoming his student, which had been a bit over a week after that conversation he had with Hori.

They left Imori a few days after once a party of neighboring Youkai sent volunteers to help get the buildings repaired. It's likely among that party are those with sights set on becoming the next Daimyo of Imori. There had been a pair of Tengu Youkai among that mixed party but there had also been a Tsuchigumo, never mind the Kitsune or the pair Jinmenju that had been among the group. He's known that it's possible that the next Daimyo won't be another Tengu or even a Tsuchigumo, but it likely won't be easy going for which ever ambitious Youkai who wants the post, regardless of their Youkai Natures.

Sighing, he does his best to push the matter of Imori out of his mind, it's not his responsibility nor concern. Although Yoshi guesses he's dwelling on it to avoid the issue that he's still recovering from that attempted Hollowing that Ueno Mana tried to do to him. *Which is likely where tonight's dream came from.* He mentally reasons.

It still unsettles him, that he somehow managed to fend off Ueno's attack upon his mind and spirit. *She's had decades and yet... Couldn't crush me under her thumb?* Yoshi thinks with a scowl upon his face as he takes the bucket from the edge of the well, having nearly forgotten about having pulled it up.

As he drinks, some of the water falls from his mouth, drenching his front. With a wince, he pulls the bucket away and takes a look at what he's done to the front of his sleeping cloths. There's little he can do to dry it off as he tugs the cloth from his chest, gently moving it about, flapping it or waving it in an attempt to dry it off.

Putting down the bucket, he turns to lean on the well and runs his other hand through his hair, which is black. For some reason, he pulls a few strands before his eyes and stares at the color along with

length. There's this... disconnect as, for a second, he thought it's brown. Snorting at the thought of brown hair, he lets go of the strands and tilts his head up, looking at the night sky, which does sport a waning Crescent Moon along with some clouds.

Still, he gets to see a wide array of stars scattered about the night sky. It's a breath taking sight, at least in Yoshi's humble opinion. He wonders how come he never appreciated the sight when he'd been younger. *Took it for granted, really. Same with how fresh the air is.* He muses dimly to himself as he places the palms of his hands on the edge of the well as he continue gazing at the stars.

It's a very calming sight, it soothes his soul, the sight of the stars shining down. He's not sure when he started humming but he had. After a while, he yawns and Yoshi knows it's time for him to return to his bed.

As he enters the rather spacious house, he wonders if he caused any of the others to wake, either by his screaming or him walking out of the room. With that thought, he does his best to be as silent as he can be, that includes using his Youkai Natures to help with said endeavor.

Looking down at his lap, Yoshi, well, Tsunayoshi now it seems, doesn't know how to process how it is he's the one picked to be the next Grandmaster. "Why me?" He finally asks upon untangling himself enough to voice out one of his many, many questions.

"I think it's more of a, how could it not be you." Replies Nakamura Aito, who's been his master for these past twenty years, give or take a few months or weeks. He's startled enough by that to look up at the older Youkai's face.

"You have a stronger Heart then Shape, it's rather odd that your Natures aren't reversed from what I've seen of you." Continues his master, former master. "I've never seen a Youkai with a Shape of a Tengu never seek out the company of others nor have I seen you try

and put yourself in an inadvertence position when you are put in a group."

"..." He's unsure of how to respond to that. Although, he's fairly certain that it's due to his previous shitty experiences among Youkai Society that contribute to him not enjoying the company of other Youkai. "It's like babysitting, being in charge." Tsunayoshi complains gently, he's fairly sure he couldn't mind being in charge of actual children, just not those that overgrown babies who want everything handed to them or be lead by the hand when they are clearly old enough to be able to do things for themselves.

"It's like... Their cattle." He adds with a huff. "Just... how is it that they qualify as strong and willful Youkai if they just..." He's not sure if he's explaining things properly. He, at least, manages to keep his hands from moving about as he spoke.

Seeing Nakamura's bemused expression and what might be laughter dancing about in those hazel green eyes, he lowers his gaze once more. "Oh, I'm sure in the right situation, they can be very willful and capable. There's few who are like that all the time though." Concludes Nakamura. "I seem to recall a conversation where you pretty much said that the only difference between a Youkai and a simple human downs to special abilities."

"I said that?" He asks once he's glanced back up. Tsunayoshi tries to think over when he might have said that while Nakamura nods, the previous slight smile is now full blown. "To Hori-kun, back in Imori."

"Oh." *That's a very long time ago.* Tsunayoshi can't help but think. "So... Nakamura Tsunayoshi? Why not just... Nakamura Yoshi?"

"Yoshi can be considered a nickname until you're more familiar with your new name." Explains Nakamura. "My old name had been Jun."

He isn't sure what to make of the fact that it seemed like his former master also didn't have a family name. "There's no changing your

mind, is there?" Tsunayoshi inquires and the simple look of contentment in those hazel green eyes is all the answer he gets.

"So... what do I need to do to prepare myself?" He asks, more or less resigned that he's going to be the next Grandmaster of the Nakamura Style and welder of Kirinzuresuto.

End of Part 1

Youkai terms:

Body is Primary

Heart is Secondary

Flames Listed:

Youkai Nature - Dying Will Flame

Kirin - Cloud Flame

Kitsune - Mist Flame

Nekomata - Storm Flame

Oni - Lightning Flame

Orochi - Sun Flame

Tengu - Sky Flame

Zasshiki Warashi - Rain Flame

Enenra - Desert Flame

Jinmenju - Forest Flame

Tsuchigumo - Earth Flame

Yato-no-Kami - Swamp Flame

Yobuko - Mountain Flame

Yuki-kami - Glacier Flame

Wani - Ocean Flame (no listed seventh Flame for Earth Flames)

Translations:

Kirin no ikari - Google translation says it's Kirin's Fury.

Kirinzuresuto - Google translation says it's Kirin's Rest.

Reijingukirin - Google translation says it's Raging Kirin.

Tsukumogami - Beings that a Youkai decided to create out of any kind material, often owned as property by their creators. It's frowned upon to sell them though, as there wouldn't be a bond between owner and the created being in question which is needed to reign in said created being.

Imori - Google translation says it's Newt.

Daimyo - Feudal Lords.

Kuge - Nobility comprised of Courtiers and High Civil Servants.

Nature of Beasts P 2: KHR!

I don't own Kateyou Hitman Reborn!

(_ T _)

There's not ever going to be a Tri-Ni-Sette. Nakamura Tsunayoshi thinks with clear satisfaction coloring his thoughts as he wipes Kirinzuresuto down with a cloth to get rid of the blood. There's not a lot of fighting happening within the plaza he finds himself located at and those others around him are also slowly realizing that there's a bit of a break for them as well.

There's a lot for all of them to do, but it's clear that things are going far differently then the population of... well, whatever they named themselves or their city state. It's an odd thing to admit to, given the location being in what his thoughts think of as *Spain* . Yet, it hardly matters, given what they're here to reverse or, in his case, prevent.

As he puts Kirinzuresuto back in the sheath, he takes in the sight of both fallen allies and enemies. There's a uniformity to the enemy's clothing that he hadn't really thought too much about, after all, he's seen such before, be it in his dream memories of Sawada Tsunayoshi or in person as Yoshi, later, Nakamura Tsunayoshi. *They're more fancy then I'd expect, given this time period.* He mentally admits as he makes note of the kind of identification they'd have on their cloths, let alone the condition of the odd weapons.

The comfortable warmth on his back brings him out of his musings concerning the enemy units. Glancing, he finds Azar of *Red Star* at his right, she's looking a touch sad but also stubborn. He's not sure what the Persians who are Active term themselves with or their own regards for their coloring, but among his own, she'd said to possess the Body of a Jinmenju with the Heart of a Orochi, which is an odd combination among the Youkai but then, Tsunayoshi doesn't really want to use the terms from his previous life, after all, the naming

theme likely originated from this particular civilization, even if some of the Mafia, and the like's, 'beliefs' in regards to Flames were all their own.

Then again, given how these people arrange themselves, it's clear that there's a tier system... He muses as Azar finally breaks the quiet between them. "It is hard to believe, eh? That these... people do indeed bleed red, just like the rest of us, huh?"

It takes him a bit to realize what she's referring too and hums in agreement. "They thought far too much of themselves." He agrees, thankful that the language spell is still functioning. *It seems that they didn't try to cancel out the more passive support boosts when they tried to clamp down on our offensive weaponry and the like.* "They blood flows just as freely as our own."

"Here here!" Cheers one of the men from what might one day be called *Africa* . While there's a few that are clearly grieving beside their dead friends, there's more that are recovering their stamina along with their wits. "You are quite the blade dancer, Nakamura!" Remarks someone from behind and that comment seems to generate some stress relieving laughter from some of the people with him at the plaza.

He puts on a bemused look upon his face, he might have been a big fish in Japan but here on the mainland, Tsunayoshi is a smaller fish in a much wider body of water. He recalls seeing a fair number of various weapon masters during the trek West from China and even in China. More then a few had also traveled West to answer the Call to Arms concerning this city state's intent to create a restriction upon all beyond its membership in regards to 'access' to their own, innate power, their Flame or Flames.

It's the sound of a horn that reminds them all that they are still within the battlefield and that they can be encountering an enemy squad soon. After all, they're a bit more of a rag tag army then a unified one that is, right now, defending their home and families. Sure, people

joined in groups but most didn't come with anyone save themselves, like Tsunayoshi.

"I'll encase our dead, then we can continue." He states and that reminds them of what happened before they reached and breached the wall. There's a number of people nodding and a few move to take guard as he begins to move among the dead while others cause the enemy bodies to either rot supernaturally fast or disintegrate as he encases their dead in modified Zero Point Breakthrough, with the help of various people, most of those that had orange know this technique, given how the enemies' Mists can't seem to get rid of it to make use of the dead body, few wanted to disrespect their own fallen dead by treating them like the enemy's own.

There's some fighting by the time he finishes but they are held back. Squaring his shoulders, he pulls Kirinzuresuto out and prepares himself for this next wave of the enemy, orange wings manifesting upon his back as his hair begins to glow the color of his Heart. "Damn that's still an impressive sight." He hears Azar murmur to one of her underlings as he takes to the air, heading for the line that's about to give way to enemy forces.

Every decade, there's a particular Festival that's Celebrated for seven days. It's one that, sadly, has him visiting *China* in order to join in as the Festival's reason didn't really matter to the Youkai of *Japan* . Most of the Youkai couldn't find it within themselves to care about the cause, the history, of the Festival, they are as isolationistic and rather proud of it as the common humans that live beside them.

None seem to give it much credence that there was any danger to themselves, that their very culture, ideology, and life style could have been affect by the designs of, now named, Echthros people; the word itself literally translates into Enemy and it's a word from one of the Greek dialects. Everyone who participated agreed that it's a good enough name to refer to the dead civilization, what survivors

had been, which had been children under the age of five, long since adopted by various members of the alliance against their parents.

The seven stones they'd used as their civilization's anchors shattered and he'd been sure to grind even the stone shards into dust, once everyone had left that tower. Tsunayoshi didn't want a bit of it to linger, even if it were the size of a pebble. He'd even scattered the dust on his way back to Japan, sure, Tsunayoshi admits that he'd likely been far too paranoid about the seven stones, but his memories of his old life as Sawada Tsunayoshi didn't weigh on him once every little bit of those stones had been turned to dust.

He felt a great deal lighter and at peace with everything he'd done to get to that point. He'll admit, history may repeat but at least it will be one where people had a chance to cause different out comes to occur. There's nothing keeping human kind from using the inherit powers that are nestled within a person, be it their actual body or/and soul. Tsunayoshi looks forward to seeing how things will be, hoping that his part in changing the course of the world will have positive outcomes then negative.

Still, seven days... It's a little much. He mentally admits as he wonders through the market.

All fourteen aspects of power are on display in their own way. Tsunayoshi notices the various Clans advertising some kind of entertainment venue, be it a puppet show to a theater troops that enact different parts of the Siege of Dead Field and the Ice Break Through, which, of course, leads to the Taking of the Echthros' Tower. He does recall the various names of fellow Asians that participated and hearing of the various marriages along with bearing the urns of the fallen's ashes back to their respective families.

The numbers weren't as many as the Clans make it out to be, but then, the bulk of the forces had been more immediate neighbors likes of the Celtic tribes of mainland *Europe* and the famous civilizations like Greeks and Persians. They didn't have to travel as far as most, like himself for example. From *China* and the

neighboring countries, there had likely been nearly three hundred to traveled West. And it wasn't all at once, either, but over the course of three years after the Pull West begun to be felt and had been active for that time before fading away.

Two hundred years and there's been changes occurring among the *Chinese* Active. Tsunayoshi mostly notices that the Active are preferring to sport special symbols on their foreheads that glow their Natures' color along with their eyes aglow. He suspects that there's a kind of ranking when it comes to those symbols, even though people aren't always wearing the same Clan uniform or clothing. It's a guess at this point as he's just realizing how lacking in... well... displays the *Chinese* Active show off.

There's a reason why calling the *Chinese* Active, Youkai, had been applied to them . It use to be easy to see a common shared idea between the two cultures, something that made it a bit easier to accept visitations between the two. *Could be due to having been exposed to Western influences.* He muses to himself as he mingles with a crowd of latents moving to attend one of the theater troops. *I wonder how they've been influenced in turn?*

Memories of the awed looks at the sight of his wings flickers through his mind. Tsunayoshi considers the fact that, if he doesn't want to draw attention, he'd better learn a bit about the special symbols, if only to fit in among the masses in the future, particularly as he doesn't want to draw more attention then needed. *It shouldn't be hard to paint something on my forehead, something simple...* He thinks as he finds a spot to watch the acting troop preform on stage.

The Shrine of the Forty-Two Swords isn't what it once was but Tsunayoshi isn't that surprised at the decline and there's rarely any visitors these days either. He can remember when it was proposed to create a temple or something to honor the history that is the forty-two swords, where they'd be housed for viewing as the various swords have either Sealed themselves so none can weld them or been shattered one to many times and none felt confident in doing

justice when it comes to reforging them. *Funny how the place I suggested ended up being where it was built.*

Seated on the porch, the ancient Youkai looks up at the clouds drifting over head. Next to him is Kirinzuresuto, the sword never did warm up to any of his previous students so he's never passed on either his title of Grandmaster nor the sword. Few are the number of Youkai who know his full name and even among those, none seem to suspect what his actual Body is, most mistaking his Heart as his Body as well and given how intense politics had been throughout the centuries, which remains rather cut throat, it's better that way as it keeps people from trying to pull him into their messes or expect him to act in a way he's uncomfortable with.

That he's living where Namimori would have been is just a bit of a bemusing, inside joke that only he gets. There's a few farms but nobody really set up a town or the beginnings of a city. *It's not like Dame-Tsuna felt any need to research history of Namimori, particularly not when he'd destined for Italy.* He muses to himself, hardly for the first time in his life.

He's fairly certain that in any event, the date for the founding of Namimori has long since passed, leaving only himself to knowing of what could have been. There's no Flame Criminal Underworld, just various subcultures that aren't overly well known by the mainstream population. *Although the number of Active have been growing.* Tsunayoshi muses as he sips from his Enchanted tea cup.

Looking down at into the cup, he watches as it slowly fills up with tea once more and the cup's heat perks up. As he's about to sip again, he feels the Boundaries ripple at the beginning of the stairs that lead to the Shrine's courtyard. With a few blinks, he puts down the cup and with ease, grabs Kirinzuresuto as he rises up, putting the sword in its proper place upon his person as he glides towards the gate of the Shrine, doing his best to pick up any details of who it is that's coming to pay the Shrine a visit.

There's a vague sense of Outsiders/Foreigners along with a feeling of oiliness that's coating these visitors. It seems that the Boundaries can't tell if they are Active or not, never mind what subculture they abide to. Tsunayoshi isn't sure if he wants them to be a group of smugglers here to try and steal any of the swords or if they're here for some other reasons, like, issuing a Challenge as the Grandmaster of his style.

As he stands by the gate, which he sees pass as though it was a window, the group strikes him as vaguely familiar. Even as he cocks his head to the side as they get closer to the gate, Tsunayoshi gets a feeling that he should know some of them, if not all of them. The cloths are business suits that are favored more in America and in certain countries in Europe then anywhere else, but it's the sight of people with clear Asian features wearing them that strikes him as odd, after all, such cloths aren't that popular as most seem to prefer a hybrid style that's a kimono styled to give the impression of a tailored jacket and/or business vest.

Staring at those that shouldn't be wearing such cloths, it bothers him a great deal to see them wear such cloths. Even among modern Japanese Active, they'd at least arrive wearing something like a modern fashion formal kimono at the very least or going all out by wearing something far more old fashioned when visiting Spirit Realms and Shrines/Temples. *They would also have someway to show if off their Natures too, if they were aware of their Body or Heart.* He reasons with himself.

By the time they pass the final Boundary of the Shrine, which is about six feet from the wall that surrounds the Shrine of the Forty-Two Swords, he realizes that they're not... **Local** , as in, they're not native to this world. Tsunayoshi's mind whirls, his focus going inwards as he does his best to dig through his previous incarnation's memories. So, he doesn't react to the conversation that's happening on the other side of the door, not really listening to the words, which are said in a particular way with certainly unique accent that's rather pronounce to his ear.

The names do come and... He finds himself rather disappointed, with them, mostly. *They sent ensured I'd be sent to a different, parallel world. I had hoped it was with intent in following me once their own lives had been lived.* Tsunayoshi muses to himself, he'd done his best to keep track of news concerning any inquires concerning a Sawada Tsunayoshi, there's been none but he'd . . .

Regardless, it seems that I'd been mistaken. The Tengu tells himself as he pulls himself together while setting those hopes and aspirations aside. He settles his shoulders and lightly touches the hilt of Kirinzuresuto, it's presence helps steady his emotions.

Stepping forward, he gives the hilt a squeeze before withdrawing his hand. "What unruly visitors!" He snaps before opening the door, the transparent effect on the Shrine's walls fade with his closeness.

Though temped to have his Heart and Shape on display, a declaration of his Youkai Natures and a showing of his power, he re-frames from such a power display. Unlatching the left gate door with a simple touch of his hand, the door opens outwards. The group of Mafia Actives' looks range from dismay to disdain with most quickly evolving into threat evaluation and suspension which sees fake pleasant looks along with forced indifferent looks. His own face likely shows disgruntlement as he makes a show of studying the group, making sure to linger on their business suits with a clear look of indignation at such cloths on those of Asian descend.

"Who are you?! And where's the Tenth?" The silvery white haired man demands not long after he'd given the group a passing look. There's a clear indication that they did find themselves in agreement with that sentiment.

"Are you here to pay your respects to the swords housed at this Shrine? If not, you can leave." He states after crossing his arms over his chest. There's a bunch of cursing from his former Storm Guardian between a few threats.

It's not long before his former Rain Guardian cuts in after it's clear that he's unaffected by such crudeness. "I'm sorry, but, perhaps you can explain a few things? We've been told a friend of ours was here, at this place."

"This is the Shrine of the Forty-Two Swords, which houses said Youkai forged and welded swords." He answers with disgruntlement. "Three swords for each Youkai Nature that calls is island Nation home."

"Three... That means fourteen..." A certain member of the group mutters while the group did a collective eye blink at the words Youkai and Nature. "There's only seven Dying Will Flames!" Snaps that former Storm.

"Dying Will Flames?" He says in a droll way. "I'm fairly sure that the Youkai tradition is still the main stream among our community. From the elusive Enenra to the reliable Zasshiki Warashi, never-mind invoking Bodies and Hearts of the Youkai could have."

A chuckle erupts from the male former Mist while the group clearly tries to wrap their minds around such concepts. It's clear that they however they figured out his location, they hadn't bothered to learn about the world they sent his soul to. *Or they just thought there wouldn't be any differences between the two.* Tsunayoshi muses to himself.

"Earth Flames are just mutations of Sky Flames, aren't they?" The former Storm inquires, looking at a certain man sporting unique sideburns, it's the sideburns that makes him certain of the identity of said man more then anything else. There's no real answer, but, well, he decides to ignore his wondering of why they'd look towards the former freelance hitman for answers.

"Is there anyone else here? Visiting this shrine?" Asks the former Rain. He ignores the mutterings from the others.

"You are the only ones to approach the Shrine this day." He states simply. The mood of the people before him shifts in a downward fashion, after all, he doesn't look like he did in his previous life. *Not that the wording I use will be over looked for long...* Tsunayoshi muses to himself as one of the former Mists pipes in a different question, "Uhm, how about listing Youkai for us? We're... not local and we've never heard of the fourteen kinds...?"

Most of the tourists come here to see Youkai flaunt their signature features. He muses to himself before gruffly giving them the names of the fourteen along with which feature gets displayed. He doesn't hint at Bodies or Hearts though. They, of course, ask about which color is attributed to which Youkai, he doesn't call either of the two out, them being the former Rain and Curly Burns, when they slip away, likely trying to find another way into the Shrine or take a peak over the walls, they won't as the Shrine is a demi-Realm with only one entrance and exit for those that are visitors of the demi-Realm.

It's clear that some members of the group find it rather hard to swallow concerning reasons for which Youkai should possess which Flame while finding some pretty self evident, namely with those that are Mists being Kitsune. It's clear that Cloud equaling Kirin instead of Tengu that's rather hard for them to swallow, never mind the idea that Earth equaling Tsuchigumo, which is a spider Youkai. He didn't have any trouble accepting any of it, then again, he stumbled into Youkai society in his teens and had been a touch busy trying to keep his head afloat while everyone was judging him for his humble upbringing and anything else they can think of when it came to him.

He's fairly sure if any of those alive heard of his treatment of his teens, well, they'd likely won't believe it. Having been around for over countless centuries, most can't imagine there ever had been a time where Kirinzuresuto would have had any other welder never mind the idea he hadn't come from a well off Youkai Natured household. Whatever evidence, be it in writing most likely if it still exists, it's been sat upon until it's been forgotten about and if found now, likely

seen as people being jealous over Tsunayoshi's good fortune, that it was just slander.

Never-mind the grapping about him welding a sword that is of his Heart instead of his Shape. Most tend to think of him as a Kirin instead of a Tengu as Tengu have, in more recent times, become more community focused, even if they aren't the ones that take leadership within said communities, so a Tengu that's incline to a solitary life like Tsunuyoshi is, has become rather unheard of instead of uncommon but heard of. As for Kirin, well, wandering is something they are still incline to do, only now, it's generally without a friend or attaching themselves to a traveling groups, be it merchants or acting troops, so, these days, they are expected to be incline to solitary traveling where it was the rare Kirin to do so, more due to how Court superstition about how it's not complete without a Kirin being a member of a Court and thus to prevent kidnappings of said wandering Kirin.

The group continues to do their best to keep his attention as their conversation about Youkai Natures and comparing them to the Dying Will Flames is winding to a close. For his part, he's been keeping from visibly reacting to the Boundary ripples, which signifies intruders trying to get in. merely feeding them which ever of his Shape or Heart they need to keep denying the efforts of Curly Burns and former Rain. Then he feels one of the Traps get set off and the Boundary near that location has stopped rippling.

It's not long before the group changes topic and asks about the history of the Shrine. Seeing as it won't be long before either the other joins whoever is in the Trap or does something else, likely anything to get help from another member of the group, he begins on when the idea concerning the Shrine was brought up and goes from there, not seeing any reason to go into unasked details concerning the swords in question. As the group before him grows a bit more restless as seconds become minutes, a yell sounds out as another Trap got triggered, thus both ended up getting caught and near one another, from the feel of it.

"Did you think it would be easy to get into this Shrine?" He inquires in a very dry tone as he crosses his arms before his chest. "The swords are considered priceless and there's been plenty of foreigners who've tried to get their paws on them for their private collection."

Various members of this group's expressions are quick to be turned into glares at him but Tsunayoshi is unmoved by the hostility. "Seeing you have less then pure intentions for visiting, I will ask that you go collect your friends and leave." He says as he reaches for the gate doors to begin readying to close them.

"Good day." He states once he's in the right position while the others are clearly torn between trying to bull rush him or doing as bid. The door closes and he bars it, then leans a bit on them as he finally allows himself to lower his mental guards to experience what emotions or thoughts that had been bubbling under his control. Which... isn't much besides the whole feelings of betrayal and grief about how, in the end, it seems his worth was only that of a Mafia Don instead of as an actual person.

Oh, Tsunayoshi doubts that this won't be the last visit by those of the Vongola Famiglia and others from that world's Flame Active Criminal Underbelly, but he isn't without support in this life. It's only a matter of figuring out how does he, ultimately, want to approach dealing with these dimensional travelers. As he recovers himself from his mental planning, the Tengu is sure to permit the two Traps to release the pair. It's really up to them to decide if they wish to try their luck breaking in again or retreating at this point in time.

As for the two Traps... Well, all of the Traps surrounding the Shrine are created by Reiki and Reiko, his Tsukumogami who are charged with the manage the outer property and are only active at night. The pair tend to assume the form of stone Fu Dogs during the day as they rest, which are nearly nine feet tall as they are posed in a sitting down position. Their nightly forms are humanoid Fu Dogs and their size isn't all that different from their stone day form.

Perhaps I should think about creating another Tsukumogami? As a butler? Gate guard? Tsunayoshi muses as he gets around to walking back to the building that's his residence at the Shrine.

There's a bit of a nagging question as to what took them so long to arrive in this world after he's settled down for sleep that night. He's been alive for centuries, his best guess is that he's lived for a good thousand and some centuries... It's not like he's been keeping track, really. All he knew is that when he lent his skills in putting down the threat of the Echthros was during a time when there didn't seem to be a Roman Empire, he's not sure if there was even a city by that name either...

So... what kind of temporal difference is there between this world and that one? If there is one then... Will I be alive when they do get around to traveling to this world again? Tsunayoshi wonders to himself as he lays in his bed, doing his best to relax and allow sleep to over take him.

- Thus it Ends -

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Busy Work is a Farm: VRGame

I don't own the VR Gaming Universe Idea.

Plus - No connection to any of my DxD stories that feature Terrance 'Terry' Oriax as an OC, even if he's been used in some of those stories.

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It's a gamble , Terry muses to himself as he studies the Avatar that's going to him in the game, which is just one of the three latest Fantasy RPGs, it's also the one that has everyone being human. He's picked something that's unique for a name, Oriax, which is suppose to be a noble house for Devils...

Either way, the human digital model sports a dark green hair and, it took a bit, but he decided on a hard to pinpoint indigo. Although the real him is twelve, the Avatar is late teens, hopefully eighteen through twenty age bracket. Oriax's facial features aren't anything to write home about, mostly average, none too soft but not too fine. The shoulders are decently board but not enough to make it seem like his head is tiny or that he's all bulk and no brains.

He's also picking the board Spellcaster as his fix Class. It's the most Jack of all Trades magic using Class, allowing for mixing and matching various magic related abilities, of course, he could have just went with Druid Class, given what his plans for Oriax within **Ddraig's Expanse** but branching out from basic Druid would cost too much Perk Points to do so. A generic Spellcaster spends PP on a one to one basis for the first three tier Perks where the other Classes only get that for the one tier and, the spending beyond that one tier, well, it varies depending on Class. The down side has to do with needing to spend coins or real money to research new spells or to buy spells, after all, Spellcaster's in game content simply says they didn't feel the Call for any of the other Magic Classes, thus they

are a rogue Class, free to do and go as they wish without answering to a higher authority like a Church, School, Patron, Family, etc.

Although this means that those other Classes have people to turn to for training, new spells, resources, and back up. They also have a Class feature that's shared among these Classes that the Spellcaster lacks, it's called Intuitive Casting. Depending on the wanted results of a spell, it could be increase to the duration, speed of casting, damage, or causing a status effect. Of course there are Perks related to this Intuitive Casting and are far cheaper for a Class to purchase, after all, it costs a Spellcaster PP just to get a Perk that's call Cultivated Intuitive Casting but it also has a per-requirement on top of its cost, which can be unique from one Spellcaster to the next, on top that the Perks to improve it come at a later tier then those for Intuitive Casting, thus costing more PP as well.

Oriax's cloths are that of a linen tunic and pants. The shoes seem to be leather though. Picking a simple satchel instead of a backpack, there's no difference between the two as they both just represent the Beginner Inventory, which has a limited number of slots, which is ten. There's always of the option of using real money to purchase the Harmonized Inventory, which would show up as a tattoo on some part of the Avatar's arms or hands. It grants thirty slots right off the bat.

Shaking his head, he goes to the Land Purchase tab and spends the amount of the Gift Card he bought last week on buying a decent amount of land at a rural spot. He'll be given the map and deed after completing the Tutorial at which ever country hasn't reached its max beginner population. *Hopefully, it'll be the same country of what I just bought so I won't have to spend a lot of time working to get the money to travel there.*

Letting himself breath out, he clicks the Log In Icon and presses the Confirm. **Ddragi's Expanse** has been out for six month and he can only hope that he's still in time to put his money making scheme into

action. At least earn back what I used to buy the land and the game...

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Whistling, Oriax goes through the streets towards the City's Main Hall to register another Patent Blueprint, this one is for a **{Barn}** Fox Faced Hares. It's taken him over three months to finally create one that the beasts are happy with along with sporting the Enchantments he wanted the **{Barn}** to have. He's still working out how to shave them for their fur, after all, **[Fox Faced Hare Fur Tuff]** would earn him fifteen Silver or three cents per one, which means that a stack of thirty brings him four hundred and fifty Silver, or ninety cents, which is nearly a dollar of real money.

The exchange rate of Silver to Gold is twenty to one while the rate of exchange for Bronze to Silver is ten to one. He's read some post once that the exchange rate between Gold and Silver isn't that different then the first edition Tabletop D&D game. The exchange rate of real money to Gold is five bucks equals two thousand and five hundred Gold. What he's interested in is the exchange rate of Gold to real money, which is three thousand Gold equals five bucks in real money.

So far, in the year he's been playing, he's earn twenty-five dollars, which mostly pays for the land he bought at the beginning of the game and an eighth of what was spent on the game. Still, given that few people have jumped from **Ddraig's Expanse** for some newer game, Oriax has high hopes of earning the rest of his money back. *It's not like I bought much else. I've kept to what I can get in game myself.*

Although he'll admit, its been harder then he thought to start in on animal husbandry but he's found it easier to raised fields of the more commonly in demand magical plants, particularly once he figured out how to create Warding Staves to alter the temperature in a wide area around them, making it the right temperature for the plants to grow, to flourish even. Between adding a generic Health Potion to the

water that he uses on them and the Staves, the plants grow up and out. He's had to re-do the rows because of how close they'd come to their neighbors, never mind he's been getting a yield from the plants once every two days instead of the three day renewal that their wild counter parts do.

Then again, he doesn't harvest all of the leaves or flowers or even roots. Depending on what sells best from the plant, he is careful to take just one unit from the plant. Given research into Greenhouses and how they work in the real world, he's been slowly working out what works in terms of Enchantments on those as well.

Most of his Perks relate for Warding and Item Creation, it's only in the past four months that he'd invested primarily in animal related Perks, which are generally of the Druid Class. What few Druid Perks had do to with plants, particularly those of the valuable sort, and of finding mineral pockets. The caring for the plants, never mind the transplantation of them, had been more of a what works approach along with purchasing various kinds of clay pots to see which plant needs which size.

Lonely Pearl Lily has a very expansive root system and found about a foot under the stem of the plant. It needs at least half of those roots to survive getting dug up, put into a very large pot, and then transplanted at the location he wants for it to grow. It's a very easy plant to find, given there's generally nothing growing around it, a three foot rotation in fact, not even grass. The most valuable part is its flower petals, which is a fertility ingredient and sells for two Gold per petal, which the flower has eight petals means sixteen Gold per flower the plant grows. It also seems to thrive best at a near zero temperature, any number under ten degrees in fact, as it grows multiple stems, the largest number seems to be fifteen in number. If the temperature is over ten, the stems are maybe half a dozen on average.

Moving out of the way of a Ranger and her Animal Companion, which is a Swift Mercury Weasel . The medium sized weasel's fur isn't as bright as it could be, which means that the Ranger hasn't

spent the effort to groom the weasel's fur, which is a pity as a tuff of fur from said animal could earn her fifty Gold, as is, would only fetch ten Gold. *Not everyone is here to make money.* He reminds himself as he turns away from gazing at the Ranger's Animal Companion.

It's not a long wait to get into the Hall once he informs the NPC woman of where he has business, it seems that the wait line for **[Travel Pappers]** is why there's such a large line that's spilling out of the Main Hall. Oriax assumes that it's due to the Main Quests that's causing all of them to need them. "Might be a whole Guild too." He muses as he ignores the dirty looks from the various Players, some of whom have spent either Gold or real money to further customize their Avatars to appear as something other then human, he kind of recalls that one of the latest patches have a Ritual that allows a Player to alter their Avatars to the point where they can install Inherit Bloodline Qualities, so people can become Elves in everything but name.

In his opinion, he finds it interesting that it's got the word Inherit in its title, implying that some future update might be. *Unless it just means that it's Inherited to the account then just to the Avatar...* He muses to himself as he does his best to find the correct door plate that he needs to begin the process of submitting his patent. *If so, then I guess it would be worthwhile purchase as it could apply to alt Avatars.*

Soon enough, he's talking with the Clerk at the Patent Office. "Let's just confirm once more that you want approval before the selling of the Blue Print for this **{Barn}** ?" Asks Stella the NPC Clerk.

"I do. The address of the Mail Box is where to send the Inquiry of Purchase." He confirms with a slight smile which is slightly returned before Stella looks back down at the submission form.

"The Royalty Buy out is currently set at six thousand Gold or fifteen dollars." Stella states in a bit of a matter of fact tone, it's clear that she's finding the amounts to be questionable but he's intent on the

price. "With the Royalty being two percent for four years after purchase." He adds.

Oriax recalls some of the previous Blue Print Patents he's heard of throughout his time in the game and there's plenty of bitching over the very idea that Royalties can be applied to any kind of Patent, most of the bitching has to do with Grieves-Light's forty-nine percent concerning his Blue Print **{Weapon} Striped Sword of Badassness** with it being a monthly Royalty as well. Which means that whatever that Player earns for that month, in whatever kind of currency, almost fifty percent of it is owed to Grieves-Light's and they have five days to pay what's owed or they'd become subject to the **=Wanted=** status. Doesn't help that there isn't an expiry date or the opinion of a Royalty Buy Out on the Blue Print either, so even if the Player scraps the sword, it does nothing as the Blue Print is permanently learnt.

And of course, other then looking nice, the sword isn't that great of a melee weapon. He recalls, there's been a lot of Player rage directed at Grieve-Light's as the Player isn't on a heck of a lot, which means a lot of those who didn't listen to the warnings that even the NPC clerks give about purchasing the Blue Print, which needs to be confirmed thrice over given the negative reviews that many Players have submitting in game. It's only a matter of time before the Blue Print become unavailable due to Grieve-Light's inactivity then because of Player rage.

Clearly a troll. He muses as Stella pours Sealing Wax , which is green in color, near the bottom before using the Seal Ring to press the Office's Crest into the wax. "It will take three to seven days for this Blue Print to be available for sale. Between now and then, it will be under scrutiny along with your own history with us." Stella says as she gently folds the contract up and puts it into the box that's to her right hand.

He blinks at the mention of scrutiny concerning the Blue Print but then, after giving it some thought, figures it's likely something new, likely from the patch that came in a few days ago. "I see. Well, I hope

that the lack of sales isn't being held against me." He jokes and is awarded with a smile from Stella the NPC. "Good day."

With her echoing the farewell, Oriax turns and leaves the rather big Office, he assumes that if there were people sitting within the various chairs about before the space of the counter it wouldn't seem to be as big as it is. But, being the only one in said space, he finds it rather large amount of space being wasted. He heads for the tavern to check in with NPC gossip, be it merely a man lamenting over a missing wife/daughter/sister to the beginning of Monster Spawns are going to be increasing in the country soon. The game is rather organic in generating events and Quests, after all, the missing person rumor could be a simple ransom, run away kid, or something more sinister, like an NPC taking a step too far into studying Extra Dimensional Entities, which the players have created subcategories viva their appearances more then what they are actually like, Celestial, Demon, or some use the term Devil, and Elemental.

Either way, he can see some shades of **Scales of Albion** in how NPCs act as the heralds of when there's going to be changes within the game, only, it's more expansive then that game. After all, he's learnt farming tips from listening to NPC farmers complain about things that don't really mean much to a player. While there isn't any books detailing how plants grow, there are journals that do result from various Quests that various NPCs generate, sure, they're only suppose to feed clues to the players about whatever thing that ended the NPC's life, but they do a good job documenting a reasonable and believable daily life. It's hardly that surprising that most players can't get a heck of a lot of money for said journals, given that their only value had towards the Quest that ultimately generated the journal.

Getting them for five Bronze for said journals, that's four more then they'd get from selling them to bottom tier NPC merchants, typically those that sell very questionable items but they are also the only ones who'll buy clearly stolen items, it's how the game devs explain away the Ownership tag, the Maker tag is optional. Sure, if you have

the right tool and enough magic, you could get rid of the Ownership tag, but that is usually a clear hint that the item in question is stolen. Few merchants are willing to purchase those kind of items from players, even if a player manages to talk the NPC into buying it, they don't get a heck of a lot of money for it, given that the merchant is taking a risk in trusting that the item isn't stolen.

Once he's squirreled away in a corner table of Liver's Worth , its not the nicest bar but it had been located close to where the working class NPCs live in the city. Oriax made sure of taking a picture of the tavern's sign before heading it, he'll share it on his various social media accounts along with his personal review of the bar. It takes a while before anyone arrives to speak with him concerning an order, not that he much minds as he's doing his best to follow along with a deal of a sort going on about a table away, one that might be a drug deal at that. Which, is a rather interesting development and one that's pipped his personal interest.

Slapping eight Bronze onto the table, he merely states to get him whatever drink and food that amount will get him. The coins are collected and the waitress hurries away to do just that. The group of five finish their hush hush business and by the time his simple loaf of bread and watered down beer arrive, that group has only three members. Oriax is quick to drink the beer, doing his best to keep a sour look off his face at the taste and takes a few bits out of the food.

Counting to thirty, he then follows after the last member of that group. It's slow going but he manages track the man to a statue. The statue is of a boar, it's been aged within the game and it's got cracks in it along with missing its ears and tail. The base is in worse shape, with small holes pitted on it and there's even bird shit staining both the statue and the base along with... maybe blood or other substance. Casting *Darkvision* on himself, the shadows of the buildings don't hinder his ability to watch what's happening in that very minor plaza that makes up this particular city's common living area.

And so, Oriax watches as the man missing his left hand's pinkie and a nicked right ear go about selling something to street walkers and shifty teenagers. Once more, he finds himself impressed with the game as he waits for the man to sell out of his supply and will, hopefully, lead him to the supplier's base to either turn in their percentage of the profit or to get more of whatever it is he's selling. *What kind of drug is it? It has to be drugs.* Oriax muses to himself.

Nicked Ear finally seems to have sold out as the NPC is beginning to drift away from the spot he'd returned to, even if he'd mostly circle around the statue for a bit, waiting for customers to show. Following a bit after, doing his best to be causal, he does his best to pick up his pace to get Nicked Ear back into view. Thankfully, the NPC keeps to the back alleys instead of going onto the boarder and, now, busier streets. It's early evening, given the sun is beginning to dip down, beginning to cause a merriment of colors to show from the western horizon.

There's beginnings of subtle marks showing up on the walls of the alleys, Oriax hears the chimes alerting him to his discovery as he'd disabled auto pop ups concerning discovery notifications. There's even a whistle that alerts him to him qualifying for a Quest. Once Nicked Ear pushes a bit of wooden fence before slipping through the gap, the fence is around an old manor, so he finds a spot to take a look at everything that tried to pop up.

He unlocked the Mini Map for **{City}** Shamrrock , unlocked **{Codex}** Shamrrok City , there's various **?** under his Reputations tab, discovered **{Location}** Passion Manor, and the Quest he's capable of accepting is called Pine Dusting Investigation. Oriax reads what details the Quest is willing to give at this point, which does involve a drug called Pine Dusting and finding out its connection to Passion Manor . It seems that the manor before him is an Event Dungeon.

Frowning, he pulls up his Spell tab and then switches to his Earned Skills tab. Oriax isn't prepared to enter into said Event Dungeon but there's no timer for this Quest either. *I'll have time prepare for exploring it.* He decides to himself as he accepts the Quest.

And if I can't find it in myself to go through with it... Well, I can always see if there's a party looking for something special to brag about and point them in here. He decides, not that he particularly likes that idea, after all, he'd been the one to make this discovery and thus, he wants to be the one to reap all of the rewards, such as they are. *It'll be something to rub in the faces of Chris and Ross if I get something good to show off.*

With that, Oriax turns on the Mini Map for this city and makes his way back to a major street so he can make use of the Deed to return to his farm. The thought of seeing their faces show off their envy and anger at the fact he'd manage to Solo an Event Dungeon all on his own... He can't help but smile at the mental image, even if it means actually going to school physically instead of using his farm's Study to continue with his education while online.

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It's been nearly six since he'd submitted his first patent and in the intervening years, he'd never received a request letter. So, it does indeed surprise him to see a **[Patent Request Letter]** upon his Study 's desk. One that hadn't been sitting there when he'd gone to feed his various animals about four hours ago. Oriax had come to his Study to check on the update concerning Online University Software download to find something else waiting for him.

Forcing himself to take a calming breath, he picks it up and opens it. It's a request for purchasing **{Fence}** Solo Killing . The name wasn't his best but, well, it allows for him to take a single member of the monsters he's raised out of the pen and kill without automatically causing the rest of the monster mob to become hostile the moment said taken member dies. The further from the penned in monster mob that particular victim is taken, the odds of them realizing what's happening goes down. He'd created **{Barn}** Butcher Building that ensures that the notice is zero when combined with the use of the **{Fence}** Solo Killing.

Oriax looks for the name of the one looking to buy the Blueprint, its a player by the name of PaperArmor. The name doesn't mean anything to him, it does invoke an odd tidbit of information about Ancient China and paper made from bamboo being used in creating armor, but he doubts that's something this particular player knows. After all, he'd looked it up due to some random throw away mention in an old article that was someone's rant about armor in game and impracticality of breast groves of the breast plate that one generally sees on women avatars.

It's the player note that causes him to snort, after all, he doesn't see any reason to wave the Royalties clause on this Blueprint, even if nobody's interested in any of his Blueprints before now. *So... If you object, why not just pay it off up front?* He wonders to himself as he considers his reply.

With a shrug, he pulls out an **Ink Pen** from his desk drawer and writes his simple decline of removing the Royalties clause from this Blueprint. Folding the letter back up, he then watches as it vanishes, returning to the which ever vendor the buyer had used to inquire about this particular Blueprint. Satisfied that the matter should resolve itself without much hassle, he sits down at the desk proper and accesses the Online Education function that the Study had been built for.

Noting that it's still got about thirty percent to go, he exits out of that function and heads for his kitchen to grab lunch before beginning his other chores for the day. After all, one never knows if that NPC laborer who happen to hire is a spy, thief, or some other kind of criminal. Nor has anyone ever approached him to do a simple buy in so they can claim his farm as their Home .

So, for almost six years, it's only been Oriax himself attending to various matters concerning his fields, his monsters, and his farm's stores. Even with the game being six years of age, few games out there offered the same kind of interaction with NPCs that this game does, like getting that one night stand pregnant or having a family with another player that results in NPC kids. Then there's the

changes to its setting that's seen it expanded upon, it had been done as organically as it could, given that this is a video game, which that saw the players able to leave the world where they started in for those extra dimensional planes that those supposed Celestials, Demons/Devils, and Elementals are native too. Although they need special equipment to visit said planes as they have vastly different environments compared to the core game world.

Rumors circulate about a future DLC about a lot of things, mostly about the idea of allowing players to get it on with those other beings along with marrying them, which means, also having kids with them. The second most popular rumored DLC is actually people being able to purchase their very own barren plane and terraforming it however they want. A variation has to do with people colonizing those other dimensional planes, kind of mimicking real world examples, which would trigger invasions occurring in return.

Personally, given what he's achieved with his green houses, the creation of pocket realities is already something players can create, it's just a matter of them realizing that they could and begin experimenting with it in game. Which means that the terraforming of a plane to ones liking is already been something he's accomplished without anyone being the wiser. Oriax had kept track of his notes, he just didn't know how to use them to create an in game instruction manual.

As for the game devs, given the various updates concerning the Perks over time, it's clear that they have noticed his farm and how he's been managing the various monsters he'd originally captured and those bred on the farm. He has had to redo Oriax's Perks a few times, using his own Gold at that but, well, there was that one time when the game devs did a hard reset for everyone's Perks, which was just last year, due to them deciding to be fair when it came to that update that had made a layout change to the Perk Tiers display and their descriptions, which caused some player outrage but the newer players to be happy about as it evened out the system. After all, some Perk had been moved around but the player didn't get a PP

refund, so, some players could have a Perk from a previous tier that had been moved to a different one while a new player wouldn't get it until they reached the right level and have the PP to get said Perk, which would be more expensive then that previous player.

With his mind musing over future Perks and Spells, Oriax made and ate his lunch. Once he'd finish, he went off to check the various green houses and to do some weeding over at his fields. Muff and Ruff, a pair of Tamed and Trained Field Hound s, they stand about three and half feet at the shoulder with typical green coats that sport spring green coloring that shape oak leaves on their respective backs, they both have dark green fur upon their ears and appear as sock on their legs and they sport a creamy green fur for their belly. They have a body build of a real world dog breed, which is border collie. The leaf patterns range from all kinds of tree leaves, typically the leaf pattern is determined by which tree makes up the bulk of the forest they inhabit.

They both have Collars that declare their Names and his own as their Owner. As for what Field Hound is based off, they are based off of the Cu Sith from Scotland folklore. Their pelts are highly prized, particularly the backs as that's typically where the leaf pattern is. They do form packs during the winter and they disperse during the summer, when their pups are big enough to fend off various smaller predators, the pups don't always follow their parents either when that happens. It's during the autumn that they begin pairing off before they seek out other Field Hound pairs to form a winter pack.

Both are friendly and while they had been wild, they seem content to act like typical dogs when it comes to him. That include games of fetch and getting belly rubs. Both are full grown and have been with him for three years now. He's not sure where it is they sleep as he's found no evidence that they ever make use of those dog houses he built for them, but, they also don't sleep in his house. Which is something he had read and confimred while he'd been hunting down wild Field Hound s, he hadn't needed to invest a lot of time into studying them as there are various NPC hunters and trapper

accounts also mention was that little fact, actually it seems only when they are puppies does one find them sleeping, particularly in a den. The adults seem to be found only when awake. None have ever found sleeping Field Hound s, be it by stumbling upon them or by search.

Given the folklore beast they are based off of, he is kind of incline to think that they might rest in another dimension. It's merely a guess on his part. Its not something he's obsessed about, needing to prove that idea to himself, not when he's got other things to do and to study.

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Randel, or to use his current Avatar's name MightyPen, isn't sure why they ever agreed to this bet in the first place. Never mind that the game is practically a decade old, or that it's still got a thriving community and player base. *It's not even a game we normally like to play...* MightyPen thinks to himself as he follows after William, *or should it be PaperArmor?*

Jessica, AKA ThistleWand, stops every few feet to glance at the **Map** , as in, a physical in game map that they bought that has the location of Oriax's Territory circled so that PaperArmor can try and 'reason' with the player over the Royalties concerning the Patent Blueprint concerning that **{Fence}** . *How exactly do a trio of almost fourteen year olds plan to do that with Characters are are only just reached level five...* He doesn't know.

PaperArmor's Class is Fighter, ThistleWand's Class is Wizard, and his MightyPen is a Rogue, he figured they needed someone sneaky and Jess had already claimed begin the magic person of their group. He'd been tempted to pick Cleric, but... Didn't really want to figure out which Deity he'd want to follow, which is likely why Will forgone Paladin for Fighter. Both needed to pick a Deity and they hadn't thought to look over the list of Deities on the game's wiki to pick which would suit them. *Wizard allows for diversity among the spells,*

it's not like we couldn't afford buying healing spells viva scrolls. He reminds himself.

There's also Perks, so, she should be able to add those kinds of spells to her list. MightyPen reasons with himself. *Not too comforting a thought, given we're on our way to visit a player who's Character is over level hundred.* A snide voice that sounds a bit like Nick states with hidden, dark glee.

He does his best to ignore that imaginary voice and finds himself bumping into PaperArmor. "That's... That's... Huge..." He hears ThistleWand stammer. "Just..." She gestures a hand out enough for him to notice out of the corner of his eye.

Taking a step back and then moving to stand on PaperArmor's right, he finds himself spotting a Dire Jasper Deer , *gender stag* , given that the deer sports some antlers upon the head. He's incline to agree with ThistleWand that the stag is very huge and that's with just a growing rack of antlers, which, given the season, is rather understandable. The coat is a dark, likely sporting purple highlights if they were up close to it, *a grown adult* , which means that the stag's shoulder should be about five feet, and more then likely to kill them with a single kick in pretty much their direction. He couldn't see either set of the eyes, which is suppose to be four, a set on either side of the head and the other set of eyes a bit more at the front of the head.

"That's a fence." PaperArmor states and it takes him a bit to tear his gaze from the stag to notice that, yea, there does seem to be a low stone fence with glowing energy stationed at the large stone towers of the wall. The energy orbs seems to be a crimson color, at least, it looks to be a bright enough red to tell from where they are standing.

"So... What does that make that stag? A pet?" He inquires as his gaze returns to the stag once more.

"Maybe an alarm?" ThistleWand suggests. "Like, to alert them that they have visitors."

"Well, enough gawking, we came here for a reason." PaperArmor states and begins moving forward once more. He shares an exasperated look with ThistleWand before she follows behind their friend.

"That's why your here, maybe." He mutters out loud as he follows behind the pair. "I'm here under protest and I'm sure Je... Thistle is here as support."

So, deciding to focus on his friends instead of on the giant stag monster, he studies the bright yellow of PaperArmor's hair. His friend had gone for the classic hero look, aka blonde and blue eyes. He's even sporting a bit of a goatee to make himself feel older then his actual age, the Character appears to be in his late twenties. The armor he's wearing is mismatched and it's all from what dropped from various monsters or as Quest rewards. Also, for some reason, PaperArmor is trying for the dual welding fighting style instead of doing something sensible and doing archery or maybe the classic sword and shield combo.

ThistleWand's hair is a bright pink and she spent a bit to style the hair so that there's a pair of braids that go behind her head with the rest falling through the goove or whatever it's called. Her hair is longer, almost reaching the small of her Character's back. Her eyes are a royal purple, something that she's always done when it comes to her Characters' appearances. She didn't pick the largest size for her Character's breasts, something about finding the look uncomfortable, which, yea, he totally agrees as he can't imagine crossing arms before someone's front with something that size would be comfortable or natural. Again, the cloths she's wearing all come from drops and rewards, her spell book is still rather plain in appearance, sporting a simple red cover but he knows she's got plans for how to personalize it. The age appears to be in the twenties as well.

As for himself, MightyPen's hair is a simple black and he picked a dark green for his Character's eye color. Compared to PaperArmor, he's about half a foot shorter then him but he made his Character

look beefy, with wide shoulders and thick muscles. The idea had been to go thuggish build with plain, unremarkable in the looks department. Unlike the other two, he went a dark tan and he does prefer his hand crossbow but he's got a rapier for close combat. Not that he likes the idea of getting in close quarters with anything, but he knows that what he wants to happen likely won't always be what happens, so, the rapier is a back up weapon, plus it's Finesse Feature means he uses his Dex when it comes to using it instead of Str. Like his friends, his own armor is mismatched, only, he's wearing a cloak to make it harder for people to notice. He did debate about having a beard or something for MightyPen, but didn't like the idea of feeling it when he rubs his face. So, MightyPen looks younger because of the lack of facial hair, even though he aged the Character up into the twenties like his friends.

It takes a lot of walking before they find a Gate that marks the entrance of the Territory and in that time, they've seen a few more Dire Jasper Deer within that fenced area that sported the stag. Does with fawns, the does sporting a lighter shade of purple and they stand four and half feet tall at the shoulder. The fawns sport two tones of purple fur coat, much like actual deer fawns, they sport spots and a creamy white underbelly. A few of the does are elders as they sport a set of antlers that are a rich green and only two prongs branch off of the main antler. These only come off once every three years and the darker the antler, the better medicine that they could produce, it's different then the stag's discarded antlers, which are only good as an ingredient that slowing down a status effect's timer in a potion or elixir, it's best used in a negative status's timer then in a positive status' timer.

Well, you could use them as decorations. He muses to himself, after all, the stags' antlers are generally white with green tint at the base and upon the prongs. There's a decoration featuring half of a stag's rack above the Gate along with some rare and highly valuable flowers, roots, and leaves. It seems that the antler has been craved enough so that some of those can be stuck into the antler decoration before hanging that over the Gate .

"I can't figure out what kind of flowers those are from down here." Remarks ThistleWand and he nods in agreement, "But... well, they likely are something valuable, if one thinks about the fact he's using an antler as a mere decoration out in the open like this."

"We don't know for sure that Oriax is a guy. It could be a gender reversal." ThistleWand counters his previous remark, which he feels very justified in giving her a flat look as she glare pouts at him. "Ah, guys? What kind of monsters are green furred and look like dogs?" PaperArmor asks with a great deal of alarm.

"What?" Both of them reply in alarm and sure enough, there's a pair of green dogs lopping their way. Their manner reminds him of his sister's cat, Mittens, when she's stalking that robotic mouse toy. Heads low, ears perked up, and tails held in a stiff manner. "I don't like this." ThistleWand murmurs as she takes a few steps back while she places her hand on the wand's hilt while PaperArmor takes a few steps forward with his pair of swords out.

"You can't think you could win against those guard hounds?!" MightyPen hisses at his friend as he brings his hand crossbow out. Sure, he's not liking the odds but Will is his friend, he'll be damned if he just abandons him just because he picked the wrong player to yell at. *Besides, it's kind of a dick move to sick dogs on us without at least greeting us!* He thinks as he grimly does his best to pick which of the two he'll try for, although now that the two dogs are weaving a snaking path, one going left and the other right.

Just as he gets a clear view of the eyes, which, it turns out are a bright blue, there's a whistle and a very male voice calling, "Muff, Ruff. Heel." And to his complete and udder amazement, the two monstrous dog obey, going from a stalking position to a laying on the ground one. He would have preferred them just sitting but they did stop advancing toward them, so, maybe he shouldn't complain.

"Muff?" He hears ThistleWand murmur while PaperArmor does the same, only with the other dog's name. "Yea, real creative, I know, but it rolls off the tongue fast and easily." He finally tears his gaze from

the green dog that's to the right to find a man striding towards them, the voice having altered slightly in volume as he gets closer.

He also notices the hard to place eye color, which could be a blue or a purple? "Oriax?" PaperArmor inquires once the... Ranger? *I mean, they could be his Animal Companions...* He muses to himself as his gaze drifts to the right once more before snapping back at the maybe twenty year old Character. *Which better Class to be a rancher then a Ranger?* MightyPen reasons to himself.

"That's what I chose for this Avatar." The green haired Ranger states, he only now got to see the highlight of the hair that shows some green with a sunlight hitting the guy's hair. There's a bit of disbelief over the fact that this guy not only owns a pair of green monster dogs but his own hair color is also a green that could look black in the shade. *Got to be a Ranger, which other Class favors green that much?*

The use of the word Avatar actually gives indication that the player behind Oriax isn't from their country, *likely an American* . "I'm PaperArmor and I'd like to discuss..." But the guy cuts him off, "It stands, the Royalties. And I'll have you know that they aren't that much when I submitted the Patent. So, you either take the buy out option or just live with paying me my cut."

Rude! He thinks and he's fairly certain that his friends would agree. "But... Nobody's interested in your bloody Blueprint before us!" Snaps ThistleWand, given that Oriax has pinned a look at PaperArmor that, even he, finds himself shrinking inwards at seeing. "It's just a single purchase anyway!"

"Yea, no. I spent years wasting time and resources on creating each of those Blueprints. Each of those link up to another and to another, a lot of them are improved versions, sure, but each work as they should without wasting a single bit over what's needed to get the max benefit out of each resource spent." Oriax states, his gaze switching from PaperArmor to ThistleWand. "If you don't like it, then

figure it out on your own time and wasting your own resources trying to match what I've created."

Which, we can't do, given we wasted two weeks researching the best ways to earn money in a quick fashion by going through various forums and various walk throughs. We need something to pay out in five months time while following the guide lines of the bet. MightyPen thinks as he catches PaperArmor's gaze. They'd hadn't meant to spend all of that actual start up fund on buying so much land that ended up being located at a snowy mountainous region, they should have said who'd be the only one to buy land but they hadn't...

The idea of selling alive and mostly unharmed monsters had been the reason why they'd even gone looking into the Patent Blueprints when their attempts are creating fenced areas on their co-owned land fell through. *Like you three know how to build a fence.* Snorts a familiar hated voice of Nick echos in his mind.

"It's not like we're going to be sticking around to even pay the stupid money!" Snaps ThistleWand and he actually face palms with his left hand, leaving the crossbow to be held with the right. "Thistle..." He hears PaperArmor groans out and he wonders why they just didn't go through with that in the first place.

"Then why are you three here? What's the point of tracking me down? Never mind the fact that you could have gone through with that without going to all the trouble of visiting me." Oriax states and, well, he really does wonder why the two of them couldn't have listened to him when he'd said that.

"Now you're just being mean." Is a weak comment from ThistleWand, which Oriax is clearly not at all affected by. His fingers begin rubbing the bridge of his nose as he wonders if it wouldn't be quicker to just slice his own throat to end it, after all, they are on his Territory and, thus, could be blocked from leaving until Oriax has finished having his 'fun' with them.

"Mean, huh? And what does that make the three of you?" Muses Oriax in a tone that is oozing with disdain. "You didn't come here for any reason other then to yell at me due to your own anger, frustration, and whatever righteous reason you could think of in your previous mood."

"He's not wrong." He remarks out loud and he can already feel the pointed looks from his friends. "Oh, come on, we spent too much time on this when we have other concerns to do concerning that bet." MightyPen lowers his hand to send a particular glare at the both of them, PaperArmor gets a sheepish look while ThistleWand refuses to face the fact this was a waste of time.

"Muff, sit." Oriax commands and he feels his heart speed up while his whole body freezes up. It takes a second to realize that the monster dog of the left had been closing in. "Here, Muff. Ruff."

Both soon stand on either size of Oriax and it's then that he notices the simple black collars that the two sport that can be glimpsed slightly in the fur about the necks. " Field Hound s." Oriax informs them and his eyes go toward their backs, sure enough, there's leaf pattern on the backs.

"Oh..." He feels faint at the idea that they've been so close to just having their throats ripped out. The monster that is Field Hound begin to be found in level sixty areas and are on the player's created list of Unfriendly Monsters. As in nobody's been able to get them as an Animal Companion of any stripe, not even a Ranger with all the right Perks geared towards Dominating any monster to become their Animal Companion.

"They can't be Dominated!" He hears PaperArmor shout while stumbling back, even he'd taken a few steps away from the... Ranger? And his pair of monsters.

"Dominate? Ah, yea, that... Mental magic... Yea, its only temporary duration if it works at all." Comments Oriax before couching down and stroking the pair's heads, the two's eyes half close as Oriax

scratches behind their respective ear. "No, I Tamed them then proceeded to Train them."

"Kind of like I've done to most of my wild caught stock." Oriax continues. "You see, Dominate doesn't result in friendly beasts once they get out of that particular state. Nor do they level up while in that state."

"They're not all that friendly with strangers, then again, I've never seen the appeal of inviting a persistent headache that would result in me bringing these two with me out into the field or into a city." The player adds. "Players wouldn't stop trying to bug me over the idea of selling them to them." There's a snort of derision as Oriax finishes scratching the pair's head and begins to stand upright once more. "Well, seeing you're here anyway, want a tour of my farm?"

"Sure." PaperAromr squeaks out. "Yes!" ThistleWand exclaims with clear glee. He puts his crossbow away with a simple, "Might as well."

MightyPen will admit, later, that it might have been the actual start to them developing a genuine interest in **Ddraig's Expanse** and them coming to respect Oriax for managing to keep all of his accomplishments from the main stream players. After all, they'd been kind of right about it being more profitable handling living monsters, they just didn't realize that they might have bitten off more then they could chew. After all, plants, at least, didn't need a heck of a lot of attention to be healthy nor do they all go hostile if someone for accidentally harming a member of their Mob.

It would also be due to Oriax that MightyPen would also sign up for Online Schooling, which helped a lot to get away from his personal demon in the form of Nick Holden. Although it also saw him lose a lot of weight and have to, grudgingly, begin doing his own home recipe for his Capsule's IV with Oriax encouragement and some research into it to assure his parent's concerns about him spending too much time in his Gaming Capsule.

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BeeJewel would like to think of herself as a compassionate person, it's why she picked Druid as her Class and took as many Perks to aid in figuring out how to humanely handle monsters when she'd kill her quota for a Quest. She never owned a player sold Mount either. So, when every trick she has fails when it comes to calming the Peacock Tyrant Drake that had been the Animal Companion to a Guildmate and friend, KullTron.

Sure, they both heard the rumors about a glitch affecting all kinds of Mounts and Animal Companions, but they didn't think it would matter, given they'd only had plans to check their in game mail, which should take fifteen minutes and no need to call upon KullTron's Animal Companion given they weren't going to be heading out of the city. They, of course, didn't think it mattered as they'd been in a city after and the Peacock Tyrant Drake is suppose to be stored in whatever in game storage place that those who own Animal Companions and Mount are put in when not in use.

BeeJewel didn't know how it could all go wrong within a minute of logging into **Ddraig's Expanse** only that it did and KullTron is getting blamed for ignoring the warnings that players have been posting in various forums. Defending her friend brought on scolding onto her own head as well along with her various attempts at trying to calm the Peacock Tyrant Drake down whenever they used capture Spells to slow try and keep the monster pinned down to a particular location.

Every time either KullTron or herself got within a certain range or in direct line of sight, the Peacock Tyrant Drake would enter into an Enraged state, which quickens the timers of various status effects on the former Animal Companion. Which isn't something either of them wanted, never mind that they can't log out due to this portion of the city is sporting an area wide Engaged in Combat effect. It's worse when the drake manages to swallow bits of either players or NPCs, as it causes the monster to begin regenerating health. It's worse when it's the head that gets swallowed as there's just so much blood

and the rest of the body just keeps moving for a time, not always collapsing on the ground and twitching either.

"Someone PM that ass Oriax or one of the Classic Trio!" Bellows a newly arrived player, who's appearance is like that of an Orc while the rest of the members of the party, also Orc looking players, begin to use actual ropes and nets to interfere with the drake's movement. It works very well compared to the use of spells as they could be used to add weight to slow the former Animal Companion down. "Fucking twink of a Ranger." Mutters one of the Orc looking players near her as they use hammers to put in some kind of metal spike into the cobblestone road.

"Hey! We didn't know this was going to happen!" BeeJewel snaps at the trio of Orcs near her, the one holding the metal spike merely grunts while the one doing look out replies, "Yea, you just didn't read today's updated news. If you did, you'd had learn that Animal Companions of a certain level and above get expelled from that Spacial Stable upon logging into the game, regardless of where the player is."

"I've never heard of a Ranger named Oriax." Keen|-|AWK muses, clearly trying to find out about why this player should be called. She's rather curious herself.

"Not a Ranger, he's a Spellcaster, actually." The Orc explains and she is fairly sure she's not the only one to be rather surprised to hear that's his Class. "He's got this whole farming operation that's been on going for nearly as long as the game's been going and nobody knew about it until this last update caused this problem."

"Farming?" She mutters out loud before any of the others listening in could. "How do you farm in a game like this?"

"Here tell from MightyPen, he started with magical plants. Once he had a good steady source of money from selling bits of that, he started going into Artifact Creation build along with Animal Handling." The one doing the hammering explains. "He Tamed them the old

fashion way, you know? Once he got the right genders penned up and ensured they got the kind of room they felt safe in. Handling them when they were young, being gentle and the like." The one holding the spike in place continues.

"Muff and Ruff are something." The out look player remarks. "The two are Field Hounds and boy, I'm glad he's not into PvP. I mean, his methods mean that his Animal Companions level up as long as they're in a party with him."

BeeJewel is sure she's not the only one to shiver at the idea of a pair of Field Hound s leveling, after all, their max level is suppose to be hundred and ten. From the sounds of it, this pair, these Muff and Ruff, are well beyond that level and she knows how hard it is when dealing with a single hound out in the wild. She shudders to imagine what they'd be like with spell support and healing.

It's not like there's much time to continue questioning the three Orcs as a rope is brought running over and then they have to deal with the drake. Minutes pass and they reach something of a stalemate as they manage to use the ropes and nets to keep the drake from running free in the city but at the same time, attacking would cause the ropes and nets to decay or get destroyed, freeing the drake from their efforts of controlling its movements in a physical manner.

In the end, it's one of the Classic Trio that arrives, a woman sporting pink hair, purple eyes, and on the back of a Mountain Ram Horned Yak . The yak is one of the wild cattle monsters but what's different is that it sports horns like a sheep but is the size of a real world draft horse, which is a good size monster on its own. The yak bellows at the sight of the drake, which the drake echos and strains the ropes and nets, trying to get at the yak. The drake is still a bit taller then the yak but the size isn't as huge between a human sized person the drake. There's like, three feet in size but the yak is far more bulky then the drake, which is long necked, display wings, and long tail.

Still, the yak snorts as the woman riding the yak with no riding gear pats the shoulder. "Let's give it a few more minutes before I'll have

Fluffy here lead the drake out of the city." The woman states and she blinks as she notices that she's right that there's no riding gear but there is a harness about the chest of the yak, it's takes her a bit and getting a bit closer to notice the stitching on the strap that she can make out.

The Ownership and Maker tag pops up, the Maker of the harness is ThistleWand while the Owner is Fluffy. It's the snort that causes her to turn to her right to see that the yak's head has turned to regard her. "Don't worry, Fluffy here is a trooper and not easily spooked." The woman says cheerfully, giving the shoulder a scratch and the yak's head slowly turns away, ears flickering.

She takes a few steps back as it feels like nothing makes sense now, like her understanding of the game she's been playing for nearly ten years and yet, she clearly doesn't know what one could actually do in the game. After all, none of KullTron's previous Animal Companions behaved like that, had reacted like they were a living creature instead of some robotic... well, toy. A toy that could only preform the simplest commands, namely, Attack, Stop, and Follow. *Even player Mounts don't act like that.*

It seems to happen rather fast in her opinion, of the leading the drake out of the city. "Who was that?" She hears Keen|-|AWK asks as they help clean up the street.

"That's ThistleWand, she's a Wizard and one of the Classic Trio, as we call them." An Orc explains. "We call them Classic Trio as they are a Fighter, Rogue, and Wizard. You know, the back bone of a Classic Party?"

She's a Wizard?! BeeJewel thinks in disbelief. "They're in some kind of co-op with Oriax, then again, he pretty much mentored them in how to turn their Territory into a money maker. They focus on growing hard woods that NPCs like for ships and construction projects." She hears the Orc informs them. "It's located up in Rockery Arctic Mountains, not a good spot to grow a lot of prized plants or manage herds of monsters."

"Likely got it real cheap, the land, I mean." One of the others comments. "Maybe, but given the location, it's rather hard to think it was worth it." The Orc says dismissively.

= Epilogue =

The whole event was something Vicky would think about for days after it happened. What motivated her to seek out one of the four, it was due to the Mentor Program that the game devs had been finally patched in when they finally explained that certain programmers among their team had decided to make a particular statement by removing certain game codes. So, while they work to reintegrate back dated codes into the game, they had this hastily created, mostly untested Mentor Program that would allow people to apprentice themselves to another player and would grind Learnt Skills faster along with a Perk Marking thing, where any exp gained instead went to buying the marked Perk. One can only Mark a single Perk but that's still a mind blowing idea, particularly when you typically had to save Perk Points from leveling up just to buy a Perk. She's not sure what was wrong with the Perks as it seemed that resetting them has either been disabled or there's a glitch about the pricing, they weren't very clear about that nor did they address it during that interview.

She ended up with MightyPen as a Mentor, who had personally Tamed and Trained a Pale Regent Qilin, he went to the game country that was the closest equivalent in setting to some mishmash of China, Japan, and Korea. She was given a Fox Faced Hare kit to raise, whom she named Sly. It had been experience, balancing Sly's needs verse her own wants but, well, somehow, she learnt what she needed and would find it rather rewarding having Sly for company.

The six months it took for them to finish integrating the updated back codes had seen a lot of people looking at **Ddraig's Expanse** if a different light and renewing interest in the game as players began to spend more time among the NPCs looking for hidden Quests and hidden Features that could be unlocked. In a lot of ways, both KullTron and herself were in complete agreement, what happened

with the drake ended up being something of a blessing in disguise as they also found themselves once more at one anothers' side.

As for Oriax, well, he never would end up being the only farm in **Ddraig's Expanse** . Then again, he'd also picked up an online job, so, his focus wasn't totally on his farm, then again, he never lack players looking to learn under him and thus, his farm was never neglected.

Will, Jess, and Randel did win the bet, just, not in the manner they expected. Working under Terry, Oriax, they would find enough hidden Quests and Events to reach the needed terms of the bet within three months of knowing him. It was Oriax that had deemed that their lands weren't suited for much, at the time, unless they wanted to invest heavily in green houses. Growing hardwood for timber harvest had come from PaperArmor, when he went through every thought concerning money making with said land. It works, but they have to use magic to speed up the growth of the trees along with using a bit of magic to cause the tree to grow a particular spell pattern on their trunks to ensure that pests can't harm the tree.

MightyPen has a Plan for the land, it's just that he needs a lot of resources and magical study to pull it off. ThistleWand is more then happy to help, once everything has been set up and ready to begin putting said plan into action. PaperArmor didn't have an opinion one way or the other, concerning creation of an amusement park in game. Oriax is mostly waiting for MightyPen to break down and ask him to help with the temperature wards that would be needed to ensure everyone attending said amusement park wouldn't feel the cold of the mountains. After all, Oriax is still the most experienced magic user that the three know in game, if only due to all of his merriment of testing he went through back when he'd been focus on creating Patent Blueprints.

Unknown to Oriax himself, the game devs know he's the most knowledgeable player within the game when it comes to Item Creation, outside of those that had a hand in programing the game truthfully. Sadly, their private betting pool concerning Oriax's farm

never did see a winner given all parties agreed that the D.A.R.G. interfered with said bet, so everyone got their money back. As for those D.A.R.G. members, which stands for Digital Animal Rights Group, their cell got arrested and charges pressed on them, in some countries, players actually sued them for trauma and other reasons.

Sadly, D.A.R.G. would continue their campaign throughout various games, often times not caught until after damage has been done to the game. They are viewed by all to be game terrorists and many companies do their best to screen programmers so that their current and future game projects don't suffer from this group's 'enlightened' point of view.

= The End =

Projected Self Image: Harry Potter

I don't own Harry Potter! Also, A/B/O dynamics.

The poll for this was one set up on DA and as the votes have been tallied, by two votes, I give you a Harry Potter Universe fanfic!

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How many lives can this record save?

How many minds can it liberate?

Feeling like I'm liable to make a change

Here I stance in a stage as I take a leap of faith

I let the music lead the way, all that passion I put in the game

- A-Reece, Residual Self Image

First Year

Feb. 10, 2020

Slytherin Dorms

"Did they really think it be so easy?" Murmurs Jack to himself as he listens to the pair of Purebloods discuss their 'devious' plans. Groaning, he tries his best to go back to sleep, trusting that the conversation is getting recorded and stored on his home's computer.

He finds it laughable that the Wizarding World still thinks themselves as progressive when, in truth, they are very archaic, particularly when it comes to secondary genders. Not that it really matters as the majority born are Betas, if they Present at all, as there have been

fewer and fewer cases of Alphas and Omegas that have presented among their population. While it's chilling to have first heard about Rituals, Potions, and Spells that could alter that, it didn't take much in the way of research to figure out that, over time, the Wizarding World's population have either developed an immunity towards said Potions and/or resistance towards the Spells. The Rituals... well, given the fact that they aren't practiced with regularity, it's good odds that they've lost the knack when it comes to preforming them with great success. *Else they wouldn't have the problem of people never Presenting in the first place, never-mind trying to change it using magic. Inbreeding... So much inbreeding...*

Given that Muggleborns, or to use the coarse term of this culture, Mudbloods, are descendants of Squibs, they also have something of a resilience towards said Potions and Spells. Enough that they wear off and the lazy inherit nature that's become the norm for the population at large means that they never thought to figure out what they'd need to change to make the Potions better, bit it when it comes to ingredients or methods of brewing the Potions. As for the Spells... he finds it harder to pin point what could be done beyond a change in gesture or a change in pronouncement?

So sue him for being something of a fantasy nerd before he'd gotten his letter when he turned eleven, which was on June 1st of 2019. Jack had then spent a heck of a lot of time figuring out the best cheats when it comes to schooling along with, upon learning about the whole course of events of the famous Harry Potter and that What's-His-name, figuring how how best to protect himself from the prejudice that still lingers in this culture that he's expected to become a member of, starting from attending and graduating Hogwarts. It's something he isn't happy about, you know, getting death threats from children of the previous followers of said dead man.

Seriously, why won't they ever say the stupid name? The bloody ass has been dead for, well, how long? He thinks to himself as he gives up on trying to make himself comfortable in his bed. "Not even have

the bloody fucking guts to write his name up in any history books." He mutters out loud.

The trunk he's currently sleeping in is just one of his security measures along with a timed spell that would unlatch the trunk's lid so he can get out. Sure, the trunk had been expensive but, well, melting down the spare **PURE GOLD** *coins* into tiny gold bars had seen a good amount of money for him to exchange for more, which he melted into more gold bars, etc. etc. He also found out a little factoid that the Goblins have far more 'useless' Muggle money that's taking up room that's always in need of getting expanded, as it's the rare Wizard or Witch that exchanges their **PURE GOLD** coins or **PURE SILVER** coins for 'useless' Muggle bills and coins.

It hadn't been hard to pay off a Goblin to actually see and wander through the room, of course he'd been smart enough to have this tiny teleportation wardrobe that's considered a **LITTLE GIRLS' TOY** , which, you know, **ACTUALLY WORKS** . It's meant for *besties* to exchange doll cloths, but that wasn't all it could teleport between the pair of tiny wardrobes and there wasn't any kind of alarm that went off from him stuffing it full of various large number bills before the fifteen minutes were up. The door merely checked to see if he, himself, was carrying any of the contents of the room, which he wasn't, nor does the room seem to alert that some of its contents has been stolen by said **TOY** when he exited out of the room.

If he spent a good, solid minute staring at the poem that's by the main Bank's door, well, that's clearly him being sure to admire the classic building and memorizing the poem. Sure, the toy only got created and popular in the last twenty years but, he still can't wrap his mind around that this bank never thought such a toy could be used like that. *Then again, who bribes a Goblin just to see a room that's set aside for 'useless' money?* He thinks to himself.

Did he feel guilty about melting down those metal coins, only, he needed the funds as his parents only have him so much money for this 'hack' of an education. Mentally shelving the issue of those that most term his 'father' and 'mother', he refocuses on the fact that the

none within the culture seem overly aware of gold and silver prices, never mind that, later, he's found a reference about how majority of the gold that circulates around came from the famous alchemist, Nicolas Flamel, as he's the only one to have created the infamous Philosopher's Stone, which creates gold from any metal and the Elixir of Life. Knowing that, a bit of his guilt faded from his shoulders.

It's later, as he comes to experience more attitude from Goblins and the various members of the culture does it fully fade. After all, there's only so much anyone could take of being looked down upon as an inferior, not because he's a child but simply due to his parents lacking magic, that any one could take. It's something he mentally finds himself doing within his own mind whenever he'd been out and about in the magical alleys, when he saw so many magical items that could be used to improve life of the average person outside of this culture, heck, should be used to improve the lives of those living within it!

Spacial expansion spells casted permanently on a room/closet/greenhouse could cut down the cost of a families' groceries or creating places for people to live. His trunk is just one example of that kind of spell used on a portable item. Sure, the trouble did come in the form of the lid needing to be unlatched for him to exit out but he fixed that issue easily. Heck, he's even managed to pay for the room to allow him access to the internet and a phone connection, as long as nobody unplugs the various enchanted items from his wall sockets in his room back home.

Streaming videos, movies, playing games both online and off... *And the others have to make due with that space next to where the owls live to get reception for their cells...* He thinks to himself, although, to keep from being suspicious, he makes a morning trip to said spot before heading for breakfast to check the news and that's it.

He knows most prefer doing so after supper but there's a select few who prefer to do so in the morning, as it's less crowded and thus easier for a signal. He keeps to that schedule even on the weekends. Saturday mornings are library time along with seeing him

writing out various ideas that comes from looking deeper into a subject and then he grabs a packaged dinner from the Kitchens as he'll end up losing track of time between watching/listening to a streamer on his desk top and playing a game on his Switch. He'd be lucky to go to bed around midnight.

Sunday mornings are homework, getting his weekly owl orders of candy, personal Potion ingredients, soda, and stationary stuffy, which he sent for on Friday when he checked his supply. Afternoons see him creating Potions, typically following the easy step by step recipe index cards he'd created during August when he'd bothered various people about tips when it came to Potions, they are merely simple Potions that help in memorizing and processing information. It's easily handled using a beginner chemistry kit as he is very leery of Potions brewed in a pewter cauldron due to the lead that could taint the contents. Sunday nights tend to equal him reading various webnovels while listening to music before going to bed.

The weekday evenings range between said happenings, from playing games to reading whatever catches his fancy while music plays in the background. If something is due overnight, yea, Jack would work on it but, that's rarely a problem, given how that only causes more work for the teachers. Said teachers... It's said to realize just how few adults there are living in Hogwarts compared to preteens and teenagers. It's why he finds classes do dull, there isn't a way for those advanced students to transfer out from the general class nor does there seem to be a budget to increase the number of teachers, after all, they still have a Ghost teaching incorrect History, who doesn't even notice the state of the students, which means that a lot of students have long since gone to said class and none of the other teachers seem to be aware that the student body has decided History is a free period and very optional when it comes to doing the course work.

Most of the other Muggleborn can be found in various empty classrooms either playing board games and tabletop games or doing some practical spell work with their wands. Depending if a Half-blood

came from which background, they could have joined in with the Muggleborns or followed the example of the Purebloods and hanging out by the lake or edge of the Forbidden Forest, generally just being lazy if they aren't having bragging contests or advancing House Rivalries within Hogwarts.

Being one of the eight Slytherin of his year, and a Muggleborn to boot, he generally gravitates back to his trunk and does whatever takes his fancy during that time. Although, he is sure to set an alarm so he isn't late for the next class. After all, he's not a Pureblood, thus isn't seen as a 'true' Slytherin and yet, he's a Slytherin, which means he's different. Jack doesn't regret picking Slytherin as his House, after all, he is ambitious and isn't afraid to let people know right off the bat he's cunning person. *It's just that... Slytherin has become more known as that Pureblood House then the House of the clever and ambitious.* He thinks to himself as he feels himself drift off.

- **:** -

First Year

Mar. 13, 2020

Wifi Spot

"Pandemic? It's a pandemic?" Jack finds himself muttering as he stares at the news articular. "This COVID is now considered enough of a threat for them to write it off as a pandemic."

"It is?" He hears one of the older students ask him and he nods, moving to show her his cell's screen. The others around them seem to be kind of interested in that news, a few seem to be looking it up on their own phones while the Gryffindor, who it takes him a bit to realize is an Omega due to the fact her hair is braided, which is the way that Omega students are suppose to have it after they have Presented. The fact she's another Muggleborn student is likely why she did in the first place, looking around, he notices that there's at

least two Alphas among the group, they are wearing wand holders on a belt, again, it's what's expected of an Alpha student.

"Well, bloody hell." Mutters the Gryffindor and he pulls his phone back from her. It's a bit as he's leaving that someone wonders out loud, "So... How do you think this will affect the Wizarding World? You think they'll have a Potion or something for us?"

"Were they even aware of COVID-19 in the first place?" Asks another student. "I mean, you know how divorced Stale-Bloods are..." Stale-Bloods is something that's been used for those born within the culture, it's like how Mudblood is an insult used to define a Muggleborn only a bit more generalized. He doesn't need to catch the last bit to know how that sentence would ends.

Upon catching up to Steve, who he met on the train and considers to be an acquaintance, "Pandemic. They've ruled COVID to be pandemic worthy." The Ravenclaw jerks his head before looking at him with wide eyes.

"It's true! There's even news clips posted on Twitter and the like." He says as Steve grabs his left sleeve of his robe.

"Are there any listings of anyone who died?" Steve asks, it takes him a second to remember that Steve's parents had gone on vacation a week ago. "No? Not yet." He tells Steve.

"Eh? Johnson? What's wrong?" Tina asks, she's a Hufflepuff and a Half-Blood who'd grown up in the care of her dad's parents, so she spent most of her childhood outside of the Wizarding world. At nine, her maternal grandparents sued for custody when their heir died and they hope that she'd Present as an Alpha as her father did, who'd been a Mudblood in their eyes and so had Tina until they were without another option when it comes to who'd inherit their family name and vaults.

"COVID is now a pandemic." Steve reveals to the Hufflepuff and he also lets go of his sleeve. "COVID... My parents went on holidays to

Spain just last week, left last Wednesday."

"Pandemic?" Tina's fellow Hufflepuff inquires, it takes him a bit to realize that his name is Kevin Smith, Beta, and is a Prefect. "What's this about a pandemic?"

"It just got announced on the news today. COVID-19 is now classified as a pandemic." He pipes in. "If you don't believe me, you can ask Coleson, he was checking it on his phone as I was leaving." Coleson having been one of the two Alphas and a member of Hufflepuff House.

With that, he heads for his House table. It's not until he's ate his full that it becomes more known among the students, of course it's more of a issue for Muggleborn students then it is for the Purebloods and a selection of Half-Bloods but it's still something that can impact their life here at Hogwarts. *As it should.* He thinks, after all, Purebloods are humans and are thus susceptible to getting infected, there might not be a magical cure for it either. Given how wide spread magic is, there has to be a magical community in China, which is where this COVID originates from, *How isolated can this information be?*

- **:** -

Sixth Year

Sept. 1, 2026

Hogwarts

The incoming group of First Years are all Muggleborn, which, isn't that different then the year before that and the year before that. COVID-19 ravaged the Wizarding World's Staleblood population, particularly all those that never Presented without the use of magic, the most common way is with a Potion and, depending the the gender they picked to be, it would need to be taken daily (Omega), weekly (Alpha), or monthly (Beta) survived. As for himself, he'd Presented rather recently and as an Omega too boot, which isn't has

rare as it once, while it's nice to know he has that option, he finds himself more particular towards women, be they Beta or Omega, then towards men of any gender.

Unlike many others who'd Presented and from Muggle backgrounds, he's got no plans on dressing in such away as to declare what he actually Presented as. Muggle suppressants were a God send as is having access to a prescription soap. The doctor he visited had a cousin who'd been Muggleborn and Presented as an Omega, which, well, the short of it, said Omega got kidnapped and killed in a very sketchy Ritual meant to transfer the secondary gender to the couple's almost thirty year old daughter. Both the daughter and the Muggleborn Omega died, even though nothing should have gone wrong. The doctor in question had been there when the parents of the fifteen year old had gotten enough liquid courage to flat out start cursing out the whole of the Wizarding World for their daughter's death and then would go on to share the various trinkets that their daughter had brought home to prove that magic exists.

Nothing happened to the parents and he rather not know their names. Still, it had been what drove the doctor into tentatively looking for the usual pattern concerning who has a Muggleborn in their family and, well, their significant other is a Beta magical, not from the UK but from Italy. He's fairly sure that there's something of a black market going on, although said market hasn't got that much of a foot hold in the UK but more elsewhere. It's likely that whatever magical equivalent to gender suppressors and that scent removal there had been, they aren't cutting it any more. Which, well, fair, there are people who need to have special suppressants created for themselves as the normal, store bought doesn't work for them.

From what he's heard, those Purebloods on the mainland were hit fairly hard but they also were more spread out and have wider genetic diversity, so, unlike the UK Purebloods, they actually had survivors while the only way for the UK families to survive had to do with using a hasty, experimental Potion that suspends COVID spreading within their bodies, but, it also keeps their cells from

dividing nor can they get pregnant. It had been implemented about ten months after the Muggle Governments declare COVID-19 a Pandemic and the Wizarding World of the UK refuses to submit to getting injected with the Muggle vaccine, which has them at odds with Parliament.

And yet, they still refuse to hire Muggleborns to fill higher positions. Positions that need to be filled. Jack thinks himself as he glances towards the Staff Table, none of those sitting there were the teachers that had been teaching him when he'd been a First Year or a Second Year. All of those sitting at the Staff table have been those that had Presented naturally, which makes them all Betas. There is a few among them that are Halfbloods, like the current Defense Against the Dark Arts Professor, the famous Harry Potter. He heard that his friend, Hermione Granger nee Weasley, is the actual acting Minister of Magic, given her husband, Ronald Weasley, is still bed ridden and it's only a matter of time before he dies due to his injuries he got during the November Alley Riot of 2020.

There's plenty of rumors that are on going and thus, plenty of those still alive Stalebloods who resent having a Muggleborn, a Mudblood, so close to the seat of power within their culture. It doesn't matter that she's likely far better suited to holding down the position then those few Stalebloods that remain, it's that her lineage doesn't have the right number of magicals in it. Most seem to think she's not even trying to keep them from getting over ran by the Muggle Government, when, in fact, she is clearly in support of allowing the Wizarding World to continue having their right to reject taking the vaccine, even when it's clear that by maintaining that minority's rights is enabling something worst to come from having magical humans infected with a deadly virus that's already shown to be untreatable through current magical means and methods. That magic could cause the virus to mutant and, well, a lot more lives would be lost.

When they had a working vaccine, he'd been among the five to aid in organizing the series of trips to the right clinics for those who wanted to get the injection. He'd gotten the injected with the vaccine on the

second trip even. All of the Muggleborn and those from Muggle backgrounds among the Half-Bloods had done so as well. Nothing went wrong other then a few wanting to sneak away to do some shopping while they were waiting for the rest of the group to get their injections. It was a bit understandable that they'd want to do some other then waiting around but, well, it did take a bit longer to track them down and return within the time limit they'd set up. Plus, they could have easily been entertained by their phones, given they had very good reception as they weren't in Hogwarts and had such a tiny Wifi Spot for the number of students who own and wanted to keep up to date viva their phone.

"Looks like we got another one." Muses Victor Walker and he hums in agreement. He's the only surviving Slytherin of his year, thus, he should have a lot of responsibilities, if only there were actually people around for him to, you know, exercise said powers. After all, the few older Half-Bloods had either graduated or they'd been pulled out of school as the Staleblood parent or grandparents wouldn't stand for the teen to remain in a 'Dirtied School'.

So, any Slytherins that exist outside of himself are younger students and, of course, Muggleborn. Not to say it's been easy sailing as it were, all of those that join have clear vision of what they want and they are more then willing to use their brain to work out how to get it. Which, at times, equals sneaking into Ravenclaw Dorms to browse their personal and private library, look for hidden treasure in the form of forgotten contraband in out of the way places, hitting the Wifi Spot after curfew to have a more stable internet connection, steal a flying broom to explore Hogwarts without walking around on the ground where they're more likely to get caught, etc. and etc.

He very much finds a great deal of entertainment in figuring out who's out where for what and how to go about punishing them in a creative enough manner that they learn something useful and won't try to get back at him for said punishment. Given that there's only one of him and it's clear that most of the Staff aren't happy with him

for either their own reasons or for the simple fact that he's a Slytherin and thus 'dark' Wizard in the making.

"Got the sweet innocent look down pat." Remarks Taylor Micheal from across from Victor. Gazing turning from the Staff to the kid wearing the Sorting Hat, he hums in agreement with that observation. "She might be able to pull off that dejected look and walk for being sorted here." He tosses his two bloody cents in. "No bet." Victor states.

It's not long before the young girl, who's name is Natalie Brooke, does get sorted into the Snake House. There's a few wolf whistles from a few members while the rest of the table settle for clapping as Brooke slowly, shyly, and, most 'importantly', miserably to the table. A glance out of the corner of his eye and he notices the looks of sympathy she's getting from the Staff about having been 'forced' into Slytherin.

Prejudices were still a thing and people can have the strangest case of selective memory. In the rumor mill, there's talk about him being some disgraced second or third cousin of this family or that family, it's why he'd been sorted into Slytherin, as the Sorting Hat knew he wasn't an actual Muggleborn but a hidden scion of some dark family. It also explains why he'd been such a loner during his First and Second Year. *Like, willfully ignoring the times Steve has dragged me into playing football for his team or when Tina manhandled me to sit with the Hufflepuffs for a whole of November of my First year.*

While it's given him a lot of leeway when it comes to life improvements, Jack found he could do without the herd mentality that seems to be cultivated at Hogwarts. He glances at the collection of First Years that are now part of Slytherin, so far, the total is nine. The year before, the total had reached a dozen.

Jack turns to regard the crowd of unsorted First Years, the line is all the way out of the Great Hall door. It's been a rather interesting phenomenon how more and more Muggleborns have lived to be eleven since COVID and its likely due to paranoia and restrictive

measures that keep the Stalebloods from venturing among Muggles. *Never mind the whole age of the smart phone and lack of understanding of tech.* He muses to himself.

If not for some Muggleborns doing their 'civic' duty concerning keeping video evidence of magical use from blowing the lid off of the existence of the Wizarding World, it's more then likely that there wouldn't be a secret magical culture hidden among, well, at least in the UK. *It would be funny if the other European Countries had something already ready to go if the secret got revealed viva some Live Stream.* Jack muses to himself.

By the end of the Sorting, they got sixteen First Years joining Slytherin, which is a fairly high number if one considered the usual number of kids to get sorted into the House in the past. It had been nearly a hundred Muggleborns among the incoming year with Half-Bloods making up the rest of the year. They, finally, get around to eating, thankfully whatever announcements were saved for after they've eaten and were short.

With the night almost over and done, he gives a short welcoming speech plus need to know info like where the Wifi Spot is on school grounds along with a quick, flashy display of magic which gave the group maps to said spot by him conjuring the maps, saying that they'll vanish after three days time, which should be enough for them to memorize the quickest way to said spot. Soon enough, he's in his own room and yawns widely as he stretches before pulling out his trunk to head to his private space.

He's paranoid about his secondary gender getting discovered by the Staff. Jack just doesn't trust any of them one bit, not when there's a population crises on going on below the Staleblood's health situation. *They're pretty much an evolutionary dead end.* He muses to himself as he gets under his covers after putting on PJ pants. Have been for a long while, they just don't want to admit that magic can't cancel out the health problems this level of inbreeding causes.

- **:** -

Dec. 18, 2031

Bunker Temporal Apartments

Settled on the couch, he watches Victor pace while Steve shuffles, lays out, reads, collects, and shuffles again a tarot card deck. One he had gifted the former Ravenclaw during their Third Year as a Christmas present. His tail tip moves side to side in a lazy fashion as his head rests on his paws, his eyes following after Victor. He kind of wants to pounce on the man but re-frames from doing so, after all, he doesn't want to accidentally hurt him and his Animagus form is that of a large cat, a jaguar actually.

"I'm surprised he hasn't tried anything." Steve comments and he merely flickers an ear while Victor seems to pause in his pacing. "Eh?"

"Well, he is clearly interested in you and your pacing." It takes him a few seconds to realize who it was that Steve was talking about while Victor likely got a clue from seeing where Steve had been looking. "Ah, right. Cat."

He huffs at being called simply cat but Victor does settle down on one of the free lazy boy chairs. "Must he be a cat?" Victor asks.

"Heat avoidance." Replies Steve, reminding the Beta about his secondary gender. "Still a bloody fucked up thing that happened to him." Victor says with sympathy coating his tone.

"Well, the spell work is almost done and since he never got pregnant, it's going to vanish completely." Steve reminds Victor. "Bloody fuckers got want they earned in the end."

"Could have done with a bit more tearing limbs off then just snapping all of their necks." Victor remarks and he snorts, shifting his weight as he recalls what it had been like, having some asshole die in his mouth, with his teeth in their throat.

He'd been the only one with a predatory Animagus that had been large enough to kill the Stalebloods who'd been tipped off by a certain former Headmaster about the Registry of Gender that, it turns out, all students who get sorted have their names written on, that will show who Presented and as what. It had been a lost and forgotten item from a few centuries back but it seemed that Dumbledore had found it but hadn't alerted anyone that it had been found.

While the spells had taken to the kidnapped victims, the compulsion to have kids wasn't that compelling, there was this part of it that caused pain if one doesn't have sex during the heat which, well, did work just fine along with this bit that ensured that they couldn't get a benefit from suppressants was, unfortunately, decent and covered majority of the stuff that's sold over the counter and the stuff that would work was expensive, as in, a few thousand pounds for a single month's supply expensive. *At least it can't affect us while we're in our animal forms.* He thinks.

It shouldn't work that way, but, well, it wasn't under normal circumstances and that seemed to be enough to tip the balance, as it were, for it to work like that for them. He's just glad he'd manage to help each of the others in achieving a total transformation before the bloody gits got around to arranging that... whore auction. He'd killed not just the kidnappers that day but also the interested clients who'd come in desperation to try and ensure that their bloodlines were secured by any means, which, in this regards, would be magical rape drugging.

The funny part was, he'd killed plenty of grown adults, among whom had survived that Dark Who's-It reign and yet, he, an almost seventeen year old Hogwarts student killed nearly forty people, eight of whom had been the kidnappers and the ones applying the magical rape magic. None of the stunners got close to hitting nor any leg locking jinxes. It was... very pitiful when one thinks about it from a certain angle but very fortunate for him and his fellow victims.

He never returned to Hogwarts, Victor handed Steve his trunk, which had all of his belongings, and he just... Did what he could do deal

with his new condition and plot out what course of action would be the biggest middle finger to the Wizarding World and a safe haven for not just himself but for his fellow victims and almost raped Omegas.

"Jack, relax." Blinking a bit, he finds that his claws had been digging into the couch and he'd ripped the cushion. He can only imagine what ever evidence of his emotions he'd been showing as he remembered that particular event. Once his claws were out of the cushion, Steve sends a repair spell and it's not long before it's as good as new.

"Right, so, you think she'll get the date they plan to do this?" Asks Victor. "Tina will, they wouldn't suspect that she, you know, have her own thoughts and feelings over this 'repairing' of time." There's a clear hint of derision towards Tina's maternal grandparents, who are surprisingly still alive after it's been nearly eleven years since COVID Pandemic happened.

"They can't be that willfully blind to her feelings towards them... Can they?" Victor inquires and both Steve and himself snort. "We are talking about Stalebloods here. Willful ignorance is an art form that they practice." Steve remarks and he nods his head in agreement.

"One can only look at their actions during what happened with Harry Potter and Dark Who's-It." He sends out, the collar about his neck had likely glowed to show it had been activated. It's the work of Cathryn Clayton, who had been a fellow victim of said event.

"How sad is it that I think I've seen more reliable news on Facebook then when I went through old copies of the Prophet?" Steve muses out loud and he does the jaguar equivalent of chuckling. "Magic is really the only thing these Stalebloods have going for them, if not for that, they'd had gotten themselves killed decades ago."

"They really think magic could fend off their results of decades upon decades of cousin marriages?" Victor muses and Steve replies, "Of course they do, magic is the cure all of everything that's gone wrong

with their lives. In fact, if one didn't have magic, they're better off dead."

Silence falls and its a while before Steve begins anew with those tarot cards. Jack finds himself slowly falling asleep when the door of his apartment opens and in walks Tina along with a few others. "They're going to go through with their plan come the Winter Solstice." She says once the five with her find spots to sit while she, herself, conjures up a seat.

"Do we know who they plan to send to the past?" They know that the Stalebloods are aiming for some point during World War 2. "They can't possible think it's a good idea to send someone already infected with COVID back in time... Do they?" Ask Liz, clearly underestimating the stupidity that is Staleblood thinking.

"It's just an observation! I mean, wouldn't it, I don't know, cause a COVID pandemic back then? And given what would be happening, wouldn't it ensure changes in regards to World War 2?" Liz asks, she's among the youngest Muggleborn or Half-Blood in attendance.

"That... would mean that they'd have to employ their brains and, you know, realize this interesting pheromone of cause and effect!" Gareth states in a very sarcastic tone that oozes contempt. "Which, you know, means no fixing a broken vase with a simple spell."

"We prepare the Bunker for their attempt and hope we did our calculations correct enough to kill the agent before they arrive, which, if we've done it right, will also kill the COVID that they'd be carrying." He states with his head up and is sure to glance around the room.

"If we succeed in getting sent back ourselves?" Asks Tina. **"We'd have a huge ass building that's got its own farms, various ways to entertain ourselves, and, you know, other shit that could keep us from needing to exit out of the building."** He says. **"If we do this right, we should cause little in the way of altering the**

events of World War 2 and, well, we'll discus with the rest of the residents about what to do once the war is over."

"And, if they don't like that, we remind them that they did sign the residential contract and point out the clause about we getting to decide a singular course of action if this building ever ended up in the past." Victor states calmly. "After all, we're only covering the time period that is World War 2 and I'm sure they'll agree that interfering with either of the events that would be happening is for the best."

"It's not like we're saying that they can't leave once that whole thing is over and done with." Steve adds. "Just want to ensure things don't get derailed and, well, it's not like another dead body would raise a lot of concern."

Soon enough, the conversation takes a different route and people are venting over the idiocy that is, like, twenty Stalebloods and their minority of Muggleborn and Half-Blood supporters. Jack doesn't find it all that unique so, it's not long before he begins to fall sleep once more. The voice of people that he trusts around him, lulling him to slumber.

Ending it here

Soul Calling Rituals: Grandmaster

I don't own either of the following: Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation or That Time I got Reincarnated as a Slime with a side of Sui from Todemo Skill de Isekai Hourou Meshi.

} - O - {

If I told you this was only gonna hurt

If I warned you that the fire's gonna burn

Would you walk in? Would you let me do it first?

Do it all in the name of love

Would you let me lead you even when you're blind?

In the darkness, in the middle of the night

In the silence, when there's no one by your side

Would you call in the name of love?

In The Name of Love, Martin Garrix & Bebe Rexha

Wei Wangyu isn't sure what to make of the rather injured... man? Or was he a teen? Either way, he's not sure of what to make of the unconscious male on the floor. *"Dad? Is he going to live?"*

His dad, one Wei Ying, replies, *"He might? Ah, maybe you should pour some Healing Potion down his throat."*

Moving slowly as to not alter the blood that's on the floor that his father told him to be careful of. While he does manage to create a tentacle to probe what he is beginning to sense is the head, he

continues to pull what he can from around him to fill his energy levels. There's something about this place that isn't as rich in magic as he's use too. It's familiar, but not in a way he himself had ever experienced.

Still, Wangyu manages to create a few drops of a standard Healing Potion once he found the mouth and making it thin to get near the back of the throat before pushing the drops out of his body. He's quick to withdraw the thin tentacle. Fairly quickly, the injured male begins to stir with a groan.

It doesn't occur to him that he should have, maybe, moved back until there's rippling going throughout his body and a vague impression that someone just screamed. Either way, the male hurls himself away from Wangyu and his dad remarks, *"Well... He's awake so, he's on the mend. So... good job son."*

Even though he's almost thirteen years of age and a mature Slime in his own right, Wangyu is pleased with the praise. He senses that his father seems to have recovered enough to do some changes to allow him to speak, as he does his best to pick up on what's being spoken out loud, there's that feeling once more that of passing familiarity with the language and yet again, he's not sure he's ever encountered it.

"Dad?" He asks, *"Who is he?"*

"Ah, he's Mo Xuanyu and it seems he tried to sacrifice his own soul to summon me, into his own body." His dad explains. What grabs his interest is the way the name is arranged.

"Are we... where you originated from?" He's pretty sure that would explain things and why he's having trouble filling his reserve with magic. *"Does this mean we might encounter father?"*

He'd heard his dad talk a lot about one man in particular enough that he'd asked if Lan Zhan was his other parent and, likely in a teasing mood, his dad said yes. Although he suspects that it had been a

mere whim and likely a jest, he has decided to keep referring to Lan Zhan, courtesy name Lan Wangji, as his father. It's a bit of him turning the jest on his dad but it's just, well, something about Lan Zhan that clearly affects his dad deeply.

His dad laughs in a way that clear that is also being done out loud. It takes a bit of effort to create an eye, he didn't think he'd manage to create a pair, and takes in the sight of his surrounding. The picture of his dad, who's coloring is black, resting in a beam of sunlight against the ruined wooden wall. Turing the eye, he compares Mo Xuanyu to the various Races he's encountered in the past, the nearest Race that kind of matches is Elves, it's not a perfect match but near enough of one.

There's a look of horror but fascination upon Mo Xuanyu's face as he looks at him, Wangyu. The mouth moves but he doesn't detect any loud words. Then again, he turns his eye towards the direction that he senses people coming from. "Dad, incoming visitors." He makes an effort to verbalize that along with digging into the memories he experienced once upon a time, not long after he'd been born and when he'd been minutes old when they'd undergone something that his dad declared to be Empathy.

"It...?" Mo Xuanyu mutters a bit more loudly but he's not overly familiar with language, so his own attempt might not have been understandable as well. "Hide." His dad says upon sensing the same thing as him.

And so, he climbs up the wall and uses his eye to find a dark enough spot to flatting himself about, his eye un-forming as well. Wangyu isn't sure what's happening below him besides Mo Xuanyu getting beaten up, he relaxes back into his natural round shape when they are out of the building. Letting go of the wood, he falls to the ground and then recreates that eye, taking in the needless destruction that had been done by the visitors.

Gazing back at Mo Xuanyu, he notices that the man seems to be in a humorless mood. Getting near, he creates a tentacle to pat Mo

Xuanyu in a comforting manner, only doesn't as the man tenses up as it drew near. He pulls the tentacle back into his body before looking around for his dad. The black Slime is before the door and he notices that his dad is causing a bit of a shroud of black Qi about himself.

"I'm going to need some hair and, well, blood." His dad both says verbally and in that telepathic way that is between them. "Oh, and, do you have any spare robes?" The cloud of Qi around his dad remains hanging about his dad.

Mo Xuanyu says something in a tone that might be in the vein of, What the fuck, as the Goblins would say. "Oh, and son? Best get refresher in course in my native tongue. Which, I'm sure, Mo Xuanyu will be happy to help you with!"

"Ok?" He murmurs out loud and telepathically. Turning his eye back towards the... ah, man. "I'll be in your care?" He does his best to bow, causing the eye to look down then move it downwards, hold it there for a few seconds before bringing it up once more.

He's fairly sure that Mo Xuanyu isn't thrilled with spending time with him, but then, he's under the impression that he isn't thrilled to be alive either. *After all, why else would someone offer up their body to some random person that they don't know all that well?* Wangyu muses to himself.

A lot of hair and some blood donated later, his dad transforms himself into a near duplicate of Mo Xuanyu and is sure to put on some of the local attire before taking off with the, ah, donkey, a beast that it reminds him of the wild Mountain Jacks from Ene Country, which had been tied up near the shed. He would sigh, if it wouldn't take so much effort on his part to do so in a physical fashion. It'll be a while before he could transform himself into something as large as his usual Elf form, never mind into something near his size like a Pygmy Boar.

- **:** -

"Shorter ears and round." Dad tells him as he does his best to modify his current form to fit more in with the local Race as there's only the singular kind living in this world. It's been three days for him to gather enough energy to do so, most of the time, he'd done birds as they were traveling. Generally, he'd kept to song birds that could easily fit in the palm of the hand of Xuanyu.

Changing the hair color was simple enough, he'd already had a dark shade of blue, he merely darkened it to appear black with only general highlights of blue. Then he'd had to grow out his hair as long hair is expected here for both genders. As he generally has the appearance of a ten year old Elf, keep the chubby looks while aging up goes rather well. Then, it was the eyebrows that needed to be thickened along with having to match his hair.

The ears, though, were harder to alter as they keep returning to their usual shape along with growing longer but he's been getting them to be shorter then the previous length. "Why don't I just do a hair style that hides them? I can't seem to get them to go shorter then this." He tells his dad, they were shorter then they'd been when they started in on them.

"Well..." Dad trails off, unlike Wangyu, his dad had a base of how a man looked like and his own, previous memories of when he'd been a man to help keep the form from reverting to look like Xuanyu. His dad takes a bit to study his face and even runs through his hair.

"I'm sure it'll be fine." Dad admits and looks away. "I'm sure we'll figure out a good style."

"I think I know a few." Xuanyu admits in a soft tone and Wangyu nods in agreement, pleased that he's allowed to stop trying to force it for now. *I'll keep working at it.* He vows silently to himself.

"Many thanks, Mo Xuanyu." He says, giving the human riding upon Little Apple, his dad named the donkey, and the man colors a bit on his cheeks before turning his head away sharply with a dismissive murmur of dismissive reply. It's not the first time he's gotten such a

reaction when it comes to smiling brightly like his dad, but he does let it slip into a slight frown as he doesn't like how easily Xuanyu treats getting thanked, it's not unlike his dad's own reaction once upon a time.

Is it something about this culture? Being unable to accept thanks? Wangyu wonders to himself as he crosses his arms behind his head. After a while, he begins to hum a tune he'd heard Jet played the last time they encountered the wandering bard.

In time, Little Apple finally refuses to move and, well, it's getting dark, so they decide to camp at the spot. Without thinking about it, Wangyu returns to his usual form and begins to move about, consuming the fallen leaves, branches, and insects hidden among all that. Returning, he uses what he'd gathered to create nutritious liquid for Little Apple to drink, pulling out a large bowl from his spacial pocket before pouring the liquid into the bowl, settling near the donkey.

Once done, he transforms back into his modified Elf form. His dad had gone hunting, having transformed into a Phantom Ice Lynx to do so. Wangyu helps Xuanyu when it comes to setting up a campfire. "You... not the same color as... Ah... Wei Wuxian." Xuanyu brings up.

"True, but you have to understand, it's not that odd for souls to get transmigrated into empty bodies, particularly those created viva a Magical Ritual." He tells Xuanyu. "Dad is like, the ninth known soul, to get transmigrated into the body of a Slime."

"... But you're born a Slime? From him?" Xuanyu asks and he nods. "Yea, I'm not a clone or copy of him." He agrees.

"How does that even work? I recall you saying that you don't really have a gender." Xuanyu brings up.

"Thirty days after dad got transmigrated, he felt an urge he didn't know how to deal with and within five hours, he gave birth to me." Wangyu states. "He didn't know what to make of me and I was...

Well, I was just minutes old when I ended up touching him, which caused a kind of Empathy to happen between us. I experienced his life and had also developed my own opinions from what I've seen, which helped age me up mentally and identity wise in a few hours then it likely should have happened naturally."

"Yet, you need to learn how to speak properly." Xuanyu points out and he shrugs. "It's been nearly thirteen years since I was exposed to his memories and the language wasn't something I needed. Even the written one is rather... bulky. I mean, how many characters are really needed? Common only needs under thirty letters to pick up, it's how they are arranged that makes up the word, never mind the number characters."

"..." It's clear that Xuanyu doesn't know how to respond to that and he didn't blame him, in some ways, it's hard for him to wrap his mind around the idea of over hundreds of characters for a written language and he can only guess at how unbelievable it must be at the thought of so few and the idea of making a simple word out of said letter characters. "Here, let me show you."

For the next while, he draws Common letters into the dirt that's near where they set up the campfire. It's not that hard for Xuanyu to mimic the letters, it's voicing the letter out loud that takes most of the time, but, that's fine. *It's not like there's anyone around for Xuanyu to practice speaking Common with outside of dad and me.* He thinks to himself.

It's the thumping upon the ground opposite of where they are seated that gets them to notice that dad had returned and with a bundle of pheasants. "We'll defeathered all of them before storing the rest away for future meals." His dad says as he settles down on the ground near the pheasants.

He hums and it's not long before he gets one of the five birds. While he could defeather the pheasant by passing it through his body, he decides not too. "What do we do with the feathers?" He asks curiously, he knows that there's parts of animals more valuable then

the rest, like, a Phantom Ice Lynx's eyes and liver are the most valuable parts as they have the highest Water Elemental Affinity and the bones, fangs, and claw are the least due to them becoming very brittle and only good for bring turned into bone powder.

"Some might serve well as ink quills." His dad muses after taking a second to check one of the tail feathers thoughtfully. "As for the rest... We could create a feather pillow for A-Yu!" His dad smiles at Xuanyu's reaction to being called A-Yu, which, well, he really should be use to, given his dad's nickname for him is A-Wang.

"Don't call me that!" Spurts Xuanyu while red faced and hands wringing the front of his robe. "I'm not a child!" Whines Xuanyu.

"Sure, sure." Dad says giving a minor waving motion with his right hand while the left twirls the tail feather between the index and thumb, back and forth. "A-Yu is cranky due to hunger. Don't worry, this Yiling Patriarch will be sure to keep his A-Yu well fed and well looked after!"

"Shouldn't you be worrying about yourself? About your... Wangyu?" Xuanyu gestures at him and he sighs, he might not be male in the sense of body, he is a Slime, but he does think of himself as a male and considers himself his dad's son.

"Wangyu will be find. He's very adaptable and resilient." Dad tells Xuanyu. "Plus, he has plenty of experience about keeping himself from getting out of danger."

"A-Yu in comparison is so frail and in need to more support!" His dad continues. "After all, you almost succeed in killing yourself."

"It was my choice if I wanted to do that!" Snaps Xuanyu and it's not long before the man stomps away, heading near where Little Apple is. He hears his dad sigh but he looks back down at the bird that he's doing his best to take the feathers off.

"Maybe I'm coming on a little strong." His dad muses and he looks up over at his dad, "What about?"

"Ah, A-Wang, my darling baby boy. My joyful babe..." His dad goes on and on for a few minutes as he does his best to pay attention to his dad as he's talking while also feeling around the bird to pull its feathers out without tearing the skin.

Finally, his dad winds down on the praises about him being his child to admit, "A-Yu isn't ready to trust anyone with his well being." He blinks as he considers this and does his best to recall previous examples of his dad doing his best to parent others, whether they wanted to be or not.

"He's kind of like Grace then?" He asks, he remembers Graceful Petal and how distrusting she'd been throughout the three months it took to return her to her grandparents. He recalls how the Dwarf girl had bristled and spat on any attempts from people trying to be kind. He gets a hum from his dad.

He also recalled the bunch of crying that resulted from her reunion with her grandparents, joyful crying compared to the grief/hurt crying she'd done when she thought they'd been asleep. *Dad said that her emotional hurts would take longer to heal then her physical ones.* Wangyu recalls and it's not that hard to make between the two.

Looking down at the bird, he plucks the feathers a bit easier then before, although his mind goes over seeing Graceful Petal four years after they'd returned her to her grandparents. *She apologized about her behavior towards us.* Wangyu recalls. He recalls how settled she'd been and how less pale she'd seemed to be.

"Are we going to be staying here?" He asks as he finishes as he considers the idea that his dad might not want to leave this world behind, yet again. He gazes towards his dad, straightening his back as it seems that his dad hastes for a few seconds when plucking feathers.

"Ah, not likely, although, I think a change in scenery would do A-Yu some good!" Chirps his dad. "Don't you think so, A-Wang?"

While he doesn't recall his dad's memories very well, he does know that some cultures are rougher on bastards then others. "It's not just because he was kicked out? Him being a bastard?"

"Framed, more likely." Dad muses, a slight red flicker briefly in his dad's eyes before vanishing. "I just know that Carp Tower is a next of vipers, it's likely A-Yu ended up losing a fight before he was even aware he was in a fight to begin with."

"He knows more then he should about you." He recalls as he hands over the bird, it vanishes into his dad's magical pocket. He focuses on collecting the feathers, he's fairly sure they'll need to wash them at some point. "He might have made mentioned A-Yuan, I think, when I was undergoing a refresher on learning this language. I brought up the subject of Burial Mounds, it seems they have a Soul Summoning going on there, for you."

"They do?" Then his dad laughs and he admits, it's rather funny that they're still trying after over thirteen years to summon his dad. "They refuse to even let me rest peacefully in death..." His dad murmurs as he gets up to give his dad a hug.

For a bit, he is content to hug his dad, to give him comfort. When he gets a pat on his shoulder, he lets go. "I'm so lucky to have you, A-Wang. Gods know I don't deserve you..." His dad mutters and he gently nudges his dad in the shoulder. "You're not evil incarnate." He states firmly.

Soon enough, he walks back to his spot and pulls the bird that Xuanyu had been kind of working on to himself. Once his dad finished his second bird, he started cooking one for Xuanyu to eat for supper. Neither his dad or himself were limited in what they can consume, while both Little Apple and Xuanyu were. Soon the five pheasants had been done with one cooking, which seems to draw Xuanyu back into their company at the campfire.

He ignores the slight redness in Xuanyu's eyes and the other signs that he'd been crying. His dad does his best to treat Xuanyu like he did before, doing his best to engage Xuanyu into discussion in Cultivation and telling shorts from when he'd been a member of the Jiang Sect and living at Lotus Pier. He enjoys hearing his dad being so animated when the subject is his past, from before he died and transmigrated into a Slime.

"Best not transform out." Dad tells him once Xuanyu falls asleep. "We don't know if we'll encounter travelers, best not take the risk of exposing ourselves as anything less then human." His dad adds and it's hardly the first time they've had to do it, but it's likely worse at this point as he's still not full up on magic.

"Understood." He murmurs and it takes a bit for him to find a spot for he himself to settle down in for a sleep. He's fairly sure his dad won't be able to fall asleep, so, his dad will likely be keeping watch for most of the night.

"Night dad." He says as he relaxes once he's comfortable, trusting that his dad can hear him just fine. "Night my son."

- **:** -

Chaos, just, chaos. Wanjyu did his best to stick to Xuanyu's side, particularly when dad had transformed into a black bird to escape a strange golden net and then, well, then they encountered that brat in yellow robes, who started in on yelling and berating Xuanyu and himself about Little Apple's distress cries from up in that net, him doing his best to defend, the net getting cut which caused Little Apple to fall to the ground along with the destruction of every other net, the Lans from Mo Manor showing up... it just got more and more overwhelming.

In the end, he doesn't like the brat that's named Jin Ling and he particularly found the man in purple robes and is Jiang Wanyin, who'd his dad likely would claim to be his uncle, to be someone he didn't see any reason to like, never mind being worthy of having his

dad as an elder, 'adopted' or otherwise, brother. He loathed that he didn't get to introduce himself to his father, but given who was near, it was for the best. Sadly, Xuanyu ended up having a panic attack, which was depressing and would take sometime to help the man calm down, which means that they were alone by the time it was settled, *for the best.*

Shaking his head, watches as arrow after arrow doesn't do anything to the stone statue. He's already moving to tackle the brat down before either the brat or the statue seem to be aware that there's going to be an attack happening from one party to the other. "Get off me!" Snaps the brat as he hugs the brat, rolling them to the side, a bunch of hands slam down upon the ground following after the roll.

As he moves to get up, it's the sound of a flute that gets his attention. Ignoring how the brat angrily shoves at him and yells at him about causing him to lose his arrows, never mind the bow. He is more interested in picking up the direction that the flute is coming from, after all, Xuanyu had fainted at the sight of the statue and he'd done a hasty spell to hide the man from the sight of others.

Sure enough, the one playing the flute does look like Xuanyu but what's surprising is the appearance of the zombie. The zombie sports chains about his wrists and is surprisingly intact looking for a zombie. The robes don't seem to be damaged nor sporting any blood, either old or new.

It's the zombie that destroys the statue and he slowly moves to where Xuanyu is hidden. Glancing back at his dad in his disguise, he casts another spell on himself before finally making it to Xuanyu and picking the man up. Aging himself up, he then does his best to carry Xuanyu away from the soon to be hostile situation in a difference sense. He can't get to Little Apple but, it hardly matters at this moment, not when people have arrived and begin to make a scene concerning the zombie and about his dad having called the zombie to his side.

- **:** -

Head to Caiyi Town.

That's all the note says that his dad's clone bird delivers. Of course the Caiyi Town was what he couldn't read, given it wasn't written in Common but, well, he did have Xuanyu with him so his dad must have expected him to show the note to Xuanyu. Which lead to a lot more lessens on written Common happening as they traveled slowly from Dafan Mountain towards the nearest town that is close to the Cloud Recesses.

After all, neither himself nor Xuanyu have money along with the fact that he's not the one carrying most of the food. It's both a blessing and a curse they didn't have Little Apple for the journey, as the donkey could be stubborn but also it meant that Xuanyu had to walk while he's still healing form long term abuse. He'd almost offer to transform into something that would get them there faster if not for the fact that Xuanyu doesn't really know how to ride and there's the problem that Xuanyu isn't overly confrontational when it comes to dealing with people.

Which means he couldn't look his preferred age while traveling. He settled for near or in the early twenties. He even got the trick with his ears along the way. He did get some odd looks at introducing himself with his actual name, they did have to use some other name for Xuanyu though, he might have been the one to pick Yu Ming for him. Not that Xuanyu had anything prepared after he'd introduced him as such that first time.

As for funds for inn stays, Wangyu did a bit of doctoring... And by that, he means he feeding various Potions to the patients to cure or heal them. Sure, he had to spend a few hours soaking up some sunlight in his natural Slime form but they generally got the funds needed for not just renting a room but also various other items that Xuanyu had been interested in over their time visiting various places. It made Xuanyu happy and he didn't see any harm in that.

Xuanyu did come to relax a great deal in Wangyu's company that by the time they did make it to Caiyi Town, Xuanyu seemed a bit

depressed over them reaching said destination. *It's likely due to remembering the matter going on with the Jin Sect.* He muses as Xuanyu stare in the direction of the Cloud Recesses.

Overtime, Xuanyu had revealed a bits of information concerning the mystery about what happened with Nie Mingjue and the aftermath. While the idea of taking a head as a trophy wasn't that odd sound to Wangyu, having known a few other Races who have similar ideas when it comes to their fallen, worthy foes or a cultural practice, it's the part about keeping it hidden that causes him to realize that Nie Mingjue's head likely shouldn't be in Jin Guangyao's keeping at all. It implies that it's not a trophy in the right sense and, from some bit of information gathering while leaving Xuanyu alone in his room, found that most believe that Nie Mingjue's death was natural, if unfortunate, as the man died from a Qi Deviation.

Why would Jin Guangyao keep the head? It seems like a poor idea to keep it, given he doesn't want anyone to know he'd been the one to kill his Oath Brother... Did he at least destroy the rest of the body? Wangyu sighs and wished his dad thought to send them notes about what's going on with him.

Sighing, Wangyu writes out a note and then creates a clone in the form of a bird. Rolling the note up, the clone knows what to do and flies off, heading in the direction of the Cloud Recesses. Xuanyu squawks at the fact that the clone bird flew out of the window and he gets a bit of a glare.

"Wait, you can create a... clone too?" Asks Xuanyu and he nods. "And... Oh, you didn't know where the Cloud Recesses were... That's why you asked for a room that faces it..."

"Correct." Wangyu agrees. "Also having the window facing the direction, I can set up something for dad to find us later, at night."

Xuanyu nods in understanding before leaving the window alone, heading for the desk and looking through the various items he brought out of his magical pocket. There's a few yellow books, which

feature pron it seems, blank paper, and an brush set with some ink he made himself.

"I'll go order you supper and I'll slip out to get some Emperor's Smile." He says to Xuanyu, leaving the brush set and ink out. "Hope you can entertain yourself for a bit." He says with a smile.

Xuanyu nods and seems to relax. It's hardly the first time Xuanyu has needed time for himself, although he suspects that it's more Xuanyu writing letters to someone and receiving letters in turn. It's suspicious, but something he suspects will be revealed in its own time, after all, Xuanyu hasn't tried to do anything towards him nor ask him to try anything in turn.

As he leaves the room, Wangyu dismisses the matter from his mind and begins to muse about what to set up for his dad to be able to know which room they are in without anyone else taking note of it. He is sure to put in that order before leaving the inn to fetch at least two jugs of rice wine. There's gossip about something happening at Yi City concerning a mix group of junior Cultivators, then there's mention of some young Lan juniors coming back from a Night Hunt that seemed to sport low spirits.

He mingles a bit before he puts in his order and pays when the jars are brought to him, he includes a tip as thanks for such speedy service. Wangyu heads back to the inn and to the room he's sharing with Xuanyu. Supper arrives before he had but he is sure to pay for it before heading up to the room.

Putting the jars down near the table before settling himself, Xuanyu is busy reading one of the porn novels and eating to realize he's returned. He waits until there's no food in the bowl and that the tea cup is empty before announcing his presence at the table, which does indeed startle the other. The bowl and tea cup does get tipped over but there's nothing in either so it's harmless.

"Be louder next time!" Xuanyu scolds him before recovering the book and putting righting the bowl and cup. "Like, knock or slam the door."

He can't help but smirk lightly at the scolding. "Maybe you should set up an alarm talisman at the door instead. It's not like we don't have the funds for you to practice making them." He teases Xuanyu, widening the smirk a touch before allowing it to fade and his eyes drifting down at the other novels.

He adverts his gaze to the other stack on the table. Pulling a blank paper over to him, he takes the brush set and after a few seconds, creates some green ink, which comes out of his right index finger, just under the nail. With a quick cleaning cantrip, he uses the brush to soak up some of the green ink and begins to draw. He doesn't have anything in particular in mind to draw but that doesn't stop him much.

A bunch of freshly herbs slowly appears upon the paper, with each brush stroke, a sprig there, a whirl and another for a leaf. A light touch for lighter green while a bit more pressing to get a darker one. Finishing with the green, he takes a moment to regard the drawing before noting the amount of ink left. He considers what else he wants to draw, moving the paper so that he can draw something else, he decides to make a purple, it takes a bit for him to pick a shade, picking a lighter violet purple, it exits out from his right pinkie as he's busy holding the brush in his right hand.

Another cantrip to clean the brush, Wangyu begins with a roundish shape with light strokes. In time, he finishes drawing a pair of birds, one is a sparrow while the other a chicken, a rooster in fact. The rooster looks like it's trying to step on the sparrow. The sparrow is a bit busy pecking at the ground.

He must have giggled out loud for Xuanyu lowers the book and then snorts at the sight of the two birds. Wangyu smiles at the slight shake of Xuanyu's head and goes back to drawing a bit more. He uses the cantrip to clean both the brush and the ink, he creates a brown ink and creates a bunch of seeds on the ground and then moves to add some more detail to the herbs, this time roots among the pick stems and adds some aging effect to some of the leaves.

Then he doodles a banner that's not unlike Ge'Rotte's Acting Troops one. A few ripped cloth, a hood, and a random saying in Draconic. He adds a pole for the banner to flutter from and then does some shading. Then he adds a few Homunculus created flying eyeballs, classically done with bat wings, to flutter around near the banner for kicks.

"Flying... eyeballs?" There's a bit of strain in Xuanyu's voice upon saying that. "Homunculus." He states in a dismissive tone as he takes in what he's drawn.

"..." It takes him a moment to realize that Xuanyu likely doesn't know what one was. "It's something a spell worker can create, typically using Alchemy. It's not alive or did it come from something that had been alive."

"I've seen someone with a Homunculus as a severed hand and a face upon the palm of it." He thinks to add and that... seems to not have the affect he expected. "They're mostly used as spies and to unsettle people." Wangyu does his best to reassure Xuanyu. "Their regarded as magical gimmicks to startle the more mundane folks."

"...Are you able to make one?" Asks Xuanyu and he takes a moment to consider that. "Never need to, not when I can just create a clone of myself. Particularly when I learnt how to shape it into a suitable form." He admits and he notices how Xuanyu seems to process this.

"You haven't..." There's a touch of worry in Xuanyu's tone and he shake his head, "I've only created the one since arriving in this world. You saw it leave through the window."

"You trust me?" Xuanyu asks with clear disbelief after a bit as he adds a bit of brown to the rooster's wings that are stretched out. "Got to give trust to earn it." He quotes to Xuanyu.

"I see...?" Xuanyu mutters and he mentally shrugs, it's not until later, when it's night and Xuanyu is fast asleep that it finally dawns on him that Xuanyu's ability to trust has likely been damaged. *What a*

shame. He thinks to himself as he waits next to the window with the jars within reach.

His clone returns without the note and as he absorbs the clone, he sighs that it seems that it'll be a while before his dad gets finds and reads the note.

- **:** -

Wangyu isn't sure how to interact with his father or elder brother, he suspects that it's likely the same for them as well. He isn't sure if dad had revealed to either of them about what he is now or about what he himself is. Xuanyu knows, that couldn't be helped given we arrived with little reserves in magic due to being Summoned and thus he didn't have the magic to assume another shape while his dad had managed to pull in alternate energy to do so.

Glancing to the side, he takes note of Xuanyu stubbornly looking down at his food while sitting across from Jin Ling, who's his nephew. In his private opinion, he suspects that Xuanyu didn't have any thoughts about his survival being common knowledge nor coming face to face with the various Cultivators that were about. Those same Cultivators who'd previously gossiped about his sexual preferences and the lie concerning him having kissed his half-brother.

Around the hall, there's a low murmur of various conversations going on around as they eat. As his gaze sweeps around, Wangyu wonders if Jiang Wanyin will be kicking out his 'guests'. As his gaze settles on the Cultivator, the man is glaring at his dad but there's been shifts in those eyes as they flicker towards Xuanyu, the look shifts just slightly, more of a sneer then icy hatred and burning envy at the sight of his dad. There's contempt and disregard when Jiang Wanyin meets his gaze. It's clear that the man sees him as something lesser then himself.

He tilts his head just slightly as he continues to match the man's gaze without blinking. That provokes a very childish reaction from

the grown Cultivator but he doesn't blink nor look away, keeping a simple mild look of being pleasant on his face. In the end, Jiang Wanyin looks away with a blink and it's clear that the man's feelings towards him just went down. *"A-Yu, must you poke the bear?"* His dad inquires and he looks down at the empty bowl and plates before him.

"He's been glaring hatefully at you." He replies to his dad. *"How childish is he, in the end, that something as simple as a staring contest wound his pride?"*

"That's just how Jiang Cheng is." His dad states. *"He hasn't changed much."*

"He hasn't grown, you mean." He counters. *"Almost two decades have passed and yet, he still blames you for... What? I mean, I know there's a list of things but, ultimately?"*

He adds, *"You dying didn't do anything, it clearly didn't improve his life any nor did it restore life to his parents nor to his sister. It clearly did help him settle his own demons either, not when he'd been whipping suspected Demonic Cultivators to death."*

"Just don't provoke him, you're more mature then that." Is all his dad tells him and he looks at his dad out of the corner of his eye. Wangyu kind of wants to pout, after all, his dad had been acting very childish when he'd been his age and even a few years older too.

He wasn't overly impressed with Jiang Wanyin, then again, he's not overly impressed with most of the Cultivators in this hall. Wangyu would compare them to some kind of beast if he didn't think it would insult the beast kin as a whole. Animals, at least, have the excuse of having a limited ability to relate to others outside of themselves but men, like most Races, possess a greater ability of awareness of anothers' state, even being able to put themselves into various situations and think on how or what they'd do in said imaginary situation. They can be empathic, if they only just tried.

He knows that isn't must of an excuse either, that they lack the desire to take a long, hard look at themselves. That they lack the drive to better themselves, to be better versions of themselves. It's hardly the first time they've encountered people like this, it's just... *Maybe I just had hopes that they were better then that?* Wangyu muses to himself.

Which, well, is likely unreasonable to take out his disappointment in them being able to realize their faults in regards to their treatment of his dad and their inability to realize just who it was that they ultimately killed during that so called Siege. He wonders if this in ability for self reflection is the reason why they find it so hard to ascend beyond being human. *Well, besides processing the raw potential.* He muses to himself.

It's not long before Wangyu's eyes are wandering around the hall again, he doesn't feel overly hungry. Sitting across from him is his dad and next to his dad is his father. His elder brother, Lan Sizhui, is sitting with Lan Jingyi and some other Lan Junior disciples that he might not have gotten the name of. There's nobody sitting next to him, to his right.

The previously kidnapped disciples from other Sects are sitting with their fathers or Sect members. Once again, his gaze drifts towards where Xuanyu is sitting, it still feels rather odd not to have the older man sitting at the same table as him. "What's going to happen with Xuanyu? ... Mo Xuanyu?" He asks out loud, deciding to involve his father in conversation instead of just keeping it between dad and himself, without anyone ease-dropping on it.

A bemusing grin graces his dad's face while he notices a slight flicker of eyes from his father towards that direction. "I'm sure the Lan Sect will make good on their promise to lend their aid to him." His dad says and he's fairly sure that when that promise had been made, it had been directed at his dad, who'd been wearing Xuanyu's looks.

His father hums in agreement and he gives his father a bit of a side long glance. "Seems like a trick, given that it had been meant for you, dad." Wangyu points out, once his attention snaps back to his dad, who's eating a good amount of food, which... "Are you...?"

It takes dad a few seconds to puzzle out what his last bit implied, what with his eyes going slightly wide at him before looking down at the table. "Ah... A-Yu, hahaha, it's just, well, stress! Yes, stress eating!" His dad assures him while he notices his father taking a bit to study his dad with a great deal of focus, likely trying to figure out if something is wrong.

"But..." He trails off and shakes his head, deciding not to bring up the last few times his dad had eaten so much before. "Wei Ying." His father states and it's not long before his dad does his best to assure his father that it's fine, that nothing is wrong.

He's not sure if his father fully believes his dad, which, well, fair. It's clear that his dad would love to have more to eat but, well, realizing what it could mean, his dad declines having his plates and bowl filled up once more. *"I'm not. Even if I am, I won't follow through."* His dad reassures him.

While skeptical, he knows his dad is right about being able to not follow through with it. Although... *What have they been doing to bring that urge up?* Wangyu wonders to himself.

- **:** -

"Senior Wei... Pregnant." His elder brother states, repeating Jingyi's news, from having accidentally heard it from visiting the medical ward. Wangyu frowns as he considers the implications of that particular statement, after all, it shouldn't have taken this long for his dad to have given birth already.

"Really? I mean, it's been five months since that thing that happened near Lotus Pier." He states in a puzzled tone. "That's a pretty long

time to be pregnant..." *For a Slime.* He doesn't add the last to that statement.

For some reason, the various Lan disciples seem to share looks with one another. "Well..." "You see." There's lot of that getting spoken out loud and it takes him a bit to puzzle out what it is they are trying to explain to him.

"Oh, I know about sex and how a male can get a female pregnant, that it takes varying amount of time before the birth." Wangyu assures the group but it seems him speaking so bluntly about the subject gets awarded with interesting looks that tend to be either vary pale or very red. "It's just... It shouldn't be... I mean, dad should have..." He's not sure how to really explain it without revealing just what both dad and himself actually were.

Finally deciding he needed to see his dad for himself, he walks off the training feeling, Wangyu puts the wooden sword into the ground before getting off the field. It's not long before he's being trailed but his mind isn't on who's following him. His mind trying to come up with reasons why it seems that his dad could come across as pregnant, but, well, it's hard for him to come up with anything that sounds believable.

"Dad? Are you pregnant?" He asks once he's within range of his dad.

"A-Yu! Wait, what?" It takes his dad until he's at the building before he gets a reply, both out loud and mentally. "I'm pregnant?!"

He speeds up his walking while hearing that those following behind him halting. It's not long before they are doing their best to catch up while he's already in the same room with his dad and father. His dad is staring rather dumbfounded at his father while having a hand over his midsection. "Dad?" He manages to voice out.

"A-Yu..." His dad gives him a lost look and it's not long before he settles next to his dad and pulled into a hug. He wraps his arms

around his dad, finding comfort in his dad's embrace. "Senior Wei?" There's a chorus of voices ringing out while he finally notices the pair of life forces within his dad.

"Twins?" He inquires as he pulls away after his dad greets the Juniors that arrived. "Twins?!" The two teens while he looks into his dad's face.

His dad hums, chuckling slightly. "Yes, it seems so." Then his dad ruffles his hair. "So quick at picking up on them, huh, A-Yu?"

Wangyu nods, though, it wasn't the only thing he had noticed about them. "Ah, but... but... how?! You're a man!" Jingyi pretty much shouts, causing him to turn to look at both Sizhui and Jingyi.

"Ah..." "Well..." He shares a look with his dad before he looks towards his father while his dad looks at the teens.

"Wei Ying?" His father asks in a soft tone. He feels his dad deflate a bit.

"Well, you see. Wei Wangyu is my son. As in, son of my body and he's a lot older then he looks." His dad admits and he is quick to look at his dad, ensuring he has permission to assume his natural form.

"What?!" "HOW?!" Jingyi is very loud compared to Sizhui.

"A-Yu." And with that, he lets his current form go and is sure to send the cloths into his storage. It's been a while since he's assumed his Slime form and it's a bit of a relief while he gets picked up by his dad.

"My soul got transmigrated into the body of, well, a black version of A-Yu here." His dad says in a forced cheerful tone. "I gave birth to him in said new body about thirty days after I ended up in said body."

His attention is more on the lives growing in the uterus that his dad created for this form for... some reason. Lives that aren't Slimes at

all. *Half-elf?* He wonders but he's not going to check using magic.

As his dad explains things, he's content to rest in his dad's arms, taking in the presence that is his younger siblings. Also enjoying some time in his actual form, pipping in at times in a telepathic manner, being as gentle as he could when sending his thoughts out.

He doesn't react much when the two are invited to give him a poke, he lets his grey both ripple upon getting poked and on the third poke from Jingyi, lets the finger come into his body, he's quick to create some ink so when the finger gets pulled out, light grey ink is on the skin. *"Just ink."* He sends out after letting Jingyi react for a few seconds of trying to get it off. *"It'll wash off."* He promises.

A bit of silence after the explanation, he slides out of his dad's arms and resumes his previous form, ensuring that the cloths are brought out to cover him. "That's... well... Is it..." Jingyi clearly doesn't know how to use his words.

"It's not just ink I can create nor is it just the two forms I can assume." He informs the three. "Same with dad, it's easier to make organic things then inorganic."

"So... Senior Wei... he... well, ah..." Jingyi looks between his dad and his father.

"It seemed like a good idea at the time." His dad admits. "I didn't want to accidentally... Particularly not when it's that! I didn't want to risk my Lan Zhan-gege in away way!"

"But you weren't married back at Lotus Pier!" Jingyi exclaims and he tilts his head to the side, trying to make the connection of sex and marriage, before it dawns on him that it's a social stigma to have kids or sex outside of marriage. "Dad's already handled father's forehead ribbon... If I understand the significance of it, they've been engaged longer then I've been alive." He pipes in.

"What? When?" Jingyi demands before realizing how rude that is, along with having raised to his feet. He bows in apology to father while dad tells the story about said incident, which had been the last Discussion Conference before the Wen Sect burnt the Cloud Recesses.

It seems that this is a first time that his elder brother is hearing this story as well. "Is that why you call Hanguang-Jun father?" Jingyi asks Wangyu.

"Hard to say, I mean, it's not like we knew we'd get Summoned nor that I'd end up meeting him?" The real reason, is of course, his dad had replied yes once upon a time to him asking if the man was his other parent along with feeling that the man had a very special place in his dad's heart. Plus, it seemed like he'd been returning a jest.

"So... Back at the training field. You found it hard to believe that... Dad, was pregnant, not because he was a man." His elder brother reasons out loud.

"Hm." He nods in agreement. "Slimes can have a very short pregnancy, I mean, like within a day? From beginning to end." Wangyu is fairly sure that that's how it was with him.

"Well, that's what it seemed like when I had you." His dad agrees. "For other Slimes, I assume it can be any number of reasons for it taking longer then a day."

It's not long before his father's uncle arrives after they dropped that discussion to focus in on names for the twins, tactically avoiding bringing up the whole Slimes having no real gender and that his dad has managed to keep the pregnancy without even realizing it. It's not long before they are assigned punishment for skipping classes and the three of them leave the 'adults' alone. They also do their best to ignore anything that's coming from the building as they leave.

"So... how do you know your a boy?" Jingyi asks as they approach where they're suppose to be. "Jingyi!" His elder brother states in

exasperation.

"I only had dad for a role model and, well, I just... why not? It's not like I felt any connection to the idea of being a girl later, even now really." He admits. "Before the thought that being female was an opinion, I was already comfortable with thinking of myself in the masculine way and couldn't see thinking of myself as a she."

"Huh." Seems to be the end of it as they have arrived to where they are suppose to be. Wangyu does his best to focus on the rest of that day's lessons, after all, there's very little magic in this world but an abundance of Spiritual Energy, so he better learn to harness it in order to ensure he isn't drained from a single spell. He's confident that he'll be able to make a Golden Core, or a Slime's equivalent of one.

} - O - {

Ending it here!

Shifting Between Illusion and Reality P1

I don't own Kateyo Hitman Reborn!

To: *Mr Sawada*

Congratulations, you have been chosen to participate in the Beta Phase of Mythical Flames of the Soul: Sky Edition! This is Phase One of the Beta and for participating, you will earn the minimum amount of a hundred Yen a day with extra earnings based on your progress, all of which will be deposited in your bank account. Thank you for your participation in our Phase One of our Beta Testing of Mythical Flames of the Soul: Sky Edition.

Signed Department Head,

Kawahira Checker

Head of Beta Phase,

Wonomichi Wright

"Huh?" Is all Tsuna could think to say upon reading that letter for a third time. End the end, the seven year old sets the letter to the side and takes a moment to study the box, the package is one his Okasan gave him upon arriving home from school today, which is also the end of the school term.

At first, he thought it was something his Otosan sent him but then he opened the letter and, well, it seems that it's not. *Maybe he signed me up?* He wonders as he bites his lower lip as he uses the letter opener to tear into the tape of the package to get at what's within the box.

Within the box is a head piece and upon touching it, the clear gems fill up with a pale orange that went away when he yelped and stopped touching it. In the end, the seven year old reaches for it once again and shivers after touching a cluster of gems. Pulling it out, he finds that there's a neck part that kind of seems to go along the back of his neck.

Frowning, he's not sure if he should put it on yet, it's clear that it's something he's suppose to wear for this Beta thing. *Well, it can't hurt to give it a try, right?* He tells himself and so, he fits the likely expensive device about his head, it then auto adjusts to his head and even moves so that the back part is at the back of his head.

=Seal Detected=

=Analyzing=

=Analyzing=

=Analyzing=

=Analyzing=

=Complete!=

=Beginning Seal Destruction=

=9=

=7=

=6=

=5=

=4=

=3=

=Start=

Warmth spreads throughout him, chasing away the cold and he feels... Whole. It takes him some seconds to realize that he's laying on his left side, given he's sitting on his bed, he's not hurt from his collapse.

Groaning, Tsuna reaches to run a hand through his hair only as he touches his forehead does he note that the head piece is gone. Sitting up, he begins to feel around his head for it but can't find it on his head. Then he looks at the box to find it there only there's none of the gems and it's got holes in said areas. As he reaches to touch the device, it happens again.

=Welcome Tsunayoshi to Phase 1 of the Beta of Mythical Flames of the Soul: Sky Edition=

=Request: Please repackage the remains of the device and return to mailing address=

"Huh?" He finds himself this rather... overwhelming yet, in the end, there's really no reason not to do as it asks. "Ah, ok, sure? I'll do it tomorrow, if it's alright with you?"

=Quest Created=

=Title: Return to Sender=

=Summary: Tsunayoshi is tasked with repackaging the delivery device and mailing it back to Truth Behind Reality Corporate Headquarters.=

=Rewards: Earning two hundred Yen if Quest Completed within 24 hours.=

=Timer Unlocked=

And now there's a clock counting down from 24:00. It takes him a few seconds to realize that it's counting down the hours and for the next few minutes, the seven year old just stares at the timer. In the end, he gets up and taking the package, he heads down stairs to find tape to tape up the box. It takes him a bit to figure out what address he's sending it back too, feeling rather stupid upon realizing that it's already on the package. Once he's put that address on the blank sticker and then his own address, only he puts the company address to the delivery space, which is highlighted for him in a pale orange and it also highlights the spot for where his address should go.

Looking around the house, he finds some change when he realized he didn't have the money in his piggy bank to pay for delivery. Placing the Yen into the pocket of his jacket and the package next to the door, Tsuna heads for the living room to watch some TV before bed, doing his best to ignore the timer.

**/ [- | T | -] **

=Quest Created=

=Title: Monkey See, Monkey Do=

=Summary: Tsunayoshi wishes to play on the jungle gym in order to improve his coordination. Complete the Quest by swinging from one side to the other without falling off.=

=Rewards: Unlocks Status Page=

=Rewards: Fifty Yen=

None of the created Quests ever have a failure condition, if he doesn't complete a Quest at the end of a day, the Game will remind him of the Quests he still needs to complete but that's about it. Tsuna's looked up game mechanics which is how he notices the lack

of failure conditions. Oh, there's been a decrease in reward money but that's about it.

Also, he's been sent a bank account card within three days of joining the Beta, having spoken with his Okasan, it seems that he doesn't have a bank account, which kind of hurts while she assured him that if he ever needed anything, he was just suppose to ask her. But, well... he just shake the Feeling that he can't Trust her, he doesn't know why either. Tsuna also finds himself watching his Okasan, trying to figure out why that is, yet, she acts like he recalls her acting, although he could do without her using his recently acquired nickname of Dame-Tsuna...

Putting the matter out of his mind, he watches other kids swing along the jungle gym. Doing his best to see how to move while doing it so he can do it himself. Glancing around, he notices a few kids snickering at him already, likely due to his cloths that his Okasan put out for him to wear.

Tsuna does his best to ignore the looks as he approaches the jungle gym. It takes him a few tries to succeed which earns him some jeers from the kids who likely attend school with him, again, the nickname they've coined for him being used instead of Tsuna or his last name of Sawada. The jeers hurt and he's done his best to swallow the urge to break down and cry.

=Quest Completed=

=Status Page Unlocked=

=Fifty Yen deposited=

Grinning widely, the seven year old runs off to a near by tree to sit down. It took a lot out of him, trying to swing properly from one side of the jungle gym to the other and now, there's a flashing icon. Sitting down, he murmurs, "Open Status View."

The icon with an image of a person glows solid before orange flames flooding his vision and he finds an image of himself in the top left corner while the rest just details his Age, Date of Birth, Parents, Birth Location, Location, and... Flame, which is simply called Sky Flame. Then there's the usual Game information concerning stats only, instead of numbers, it's English letters. A guide pops up when he taps his STR to inform him what the letters mean for him, which is which Stat he's using most often in his day to day life, which he exercises daily.

A being the best, B, second best, C is average, D being second lowest, and E being the bottom. The note mentioned that D ranking is atypical for children under the age of ten with E being for those below the age of five. Then it mentions the color that the letters are in, white being average potential, gold good potential, and black meaning poor potential, which only comes up with something is hindering said Stat. Two of his Stats sport gold color text and they are CHA and WIS, the rest is all white.

There's a lot on the Stat page that does fall in line with the usual game mechanics like Status Conditions and something that keeps track of his physical needs. Then there's Flaws and Merits, he's in possession of Soft-Hearted - Major as a Flaw, it means that he can't stand to see someone hurt in his presence outside of combat, it's listed as a Mental Flaw. The other Flaws are minor ones while they are listed are mostly Social with one Physical Flaw that will fade once he's over the age of nine.

Among the Merits listed, he has Hyper Intuition - Weaken, which grants him extra awareness of intent. It's Weaken due to him being Sealed at Age four, two months before his fifth Birthday and it'll grow powerful over time, new features of this Merit will either be unlocked or he'll find ways to use it in a creative manner. Then his attention goes down the list.

"Cloud Territory?" He murmurs in puzzlement and it turns out, that the infamous Biting Kid does exist and that Hibari Kyoya, the kid's name, is the Cloud claiming Namimori as his Territory and thus, is

investing time and energy into keeping kids, or herbivores, safe. It's a Social Merit and, yea, there's a few hindrances about this Merit too, like if he crosses whatever line Hibari-san has, he'll be 'bitten to death' by said Cloud.

For some reason, he has this urge to yelp at whenever he read that part about being 'bitten to death'. Shaking his head, he notices that there's other tabs and trying to tap them, he gets a message that the other tabs are Under Construction and will be Uploaded after a month of time. There's nothing more to do and he doesn't really have a lot of information concerning certain Flaws but from what he's gathered, he can't do anything about them since they're not there because of anything he's done but his Otosan, is listed under the Flaw Enemy along with the Vongola Famiglia, both sport Minor next to their name but still, it's pretty clear his Otosan doesn't have his best interests at heart nor does this Vongola Famiglia.

It also mentioned that if he ever went against his Otosan's expressed wishes, his Okasan would fall in behind his Otosan's wishes. Which means that, he can't trust his Okasan to support him when, not if, he ends up in conflict with his Otosan. That isn't a pleasant thought and he bites his lower lip as he feels tears pool up in his eyes that he can't trust his Okasan to pick him over his Otosan who's never around.

With a sniffle, the Status Page fades and in the end, he kind of lets it out, he doesn't know how to stop as he hurts so much over this knowledge. After a while, he's got no more tears and he feels kind of numb, but he's hungry and kind of exhausted. So, he gets up and heads home, finding it hard to really want to do anything for the rest of the day.

**/ [- | T | -] **

"Your a Beta Tester too, right?!" Tsuna jerks his head while lowering the book to find a girl and he notices she's got a green glow to her eyes yet, that's not really her eye color. "Oh! Haru thinks that's a pretty shade of orange!"

Then Haru cheers as her gaze turns to something else, which likely means that she just completed a Quest. "Haru almost forgot, I'm Miura Haru! A Lightning!"

"Ah... I'm Sawada Tsunayoshi, a Sky." He admits. "I prefer Tsuna though."

Grinning widely, the bold girl moves to sit at the table and he can't help but study her while she seems to be returning the favor. "So... Why were you looking for others?" He asks Haru curiously.

"Parties and Dungeons, Haru didn't want to deal with Dungeons on her own, so Haru set out on a Quest to find someone to bring Haru materials so Haru can make things." She tells him and he blinks before pointing out, "I don't think Dungeons are going to happen, I mean, there hasn't been anything but Quests."

Haru pouts, after all, in the almost four weeks since he got the package and started this Beta Test and yet, he's not really stumbled across any Monsters nor have he got anything save actual Yen for rewards and him slowly learning to use his Hyper Intuition, which is slowly growing in strength. Thankfully, the Quest creation helps him figure out what his Hyper Intuition is trying to alert him too, which is now helping him to learn to control the Merit instead of it controlling him. He also has a long term Quest to help him weaken his Soft-Hearted Flaw into one he can live with, after all, he's going to be in conflict with his parents in the future and given that his Otosan continues to remain an Enemy, he won't allow this Flaw to keep him from winning that future conflict.

"Haru thinks it's coming up." The other states and he tilts his head slightly to the side. "Well, maybe but we might not be allowed to test it." The seven year old points out. "Cause it'll likely be too... voi-lent for kids."

"Ah! Tsuna-chan is right!" Haru exclaims, her eyes widening and the green returns, covering the whole of Haru's eyes, including the

whites, while he flushes and pouts at the -chan. "Not a girl." He murmurs.

"Haru thinks Tsuna-chan is cute like one." And thus, they spend the rest of the hour arguing over whether or not he is adorable like a girl before they both end up having to head off home.

**/ [- | T | -] **

To: *Mr Sawada*

Congratulations for being chosen to participate in the Beta Phase Four of Mythical Flames of the Soul: Sky Edition! It has been noted that you have participated in our Phase One and thus, your implants have been reactivated and the updates transmitted! We can't wait to see how you will progress during our Phase Four of our Beta Test.

Signed Department Head,

Kawahira Checker

Head of Beta Phase,

Wonomichi Wright

"That... explains the notification I got from waking up." The nine year old admits, today's the last day of school's summer semester, which he's more then happy about as it means he won't have to put up with the strange attention he garners from various classmates, upper class-men, and teachers. Plus his chances of encountering Hibari Kyoya, the Cloud of Namimori, due to said attention will, hopefully, be zero until school resumes in September.

Folding the letter, he heads back to his room to change out of his nightwear, putting the letter where he put the previous one. His Okasan is already in the kitchen by the time he's coming back down the stairs and they exchange greetings while he moves to sit at the

table. "Open Status Page." He whispers and orange flames surge before his eyes as the Status Page forms from said flames, it's a rather cool effect and he can't help but grin at the sight of it, it feels Right begin able to access it once more.

After a minute of going over it, he notices a number of changes and a quick tap calls up a summary of Updates that have been done to the game, which includes Combat, Monsters, Flame Training, and Alternate Reality. Phase Two of the Beta had been Combat Oriented and did bring in Monsters to fight. Phase Three brought in Flame Training along with an Altered Reality to interact with. From the looks, Phase Two and Three happened at the same time and then combined into a single 'Phase' in the last two months. It appears that Phase Four is bringing in Monster loot drops and Special Areas that will be where they can go to face said Monsters plus there's a skeleton of a Crafting System.

It hints that there's going to be something coming in Phase Four, he wonders if it'll be an Inventory System as it seems to be missing from the summary. *Or will there be actual Dungeons?* Tsuna wonders as he checks his Quest tab to note that it looks like it kept his previous history and he Resumes the Incomplete Quests.

He hears his breakfast being placed before him and he murmurs his thanks before he begins to eat while going through his Quests to see if he's made any progress. After a few seconds, he closes the Status Page and focuses on his breakfast. It's been a week since his Otosan phoned and it's clear that whatever exchange that happened, it's affecting his Okasan to the point she hasn't asked him about school since said phone call nor has he been able to get any meaningful information about what the two talked about save that his Okasan seems to be under the impression that his Otosan might be visiting or sending something to the house.

Once, he would have hoped for his Okasan's sake that it was true but, well, he's come to a startling conclusion that his Okasan is in a miserable marriage and that she could do so much better then the man who she married, the one that is never around, barely phones,

or sends his Okasan anything for any of the special holidays or anniversaries. These days, he knows that his Okasan's devotion to his Otosan isn't healthy and that her suffering is as much her own fault as it is his Otosan, that she should have woken up to that fact a long time ago. After all, the neighbors likely would understand if she files for divorce, a number of them, from what he's over heard, seem to wonder why she hasn't already.

Yes, he still loves his Okasan but he won't turn a blind eye to the fact that if his Okasan just had a touch more spine, she could pull herself out of this sham of a marriage and could easily find someone who'd be actually there for her on a physical and emotional level. Tsuna wonders if he ever thought to blame himself for keeping his Otosan away before dismissing that thought. After all, the two were adults and thus should have known what they were getting themselves into when they got married, right? If they hadn't then why did they get married in the first place?

Nodding to himself, he then notices that his portion of breakfast isn't what it should be. It seems he'll have to ask his Okasan to get him bigger portions again, but given how she is right now... It'll be for the best for him to head off to buy something from a store, likely needing to grab something more for lunch too as he notices the size of the Bento that's now waiting for him on the counter. For some reason, having the implants cause him to need more food then most kids his own age, even Haru, who does come around to bug him into letting her dress him up one every few weeks, needs to eat more too, so he's not alone in that, even when they were inactive.

A number of Quests get created as he puts his dishes in the sink and the rewards were still Yen getting transferred into his bank account although now there's a number of question marks, which is rather odd but then, perhaps it's just that he hasn't encountered the items yet? Grabbing the Bento, he says good bye to his Okasan before leaving the kitchen and once he's done switching to outdoor footwear, he jogs to the nearest grocery store to make his purchases.

**/ [- | T | -] **

"Tsuna-chan!" Haru cries out and she pretty much gives him a quick hug before she gives his school uniform a look and then beaming up at him. "Haru knew you'd be coming to this Area! Now, join my Party!"

And sure enough, there's a Party invite to a Party called Haru's Stylish Rangers. It takes him a few seconds before he actually does press the Accept and it's then that he notices that Haru decided to engage the Nickname System as there's a Green Ranger Haru floating above her head in bright green text. "Ah, you didn't create a Nickname! Quick, put in Orange Ranger Tsuna!"

"Ah, Haru? I think you are not suppose to use your actual name when you make a Nickname." He tells the Lightning who's pretty much the closest person he has in his life that's a friend, a kind of annoying and a girl, but still a friend. She pouts at him and he crosses his arms, doing his best to out last her pout, even though he already feels his resolve slowly, VERY slowly crumbling away.

Given how impatient Haru can be and his practicing of being patient, Haru's the one to give up after a minute and she scowls at him, not that it's all that threatening, he attends the same school as Hibari Kyoya after all, and manages to give her a blank look. "Nickname." She states and the tone is one he knows well, it's one that means she's not moving from that stance.

"Fine." He admits and wills the Status Page to appear, it's trying to do it without murmuring a trigger but it comes. Tapping the Nickname option, he turns to stare at Haru, not really watching as he types something in, anything really, and Accepts it as his current Nickname. "Natsume?" Haru mutters and it takes him a second to realize that yip, that's what he ended up putting in as a Nickname.

"It's not my actual name." He defense it while the Status Page fades away. "Well? We got Quests to do, right?"

"Right!" Haru agrees after giving the name now floating above his head a final look. "Haru found a Chest with light armor and a dagger." He watches as sparks fly and lightning in the color of green arcs as leather armor appears to be covering Haru's body with a dagger hanging from the belt. The sparking lightning fades but the changes remain and he glances to find that Haru's eyes are now softly glowing an emerald green.

Haru pulls him over to the entrance of the Special Area and he does notice the chest. It's clearly old with the metal being pretty tarnished plus the wood looks like some large feline took some kind of personal offense to the chest. Paint chipped around the claw marks and the dents has the paint being rather worn. Walking over, he barely touches it before he gets notifications that he's looted leather armor and a dagger, they also get Auto Equipped to his body, orange flames move over his body and it's pretty much the same leather armor and dagger Haru is wearing, only it the armor is clearly meant to fit his body.

Thus he completes a few Quests and is awarded with Yen plus two new tabs is unlocked on his Status Page, one that covers his ability to fight and the other covers his capabilities with his Sky Flame. It takes a minute for the Combat tab to finish running its Scan on him before pretty much giving him information concerning his fighting potential. It pretty much informs him that his ability with his own body is what he's best at while he's pretty much average concerning more melee weapons and poor with handguns... He's confused as to why it would go out of its way to inform him of that since there's no other listing concerning firearms listed.

"Haru? Did you get anything concerning guns?" He asks as he feels her moving to stand behind him.

"Nope! Just normal ones like swords and other stuff." Haru chirps and he finds himself running a hand through his hair.

"Well, according to this, I sport poor potential when it comes to handguns." He admits and Haru laughs while he finally switches to

the other new tab. "How did I...? I mean, really? I can Harmonize with electronics?"

"Tsuna-chan only has one Flame Skill?" Haru remarks, her tone is clearly amused. "Haru's got three!" Clearly bragging and Tsuna sighs.

"Well, we best get this over with." He says as he closes his Status Page. "Ah... What do you have to carry loot with?" He thinks to asks.

"Carry? Haru thought there was..." He watches as the Lightning is not going through her Status Page, looking for an Inventory tab. "Darn it, how is Haru suppose to gather materials if Haru doesn't have an Inventory?"

"Why don't we just go out and buy some large backpacks? I mean, we have our own money... You spent everything you earned from playing in the Beta One, didn't you?" He realizes and the girl looks sheepish yet depressed.

"Well... You'll have to pay me back, in full, for the backpack, ok?" Haru nods in agreement, eyes clearly displaying honest relief and agreement with that idea. As they exit the Special Area, their leather armor and daggers fade away and their respective cloths can be seen.

Haru is quick to grab his hand and pull him along, heading for the nearest market. "Camping store likely has something durable and can store a large amount of stuff." He remarks and Haru merely nods, he doubts she's really paying him half an ear.

Not for the first time does Tsuna wonders what his life would have been like if Haru hadn't found him in the library back when he was seven. He's not sure if he should be thankful that he's the first Beta Tester beside herself that she encountered or not, given how busy she can be. Though, he'll admit, having her in his life... he's not so lonely nor does he feel so isolated from everyone else because he was lucky enough to get picked to Beta some ultra secret game and

likely has to keep it a secret, after all, the company could sue him for releasing that information. Well, that's kind of the conclusion he reached and shared with Haru, who, after speaking with her parents, agreed that he's right.

Finding a store that carried camping backpack was hard but they found said backpacks, although, the nine year old is puzzled as to why an Antique store would carry camping equipment... The strange, yet nice man behind the counter seemed bemused concerning their kind of truth concerning why they were looking for said kind of packs and did, it seem, have a few in stock. The two backpacks only differed by color with one being a simple dark brown and the other being a sleek black, Haru claimed the brown one, leaving him with the black one.

They also ended up stopping off to grab something to eat cause it took time looking for a store that carried the packs. The restaurant belongs to a classmate of his family, Yamamoto Takeshi, who seems to enjoy playing sports. Haru seemed rather disappointed upon realizing that his classmate wasn't a Beta Tester as she wanted more people to join Haru's Stylish Rangers, he already decides to be the Party Leader in the future so their party isn't named that, he'd likely just stick with something simple like, Duo Trouble or Strike Force or something like that. He even generated a Quest to that effect.

Haru is fairly loud as she says farewell to Takeshi, who's helping out behind the counter. His classmate, well, former classmate, grins widely at Haru while saying his own good byes, each of them having paid for their own meal and drinks. "See you Yamamoto-san." He says after Haru elbows him and gives him a meaningful look.

Takeshi returns his clearly forced good bye, "See you as well, Sawada-san." There's clear amusement in the other boy's tone and a slight glint of humor in the other's eyes.

With that, they leave and he rubs the spot Haru elbowed him, giving her a dirty look but she ignores it. And so, they return to the Special Area and as they prepare to enter into it properly, they get a

notification that their backpacks are now equipped and the backpacks serve as an Inventory, although there's a limited space to store things. Given the various pockets, their Inventory isn't all that dissimilar to a Pokemon game pack only they get to assigned what goes into what pocket or into the main bag. If they assigned a pocket to something, when they loot Monsters or Harvest from the Terrain, it'll automatically get put into said pocket, which saves time.

So they do that for the smaller pockets leaving the larger space unassigned. They check how easily they move with said large backpacks on their back along with engaging in a minor Spar, which completes another shared Quest that Haru won. They wait five minutes for his health to return to normal and he endures the victory dances Haru tries out along with poses, leaving him to sulk over his defeat. Her Lightning Flame allowing her to act and react faster then him, although his Hyper Intuition did kick in by the time his health had dropped under fifty percent but it was too late, Bleeding it what got him 'killed' in the spar.

He hopes there is a way to use his Sky Flame to heal himself and that thought generates a Quest, which he takes as a yes, there is a way. He just needs to figure it out and then practice it. After all, this game doesn't seem to have any Classes just Flames, which it doesn't really explain very well beyond which Flame is what color along with a name that goes along with it. The only reason he knows that Lightning Flames are green is because of Haru and it goes for her concerning Sky Flames being orange.

Then again, Hibari is a Cloud, so... If I ever figure out how to see that, I'll know what color Flame a Cloud is... Again, another Quest generates as he climbs to his feet. Clapping his hands to get rid of dirt and dust, he asks Haru, "Ready to begin?"

"Haru will become the Greatest Crafter in Mythical Flames of the Soul!" She declares and her pupils glow green for a few seconds before Haru marches through the large glowing portal that officially leads into the Special Area where Monsters spawn. He hurries to follow after and once the trip through the portal ends, finds that they

have arrived in a large meadow that's sparse with bushes and the odd tree while off in the distance, there's a forest and further out, what might be a mountain range.

Then he hears a growl and Tsuna pulls out his dagger, preparing to face whatever Monster is growling, which turns out to be a fox looking Monster only it's fur is spring green with a 'mane' of what could be pine needles. With a yell, Haru is already attacking the cat size Monster that's got a question mark over its head. He does his best to join in, moving to the side to attack it from the right. It manages to evade a lot of their slashes and darting in to bite their legs or incoming arms.

They finally kill it, he manages to come up with a plan where he kicks it as it leaps and when it's on the ground, Haru's to lodge her dagger into its unprotected belly. The body remains and they get a notification that their skill with daggers went up, which means that they will actually see what kind of level or rank they actually have when it comes to using a weapon. "How does Haru loot it?"

"Ah... Well, we might have to... Skin it? With our daggers?" He suggests and Haru gives him a look of horror and disgust at touching the dead body of the fox Monster. "I mean, this game kind of seems real, you know? So, skinning it with cause it to drop its loot?"

"Haru think Tsuna-chan should do it as it's Tsuna-chan's idea." The girl states and he sighs at the ten year old Lightning before biting his lower lip as he alters his hold of his dagger as he moves to kneel by the dead Monster's side.

Taking a deep breath, he lodges his dagger into the body and it makes that sound, the one of metal cutting into meat, only it's more wet sounding. It's slow but he does manage to cut the Monster from its chin to its tail tip, which is hard given the needle mane remains sharp and able to stab him with its points. Thankfully, the game seems to take pity on him as he tries to make sense of why that didn't work, the Monster gets consumed in orange fire and there's

now a pelt without the needle mane, a pile of needle hairs, meat, and bones.

He also gets a notice that he used his Sky Flame Skill to turn the Monster into Loot and he privately thanks any Kami willing to listen to him for that odd yet useful Skill. "Ok, I turned it into Loot, you want the pelt for making leather, right?" He asks and turns to find Haru looking at him with an odd look on her face before she comes out of it upon realizing he was looking at her.

"Right! And the meat for cooking." Haru states and he collects the needle hairs and the bones. Haru timidly approaches and touches each with her own dagger, which causes the pelt and the meat to vanish into the backpack's Inventory space.

They take a rest and their health regenerates, once they are fully healthy, they move onto attacking another fox Monster. Slowly, they get use to Combat and his Hyper Intuition begins to activate faster and faster in future fights. Of course, he's the only one able to use Flames to transform Monster bodies into neat piles of Loot. It's by the twentieth one that they kill that the fox Monsters get names above their heads, Evergreen Foxes, named for their mane of harden fur that is dark green in color and they completed a Quest which grants Haru a Recipe Book that possesses two ways to cook said Evergreen Fox meat while he gets a Recipe for making a Bone Dagger, which makes sense as he's been collecting the bones.

They also learn that the Entrance Hall leading to the Special Areas will now possess Craft Stations where they can turn Material Loot into stuff. Which has Haru squealing although she pouts at the fact that he can't hand over the Recipe for crafting a Bone Dagger to her, it seems that it's bound him. "Maybe I can make a copy of it?" He suggests and thus generating a Quest to see if he's able to create copies of Recipes.

Also, the Area now hosts more kind of Monsters and they can now interact with various bushes, the odd mushroom, and, of course, flowers. They leave off hunting for more Monsters and focus on

Harvesting Loot from the Terrain, only killing Monsters if said Monsters attacked them. Both of their armors and daggers are looking rather worn by the time they exit out of the Special Area and into the Entrance Hall. Sure enough, Haru doesn't want to leave until she's turned some of what she's gathered into something not so... icky, her words not his.

So, he finds a Crafting Station that allows him to transform those bones into daggers. Unlike in other video games, he actually has to do some work and it takes a lot of tries before he create a poor example of a Bone Dagger but at least he now has a feel for creating them. He does his best to use up all the bones, some of his Bone Daggers are still poor quality but he's managed to create average ones. The average ones didn't match up with his metal dagger but then, he can now see if he can't do some range attacking viva dagger throwing as it doesn't matter if he loses or breaks these Bone Daggers as he can craft replacements as long as the Monsters drop bones as Loot.

Then he notices that he's also have to experiment to create his own Recipes when it comes to creating things out of bones. In the end, he shrugs, he's pretty sure its late and they best heading home. So, he makes sure to store what he made into his backpack's Inventory before going to check up on Haru...

"And your sleeping." Tsuna states upon checking to see if Haru is still alive. "Maybe I can..."

He tries to lift her only, yea, he's not strong enough and she's far too heavy for him to carry, without the backpack as it's resting on the counter of the station. Groaning, he tries to think of something and winces at the sight of what appears to be a rest area, complete with boxes that might be beds as there's covers and pillows on said contents. Looking between Haru and said location, he sighs in defeat and begins to drag her towards said area, having to take a few breaks due to reason but does manage to get her on one of those box beds, at which point, Haru grabs a pillow and snuggles with it, much to his amusement.

After taking a breather, he goes to collect Haru's backpack and places it on the ground next to the box bed she's on. Then, he sits down on another bed box, allowing his own backpack to drop to the ground next to it as he tries to figure out if he really wants to leave the Lightning alone in this place or if he should stay, even though he doesn't have anyway to contact either of their parents. But, well, he yawns and the toll of the events within the Special Area finally settles on him, so, he finds it hard to not fall asleep right there and then.

Kicking off his shoes, he moves the top of the sheet over, getting under it before covering himself with it. He moves the pillow just so and closes his eyes, the place is so different from his room yet, he's tired enough not to care. It wasn't long before his breathing evens out and everything just fade away.

To be continued . . .

Shifting Between Illusion and Reality P2

I don't own Kateyo Hitman Reborn!

"Tsuna-chan! Wake up!" And he's startled awake by Haru's voice being next to his ear. They butt head as he jerks to sit up quickly and they both hiss in pain while the nine year old Sky tries to gather his thoughts about what happened last night.

"Haru? What time is it?" He asks once he recalls that his implants are active again and he's able to play Mythical Flames of the Soul once more. The update about active Quests doesn't happen like it once did, then again, he's got a Quest tab to check his current Quest list, so the game doesn't need to do that upon the start of a new day.

"How would Haru know? Haru's phone is dead!" The girl informs him and he blinks before asking, "But... shouldn't you be able to charge it with your Flame? I mean, isn't Lightning just electricity?"

"Tsuna-chan has a point. Haru will have to give that a try... After Haru is home and can experiment using old cell phones or home appliances." The ten year old muses while he finds himself starting at the floating Nickname above Haru's head, which reminds him to look at the space over his own body to study the Nickname he put in without noticing what he was typing. Natsume hangs above his head in orange text while Green Ranger Haru hangs above Haru's own in green text.

"Never mind that, Haru wants to know why Tsuna-chan didn't carry her home." The other asks him and he gives her a frank look as he replies, "I'm not strong enough to carry you, I ended up dragging you over here."

"Boys are suppose to be strong." Haru points out and he bristles at the beginning of that old argument. "I am a boy! I'm also NINE!" He

counters as he crosses his arms about his chest.

"Tsuna-chan is still Tsuna-CHAN." The girl states and he growls while glaring at her, a scowl fixated upon his features. She, of course, ignores his displeasure and moves back to her own bed box.

For the next little while, they refuse to look at one another or speak with one another. Which results in him glaring off at some random interesting decor on a wall within the resting area. In the end, he kind of feels a familiar need and shifting about, he begins to look for what could be a restroom. Upon spotting a door sporting a familiar figures, he swings his legs over and walks quickly in that direction, feeling the chill of the floor through his socks.

"Where are you going?" Haru asks before he hears her running to follow behind him. The door has both and upon opening the door, it looks like the restroom has ten stalls plus four sinks with two foot stools for kids to use.

Haru is quick to enter into the first one and he moves a few stalls to the left before entering to do his thing. His shoulders sag with relief as the toilet flushes itself once he's done, walking out, he washes his hands, noting that he's the first to finish. Now, he's hungry and thirsty, at least he knows that Haru made some food last night, well, it might serve as breakfast but if it doesn't, he could go out and buy something for himself at least, for breakfast before heading home. After all, given the mood he recalls his Okasan is in, it's likely she didn't realize he never came home last night.

Looking into the big mirror, he notices that he's still wearing his school uniform and then, he wants to be in his leather armor, orange flames flare up and race about his body, soon enough, he's wearing his leather armor and sporting that dagger in his belt. His eyes also shimmers orange while the adventuring equipment is on display then fade as his armor and dagger fade into orange flames, revealing his normal cloths. Humming thoughtfully, the nine year old gets off the stool and heads out of the restroom, heading for his backpack and to where his shoes should be.

Sitting down on the box bed, he puts on his shoes and then collects his backpack. Then, well, he kind of pauses as he looks towards the restroom door, torn between leaving Haru to her own devices or waiting for her. After all, Haru's more then capable of getting herself home and should have money in her bank account to buy something for breakfast if they ended up sleeping in later then they're use to.

Before he really comes to a decision, the Lightning exits out of the restroom and seems to notice that he's looking at her, which seems to cause her to pause before she hurries forward, being sure to look pointedly away, which he returns by looking towards the door way that leads out of this place. Moving to stand and shouldering his pack, he slowly walks towards the door that will open up to a street.

"Thanks..." He looks towards Haru, curious about why she's thanking him but she's got her back to him. "Haru's parents are going to be so worried for Haru!" The other says in a much louder voice and with that, the girl bolts for the exit at a flat run, causing him to blink before realizing he just doesn't get Haru and figures that he may never understand her, after all, she's also a girl and from eavesdropping on the older kids, they all seem to agree that girls, also women according to grown men, are impossible to understand.

**/ [- | T | -] **

"Tsuna-chan! Ten minutes until the mystery feature is unlocked!" Haru pretty much yells in excitement upon his answering of the phone.

"I know, Haru, I know." He murmurs, it's nearly midnight and he'd been reading a manga while sitting in the living room. Yawning, he hears Haru huff but also kind of yawn. "I was reading a manga, waiting for it to count down."

"Oh! Which one? Is it a Love Story~, Tsuna-chan?" The ten year old inquires in a sing song tone by the end there and he feels his face heat up.

"Not a girl! And it's an old one called Ranma one half." He informs her. Sure, the main character is engaged to a number of girls but he clearly didn't want to be! Never mind the whole cursed to turn into a girl when splashed with cold water, at least the curse gets reversed with warm or hot water.

The character's hair style is really the reason why he even picked up the manga in the first place as he recalls seeing a toddler sporting a similar look, who also owned a pet monkey. Only reason he knows about the monkey is due to the white furred found him at least once a day during the toddler's stay in Namimori, it's also how he got into Hibari Kyoya's sights as well. He's never seen the Cloud of Namimori sport such a glaring look to anyone like the one he gave the toddler, it was enough that he actually yelped with a slight jump. How Fon, the toddler's name, didn't start balling his eyes out from getting such a look...

"Oh! Haru knows that anime! It's also a manga?" The girl muses and he sighs while running a hand through his hair.

"Yes, though, I did not know it was also an anime." The Sky admits. "Is it any good?" He asks curiously.

"Haru finds it rather confusing and frustrating as Haru really wishes to make Ranma wear so many different outfits but he only wears such boring cloths day after day." Which was something he really should have seen coming. "So many nice outfits, for both boys and girls... Why can't Ranma wear something stylish?"

"I think it's a personal point for him to, you know, empathize the fact he's a guy even though he's cursed to transform into a girl." He remarks and could understand that, after all, his Enemy Flaw has long since received an update and he really doesn't want anything to do with the Mafia let alone like the idea that his Otosan is slowly plotting out his life. Genma did the same for Ranma by engaging him to so many girls and even getting Ranma cursed, the man putting the blame for everything on Ranma's shoulders, forcing the cursed teen to deal with Genma's choices and decisions...

Yes, Tsuna can empathize with some of what the main character of Ranma one half goes through but he also knows that he'd handle things differently. Then again, they are to very different people, living two different lives, plus, one is a fictional character. "I mean, how would you like it if you turned into a boy when you get splashed with cold water? I'm sure you'd refuse to wear typical boy cloths or alter your address."

"Tsuna-chan shouldn't joke about that! If Haru experiences a nightmare like that, Tsuna-chan better watch out!" The older child grumbles and he represses the urge to sigh. "Haru is a cute, adorable girl and will grow up to be a beautiful, young lady."

"Then I'm a boy who's going to grow into a young man." He counters and they bicker over that old argument, which is still one he doesn't get. After all, why can't Haru acknowledge that he's a boy? *Why can't she just call me Tsuna-kun or just Tsuna?* He wonders to himself. Haru doesn't mind him calling her by her first name without anything else added to said name, then again, she seems to enjoy hearing her name being spoken given she still like to talk in the third person.

Then, well, the count down appears before his eyes and Haru squeals within seconds as it count downs from twenty.

=19=

=17=

=16=

=15=

=14=

=13=

=9=

=7=

=6=

=5=

=4=

=3=

=Avatar Unlocked=

"Avatar?" They murmur at the same time, although his tone is sports disbelief while Haru's tone sport excitement. "I thought for sure it would be Dungeons..." He admits while Haru just hums in a distracted manner, it seems that she's already looking at what that even means.

Sighing, he murmurs, "Open Status Page." Orange flames flare before him, it's open straight to the new tab, which then opens a summary concerning what an Avatar entails along with how it'll now change how he'll experience Mythical Flames of the Soul. It means Avatars now achieve Levels and that Stats now have actual values while the play style also determines Class. Due to his usual sneaky approach to hunting Monsters in the Special Areas plus his ability to avoid Monster Traps left behind by other Beta Testers and his throwing dagger attack style, he unlocked Rogue as his Class and his Stat point allotment has been arranged thus.

As for his Avatar's Level, it's at Level 10 from the amount of Monsters he's killed from spending time in that Special Areas, which isn't a lot as he's been busy spending time working on personal Quests like creating and improving his use of his Sky Flame plus doing his best to work on his ability to cook for himself as his Okasan

hasn't come out of her state concerning his Otosan. From what little he got about it, it seems that his Otosan is suppose to be coming home for a visit at some point in September, no date given, which is fast approaching along with school, like in a week.

He's got fifty Stat points to spend as he sees fit as well, five per level but he can also spend these point to purchase a Flame Perk instead of spending them in improving his Stats. The Flame Perks generally improve their FP, short for Flame Points, from use, generation, and adding additional effects when using a Flame Skill. There's mention of a number of Avatar Races able to channel certain a certain Flame better but at the cost of being more susceptible to the 'stereotype' related with said Flame, following it to the instinctive level.

Which... he really doesn't get then again, it's not like he's met many fellow Beta Testers beyond Haru and finding those traps laid out by at least four other Beta Testers. There's no real hints concerning their Flame nor have they ran into said Beta Testers during these pass few weeks. It's likely that whoever they are, they are older then they are.

=Quest Created=

=Title: Colors of a Sky's Court=

=Summary: Curious about what other Flames are out there, Tsunayoshi is charged with meeting with another Beta Tester who isn't Miura Haru or is a Lightning.=

=Rewards: Hundred Yen=

=Rewards: New Friend=

=Rewards: Knowledge concerning another Flame of the Sky=

Tsuna blinks while realizing that a similar Quest is how Haru found him back when he was seven. "Haru... I just created a new Quest

about locating another Beta Tester who's not a Lightning." He tells her, for some reason, he swears she stiffens at the news.

"Would you mind... Helping me look?" He asks before adding, "I mean, you don't have to but I thought, well, it rewards knowledge concerning another Flame and, well, I'm curious as to what other Flames there are that aren't Cloud, Lightning, or Sky." Even though he doesn't really know what Cloud really governs, only that there's a characteristic that Clouds claim Territories. Having spoken with Haru, she admits that Lightning governs Hardness or Harden plus electricity while he, in turn, admits that Sky governs Harmony and that's about it, no real additional bonus like electricity for Lightnings it seems.

"Haru... might have a lead..." The older child admits. "His name is Irie Shoichi and I think he's new to being a Beta Tester."

"Oh?" He is rather curious, after all, why hasn't Haru approached him? "What's the color about his eyes?"

"Haru thinks... it's yellow?" Haru recalls. "Haru doesn't know what Flame that goes with though..."

"I'm kind of surprised, Haru." He admits. "I mean, haven't you approached him yet?"

"Haru has Tsuna-chan." And though he waits for her to explain more, that's pretty much it. "Ah, Haru? I thought you wanted more people to form parties with? So, why haven't you approached this guy?"

"Haru was looking for other girls to party with, not boys." Haru states simply and he frowns, "I'm a boy!"

"Tsuna-chan is Tsuna-chan." Haru says in a dismissive way and he growls before huffing. "Whatever, that doesn't stop me from being able to pee standing up."

"Gross! Tsuna-chan shouldn't talk about such gross things with Haru!" The Lightning states and he sighs.

"Well, thank you for telling me about him, Haru. I'll have to track him down." He tells her and wonders just how much older this Irie Shoichi is that Haru decided not to approach him.

"Haru wants to know what Race Tsuna-chan is going with concerning his Avatar." Haru asks him as his **Quest: Colors of a Sky's Court** gets an update with this new information. "Haru's thinking of going with an Elf."

"Ah, Race?" He does his best to find a listing for Avatar Race but it's not on the summary notification. "Tsuna-chan is still reading the update notice?" Haru teases seconds after he murmured that. He skims through it a few times, being sure he read everything before closing it.

"Just wanted to be sure I didn't miss anything." He defenses himself from the Lightning's teasing while going through the steps concerning Avatar Creation. To Gender, he did pick male and his choices for Class is Rogue but there's also Sorcerer. "What Class did you pick?" The Sky asks.

"Sorcerer." Haru states. "Tsuna-chan going to place Sorcerer too?"

"No, I unlocked Rogue given my style concerning Monsters and disabling traps." He admits and picks Rogue, locking in that as his Class. Which now brings him to picking a Race.

"Haru unlocked Fighter as a Class, Haru did not like fighting with weapons as Haru did not like getting Haru's outfits ruined." And that makes perfect sense, given that Haru's wants to focus on creating stuff using Monster Loot. Moving to look at what an Elf is, he finds a male human looking person only sporting antlers coming from the temples plus the ears are rather long and pointed. The face kind of implies a muzzle but, otherwise, as a Race, Elf looks fairly human compared to the few he flipped through to find it. He wonders what a

girl version looks like, but then, he'll likely be seeing Haru's Avatar soon enough.

According to the summary concerning picking Elf as a Race, they don't specialize with any particular Flame but does grant bonuses when using Flames in and outside of combat. They have a harder time increasing their physical Stats and using Stat points to bring them up costs two points instead of one. On the flip side, they have an easier time bringing up their INT and WIS and then, concerning the use of Stat points, the most notable advantage an Elf has is that CHA can get increase by two at the price of one Stat point.

"Well, not an Elf." He states, after all, Rogues generally need a high DEX. "I need a Race that doesn't hinder my physical Stat growth."

"Well, Haru can't help as Haru's Avatar has been completed." The ten year old girl tells him and he isn't all that surprised. "Haru's tired so, night Tsuna-chan!"

"Night Haru." He says and once Haru hangs up, he puts the phone down and then, closes his Stat Page, heading to grab his manga, he heads for his room. Changing into his nightwear once he put the manga onto the desk, he lays on his bed before calling up his Stat Page, which is still on the Avatar Creation but no longer on the Elf Race page. The Race on display is Tengu sporting an Eagle appearance instead of Crow appearance plus functional wings.

As a Race, Tengu does gain the Beta Tester Flight but there's a cost in the form of being among the shortest of Races at four foot five inches being their max height. They also have an encumbered limit that a Beta Tester's STR can't increase at all, again, it kind of makes sense given Tengu can fly. The Race proves to grant bonuses to those possessing Cloud and Sky Flame at the cost of more instinctive behavior concerning their Flame 'stereotype' characteristics.

Having spied the reference to Sky Flame, it makes sense as to why this Race is the first one to appear for him. And so, he spends time

going through the roster of Races.

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Yawning widely, Tsuna realizes that he fell asleep while trying to pick an Avatar Race and is rather bewildered at the sight of his open Stat Page concerning Avatar Creation just hanging there, before his eyes. The Race that's on display is that of Kitsune and, well, he ends up yawning which usually means he's stretching, and that... As he views the Stat Page, he finds he approved Kitsune as his Race, which causes him to pale but even closing and reopening the Stat Page doesn't do anything, leaving him to Edit Appearance.

In the end, he just picks white fur, no additional markings, and then sapphire blue eyes. He just picks age appropriate height and weight plus enabling the Avatar to age, which transforms the Kitsune on display to look much younger and, well, rather cute, like a young kit really. Before accepting, he moves to pick a very light gray for his limb stockings, tail tip, and backs of his ears, not liking how the typical black looked against such stark white fur. Approving the look, he's informed that Natsume the Kitsune has been confirmed as Sawada Tsunayoshi's Avatar.

With that, the Stat Page vanishes and he's confused as to where the name Natsume came from... until he realizes he never changed his Nickname, like, at all. Haru's Nickname did recently change it to Sango, then again, Haru went through a lot of Nicknames since her first one, which had been Green Ranger Haru. In the end, there's not much he can do, so he rolls out of bed and head for the bathroom.

Once he's back in his room, Tsuna stands before the mirror and after a few seconds to willing the shift, orange flames roll about his whole body and upon vanishing, he finds himself staring at the Kitsune Avatar and doing a few tests, well, he finds out how to move the ears and then the tail. He opens his mouth to take a look at the kind of fangs within before closing it. Then, he moves a hand paw through the fur about his neck and finds that he can almost feel the way it moves as his hand goes through it.

Shaking his head, the Avatar fades as orange ashes fall, disappearing within an inch of his body. Leaving his real body to be seen and reflected in the mirror. With that, he moves to go through his dresser drawers for cloths to wear, after all, he's got things to do today.

As he finishes making himself breakfast as his Okasan is out of the house, which is kind of odd but, well, it hardly matters as his Okasan is an adult and should be able to take care of herself. Plus, she might have mentioned something about getting up early for errands yesterday but he'd been too hyped over the unlocking a new feature for the Beta Test. Then there's the fact that it's pass eleven am, so, it might be his fault for not waking up earlier to actually talk with her.

Once he's made brunch, it's a term used when one combines breakfast and lunch, he goes through his Quests and finds the **Quest: Colors of a Sky's Court** . He's kind of puzzled by the working used but mentally pushes that away, after all, this Beta is for the Sky Edition of Mythical Flames of the Soul. He's got the base Flame from the title, which likely means Sky Flame is the most numerous Flame type and thus nothing special. Then again, Cloud, Lightning, and Sky... Well, if Lightning gets used as a name, maybe Storm and Rain does as well?

In the end, he finishes up his meal and puts the various dishes into the sink while soaking the stuff he used to make his brunch. Tsuna heads off to complete his usual Quests concerning his physical conditioning before deciding to look up the name Irie Shoichi or just looking for those with the last name Irie. Haru finds him just as he finishes his push ups in the Entrance Hall of the Special Zone that's the first one they found and have come to visit regularly, it's kind of like they have mentally claimed it as theirs.

"Tsuna-chan should head off to take a shower." The Lightning states and he chuckles slightly while she gives him a very unimpressed look. "So... what does a girl Elf look like?" He changes the topic as he drinks some water from a water bottle that he bought on his jog here.

Haru's expression changes and it's clear that she's very excited to show off her Avatar, given that she didn't comment on him needing to at least go wash his face viva the restroom of the Entrance Hall. Green begins to glow and then lightning spreads about her skin before it flashes brightly with a slight roar of thunder as he gets his first look at Sango the Elf. He blinks for a bit, the flash is rather blinding after all.

Sango is clearly a young woman and like the boy version, there's something in the face that suggests a muzzle and it's then that he really notices the eyes, how instead of the whites being white, they are actually black. Emerald green is the color of eyes that do seem to be very bright but that could be because of the black that's surrounding it. There's no hint of antlers but then, perhaps that isn't that surprising the animal they seem to be hinting at is a deer and it's the boy deer that grow antlers.

The hair is a glossy navy blue as is the thin eyebrows. The cloths that the Avatar is wearing are clearly a woman's kimono but the bone and stone bead necklace kind of reminds him of those seen in anime and manga for religious characters like monks, priests, or priestesses. "Did you craft a Flame focus?" He asks curiously, he never created one nor did he ask Haru to create him one, he rather figure out how to use his Sky Flame without one as then he doesn't waste time reaching for it or calling it into his hand.

"Of course I did." The voice does sound like Haru only... far more mature. He watches Sango the Elf holds out her hand with the palm facing up and a rather large orb that looks to be made from jade appears in the air before the palm, it hovers and it takes him a second to realize that the orb likely only appears to be made out of jade but it likely has a metal core as he's seen Haru in the library reading different books, some very advanced books at that, which means that her Lightning Flame is the cause of the hovering. It's clear that Sango seems very pleased with his reaction.

"So that's why you've been spending all that time in the library, huh? Trying to figure out how to that kind of effect?" He asks, he's spent a

lot of time with her after all. He's seen her pouts when it comes to certain feats that look rather stylish and among them is usually having a hovering ring or an orb following someone while hovering in the air without touching the owner.

"Your turn, Tsuna-chan." Haru states as the Avatar vanishes in a flare of green static. It's clear that he hit the nail on the head.

It takes a few seconds but the orange flame covers him and heralding his Avatar covering him. "So cute!" Haru squeals at the sight of Natsume the Kitsune, he feels his ears move back while Haru seems to suddenly teleport before him, clearly admiring his 'cute' factor. He barely has a chance to jerk back before Haru is overcome with the impulse to try and pet him.

"Haru!" He notices his voice is also kind of different, not that Haru cares as she manages to coo while running a hand over his head. His face heats up and after a few seconds, he pushes Haru's hand from his head. "Haru! Don't do that! It feels weird!"

He's sure to let the Avatar go when Haru tries to reach out with her other hand and she pouts, going so far as to cross her arms. "Meanie." Haru says in a sulky tone and he gives her a scowl, not liking the fact that she just invaded his personal space just because.

"Your the meanie." He counters as he crosses his arms about his own chest. "You didn't even ask!"

They look off at different directions for the next little bit but, well, he gets hungry and he's also got something else to do. He walks over to his backpack and pulls out a snack from the large camping pack and drinks some more of his water before capping it. Sitting on the floor next to his backpack, he opens his snack and begins to eat it.

Haru huff upon noticing what he's doing but she pulls out her own cell phone. As he finishes and pockets the garbage, he gets up and begins up shoulder the camping backpack. "I'm off, you wanting to come or you just going to stick around here?"

"Haru's coming." The Lightning says and the cellphone goes into a pocket, he half expected that Haru would have wanted to do a minor run of the Special Area but, well, it seems he was wrong as she didn't even bring her backpack. They walk out onto the street and they both pause at the sight of the infamous Cloud, who seems to pause to stare at the two of them, then pointy at him.

But then, there's something happening with a woman shouting at some teens about smoking. Thus he's saved from an encounter with Hibari Kyoya as the older boy, who's two years older then himself, growls and glares off at the spot, it's not long before there's yelps of pain while he does his best to calm down from his close encounter. Haru also seems to be recovering from the near miss as well, after all, ever since Haru started hanging out with him, she's meet the older boy.

With one last deep, calming breath, he heads off to the library with Haru in toe. Using the library's computer, he does find a listing for an Irie family here in Namimori and so, his Quest updates with an address. He waves Haru over from her talking with some younger kids. Tsuna heads for the exit, waiting for a few minutes for the girl to catch up. "I got an address." He tells her and Haru hums in acknowledgement.

He leads the way, heading for the address. As they pass a bus stop, the returning and his, maybe, future classmate, Yamamoto, calls out a greeting to Haru and to him, which Haru is happy to return and he gives a wave. He kind of recalls hearing that Yamamoto Takeshi signed up for a number of sports camps, one after another. Yes, the Lightning continues to be disappointed at the fact that Yamamoto hadn't been picked as a Beta Tester as, before Yamamoto left, Haru had been more then happy to visit the restaurant just to speak with Yamamoto, then again, he's seen her face redden slightly after a friendly smile the other boy gave her once.

The young Sky takes a moment to study the ten year old sports enthusiast as various kids from school welcome the other back. He can only guess at what the other boys are saying but for some

reason, the smile on Yamamoto's face isn't... Shaking his head and scolds himself about 'knowing' anything about Yamamoto Takeshi when the most interaction he's had with the other had been at Yamamoto-san's restaurant twice this break, once for that supper and when Haru dragged him over to the restaurant to ensure he gave the other farewell and wishes of fortune for his various camps.

After all, Takeshi's always been popular at their school while he'd still trying to figure out why he keeps getting targeted by various people out to bully him for no reason what so ever. Which means he's usually seeing Hibari Kyoya on a daily basis due to said attention and the older boy seems to have a special nickname for him, Fluffy/Small Animal. He's Fluffy Animal when Hibari is in a semi-pleasant or normal mood, for Kyoya at any rate, and Small Animal when the Cloud is in a more violent mood. Thankfully, Haru hasn't heard the Cloud use said nickname or she'd be using it to tease him when she's in the mood to do so.

Turning away, he picks up his pace and continues on, after all, he's got a Quest to finish. Soon enough, they arrive at the house and now... the sight of it, of the end goal... The nine year old begins to get cold feet yet, well, it's kind of too late to back out now. After all, he doesn't want Haru seeing him chicken out and so, he approaches the house, ringing the door bell the moment he reaches the door, he feels himself freezing slightly.

"Coming!" He hears an older girl's voice call out. Soon enough, he recovers just as the door opens and a look of surprise flashes across her face. "Yes? Can I help you?"

"I'm... I'm looking for Irie Shoichi? We're kind of..." The girl seems to grin, "You're also Beta Testers? Yea, sure, still kind of freaky who this game works."

"Come in, I'll grab the little dweeb, he needs to get out of his room at some point after all." The girl opens the door wider and he walks into the porch but doesn't move to switch his footwear, the door closing

while the older girl heads off to fetch someone who sounds like he's a heck of a lot younger then he expected.

"How... old is he?" He asks upon turning to look at Haru. "Bit younger then Tsuna-chan." The Lightning admits and he just stares at her, finding it hard to wrap the idea that Haru didn't approach this Irie Shoichi if the kid is younger then he himself.

He jumps slightly at the shouting that suddenly breaks the silence of the house, it's that of a boy and it's followed by that girl's voice. Then a door get banged closed only for it to be slammed opened. It takes some minutes but the girl marches a young boy, who really is nearly his own age, down the stairs. The kid sports red hair, wears glasses, and sporting an angry scowl but upon spying them, he notices the yellow that shimmers in the boy's eyes and the other jerks upon meeting his own eyes, orange likely doing the same for Irie Shoichi.

Then he gets a Quest Completed the moment the other boy walks over, the anger from earlier gone while there's excitement and touch of shock. "A Sky... Your a SKY! I can't believe it!" He's rather bewildered as to why that's so surprising. "There's a Sky here in Namimori!"

"Ah... I am Sawada Tsunayoshi and yea, I'm a Sky." He admits while the shock turns to awe. "This is Miura Haru, she's a Lightning."

Shoichi blinks and glances towards Haru, looking a tad confused before he seems to recognize her. "Oh, I remember you! From the book store! You were looking into magnets." Haru gives him a weak smile and wave.

It's not long before they are led up the stairs, pass the bemused sister, and then into Irie Shoichi's room. "Oh, yea, I should introduce myself. I'm Irie Shoichi and I'm a Sun!" The boy says, again, staring at him with a look of awe.

"I never thought I'd get the chance to meet a Sky..." Shoichi admits. "According to what I've come across, Skies are so rare, Clouds are a

touch more common then Skies."

Something hardens within his stomach as he realizes that his thoughts on the subject concerning him possessing Sky Flame seems to be wrong, dead wrong from just the way Shoichi reacts to him. "How do you know that?" He asks, his mouth feeling rather dry.

"Well, that's what I've found online from the previous Beta Testers accounts." The Sun explains. "Of course, it took a lot to find some hidden forums that some other Beta Testers made, most of it is complaining about everything little thing like how Flames are distributed and their names to the fact you actually need to skin and butcher Monsters to get Loot if you don't have the right Flame."

"Anyone complain about the Avatars yet?" He asks after Shoichi gestures for them to sit on his bed while he's sitting that he rolled away from the desk top computer. "Well, it's too early to tell, I mean, we here in Japan were among the first to get it unlocked, you know?"

"Haru picked Elf and Tsuna-chan picked Kitsune." He flushes at the reminder, he didn't mean to pick Kitsune as his Avatar's Race, he'd been more inclined towards Leonine or Lupine as they just appealed to some deep part of him.

"Tsuna...-chan?" Shoichi asks and he replies, "It's just how she decides to address me. I've tried getting her to stop with it but, she's stubborn."

"Oh, so, ah..." Shoichi trails off and he says, "Tsuna or Tsuna-kun is fine."

"Shoichi-kun for me then." The slightly younger boy admits. "Haru is fine with Haru." The ten year old states and he shrugs at the startled look the red head gives him.

"Ah, ok, thanks... Tsuna-kun." Shoichi says, ducking his head slightly. "So, yea, my Avatar, I picked Tengu. The appearance takes after a magpie."

"Yea, I was tempted to pick that, I mean, who wouldn't want to experience flying?" He admits and Shoichi seems to sag in relief while Haru murmurs, "Haru wished they had a cute pixie instead of just ugly Tengu."

"At least you won't have to worry about instinctive behavior given you are neither a Cloud or Sky." Tsuna points out and Shoichi smiles while returning the gesture, "And you given your not a Mist or a Sun."

"Haru's a Sorcerer, Tsuna-chan is a Rogue." Pipes in Haru in the slight silence that descends. He sighs, running a hand through his hair while Shoichi blinks, looking between them before saying, "I, ah, haven't spent any real time in the Monster Areas so, I don't have a Class yet."

"That's kind of odd, Haru recalls having two options." The Lightning recalls and he kind of nods, adding, "Yea, Sorcerer just seemed to be one that we both shared... You... haven't actually done any of those Monster Quests yet, have you?"

"No, I haven't... I'm not... It's just that... My stomach is rather... sensitive." Shoichi admits with a weak smile and a hand going to his mid section.

"Well, we could escort you into the area and I've gotten the hang of using my Flame to turn Monsters into Loot. Haru should be able to make you something if you don't like the idea of using a dagger, she's trying to be the Greatest Crafter in the game after all." He assures the Sun, who looks rather relieved at the idea.

"Well, according to my Combat Tab, I'm simply average for most weapons, which includes the category firearms, surprisingly enough." Shoichi explains. "So maybe something ranged? I mean, I can fly around attacking something while it can't attack me?"

"So a bow or a crossbow? After all, unless you know how to create a gun using Loot from Monsters and Terrain, those two kind of sound

like your best bet." He admit while Shoichi's head jerks up at something.

"Wait, if you know how to make something like that, you can actually make it?" Shoichi asks and he slowly nods, feeling Haru doing the same. "Yea but the end result will be different as creating anything gets awarded a Quality, I mean, I can make fairly decent Bone Daggers now but at the beginning, I'd just make poor or average. Plus, the Loot that's Harvested from Monster corpses and the Terrain might have certain things that might help increase the Quality or decrease it."

"Plus, Haru likes to experiment which Haru then creates notes for before having Tsuna-chan create an actual Recipe for Haru." The ten year old states in a sage like manner. "She's hoping that an Auction House or System will open up at some point so she can actually sell those for large amounts of money." He explains.

"And for Haru to buy material that Haru has never worked with before." The Lightning states and he nods, adding, "Yea, that as well."

"Wow... Now I wished I'd hooked up with you two earlier as now I don't have that much time left before school starts up again to test this creation system out." Shoichi admits.

"Ah, well, you might get picked again for the next phase of the Beta, we both did after all." He admits and Haru nods, "It's how Haru met Tsuna-chan when Haru was eight."

"We were part of the first phase of the Beta Test, which was just the Quest generation and making sure the implants worked." He admits and Shoichi looks rather stunned by this news. "Haru found me due to a Quest and then, last night, I created a Quest looking for other Beta Testers, which is what brought us here as Haru realized you were also a Beta Tester, I guess you didn't realize she was one in turn?"

"Yea, I just thought it was just my imagination playing tricks on me." Shoichi admits. "I, ah, kind of don't sleep, sometimes, at night, like I'm suppose to." The red head rubs the back of his neck while looking rather embarrassed over that. "I just get so wrapped up in something that I just can't fall asleep nor can I just stay in bed until that energy wears off, so, yea, I just find things to do to wear myself out, only by that point it's usually time to wake up, then school..."

"These days, I just blame it on my Activation trait of my Sun Flame." The other boy admits, laughing slightly while looking up while his one hand is rubbing the back of his neck, eyes closed with a sheepish grin.

"Haru knows that feeling." Haru admits with a nod. "Shoichi-kun doesn't have anything to be ashamed of."

"So, when is a good time to do this Monster killing?" He asks after a bit of silence. "I mean, we can eat supper and then head out, if we run a little late, there's beds we can use to rest."

"Also bring a pack... Haru needs to run home for Haru's pack if Shoichi-kun wants to do it tonight!" Haru exclaims and Shoichi looks a bit nervous yet there's some resolve there.

"Yea, just a quick trip, right? And would like to try a bow, I mean, I've seen some how to videos when it comes to using weapons and a bow seems a lot simpler to use then a crossbow."

To be continued . . .

Shifting Between Illusion and Reality P3

I don't own Kateyo Hitman Reborn!

"Hey Sawada-kun!" Startled Tsuna looks around only to find Yamamoto Takeshi approaching him at a fast walk. "Ready for the start of another school semester?"

"Yamamoto...-kun." He nods a greeting, a tad confused as to why Takeshi added -kun to his last name but thought it best to return the favor. "And, well, kind of?"

In all honesty, Shoichi's come up with a lot of interesting idea and yet, much like Shoichi kind of mentioned, the other boy seems to be able to go about two days without any sleep and it also be came apparent that Shoichi hasn't been eating enough given he's got an implant either. Which means that he's found himself gently, most of the time, getting Shoichi to eat regularly, usually a hearty soup filled with veggies and meat plus spices for flavor. According to some articles he's found online about food that lasts the longest within the stomach, soup was the most recommended and thankfully, the easiest for him to make.

And so, Shoichi's beginning to put on weight in the form of muscle and is also growing taller plus, it seems that it's also helped level off Shoichi's sleep pattern, making it a bit more easier on the Irie Household as a whole. Haru's rather pouty that soup is pretty much on the menu throughout their time within the Special Areas but then, as he pointed out, if Haru wanted something else, she is more then welcome to bring her own meal. Which, for some reason, she just doesn't do, seemingly preferring the free meal of soup then bringing her own lunches.

"I hear that your Okasan is gone, so, you're alone at the house?" Takeshi asks and he sighs, yes, his Otosan did finally make an

appearance just a few days into September then took his Okasan off on a cruise, leaving him alone at the house with no baby sitter.

"She's suppose to be back by October." He admits weakly but, well, there had been some strange tension in the air between Otosan and himself. Never mind the Quest that got created the moment he heard about this 'cruise' as something about it just seems... rushed. "Not sure if my Otosan will be returning with her though." *I hope he doesn't.* He can't help but think.

"So... You're kind of on your own then?" Takeshi asks and he nods. "Yea, been doing my best to keep the house clean and been making my own meals. Soup is pretty easy to make." He admits with a slight smile, he's pretty certain Haru is the one to tell Takeshi about his current situation. After all, she seems to like Takeshi and he can see her visiting the Yamamoto family's restaurant, which he though had been co-owned by Takeshi's parents only to find out that it's just owned by the father, Takeshi's mother does help around it but she's got her own job.

"That's rough, why didn't they take you with them?" He blinks and looks over to Takeshi, studying the other's face for a few seconds. "Neither of them thought I wanted to go, I think? I mean, it's not like they asked if I wanted to go. Plus, school was coming up, that could be the reason they didn't asks, maybe?"

Though personally, he thinks it might have something to do with that odd tension and the stirrings of... something that he thinks might be anger or hatred, after all, that man is still on his Enemy List and the short amount of time he spent in the man's company... He found it really hard to think of him as his Otosan, it had been easier when he didn't know what his Otosan looked like or Felt like. He still recalls how he bristled at being called tuna-fishie and realizes he scowled upon thinking that thought.

He gets the feeling that Takeshi noticed the scowl and would remember it. "How was your camps? Haru was more excited that you were back then your experiences during this break." He admits

and there's a change in Takeshi's expression at the mention of the Lightning, it's clear that Takeshi regards Haru fondly, even if she can be a bit pushy and bossy.

"Great! And from now on, I've decided to focus on Baseball as I found it to be the one I liked the most." Takeshi tells him and he moves a bit closer to Takeshi, there's something in the other boy's eye but it passes quickly as the other begins to recount the reasons why he finds Baseball to be his favorite.

As the gate of the school comes up, Tsuna notices Hibari on the wall near the gate sporting a fairly neutral expression while watching students enter into the school. "Hey Takeshi-kun! Over here!" He hears someone call the few months older boy over to them. "See you, Yamamoto-kun." He says as he ends up catching the eye of the Cloud of Namimori, who seems content to watch him like a hawk.

"Talk with you later, Sawada-kun!" He feels Takeshi move off to join up with those boys who beckoned him. His pace slows, he's not sure what to expect from Hibari as it's unusual for the Cloud to focus solely on him while there's other people around, capable of crowding him. He's yet to blink and it takes him seconds for it to dawn on him that he's in a staring contest with Hibari Kyoya of all people! Now the question is, does he want to win? What happens if he wins?

Then he's bumped from behind and the staring contest ends as he turns to find someone, an older someone, steadying themselves. "That's Extremely mean!" The almost teen shoves him after giving him a sneer, turning to glare at the white haired boy in the company of Sasagawa Kyoko and Kurokawa Hana, he knows Kyoko is the most popular girl in his age group while Hana is her best friend slash bodyguard. "You Extremely should apologize to my sister, her friend, and that boy you just pushed!" The older white haired boy informs the teen while Kyoko seems to be trying to talk her older brother from doing something.

"For crowding the sidewalk leading to the school's gate, you all will be Bitten to Death!" And with that, whatever was going on between

that teen and the siblings plus Hana comes to an end while he is quick to enter into a flat run, heading straight for the school, hopefully he won't be confronted by Hibari Kyoya at a later point in the day or that the other will recall he had been part of that crowding situation.

**/ [- | T | -] **

"I'm sorry about my brother including you like that this morning, Sawada-san." Sasagawa Kyoko apologizes, both Hana and her looked for him during their respective lunches, he wasn't in their class so he's almost done eating his soup when they found him. The look on Hana's face...

"It's really nothing, Sasagawa-san, I wasn't hurt nor did Hibari-san catch up to bite me before he had the chance to do so." He assures the girl, hoping that Hana will now stop giving him that look. "You didn't need to seek me out to apologize on your Oniisan's behalf."

"See, Kyoko? You didn't need to apologize at all, I told you the monkey was fine." Hana states in a put on tune with hints of disdain and he gives the other girl a puzzled look at the monkey comment.

"Are you sure?" Kyoko asks, her gaze moving between her friend and himself. "You never know with Hibari-sama, he might just track you down to give you your bites."

"That's between the two monkeys, Kyoko. Let's go, we still have our lunches to eat." Hana states, the girl seems to possess the two Bentos.

He looks down and off to the side, feeling a tad responsible for the two not eating their lunches, yet he knows it's really not at the same time. "I'm pretty much done, why don't you two just sit here and do that?" He gulps the last of his soup before twisting the cup onto the thermos then gets up.

"It's a nice spot..." Kyoko admits, taking a look around and Hana just seems to be happy he's leaving plus they'll actually eat some of their lunch. "See you, Sasagawa-san. Kurokawa-san." He says as he begins to walk away, Kyoko's farewells are more heartfelt then Hana's.

Heading for the boy's washroom and ends up running into Takeshi, who's exiting. "Hey Sawada-kun." The boy says with a smile.

"Yamamoto-kun." He greets the other with a slight smile of his own. "Have you signed up for the Baseball team yet?" He asks, recalling the conversation from this morning.

"Oh, no, not yet, they won't have the sign up sheets until after-school." Takeshi tells him. "Say, are you thinking about joining a club or team?" It's clear that it's a thought that just crossed his mind.

"Ah, no, I likely won't be joining any club or team, at least not for this semester." He admits. "I'm kind of testing something out for a company so, that takes up most of my free time outside of school and chores."

"Oh, wow, really? What kind of game is it?" Takeshi asks.

"It's another one of those massive multi player, role playing game." He admits with a bemuse look, amusement likely dancing in his eyes. "Not sure when it'll be released though, it's still got a lot of things to test out."

"Is it any good?" Takeshi asks and he nods, his smile growing just a tad. "Yea, I'd say so. It's rather expansive too, which is likely why it's going through so many Beta phases."

"Well, I guess it's too much to ask for a title huh?" Takeshi asks and he sighs, admitting, "I'd like to share it but, well, I kind of don't want to get kicked out of it, I mean, I'm getting paid to do this, you know? But, when I hear they're done with the Beta Testing and are set to release it, I'll share it then, ok?"

"Fair enough." Takeshi admits after taking a moment to study him and he relaxes upon hearing that, glad that the other isn't pressing him for more. "See you later, Sawada-kun. Also, be sure not to be a stranger at the restaurant, ok?"

"Ok, I'll remember, Yamamoto-kun." He promises and Takeshi heads off while he enters, washing out the thermos with some water from the sink.

Soon enough, he's putting it away and grabbing what he needs for his afternoon classes. He makes it back to the classroom just as the first bell rings.

**/ [- | T | -] **

He half expected to be confronted after school by his usual 'admirers' yet, nobody moves to hinder him as he leaves for home. As he nears the house, he Feels that something is wrong, which causes a Quest to be created concerning said Feeling and how he'll investigate it. Tsuna frowns as he considers his options and, well, he rather not deal with what the Quest entails. He doesn't want to involve either Haru or Shoichi, after all.

In the end, the young Sky retreats from the neighborhood and considers the few adults he has in his life before realizing that, well, the list doesn't really have any names on it, given his Okasan's away so that rules her out automatically. He considers phoning the local police before discarding it as he doubts they'll accept 'I have a bad feeling about heading home' or 'I got this Quest and it's warning me that somebody or bodies are looking to capture me'. Nor did he want to involve either of his friends' parents.

So, well, he walks off as he worries his lower lip before coming to a stop under a tree. Closing his eyes, he just touches his Sky Flame and just soaks his being in the warmth the orange fire seems to give. Then after sometime, Tsuna realizes that he's started walking again, he opens his eyes, feeling an icy resolve grip him. There's no real direction but there is a sense of destination though.

As he arrives at what Feels like the right place, he feels kind of exhausted and yawns while rubbing his left eye with the back of his hand. He's standing before Takeshi's dad's restaurant and glancing around, he enters it, not really sure why this was his destination. There's something that tries to wrap its way into him but he just 'ghosts' through the 'bindings' covering the area so that he can enter into the building. He's kind of confused at the sight within the building yet, it seems that those who were actually there seem to turn to regard him.

"Ah, is Yamamoto Takeshi here? Or is the baseball team doing something with those looking to sign up?" He inquires and the man who is Takeshi's dad seems to recover, while this dark blond wearing a crown seems to turn his nose up at him. The... 'baby' seems to be regarding him with what he thinks might be a frown.

"My son might be hanging out with his future team-mates..." The man trails off and he introduces himself, noting the way the 'baby' and the crown wearing blond stiffen, "Sawada Tsunayoshi, sir. I'm friends with Miura Haru."

It's clear that Haru is instead well known to the man, given the smile. "Yamamoto Tsuyoshi, owner of this establishment." Yamamoto-san says. "I will tell my son that you came to see him."

"Ah, yes, sorry, it's just that, I thought you'd be open. I'm sorry for not noticing the sign." He says for clearly, he missed something given the lack of hassle and bustle of the supper rush. Bowing in apology and he hears an odd laugh but doesn't turn to focus on the one who laughed.

He leaves with a simple good bye and a bit away from the restaurant, the Quest updates, which is odd, given he hadn't done anything save for putting some distance between himself and that restaurant. Sighing, he's growing hungry and yet, he doesn't want to try for home. So, he heads off to find a fast food place to eat at and he reconsiders the reasons why he doesn't get himself a phone

while he finishes eating the burger and fries. He doesn't leave until he finishes the drink.

It's getting late and he can't avoid this Quest, so, he exits and heads home in a passive mood. That Feeling remains as he gets close to the house, yet, for some reason, he's kind of reassured that it'll work itself out, which is just odd but, well, he kind of has to trust that feeling. Unlocking the door, he enters and turns on the lights, taking off his runners, he puts on his slippers. He can't help but find the house to be eerie as he closes the door with a frown. He manages to dodge the attempted strike to his head but he's so startled by the fact he's getting attacked by actual people that he get sent flying viva a kick to his mid-section, he gets stopped by a wall while someone speaks in a foreign language yet the tone and body language clearly say they are annoyed with him.

The next blow is to his face...

**/ [- | T | -] **

"Small Animal." He hears a familiar voice, clearly annoyed yet... was there worry there? Opening his eyes, he finds Hibari Kyoya crouched next to him and that his face hurts.

Hibari grunts before looking up at somebody, a sour look clearly plastered upon the Cloud's face. "Clean up the mess." Hibari states and, well, he closes his eyes due to the fact that, his head is pounding and he feels rather tired but he did note that his Quest has been completed and the rewards he received means that whoever they had been, they hadn't taken him out of Namimori and he had only been captured for four hours, well, that's what the Quest informed him.

He hears Yamamoto Tsuyoshi murmur something to someone while he feels like someone is picking him up. He tries to stand, yet, his body doesn't really respond to him like it should. There's a huff that's likely from Hibari, who might be the reason he's getting off the ground. "Sorry." He slurs out, likely not even sounding what he said.

"The Vultures have been dealt with." Hibari states simply. "You, Small Animal, did nothing wrong."

He kind of hums in acknowledgement, he's having trouble orienting himself while he hears a familiar sound of metal slicing through bloody meat, he shivers slightly as presses his eyes close even more. The smell, it's not all that different then a Monster's corpse gives off and, well, he's pretty certain that by 'dealt with', Hibari means dead. "You hurt?" He asks softly, his voice wavering yet he's pretty sure that was fit for human ears.

Hibari scoffs while there's that odd laugh and it kind of clicks into place that whoever that 'baby' and the one wearing the crown are, if he hadn't gone to the restaurant, he might have been taken out of Namimori before anyone knew that something happened. "Thank you for your help." He says as he does his best to ignore the bodies of the men to look at the blood splattered, crown wearing teen and the 'baby'.

Although he doesn't see the eyes of the dark blond, he can feel them on him and they are assessing him before a judgement is reached. "The Prince does not need to be thanked for putting uppity peasants in their place." The teen states and the 'baby' states simply, "We'll be charging your father for this."

"Ok?" He gets out before the pounding becomes to much and that tired feeling, what feeling he has with his body slips as he senses Hibari tense up and he can imagine the scowl. In the end, Hibari manages to man-handle him into the likely back of a car and, well, he falls asleep as it drives towards a doctor's clinic or hospital.

**/ [- | T | -] **

"Tsuna-kun!" Twin voices cry out, one being a boy and the other being a girl's. He's rather startled out of his almost nap as Haru and Shoichi are quick to approach his bed, both looking rather harried.

"Haru. Shoichi-kun. Are your schools are out already?" He asks, he knows his face still looks rather messed up but his Flame Skill for self regeneration is working on it, just at a slower pace then if he'd been using it in the Special Area.

"I looked worse this morning." He admits. "I'll be fine by tomorrow."

"What happened?" Haru hisses and there's fury in that one statement, which takes him back for a few seconds as he's never expected to hear that tone coming from Haru. "Kidnapping. I didn't spend more then four hours in their clutches though."

He'd hope that would reassure them, only it seems that Shoichi's not sporting a dark expression in his eyes while Haru's face displays her anger at what happened. He can honestly admit, he's not sure what to make of his two friends at this point as it's like looking at a pair of strangers who merely share Haru and Shoichi's looks. *Did that head blow send me to an alternate dimension or something?* The Sky wonders.

"Why you?" Haru demands while Shoichi muses, "Maybe because of the game? After all, with his mother out of the house, they thought he'd be an easy target?"

He dimly recalls something from last night, something about his... "We'll be charging your father for this." He repeats and he feels the two pin him with a look.

"The... not baby said that. I think they were a very short dwarf, I think is the right term?" Then again, he's kind of surprise to recall anything about that short time he'd been found. "Hibari was there, he propped me up but I don't think I could walk... I heard... I..." He swallows as he recalls that snick snack sound, of a metal cutting through bloody meat. *Didn't I see someone covered in...*

He feels Haru place a comforting hand on his shoulder and it seems that he'd started shivering. Shoichi goes to pour him some water before bringing it over, he takes it and gulps it down in hopes of

appeasing his stomach. It doesn't do much but, well, he takes some deep, calming breaths.

"What... what does your father do, Tsuna-kun?" Shoichi asks. "I've never heard you mention him." He notices a slight guilty expression and he's pretty sure it likely had to do with drawing his own conclusions about his home life.

"Lie." He admits in a frank tone. "Lies a lot to my Okasan, who passes them on to me." Then adds, "I... never mentioned him because, well, it involves a lot of heavy, kind of family history stuff."

"It started due to the actions of an ancestor of mine and, well, it seems Otosan decided to involve himself in that dark world and might be planning on dragging me into it without caring for my opinion on the matter." The Sky admits with a sigh, leaning back in the bed. "I won't allow him to make that decision for me, he maybe have sired me but he's long since given up his rights as a father when he doesn't fulfill his duties as one. I only call him Otosan more out of habit but, since his visit, I really don't want to call him that." He's looking up at the ceiling, glaring up at it, although he doesn't really see the ceiling, no, in his mind he sees the man who married his Okasan and pretty much abandoned her to raise him on her own, only sending money to support them, as if it could fill the void in his Okasan's life that his absence leaves unfulfilled.

"How do you know any of this?" Shoichi asks and he blinks, turning to regard the two, having kind of forgotten they were in the room. "Oh, ah, a Flaw of mine. It's been there since phase one, I should see if it received an update..."

"Your Otosan is a Flaw?" Haru asks with a hint of disbelief and he sighs. "He's listed under the Flaw, there's a lot of names listed under it plus some summaries as to why."

"Are all of them names of people?" Shoichi asks curiously and he presses his lips before shaking his head. "No, some of them seem to be whole Mafia Families."

"Mafia? Not Yakuza?" Haru asks, eyes wide, clearly disbelief in her gaze.

"Yea... that ancestor of mine? He kind of founded a vigilante group that transformed into a Mafia Family after he gave up the leadership position." Tsuna admits. "I'm not sure why he picked Japan to immigrate too but he did. I mean, he was an Italian, why comes all the way east to a land that didn't even like the teaching of the church?"

"Any idea of what year he did so?" Shoichi asks and he tells the pair the date of when Giotto had given up claim to the group, he's pretty sure the man would have made it to Japan within a year of doing so. Which causes them both to get looks of understand as to what he meant by that.

"So... Mafia, huh?" The Sun repeats and he nods. "Yea... My Otosan seems to have a talent for pissing people off." He admits.

It's not that surprising that silence over take them, after all, it's likely because of Otosan that this kidnapping even happened. Minutes pass and then, he hears someone knocking near the door, looking he finds Takeshi and it's soon that Haru is calling out a greeting to the other, who returns it. Shoichi seems to curl in on himself slightly but he gives the younger boy a reassuring smile, which Shoichi returns, relaxing. "Hey Sawada-kun."

"Yamamoto-kun. This is Irie Shoichi, we meet through the Beta. Shoichi-kun, this is Yamamoto Takeshi, he attends the same school I do." He introduces the red haired Sun, who says, "Hello, nice to meet you, Yamamoto-san."

"Tsuna-kun talked about the Beta? Haru thought we agreed not to mention it!" She huffs and he counters, "Well, Shoichi-kun told his family and some online friends, so why not tell our other friends about it?"

"You didn't want to tell me about this, Haru?" Takeshi asks in a slightly wounded tone while Haru flushes, answering, "Haru didn't want to make Takeshi-kun jealous of Haru and of Tsuna-kun for not being included."

"Huh, well, that's a fair point." He can tell that it seems that Takeshi seems to relax and some of the hurt that had settled upon his face leaves the other ten year old. "I mean, a lot of kids would get jealous for getting paid to play a game."

"Tsuna-kun!" Haru whines and he chuckles a bit. "You even told him about that?"

"I told him it's a massive multiple player role playing game and I promised to share the name of the game once they announce that its in production." He admits and Haru seems to nod, it seems that at least he didn't spill all the beans as it were.

"So, Irie-kun, how long have you known Haru and Sawada-kun?" Takeshi asks the younger boy while Haru seems to be giving him a certain look that promised a long talking too. "Oh, not very long, I mean, I did meet Haru at a book store earlier in the break. It was Tsuna-kun's idea to track me down after the latest feature of the game got unlocked and they arrived at my house. We exchanged information and they've helped me test out a feature of the game I didn't feel comfortable doing on my own."

"Tsuna-kun's also been ensuring Shoichi-kun eats regularly." Haru pipes in and he's pretty sure that both Shoichi and himself duck their respective heads, he can feel his face heat up. "It's why Tsuna-kun has started to learn to cook before his mother left on that vacation."

"I was doing ok." Shoichi weakly defends himself while Haru pins the younger boy with a look. "Shoichi-kun skipped meals or didn't eat all his food, Shoichi-kun also tended to stay awake two nights straight."

"I am still alive." The Sun points out, again it's a weak defense. "Shoichi-kun is looking much healthier because of Tsuna-kun's

efforts." Haru states and he is rather embarrassed at the fact he's kind of acting like Shoichi's older brother or in some way like the Sun's mother.

"So... Irie-kun is like having a younger brother, Sawada-kun?" Takeshi muses and he blinks, looking over at Takeshi, being reminded that the other boy is still in the room, visiting him. "I guess so? I mean, he's not related to me but I do feel responsible for him..." He admits and he feels Shoichi looking at him, there's surprise but it's also clear that the response seems to please the Sun. "He never seemed to mind my treatment of him." He admits and he notices that Shoichi's face goes slightly red, likely from embarrassment.

Yes, he has come to care about Shoichi and their relationship is different then the one he shares with Haru. After all, why else would he take it on himself to ensure that the Sun actually eats regularly? One would also wonder why Shoichi even allowed himself to be treated like that, after all, Tsuna had been a stranger just a few days before that point, there's no reason why Shoichi should listen to him concerning the importance of meals or accepting what food he brought. *Haru must have rubbed off on me.* He concludes.

The topic changes to minor things, like Haru chatting about this new show, Shoichi bringing up a few articles relating to programming language, and Takeshi relating rumors going on at school plus that Hibari being a touch more violent. There's not much news for him to share and after an hour, the others realize they best head off as they do have to have supper. Feeling a touch tired, he decides to nap for a bit.

**/ [- | T | -] **

"Ah... Hibari-san? Why did you follow me inside?" *And why do you have a pack?* He asks the Cloud. It's been three days since that kidnapping event and the hospital kept him for so long as they had tried to reach his Okasan.

When the nurse mentioned that, he ended up having to explain that she's gone and won't be returning until the beginnings of October. It took the staff an hour to find out he told them the truth, yet, they didn't want to send him out without some escort. Which, it seems, to be where the Cloud of Namimori came into play.

"Fluffy Animal should not be left alone." The other states in a flat tone. He opens his mouth before thinking better of it, leading Hibari up the stairs.

"This is our guest room." He says as he moves in just enough to flick on the light switch before moving out of it, allowing the preteen to enter the room. "I best check on the kitchen as I might need to make a grocery run."

Hibari grunts an acknowledgement and so, he walks down the hall and down the stairs, running a hand through his hair, not sure what to make of this. *After all, it's not like it's going to happen again, right? But, if it makes him feel better... It's just for a week or two, right?* He tells himself.

Entering the kitchen, he winces at the mess, it's clear that whoever those kidnappers had been, they went through the cupboards, destroying things for entertainment. It's clear that he doesn't even need to go through the fridge as the contents is also about the kitchen, which causes it all to smell rather ripe. A pair of Quests get created in regards to cleaning up the kitchen and going out for groceries, with a sigh, he heads for the cleaning supplies that were untouched.

As he never cleaned up such messes before, he's isn't sure where to start and he switches between tasks, likely in a clumsy manner. He spotted Hibari at the door once, watching him for a bit before the Cloud moves off, although a Quest concerning the grocery run gets an update. Huffing slightly, he's lucky it's the afternoon so he'll have a chance to head off to buy groceries before supper. It's slow progress yet, as he cleans up certain messes, his cleaning Quest

gets update. Once he's put the cleaning supplies, the Quest does an update before awarding him his Rewards that he earned.

Taking a moment to wash his hands, he takes a moment to stare at himself in the mirror. "Open Status Page." With ease, he moves to his Flaws and Merits, staring at his Otosan's name, there's no Minor by the name but there's no Major either. The reason for the upgrade? The man felt Threatened by him during his stay and, well, it's not something that he can take back. Tsuna wonders if it'll go down after a period of time, he hopes so, he's not ready to confront either him or the Vongola Famiglia yet, or, likely, ever but it's foolish of him to think he can avoid that conformation. At this point, he'd almost do anything to escape their radar, well, theirs and the other Mafia Families.

Letting the Status Page fade, he walks away from the sink and mirror, drying himself with a towel. Leaving the small washroom, he heads for the living room. "Hibari-san, do you have any requests concerning groceries?" He already suspects that the preteen does but he's not suppose to know that for sure.

"Door." He heads for the door to find a list and reads it. Another Quest gets created concerning making Hibari's request which means he'll have to look it up on the computer. "Do you want the spare key? There should be one in the end table's top drawer." Nodding towards the end table that's sporting an empty vase.

Hibari gives a slight incline of his head. "I'm off to get some groceries, I'll be sure to get what you asked for." He tells the Cloud and so, he switches footwear plus making sure he's got his wallet with him, thankfully, he did put it into his current pant's pocket upon getting his school uniform back along with some spare clean cloths that Takeshi brought for him when the other had come to visit him the next day as he had been ready to be released by then.

The Sky leaves, being sure to lock the door behind him as the Cloud of Namimori won't have trouble unlocking it when he decides to leave. Pocketing the key, he jogs off to the market, it'll take him

longer to get there then taking a bus but he kind of wanted to keep in shape, particularly given that he hadn't been able to prevent his own kidnapping. Grinding his teeth at the thought of how he froze up just because it had been other human beings doing the attacking...

Never again! I know I could have done better, I should have done better. I can't afford to freeze up like that, not if I want to keep out of being dragged into the Mafia Underworld. Into Giotto's mistake. He tells himself, his hands balling into fists for a few seconds.

It takes a bit but he manages to relax his jaw and his fists, he barely acknowledges the Quests that got created, after all, he's grown use to them getting created based on his desires and what's happening in his life. He'll go through his list of Quests later, but for now, he's just doing his grocery run and then he's to prepare supper for not just himself but for Hibari, a test of his ability to cook something other then soup or using pre-prepared packaged ingredients. After all, cooking steak should be within his ability, right? Likely but it's a question if he's able to cook it to Hibari's satisfaction and he's gets the feeling that the Cloud is very particular when it comes to his hamburger steak.

To be continued . . .

Shifting Between Illusion and Reality P4

I don't own Kateyo Hitman Reborn!

It's the beginning of the latest school year and he's thirteen yet, Tsuna can't help but feel... It's something he can't really use words to describe the... well, closest words he finds work is wondrous dread. It's likely that his friends and close schoolmates have also sense it or maybe they are taking their ques from him?

Either way, Haru and Shoichi make it a point to text him during lunch and after school, even being sure to hang out with him on the weekend when they can or inviting him over. It's nice of them and he's so glad to get out of the house and away from his mother, he's not sure when he's stopped using Okasan in reference to her but he's pretty sure it was around the time Takeshi's mom died in a traffic accident, back when he was ten years old. He's not sure what caused their relationship to sour only it seems that it's clear his mother hasn't noticed anything different between them, then again, she still tended to refer to him as Dame-Tsuna even though nobody uses that old, hurtful nickname these days.

"Hey, you alright, Sawada-kun?" Takeshi asks upon putting a comforting hand upon his left shoulder. The slightly older teen's eyes covey worry and he sighs.

"Just... that feeling of something coming, Yamamoto-kun." He admits as he gives the baseball player a slight smile. "I don't know why but... I really dread whatever it is." *It feels like I've forgotten something too.*

"Well, come on, I'll walk you home." Takeshi declares and he does his best to protest by saying, "No, you don't need to, Yamomoto-kun! Really, it's not like it's going to happen today!"

"I mean, won't there be a pick up game happening after school?" He adds as he glances towards the slightly taller boy. "There was one last year I recall."

"I can always come back to join in." Takeshi states while the hand upon his shoulder leaves. He sighs but comes up with a compromise, "I could just hang out to watch, it's not like I have much to do as we don't get homework."

"You know, you could join in." Takeshi points out and he gives a slightly flat look at him. "Ok, yea, they... it's rather odd... And yea, Hibari-kun did pretty much send most of them to the hospital huh?"

"Yea." He admits with a soft sigh while running a hand through his brunette hair, it's an incident that he really didn't want to be reminded of. Kyoya seems to have decided that Tsuna is in need of a bodyguard and then self appointed himself in said role.

"I have my phone so I can send Haru some recordings of you playing." The teenage Sky remarks and Takeshi just beams, he's not sure if Takeshi returns the crush Haru has on the other boy but it's clear that Takeshi does seem honestly fond of Haru for who Haru is and doesn't mind her brash, forward manners, or habit of speaking in the third person, even though she's more then capable of not doing so, although he kind of can't think of any examples of times she hadn't spoken in the third person...

A slight headache forms but it fades as he dismisses the thought. "Ok!" Takeshi states. "And we'll stop by my dad's restaurant for supper before I walk you home."

Tsuna smiles at how up beat Takeshi is and wonders, once again, if his life would have turned out if Haru hadn't decided to befriend him all those years ago and help him break out of his shell.

**/ [- | T | -] **

He's jogging to school after a very unsettling morning featuring a self proclaimed hitman in the form of a toddler, a shape shifting chameleon, and him supposedly being the next Don of... Tsuna's jaws clinch at the thought of his many times grandfather's mistake and feels a fire flare up within him at the thought they could just waltz into his life and make DEMANDS of HIM! That they had the RIGHT to DECIDE his FUTURE for HIM!

Their Ruin, always going to be their Death, All will curse Vongola for their PRIDEFUL ARROGANCE... Its an Oath of the Ending of a Mistake that was sworn at some point in the past, a Promise of Stay Free that sings within his blood, his bones... In his very SOUL. He'd burn the Mafia world to its foundation then inherit the Vongola Famiglia, his only acceptable role in that underground world will be that of its Destroyer not one of its Gatekeepers, a Staff Member, or that of a fellow Inmate.

"Sawada-kun!" Kyoko calls out in greeting and he is pulled from his thoughts to notice said classmate, who's without Hana it seems, so he slows. "Sasagawa-chan." He greets in return as he comes to a stop near her.

"Eager to get to school?" Kyoko asks and he chuckles slightly, replying, "I... didn't have the best morning so far."

"So I was just trying to calm my temper by jogging." He adds with a slight frown as he glances towards the school gate. *Might need to speak with Kyoya about this too.* He realizes, after all, keeping this morning's turn of events from the Prefect, he's pretty sure there's a different word he should be using in regards with Hibari Kyoya.

Kyoko's eyes take a few seconds to study him for a few seconds before changing the subject towards their homework, they are walking towards school together. As the topic of their respective homework comes to an end, silence descends and as they get within sight of the gate, Hana is arguing with Mochida, who's still one of the few members of the student body who continue to stubbornly bully him and who's been harassing Kyoko, trying to get her to go out with

him. Glancing around, he lets out a slight sigh that Kyoya isn't perched on the gate today, making sure he arrives on time.

"See you in class, Sasagawa-chan." He says as he moves to slip off to the right before Mochida spies him walking with Kyoko. Kyoko gives him a smile and nod, understanding clear in her eyes as to why he's trying to slip by without the older teen noticing him.

Well, it would have gone as plan if not for something impacting his head and all of a sudden he feels his headgear Activate due to Sun Flame. Then there's memories that filled in so many odd points of his life as well as why he even has that bank account, which had nothing to do with that sperm donor like his mother told him when he asked. But he also begins to feel the headgear begin to power down and it is also trying to dull his memories of said game.

And so, he uses his first Flame Skill to bypass the shut down order, refusing to Forget about the times he's spent killing Monsters with Haru, about helping Shoichi unlock his Class, and of that kidnapping attempt that seems to be one of the reasons why Kyoya has every right to be protective of him. He's not sure when but he feels his emotions seem to get pushed aside while he finds himself more then capable of Focusing on Harmonizing with the headgear to keep it from blanketing his mind.

He feels Kyoya come running while Takeshi seems to be jogging over. In the end, his Quest to keep his headgear active is successful and the last of that Sun Flame dies, which brings him out of his tunnel vision. He's dizzy and it's Kyoko who moves to steady him while he feels exhaustion creeping up on him along with the feeling of his stomach flip flopping. It's about then that he realizes that people were talking but as he tries to listen in, he winces at how his hearing is ringing and he finds it kind of hard to pick up the words let alone the voice.

Someone places a hand on his forehead and is quick to move it. Feeling Kyoya getting close and Takeshi pretty much behind him, he

sighs and lets himself fall asleep, trusting that between Kyoya and Takeshi, he'll be Safe.

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Reborn can't help but stare at the literal Crown of Sky Flames that burns brightly the moment his bullet slams into his current project's head. He's already mentally cursing the External Adviser for the lack of information concerning this development, for clearly, some Famiglia has already made a move on the boy and now he's going to have more work to do, particularly when it comes to checking the boy for sleeper triggers. Which means rearranging his plans by bringing in Shamal earlier then expected.

He notices the potential Rain Guardian jogging through the school gate and is moving to stand behind the boy while the latent Cloud, who he marked down as a potential Cloud Guardian, comes running. It seems that both were already in the process of Harmonizing with the boy, which means that there's no Seal on the boy, which means another part of the information packet is wrong. Returning to study the young Sky, he notices the brightly burning orange flame that's hovering in a ball of flames before the boy's forehead, the size of which seems to be the size of the boy's fist. The Crown's light seem to have dimmed at some point, he also notices that there's light coming near the back of the collar of the uniform.

Then the Crown's orange points of light flare up and burn the same shade of orange as the ball of Sky Flame that's been hovering before the forehead. Then the Crown's light dies and checking his watch, he notices that his bullet's effect is about to end and the ball of Sky Flame fades. The girl that the boy walked to school with moves to catch the boy, who seems to be dazed from the effects of the bullet, the Activation of the Crown, and entering into some type of Hyper Mode. He watches as the boy sags and then falls unconscious by the time the latent Cloud gets within a couple of feet, the latent Rain is sure to help catch the boy as the girl likely couldn't manage the boy's weight on her own.

The latent Cloud is glaring about the area, there's an almost purple glow in the teen's eyes and he sighs as it looks like the teen is struggling between becoming Active and staying latent. The young Cloud's mood causing most of the students near him to become rather nervous. It's clear that he's going to have to tread carefully in regards to the Cloud sporting a clear family resemblance to Fon as it seems that something seems to have happened in the past to cause the Cloud to become so protective of the boy, so much so that upon sensing something was wrong, the Cloud came running and from quite the distance it seems, from the other side of the school.

The Cloud regains semblance of control over himself before following after where the two girls and the latent Rain, likely taking the boy to the nurse's office.

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So cool... He'd been in awe at the sight of the orange ball of fire hovering before Tsuna's forehead and then the soft orange glow of various pin points about Tsuna's head, kind of creating a crown in a way. The sight of the orange fire, it stirs something in him and he feels a fierce sort of pride/connection about and with Tsuna.

Moving to stand behind Tsuna, he got a good look of the fact that there's a small line of orange lights moving from the back of the head and down about five dots the neck, both sides of the seven are a glow. He itches to reach out to touch and trace the seven glowing dots. A part of him though is enraged upon hearing Kyoko and Hana mention a bullet impacting Tsuna's head, it means someone wanted his classmate and semi-friend dead. The two are clearly freaked out by the fact that someone just tried to kill Tsuna and they don't understand how it is that Tsuna is still alive.

He wonders if the two notice the orange fire only to notice the looks Hana keeps giving Kyoko when she pays the orange ball of fire a little too much attention. Which means that yes, they can see it but Hana is the reason why it's not mentioned. Then again, given the looks the current Captain of the Kendo Club, Mochida Kensuke,

receives from some of the other students, he assumes that Mochida can see the orange fire too but most of the students don't. Thus most seem to think him crazy.

It's the arrival of Kyoya that seems to be a signal of some kind as Tsuna seems to faint or something, he's quick to help Kyoko keep the slightly shorter boy from falling to the ground. A quick check and he is smiles softly, Tsuna's merely sleeping and perhaps that's normal, after all, the fuel of the orange fire had to come from somewhere, right? So, they decide to take him to the nurse's office, with Hana being the one to open the various doors as Kyoko seems to refuse to let go of Tsuna, clearly at a lost as to what's going on and using Tsuna as some sort of anchor.

"Explain." Hibari-senpai states once they settle Tsuna on one of the beds. Hana stays between Hibari-senpai and Kyoko.

"Well, from what I gather, a bullet hit Sawada-kun in the head only it doesn't kill him." He tells the Prefect, he recalls how Haru told him that Hibari-senpai is the Cloud of Namimori, even though the teen doesn't seem to fit his thought of what a Cloud is, white, fluffy, and easily pushed around. "It caused something to happen, I arrived to spy an orange ball of fire hovering before his forehead while there's these pin points of orange light glowing under Sawada-kun's head, kind of reminded me of a crown."

The two girls glance at him before looking at Hibari-senpai and realize that Hibari-senpai isn't calling either of them out on it, just glaring off out of the window. A fist tighten about one of Hibari-senpai's favorite weapon, a metal tonfa. "His eyes were also orange." Kyoko admits softly and Hibari-senpai nods in acceptance.

Then Hibari-senpai turns to study him and Takeshi stills, no smile on his face and he allows himself to display his own feelings about this attack on Tsuna. After a minute, it seems that Hibari-senpai decided he passed his test and turns to look at the two girls, "Go to class."

"Guard him." The Prefect states to him and then the older teen prowls out of the room. It's clear that Hibari-senpai is going to hunt down the gunman.

"Shouldn't we be phoning the police? Or his mother?" Hana wonders.

"You should text Haru, she'll want to know about this." He tells them, not wanting to talk about the likely uncaring reaction of one Sawada Nana. If not for talking with Haru and Shoichi or noticing Tsuna's interactions with her, he'd assume that Sawada-san is a loving mother and that it's just a phase Tsuna is going through in regards to the strain relationship with her. *"What kind of mother doesn't even remember her own son's Birthday?"* He recalls Haru remarking back when they decided to take Tsuna out for his eleventh Birthday, which was a supper and then a movie.

"Right." Hana decides after a few seconds to studying him and gently pulls on Kyoko's other hand. "We best go or we'll risk being Bitten to Death by a certain bird monkey, Kyoko-chan."

"I'll make sure nothing happens." Takeshi promises and after a few torn seconds, Kyoko nods before getting up and walking after Hana, leaving him alone with Tsuna. With them gone, he does keep his hands from moving to touch the memorized spots where the orange glows had been coming from for about... two minutes.

It doesn't take him long to home in on the correct spots, after all, he can't help but notice a slight change within him upon getting close to the spot nor how there's this draw to the center point. And yes, there's a slight hardness under the center spot, one that isn't bone and it's temperature is above Tsuna's normal temperature. He muses over his memories concerning the three Beta Testers and wonders if this might have something to do with why none of the trio recall the game they'd been playing and the glazed looks the few times he brought up the game.

If these implants were for the game then it must be one advance game as it interfaces the player's brain directly. Which the game company might want to keep secret about and thus, might have done something to ensure that those Beta Testers can't talk about it now that the players aren't part of the Beta any more. It's a thought but what does this now mean for Tsuna, though? After all, what was up with that orange fire?

While he's not the smartest when it comes to book learning, he is good when it comes to reading people and could tell that this fire wasn't that shocking to Hibari-senpai, nope, it was something about why it occurred due to a bullet and about these implants. *So the fire is expected but the bullet and crown weren't?* He muses to himself as he moves his hand to the back of Tsuna's head and finds that the implants that fascinated him seem to be in the spine starting from the back of the head and goes down slight towards the neck.

Tsuna sighs slightly as his finger moves down and up the seven spinal implants, clearly relaxing even more while also clearly going deeper to sleep while it feels like something is pulling on something within him. He can't help but smile fondly at the brunette as he continues doing this for a bit, who he really needs to have a talk with concerning their relationship as they've known each other for some years now and he would like for them to use each other's first names. After all, they're friends, right? Right!

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Sawada Tsunayoshi, nicknamed Tsuna, who he regards as Small Animal or Fluffy Animal, is a Sky. Kyoya has known this since that kidnapping when the brunette's eyes displayed a clear orange while struggling against the drugs meant to keep the child unconscious. The two assassins and the former assassin turned sushi chief had been more then pissed at the lack of security around the Sawada Household, particularly as one Sawada Iemitsu, who he has never met and will be Bitten to Death upon such a meeting, squirreled the Small Animal's mother out of Namimori for a vacation, disregarding the Small Animal's need for a support structure or gave thought to

leaving any sort of protection. The two assassins also seem to be rather bemused at the Small Animal's thanks in regards for saving him but he would have rather bundled the Small Animal off into the car and way to the hospital to be checked over.

It had been Yamamoto Tsuyoshi, a retired Carnivore, who explained the importance of the color orange in regards to the Dying Will Flames to him. Of the role it plays in helping to stabilize those in possession of the other colors and what those colors can do along as the usual personality traits, of which he is likely to call upon the purple fire, which are termed Cloud Flames, given how he has claimed Namimori as HIS. Which means that the Small Animal, who is a Sky, was part of Namimori, which made the Sky HIS as well and so, he set out to ensure the protection of the Sky, who did have a support network, small and made up of young animals as well but were also in need of their own family's support as well, so he decided to take up residence within the Sawada Household.

He had not been overly impressed when the mother returned, far later then was promised and with little to no care about having left Small Animal alone in the house. Yes, Small Animal turned out to know a few things about taking care of the house and cooking, most experience seems to be of stew and soup, but he was quick to learn that the mother nor the so called father left a card behind for the Small Animal to use, thus he grew suspicious about where the money was coming from only to learn that the Small Animal plus two of his network earned money Beta Playing a game. While not pleased, Kyoya admitted that it was good experience for later in life when the Small Animal would be old enough to leave the mother behind, so he made sure to chip in with the grocery bill from then on as he wasn't going to rely on the Small Animal to buy him food.

Few things happened since then in regards to the mother or the absent father beyond ensuring the herbivores knew to leave the Small Animal alone, although some still haven't learnt the lesson and he's been slowly working on the problem of the herbivore teachers. There had been a few threats that made their way into Namimori but

the fake-baby assassin tipped him off while charging Iemitsu for the information so he's dealt with them and got tips from retired Carnivore about how to deal with the bodies. Everything seemed to be going well, but then he noticed the worry that the small network displayed, taking ques from Small Animal as it seems that the Sky sensed something coming, coming for him and now it seems, it's here and the fake-baby assassin clearly didn't know about this.

"Hibari-san." The fake-baby states. "Small Animal was fired upon and the bullet did something." He states in turn.

"Did it cause the cloths to burn off and the hair to turn into fire?" Asks the fake-baby and he takes a second to blink before replying, "Crown of Sky Flames and then a fist size ball of Sky Flames hovering before the forehead, orange eyes."

There's silence on the other end and it's becoming clear that this Crown of Sky Flames was new. "No cloths burning off? No bellow of doing something with 'My Dying Will'?"

"Felt it happen." He admits, he'd been running before he even realized something was Wrong. "Didn't say a word, not even before collapsing in exhaustion."

"The bullet sounds like Reborn while the aftereffects don't sound right." The fake-baby assassin states. "Beware of strange behavior."

With that, the call ends and he scowls, but at least he has a name for who would shoot Small Animal. That's a start.

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It's hunger that really causes him to wake, otherwise, he'd be content to remain in his semi-sleeping state. Groaning slightly he opens his eyes to find a number of messages waiting for him and blinks his eyes a few times, it takes him a few seconds to realize that while he did manage to keep the headgear from making him Forget it seems that he's caused some of the basic functions to remain active. The

first few had to do with Quest alerts and informing him of the fact that he developed a new Flame Skill in regards to Rain Flame use, which is strange as he doesn't recall anyone he know a player who sports that Flame.

"Sawada-kun? We need to talk." He blinks and turns to look to find Takeshi sitting in a chair.

"Uh? Sure?" He finds his mouth dry and wouldn't mind something to drink before realizing that Takeshi sports a pretty serious look in his eyes and there's no upturning of the other's lips. "Is everything ok?" He asks with worry coloring his tone.

"For now, but, well, I've been meaning to bring this up for some time now..." And Takeshi takes a deep breath, likely trying to calm his nerves while he moves to sit up on the bed, totally focus on the baseball player. "I think we're friends, we've been friends for at least two years now and I think it's time we start calling one another by our first names."

"Oh." He can't help but find himself rather stunned and a tad embarrassed. "I... I just... I mean, yea, I was hoping we were but, well... Haru was the one to... And then with Shoichi, it was like gaining a little brother? I kind of didn't know if we..." He tries to explain himself and it looks like Takeshi gets the gist of it.

"We're friends and I want you to call me Takeshi." The slightly taller teen states and he nods, replying in kind, "Tsunayoshi, though, I don't mind being called Tsuna." There's this sense of relief now and it feels like tension has lifted from between them.

"So, head implants?" Takeshi inquires and he blinks, looking confused. "They lit up like an orange crown."

"They did? Really?" Tsuna asks and Takeshi nods, adding, "Then there was this fist size ball of orange fire hovering before your forehead. Oh yea, orange eyes too."

"A ball of..." He's at a loss as he's never hear of Haru or Shoichi remarking on him causing something like that before. "Huh, the orange eyes are something that only other Beta Testers notice." He admits. "Not sure about the other stuff, neither Haru or Shoichi mentioned me ever calling up a fist size ball of Sky Flame and have it stationary like that."

"Oh, you remember now! That's great!" Takeshi remarks and he recalls a few attempts by the other bringing up the Beta Testing, how it just...

"I guess it was a security feature?" Takeshi muses and he hums, replying, "Likely, I mean, I kind of wondered about the reason Haru approached me that day... It makes more sense now."

"Is it going to..." Takeshi asks and he sighs. "I hacked it, I am not sure if that alerted anyone to its Activation or to its continued activity but, I should get a warning if they try to turn it off again so I can at least try to counter it."

"You hacked it. How? I mean, you didn't even involve your cell phone!" The other teen remarks and he shifts his weight as his eyebrows furl as he ponders the question.

"Maybe that's what the Ball of Sky Flame was for? I mean, usual when I use my Harmony like that, I usual have a hand on it or on what I'm channeling the Skill through? The implants are already touching my skin so I just needed to call on my Flame to hack it?" He reasons out and then sighs, "Sorry, this must seem pretty out there, people being able to conjure fire out of no where and for it to not burn the user."

Takeshi chuckles, waving a hand in dismissal. "I'm the one to ask and you answered, at least you seem to know what was going on. So that's something, right?" The other asks and he sighs before his stomach makes its demand for food. Placing a hand over the area, he looks rather embarrassed but also knows that he's going to be

eating a great deal more from here on out with the implants up and running off of his own Flame.

"It's about an hour to lunch." Takeshi remarks and he admits, "I will need to eat more now that the implants are active and that I'm going to be using my Sky Flame too." *And I'm unsure if I'll be getting money deposited into my account from Quests.*

"Ah, I guess the energy has to come from somewhere." Takeshi remarks and his stomach rumbles within seconds of that statement. "Here." Takeshi pulls up his book bag and he brings out the Bento Box that his mother packed.

The usual word spoken and he digs into the food. As the edge of his hunger tapers off, he turns to regard Takeshi, asking, "How come you aren't in class, Takeshi?" He's awarded with a wide grin upon the use of the other's name which he feels his face heat up upon receiving.

"Hibari-senpai's order was for me to guard you, Tsuna." There's a warmth hearing Takeshi say his shorten name before he blinks as he considers that. "Oh... Ah, any idea what started the whole..." He doesn't know if there's a word to ultimately describe what occurred.

"A bullet." Takeshi states and he'll admit, he's confused. "Shouldn't I be dead if that's the case?" There's something dark and foreboding lurking in Takeshi's eyes. "You should be." The other agrees and there's no smile upon Takeshi's face, he can tell that the other teen, he's brooding now.

Not wanting to derail Takeshi from his thoughts just yet, he looks down at his Bento and continues to eat, his own mind recalling the hitman from this morning and he can feel his Sky Flame prickle at the thought of him Inheriting that Mistake of his Ancestor. Willing his Status Page to appear, he mentally goes to the Flame Tab and stares at the Oath he made using his Sky Flame before mentally heading to the Flaws and Merits, there's an update concerning Sawada Iemitsu and it merely mentions said man as his sperm

donor and his mother is now listed as Enemy Support before bringing up the Quests, reading the details of the Quest that's entitled, Burn it to the Ground, Prolong.

Shouldn't be that hard to reactivate Shoichi's and he'll be able to help reactivate Haru's. He mentally notes. Although he'll have to wait until this weekend as they might need to rest afterwards from having them reactivate.

"What are you planning?" Takeshi asks once he finishes his Bento. "To reactivate Haru and Shoichi's implants, I'll have to do Shoichi's first as he possesses a Sun Flame and thus we should be able to do Haru's easier between us."

"Sun Flame?" Takeshi asks and he begins to explain about the Flames of the Sky from the game, although they likely have a different name among the Underworld, to the other teen. It's clear that Takeshi is absorbing this information and asks a few questions about a few things like could Flames do the reverse of their attribute and could two Flame Users work together without any Sky Flames helping to meld the two together.

It's a few minutes until lunch when Kyoya arrives, he is a touch surprise to find he felt the Cloud as Kyoya drew near. The door opens and Kyoya takes a moment to study him, clearly searching for something for a few seconds before marching over. "Mafia."

"Fake-baby with a yellow stone shaped like a pacifier showed up and, well, I refused but the so called hitman didn't seem interested in my opinion." He admits. "I was planning on looking for you, to tell you."

"Mafia?" Takeshi inquires and he sighs, "Ancestor of mine founded this group that devolved into a member of the criminal underbelly and instead of doing the smart thing and burn it to the ground, left meekly and came to Japan to hide from his mistake and shame."

"Sperm donor learnt about his relationship to the founder of the group before it became a Famiglia and decided he wanted to be part of it. He's pretty much married to the job and only married my mother because he was expected to have an 'heir'." He continues. "The Ninth Don and the donor visited the house back when I was almost five, I went Flame Active but instead of seeing it as a way to bind me into the Famiglia, they pretty much fucked their whole stance on Sky's been a Blessing and Sealed me, which screwed me up and the damage would only grow worse the longer I was Seal."

Kyoya's eyes are now blazing purple which means that the Cloud is now Active while it looks like Takeshi doesn't fully grasp what kind of damage he could be talking about. "Seven years old and I was picked to Beta Test something, the implants in my head? They Unsealed me and a bit later, I unlocked the game's Status Page, which has a list of Flaws and Merits, which lists Sawada Iemitus as an Enemy and gave me my history lesson along with where the Seal came from. Same goes for the Ninth plus the Vongola Famiglia. I never wanted to inherit that Mistake, so when I learn how to do it, I went so far as to swear an actual a Flame Oath to that effect and if I fail to follow through by accepting the Heirship, I will die as my own Flame will burn me from the inside out." He states. "I rather be dead then a fucking, kami forsaken Mafioso Don."

Takeshi looks alarmed while Kyoya just seems to go still for a few seconds before Cloud Flames begin to flare up, he's not sure what language that is but by the tone alone, it's clear that Kyoya IS NOT PLEASED. "But, didn't this ancestor start out making this group into a crime organization?" Takeshi asks and he's more then a little relieved to be able to look away from the enraged Cloud.

"Ah, no, he was more into going around and killing nobility he thought were abusing their privileges and positions. Kind of enforcing his out look of right and wrong on the masses." He admits. "The group only became a crime family under the Second, which means that the Second's bloodline is the actual Famiglia heirs and as long as the Second's blood exists in some form, my ansestor's bloodline

doesn't have an actual claim to the Donship of the Famiglia. If it remained that vigilante group, then yea, I would but it isn't and hasn't been that kind of group for generations now nor can it really go back to that way as it's long since carved its place in the Mafia Underworld."

Something he must have said seems to still Kyoya as the other now sports a thoughtful and yet very bloodthirsty smile. "You put a lot of effort into learning all of this, huh, Tsuna?" Takeshi asks and he turns to look at Takeshi. "Well, yea, I mean, I wanted to be sure I had my bases covered and given human nature, plenty of Dons likely had daughters that they married off or had bastards who went on have their own families or their own bastards. It's just them needing to crack open their record books and, you know, do some actual research. Odds are, there's got to be at least two Mafioso with the right blood who would jump at the chance to take the position, who would already have the proper mindset too."

Kyoya walks out of the room without a single word and both Takeshi and himself share a look. "So... been wanting to rant and rave about that for sometime, huh?" Takeshi asks and his face heats up, ducking his head. "It's not like I haven't told Haru or Shoichi but at the same time, we figured they weren't that stupid as to go for the civilian child then someone who's already part of said world."

"Shoichi even helped me word the Oath, so either they select someone who's of the Second's blood for Donship or they press the matter with me and... Well, I'm not looking to die, Takeshi and as I said, Giotto should have done the right thing and destroyed it in its infancy then to the easy thing and let what he found become even more corrupt then it already had been."

"How was being a vigilante corrupt?" Takeshi asks and he gives the other a slightly sad smile. "It's no different then a tyrant enforcing their will on the people, a lot of those people who died? A lot of them had merely been paid to do their job to support their own families in the position of tax collecting, militia, and general staff. The group rarely just cut off the so call serpent's head and left it at that."

"Only difference was criminal groups did things like that for money while the vigilante group did it in the absolute belief they were in the Right and had the Duty to Punish those people." He admits. "The group tried to be for the peasantry, to aid them and protect them, not exploit them like the nobility had only, they ended up doing just that under the Second."

"I can only guess how entrench the Vongola Famiglia are in both sides of Italy's culture and I can only hope that someone among that Famiglia actually has common sense to see that having an unwilling heir to one of the most influential Famiglia isn't going to end well." He admits. "Cause what follows if they don't... It's not going to be pretty, not one bit." He looks out the window, his Sky Flame swirling within him as he recalls the sight of those actual dead people along with the smell... The sound of metal slicing into...

"With My Dying Will, I will **burn** the Mafia Underworld to *ashes* ." He whispers as he senses someone listening in and with a simple look, gets Takeshi to be quiet as well, after all, it wouldn't do for whoever get information.

He uses his cell phone to type in a text, We now have an eavesdropper listening in. Just type out a question on your phone, show me the screen just don't send it, ok? Takeshi blinks looks him in the eye before giving a slight smile.

It's not until midway into the afternoon classes that Kyoya seems to recall they were in the nurse's office and that both of them are well enough to attend classes that sees them leave the room. The eavesdropper follows them but, well, there's not much to listen to beyond classes and then Takeshi chatting about anything that comes to mind that doesn't involve Flames or the Mafia.

To be continued . . .

Shifting Between Illusion and Reality P5

I don't own Kateyo Hitman Reborn!

"Reborn, you know I don't treat males!" Whines the latest adult to be hired at the school while he sits on a bed, Takeshi is at the door. The teen followed him when Tsuna was to report to the nurse's office with a very weak lie that the teacher accepted, likely due to the Rain's athletic prowess.

It's clear that Reborn's patience is on a short fuse but then, he has made use of some of his own Flame Skills to minimize the fake-baby's antics, namely ensuring that the hitman only wakes just a few minutes after him along with using his Harmony to keep the fake-baby from getting a peaceful sleep while resting upon it. So many little things that keep the fake-baby from feeling comfortable in his room or in his presence. There's plenty of Quests generated daily that allow him to throw wenches into the plan concerning his 'training'.

So far, Reborn hasn't seen fit to really scout out Haru or Shoichi so those two are taking advantage of this oversight to get things done. It also seems that Shoichi located an online friend who's focus is on engineering, which lightens the Sun's load by a lot. Haru's been busy retraining her Lightning Skills as they've grown a touch rusty plus it's helping her with her temper plus helping with what she can with Shoichi's various projects. The source of the information is from the Quest getting updated as new options appear or are completed.

As for Kyoya, he's been busy learning how to properly use his two Flames, Cloud and Mist. The Lightning and Cloud have only had three spars to date but it's clear that Kyoya isn't happy with his own, personal progress, never mind that Haru's been semi-Active since she was seven and fully Active when she was ten. He'd like to spar with Kyoya, if only to figure out how rusty he is but with Reborn

pretty much keeping him in sight as much as possible, he's only been able to work on a few of his non-lethal Flame Skills.

"I won't repeat myself, Trident." Reborn states in a very soft voice yet there's threat and danger in that tone, a promise of death as it's clear that the fake-baby's patience is gone. The strange chameleon is visible and waiting upon to turn into a gun.

Trident jerks his head back as though the fake-baby punched him or hit him in the face with a hammer of some sort. He watches the color drain and the Mafioso swallow hard, eyes wide while staring at the fake-baby as though seeing him for the first time. Then the adult dressed up as a doctor turns to regard him, eyes calculating and drawing conclusions about it. Tsuna finds he's not sure why he's here but at the same time, he's pretty sure that it's going to be a mix bag of good and bad.

"So... what can you tell me about your previous experiences with doctors?" The man, Trident, asks, approaching him and he raises a slight eyebrow. "Never had much reason to visit one before." He replies.

"No head injuries?" And he blinks as it dawns on him why they're there. He snorts and laugh, replying, "Got implants after being pick as a Beta Tester for a game back when I was seven. They recently reactivated about three weeks ago."

"Who'd installed something like that in a kid?!" There's a touch of actual concern and outrage from the man. "No surgery, they implanted themselves upon my putting on the helmet like device. Takeshi already pin pointed their location on my head." The Sky states and the two glance at the other teen, who is likely giving them both an empty yet easy going smile.

"What game?" The fake-baby growls out and he glances towards the hitman. "If you must know, it was for Mythical Flames of the Soul: Sky Edition." Oh yea, the two clearly look like they just ate a lemon slice.

"It's a pretty advance game, the first phase was just going through the bare bones of the game, namely giving rating concerning a person's stats, a Quest generation system, and Flaws and Merits." He continues. "I wasn't part of the second or third phase but fourth phase introduced Flame Skills, weapon rating system use, Monster Spawn Areas, Special Areas where we could create stuff from butchering dead Monsters or Harvesting the 'natural' resources, Leveling, and Avatars plus the usual kind of Stat Point System." He muses. "It's kind of depressing that it hasn't seen release yet, to be honest. I miss my Avatar."

"Just how many Beta Testers were there?" Asks Reborn in a very tightly controlled tone. "In Japan? Or Italy? Or just world wide?"

"World wide." The fake-baby states and he hums as he tries to recall the number Shoichi sprouted out once. "In total, I think it was a good million and unevenly spread out as some countries only had a few thousand, I wasn't paying it much mind, really. I was more interested in playing the game then knowing what's happening in the background."

Oh look, he's got a headache. He muses to himself as the fake-baby is now rubbing his temples while murmuring in not Japanese. "I think the company was called the Rainbow Ouroboros Circuit Games. I just remember Taiyang mentioning the symbolism of what an Ouroboros is." He volunteers before either asks, he's even using Shoichi's Avatar's name, which just means Sun in Chinese, well, according to Shoichi it does.

"You didn't think to *just* **ask** the kid, huh?" Trident shanks upon turning to talk with Shoichi, only for a bullet to gaze the adult's right cheek. *Like I'd answer them until now.* He mentally admits to himself.

Between giving actual answers verse whatever Reborn wanted Trident to do to him, he'd go with the answering of questions. "So... your the brat who's in line for the Vongola Famiglia." He rolls his eyes.

"I'm not interested and I won't be a Mafia Don." Tsuna states in a flat, matter of fact tone. "Just because the sperm donor decided to become a Mafioso doesn't make me one." A bullet gets fired in his direction which causes Takeshi to throw the nearest thing in range at Reborn.

It startles the maybe doctor while the fake-baby merely dodges the item, he gets the feeling the hitman approved of Takeshi's sentiment and action. Which makes the fake-baby something of a hypocrite about given how effective he's been in derailing the hitman's plans for him and not getting any approval for doing so. He can feel the icy anger within the other teen lingering over the likely chance that his reaction won't keep the fake-baby from firing a bullet in his direction again.

Moving off the bed, he walks over to where Takeshi is. "Well, seeing as you now solved the mystery of my implants, we best return to class." He says as he places a hand upon Takeshi's shoulder to calm him, he's not sure if it's the right thing to do, but it seems that it's the sentiment behind the action that the slightly taller teen allows himself to calm down. "Not sure if I will require your serves in the future but feel free to charge whatever you want to whatever account Reborn has access to about this consultation, Trident-san! Higher the better in my opinion!"

With that, they leave the nurse's office and he apologizes to Takeshi, "Sorry, I touched you without your permission but you Felt like you were ready to do something rash." The young Sky gives Takeshi a polite bow.

"Ah, you weren't wrong, Tsuna. And it's fine, I mean, I did trace those spine implants sometime ago." His friend reminds him. Tsuna sighs at the reminder of how he kind of 'pulled' on Takeshi's latent Rain Flame to fall into a deeper sleep.

"Let's just get to class before Hibari learns of this." The young Sky suggests with a sigh and the Rain chuckles with a slight nervous undertone, after all, Kyoya has been in a foul mood these pass few

weeks and it's due to the targets he wants to 'Bite to Death' not being in Japan and unlikely to visit any time soon.

("I like him." Trident Shamal states in Italian the moment the two teens leave the office, leaving the two Mafioso alone together. Reborn just sighs and just Knowing he's not getting Paid enough to deal with Any of this Shit. "Of course you do. Of fucking course you do." The Sun Arcobaleno murmurs in English. *Now, how to break the news to Timoteo that there's nearly a million Flame Users world wide, most of which are likely not involved in the Criminal Underworld? Never mind getting that moron Iemitsu to investigate this supposed game company.*)

**/ [- | T | -] **

"We'll settle things during lunch." And then the silver haired newly arrived student from Italy, who's likely a Mafioso, stalks out of the class, heading for gym class. *Great, just... great.*

Tsuna shakes his head and clears off his desk before following after. He's got no reason to show up upon reading the summary of the latest Quest beyond not showing causing Reborn to be displeased but, honestly, he's kind of making a go of keeping the fake-baby on a short fuse along with being sure to use his Sky Flame to ensure he comes out of those episodes unharmed and unbothered, which just sets the hitman off again quicker, thus the cycle continues on and on. Honestly, he's kind of waiting for the hitman to actually snap and attempt to kill him so they can fake his death as Spanner, that online friend of Shoichi, has managed to create a prototype Fabricator machine which has already been used it to create some bones based on his DNA.

The trick will be Harmonizing Reborn into following that plan, which Haru will aid with using her own Lightning to Harden the path of that plan within the fake-baby's mind. Yes, it means he'll have to shave off his hair and go through a few chemical baths with Shoichi using his Sun to help alter the body and head hair pigment along with skin tone along with a number of other little things needed to be done,

like changing dental records, finger prints, figuring out if they could alter his current blood enough to give a false DNA ID, etc. Then again, faking his death is just one of the plans and only one they'll go through with if the hitman's mind is ever fully clouded over by the desire to kill him.

Have we brought Kyoya into discussing that plan? He suddenly wonders as he waits for his turn to play on the court. After all, the Cloud might not like having something like that sprung up on him let alone not given the chance to approve of said plan. *So, I'll just have to talk with him in private about our various plans that we've been brewing up. He might not disagree with any of them but he likely won't agree with them either.*

He ignores the drilling look coming from the silver haired teen, cause honestly? Tsuna doesn't really care about the issue the Mafioso has concerning him nor does he see any reason to involve himself with said teen as he's got other worries to focus on then needing to add to his collection. After all, he's pretty sure Kyoya's going to be rather offended by the lack of keeping him in the loop but the older teen doesn't like being around others or people talking a lot either and that's how they come up with their respective plans, by someone musing about a random thing and they nitpick it or add to it until something begins to take shape and it's likely a process that would drive Kyoya out of the room within minutes.

Kyoya likes to keep things straight and simple but, well, this is one situation where that leads to getting entangled up, trapped, and then caged. Once caged, it's where they then do their best to break you so they can mold your behavior to suit them. He mentally admits. *Here, he's a big fish in a small pond, out there, he's just another mid size fish, nothing special.* And he knows that Kyoya would like to disagree with that assessment but, well, the older teen is still getting miffed about Haru's win streak in their spars and it's really Kyoya's pride that's keeping him from asking for help in asking for tips of what he could do better at.

"Yo, they've been trying to get your attention." Takeshi nudges him and he turns to look up to find the Rain standing before him. "Ah, sorry, just... Reflecting about how to approach Hibari." He admits and the older teen gives him a bit of a grin, humming while offering a hand to help him stand up, which he takes.

"Sure it wasn't something else?" Takeshi inquires as the other's eyes flicker else where. It takes him a second to realize who's in that direction, which causes him to roll his eyes. "He's not a threat nor does it really matter what issue he thinks he has with me, I'm not going to indulge him in it." He assures his friend, who hums before patting him on the back as he walks pass. "Good luck!"

He gives Takeshi a smile before he walks towards his huffy teammates, ignoring their scratching comments. Taking up position, he does his best to pull his weight in the game, he's in good shape as he had continued to exercise even though he Forgot why it was important to so. He's not one for sports though and given how hard it's been for him to befriend others once that Seal had been removed, there's a disconnect between himself and most of his classmates, one that he often times doesn't see the point of trying to fix as he's not very confident in his ability to make friends or in his kind of stunted social skills.

Dismissing that train of thought, he focuses on the here and now, doing his best to try and fulfill the gap in the teamwork. They lose by a single point but given he's scored a few points which means that none of his teammates could place the blame on him for the loss so they stick around to help clean up. Takeshi also helps out even though he was part of the winning team, which earns the other teen a great deal of praise and goodwill. Tsuna isn't sure if Takeshi is overly affected by said praise directed at him as the other doesn't seem to act any different.

The relationship between Takeshi and the majority of their classmates has always puzzled him, so it's not all that surprising that this doesn't really shed any new light on it. Then again, it's Haru who's been the one to pull Takeshi and himself together in the first

place, being the catalyst for them to be friendly with one another. Yet, in the end, both of them did want a connection between them or else they wouldn't have much reason to spend time together without her around. It's only recently, they finally got around to confirming that yes, they were friends and they should call one another by their first name.

It's going to be a long day. Is all the young Sky can think.

**/ [- | T | -] **

The location he finds himself at is a very familiar one and Tsuna smiles a touch sadly as memories play out in his mind, he can almost see the entrance beckoning for him to walk through it. He wouldn't mind a chance to be wrapped in his Avatar, check over his equipment before entering the wilderness, hunting for plants or animals for some Quest or just gathering crafting materials for crafting projects. His Flame purrs as he wanders the deserted spot, it's likely he's on the right track about something.

Squaring his shoulders, the young Sky closes his eyes and begins to slowly release a wave of Sky Flame from his body. There's gentle ripples that bounce back, they are faint but it seems that yes, there's something here he can make use of or, maybe, reawaken? Not wanting the delicate wisps to be overly harmed, Tsuna hums as he slowly floods the area with his Flame, as his Sky picks up the 'frequency' of the Mist Construct, his humming alters without him realizing it, his focus on drawing the Construct to 'life' with his Flame charging it.

There's a touch of resistance but, in the end, his Sky takes the form of the 'key' and with a twist of the 'key' in the 'engine', it catches and as he opens his eyes in time to watch as the Construct take over the space, transforming the space into the familiar one of his memories along with his Avatar rippling around him before taking hold about the same time the rest snaps into place. His tail slowly wags back and forth in a lazy manner while he flickers his ears about.

For now, he brings up his Menu and goes through the options, checking out if anything is altered from how he recalls it. Satisfied, he Messages those on his List and proceeds to waits, already guessing that Haru will be the first to arrive and he's right. There's a squeal near the entrance and he sits up on the bed he'd settled down on, turning to regard the Lightning, who seems more then happy to have her Avatar wrapped around her.

It's clear that she is already going through her Menu, then there's muffled cursing, which, he gets, after all, he forgot to retrieve his own backpack that houses his Inventory. Still, Haru merely sighs and does a tour of the stations. Tsuna can only imagine her expression on her face as she does so.

Author's Note: So, yea, that's all I wrote before my muse left me.

Reflecting Upon Fear: Grandmaster

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation

For as long as he's wandered the streets, Wei Ying has ever really come to have one fear. It's a very understandable fear that many street urchins likely develop when faced while wandering the streets, looking for something to fill their empty stomachs. There's competition on the streets for that very same resource and the various players aren't all human.

Stray cats and crows are generally smaller then the average child. They give way easily as one can hunt the vermin that make their nests among the houses and the other can fly further then a street urchin could ever hope to cover in a day. After all, there are places that do chase off street urchins and have no problem with striking said children until they're out cold.

No, not even mice or rats are in the running, they are far too small along with able to get into places that a child can only dream of. Never mind that they are very much aware of what a death sentence being out in the open is for something of their size. It's unheard of swarms of rodents to attack other beings, for all that they have the numbers on their side.

So, the only other beast left that could fit the profile is that of man's best friend, the dog, or more accurately, a single or pack of stray dogs. A single dog of a certain size is more then enough to scare a child from a meal. A pack, even with just smaller size mutt, could rule a block as not only would they have the needed teeth to threaten but the ability to harass a child until they have the misfortune of dropping their prize.

For five years, Wei Ying had lived on the streets, roaming on his lonesome since he'd been kicked out from the inn that his parents

had left him in, waiting for their return. Time enough for the child to have plenty of experiences with stray dogs and come out of said experiences on the losing end of such encounters. Without any support of any kind, Wei Ying learnt he could ill afford to be injured for none will find it within themselves to take care of him for long, if they even do follow through with such an impulse in the first place.

Wei Ying had little choice but to learn to be adaptable and a good judge of the worth of an action or item. Dogs being the main competition when it came to food, after all, another street urchin could be reasoned with, but not a dog. After all, between starving child and a normal size dog, the dog wins out in the physical capability, it wasn't much of a contest, really.

Perhaps if Wei Ying had been left to fend for himself against stray dogs while getting taller, the fear might have slowly faded into trepidation but he could find it within himself to confront his fear. After all, street urchins really can't afford to allow fear to control them along with them growing up. Things change, ultimately they themselves change. Stray dogs know better to attack adults after all, and all children do grow up to be adults.

So, Wei Wuxian never out grew his fear dogs, he never had any true cause to.

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Coming to, Wei Wuxian can't help but find something off. He can't pin point what but then, his head aches as loud sounds threaten to overwhelm him, the room stinks more then he recalls, and he swears there's something going on with his vision. There's something not right and as he struggles to recall what he'd done and where he is...

"Well, well, well... That old relic actual works better then the description!" There's a snide voice that echos in the room. "Here I thought it would merely cause you to have nightmares all night long!" The voice remarks as he realizes that a door was opening off to his left.

Turning his head, Wuxian growls at the sight of Wen Chao. Then he stops and a very distressing whine comes from him as it slowly dawns on him what's happened to him. Wuxian suddenly recalls why he'd been tossed in this room and the parting remark about having one hell of a night due to an old relic that the Wen had discovered in an old storage room when they'd been cleaning in preparation of this camp.

Fears' Face is what was inscribed on the mirror's back before he'd flipped it to look at himself in the polished metal surface. He doesn't really recall what happened after he'd seen a... a...

With a mixture of howl whine, he covers his muzzle with his forepaws and can't help but whine in distress at his plight.

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For reason, Wei Wuxian doesn't join them after having been thrown into a cell the previous night. They also didn't get graced with Wen Chao's company for that morning, only in the afternoon did the second son of Wen Rouhan makes his appearance. Despite Jiang Wanyin demanding to know where his Shixiong is, it only causes a very bemused expression to grace Wen Chao's face before informing them that Wei Wuxian will be indisposed for awhile and they should be more concerned about themselves.

And so, with no answers coming from any of the Wens, began their re-education under the supervision of Wen Chao and his bed jumping servant, along with various other Wen Cultivators there to ensure they complied with their orders. Even though for the next few days Jiang Wanyin would demand news or the right to see Wei Wuxian, he was denied and would get punished with extra work while getting his meals cut in half. By the time five days had passed from getting such punishment, the heir of Jiang stopped asking after Wei Wuxian but would glare at the second son of Rouhan when he had the chance.

With the fate of the most out spoken disciple up in the air, many resolved to not make any trouble while attending this Indoctrination Camp. Without such a lively presence among them, the mood remained oblique and being used as live bait for Night Hunting for the Wens caused some to get injured, which only made them more weary of what kind of entertainment the Wens had in store for them. As such, the fact that Wei Wuxian had ever came with the Jiang Sect disciples felt like a dream, an illusion and thus, never discussed by the time the first month had passed.

In the middle of the second month, a rather large dog would be paraded out before the group. There's nothing overly special about the dog save for the size, which seemed to be nearly the size of a adult man, and how mournful looking the gaze seems to be. It was often trembling with the tail more often then not tucked under the legs. The fur being on the dark side, not really black but a dark brown that could almost pass for it.

Jiang Wanyin swears that the dog kept trying its gaze on him more often then not. Which, unsettles him but for the life of him, he couldn't figure out why. So, he does his best to ignore the dog when it makes future appearances.

Near the end of the third month is when things take an... interesting turn for the disciples as the Wens seem to have a sudden interest in their health and are examined by various Cultivators. Questions get asked and some of the repeat visits also involve that dog that they'd seen. Some of them find themselves having strange dreams after being given medicine, a few claim to have dreams involving a collar about their necks and having their bodies feel... off while others dream of old nightmares from childhood.

Wen Chao no longer is in charge of them nor do they see that dog again. None really know what to make of the changes going on with their treatment but there is a change. They rarely leave the Indoctrination building by the time five months have passed.

In fact, during the following months, their Sect Leaders come to visit them, although it's just one Sect at a time. This eases their fears but it's still rather confusing. The theme of their dreams after said visit is frightful and causes deep sensation of unease within the disciples, more then a few begin dreaming of their Sect getting destroyed by the Wens along with the feeling of something tying them down, keeping them from trying to do anything to help.

Once the last of the Sects visit, which is the Jiang Sect, who seem concerned about the fate of Wei Wuxian, as it seems, not even Jiang Fengmian had been informed that something has happened to his Head Disciple. Which does cause causes a lot of unease until someone points out that it hardly matters, after all, Wei Wuxian is just the son of a servant, for all that he has been appointed as Head Disciple. This causes Jiang Wanyin to ball his fists at the disrespect but nothing comes of it.

Nearly seven months in, something happens that causes the discples to spend a whole night and day trapped in a nightmare where that dog from before seems to be calling for help while Resentful Energy tries to drag the animal, the beast, into it's pool of energy. None fully recall the events of the nightmare but some among the disciples often clench their throats, fingers tracing a circle about their necks with wild looks in their eyes.

It's not long before those dozen disciples are separated from the main group. By the time it's been eleven months, even those dozen seem to vanish. When they make a fuss about those missing, finding that their courage at last to demand some explanation, they are herded into a different building that reeks of Resentful Energy and are shown a particularly nasty looking Yao that's huge, oozing a shroud of Resentful Energy, eyes glinting like rubies with the bodies of dead people littered about the feet.

"Still want to know their fate?" Wen Chao asks in a snide way and the Yao barks furiously at the sound of Wen Chao's voice. Chills go down their spines as the Resentful Energy spikes and those near the

door swears that the broken bodies within the cell of the Yao begin to move.

Shaken and their resolve broken, they return to building in a meak fashion. All the while Lan Wangji couldn't get the image of something out of his mind. An image of a young man sporting animal features with a mouth moving but no words coming out.

When he dreams that night, there's a mournful howl mixed with the weeping cries of a child. For all that he would search, Lan Wangji wouldn't find either the beast that's howling nor the child that's crying. The dream vanishes slowly once he wakes and by noon, the cries and howls have vanished along with the image of that man.

A few weeks later, a number of animals get brought in, all of them rather large for their kind and also sporting very expressive eyes that spark with sorrow, fear, and resignation. About their necks are collars sporting the Wen Sect image. A dozen total without any real rhyme or reason for the kinds being shown.

Unlike before, the animals don't visit after the singular showing. Not long after, their uniforms undergo a change and more examinations take place, more medicine distributed that cause weird sensations and seems to play tricks on their minds. They can refuse to take the medicine but they go without, it's then that some begin to suspect that they are being subjected to some kind of experiment.

They organize a hunger strike and this merely causes the various Wen Sect guards to shake their heads. It's not long before their dreams get worse, of getting chased through their homes by something huge and Resentful. The huge Yao that they saw stalks them night after night, sometimes they encounter one another in those dreams but, well, it was just their imagination, right? There's no way that anyone could travel between one person's dreams to another, right?

The worse part is when they are caught by the Yao, it doesn't maul them nor does it harm them. It asks, "Why?! Why ME?! Why?!" The

voice is demands an answer but none know what kind of answer to give, so they stay silent.

Without restful sleep and good meals, their mood sours and tempers flare. It is merely verbally but the spark that lead to it being physical comes from Jiang Wanyin taking offense to the manner of which Jin Zixuan and Lan Wangji had seemingly shared a look when he complained about how long did these Wen think they should continue to hold onto this excuse of reeducation? The sight of the two sharing such a look sparks an ache within him at the missing Wei Wuxian and his restraint breaks, he lunges at Lan Wangji, having come to envy the amount of attention Wei Wuxian had paid the Second Jade.

The Wens do break it up, putting the three of them into cells. Without anyone around and being oh so hungry, the sight of the food tray with a cup of something that's likely medicine... And so, Jiang Wanyin gives in and drinks the medicine before he's given the tray of food. It never dawns on him that there could be a reason for being put in a cell so far from his fellow Sect Heir and the Second Young Master of the Lan Sect, he takes it as a blessing that none are around to witness him break their group fast.

In his mind, it's not his fault, it's all Wei Wuxian for attracting the attention of the Wens. It's Jin Zixuan and that bastard Lan Wangji's fault that he'd been singled out by the Wens. Even going so far as to blame the others for being in favor of the hunger strike as it's likely because of that he's been having such weird dreams. *After all, when we'd been taking the medicine, we didn't dream of anything.* Jiang Wanyin thinks savagely.

With a full stomach of soup and feeling tired. Jiang Wanyin considers how to keep up appearances before the group. After spending three days in the cell, taking the medicine and eating the food, Jiang Wanyin thinks of how foolish they are being about the medicine, after all, since he consumed it, he'd been sleeping better. After getting checked over by one of the Wen doctors, he is returned to the group.

It's not long before he expresses his scourn about the hunger strike and brags about the medicine clearly being for a restful sleep. Another fight breaks out but since he didn't throw any punches, he's not taken away. Two days later, Jin Zixuan is brought back to the group of disciples and the next day, those that had been taken away as well. Lan Wangji would return once the disciples had broken their resolve to hunger strike and would be the only one to continue to reject the medicine, thus he doesn't get anything to eat.

Even the Lan disciples don't follow their Second Young Master's example. Lan Wangji doesn't say a word about it nor does he really addresses the issue. So, as the year passes, Lan Wangji watches as something seems to take root in the various disciples and does his best to avoid getting involved in the fights that begin to become common place, in fact, its to the point that the Wen in charge seems to be rather satisfied by the manners that are getting displayed.

It's to the point that when the winners are rewarded for, well, winning. It's like a long awaited change had been given the go ahead. In Lan Wangji's view, his fellow guest disciples have become... lesser, he just couldn't pin point lesser in what, extactly, not until he notices the hair growth on places hair shouldn't be, like the back of hands and necks. Teeth seem to become more pointed and eyes seem to glow at night.

Only reason he managed to gather his wits has to do with his dreams having changed. It was like by trying to comfort the Yao that use to chase him through the mountains of his home, he is given peace in return. So, as the hair becomes more prominant and the ears begin to alter shape with hair growing upon them... He finds it within himself to speak of his observations in his dreams, after all, it's just a dream, right?

The Yao takes its time before after nearly a year and a quarter into the Indoctorantion Camp, asks, "Have they grown tails yet? Their skulls change enough for muzzles or snouts? The palms of their hands like paw pads?"

Lan Wangji is unable to answer most of those questions but... finds it rather disquieting that the Yao seems to think that's what's going to happen. "Not Yao." Lan Wangji states.

"Neither am I." And the dream ends with Lan Wangji finding himself wide awake with a sense of dread. It's then that he does take a good long look at the other disciples and it worsens at the sight of hunched, nearly naked bodies that sport a coat of fur, of blacks in the eyes while the nails seem to have become black and sharp looking. The beginning of a snout with the tip of the nose having darkened to almost black.

Less then a year ago, these almost beasts had been human, not just human but Cultivators. Worry eclipses his heart and he is sure to check his own body over in a very careful manner. While there is a hint of something trying to happen to his own body, it's fairly superficial. But a notion inspires him to check over the uniform he's wearing and finds unusual Arrays and Talismans sown in and upon the layers now that he's looking for them.

It's a while before Lan Wangji finds himself dreaming of the Yao. "Wei Ying." It had taken a lot of thought before coming to that conclusion but... things seem to have altered course with the lack of Wei Wuxian being among them.

"Hey Lan Zhan, you figured it out? Yea, this is me now... I guess." The Yao, no, Wei Ying confirms.

"Explain." He demands and Wei Wing gives him a soulful look before doing just that. Lan Wangji listens, doing his best to commit it all to his memory so when he wakes, he'll remember this information.

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For it has been two years now and the various Sect Heirs and a selection of their disciples have been held by the Wen Sect. They had been given the chance to visit their heirs and disciples to be assured of their well being. The last of the Sects to visit being the

Jiang Sect and the news about the missing Head Disciple gets shared but, there's little that the Jiang Sect could do to get answers from Wen Ruohan.

There isn't a lot of rumors that come out of the Nightless City nor any letters from the disciples that are in the Indoctrination Camp for reeducation. None know how long this camp was meant to last. Still, when Lan Wangji arrives at the Cloud Recesses, the news he brings about the state of the Wen Sect is hard to swallow.

If not for the Wens getting pulled back to Nightless City, many would say that the Second Jade is lying. And yet, as some Cultivators go to investigate, the sight of Nightless City covered in a haze of Resentful Energy with Ghosts and Corpses having over taken the city... What Wen Cultivators that are alive are station outside of the city.

None dare to enter the Nightless City, not even to learn the fate that befell their Heirs and disciples. Many are demanding Lan Wangji to explain the course of events that led to the dead ruling over Nightless City. More are accusing him of being a coward for having fled all on his own out of Nightless City.

Lan Xichen manages to keep the inquires and demands from being heard by Lan Wangji, then again, the other Jade had been spending far too much time in the Cold Springs in meditation. The robes that Lan Wangji had arrived in where that of the Wen Sect disciple uniform as well. There had been something about how Lan Wangji held himself that had given Lan Xichen pause and to do his best to give his younger brother the space needed to recover.

Still, a month after Lan Wangji's return, the Lan hold a gathering so that Lan Wangji can speak his piece. So, after rush politeness, Lan Wangji stands before the gathered Cultivators and Sect Leaders in the white robes of a Lan disciple. The various Sect Leaders shouting their questions and demands at the lonesome Second Jade, who doesn't seem to be overly moved.

It takes Lan Qiren shouting for them to control themselves before Lan Wangji begins to speak in a short, matter of fact way. "The Wens exposed Wei Wuxian to Fears' Face and had unusual affect on him."

Jiang Fengmian has an inkling of what Wei Wuxian's fear had likely been. "Their plans changed when they realized they could potentially apply what happened to other." Lan Wangji continues.

"What do you mean, apply it? What does that have to do with Resentful Ghosts and Corpses?!" Demands Sect Leader Yao.

That causes a number of people to explode in their own questions and opinions. Lan Wangji merely waits for them to quiet down, having the appearance of being unmoved. Continuing, almost has if following a script, "A dozen had been noted for being the most susceptible and would be singled out until they no longer were returned to the main group."

More demands for explaining and it lasts for some time, but Lan Wangji continues to appear unmoved and is patiently waiting for the dim to die down to continue. "We were examined and given new uniforms. Medicine handed out before being fed."

Lan Xichen already doesn't like what his younger brother is revealing but would wish for people to not keep interrupting after each little details spoken. "Silence! Let him finish reporting before we interrogate him!" Snaps Nie Mingjue with a challenging look.

Finally, people settle down and Lan Wangji continues to speak. "We organized a hunger strike, suspecting that something about the medicine to be causing odd happenstances to our senses and that we were being subjected to experimentation."

A bit of a pause but none speak as Nei Mingjue glaring at those that look like they were about to. "Investigation by this Lan Wangji of the robes had Arrays and Talismans sown upon them and within them. Medicine was amplifying the effects of the sympathy that's the Wens were fostering upon us, using Wei Wuxian's condition as a template."

Unease spreads among the crowd while Jiang Fengmian notices Madam Yu's fist clutching as she clearly already blaming Wei Wuxian for whatever has happened to Jiang Wanyin. While Nie Mingjue is finding himself worried about what this means for his little brother but keeps from speaking and merely glares at the gathered Cultivators. Lan Xichen reassures himself that his younger brother hadn't seem overly affected by whatever the Wens had been doing.

"The Wens encouraged certain behavior after the strike collapsed and physical changes began to take hold, hair growing where it shouldn't, thickening of the palm skin, ears becoming more pronounce, eyes reflecting light during the night, and sharper teeth." Lan Wangji lists. "Their manners devolved with much encouragement by the Wens into that of beasts. When the robes were shed, collars put upon the necks."

Many Cultivators' eyes go towards the neck of Lan Wangji but there is no impression of a collar, nor does the Second Jade appear to have changes to his appearance. It causes Lan Xichen much relief that it's clear that Lan Wangji couldn't have undergone that point. More then a few were trying to wrap their heads around the idea of the Wens somehow turning their disciples into... into... beasts or would they be considered Yao?

"Wei Wuxian had been experimented on the most and had Resentful Energy infused into his being as his dog form lacked a Golden Core." Lan Wangji reports in a brisk tone. "Without any other opinion, Wei Wuxian had learnt to harness it and is how this I managed to escape from being experimented on when their patience came to an end."

Before Jiang Fengmian could register her mood as he's shaken by what happened to his Head Disciple. "What a mess this trouble maker has caused!" Madam Yu snarls and Lan Wangji looks at her while Jiang Fengmian speaks up, "It's hardly Wei Wuxian's fault, it is this relic of the Wens that is the source of this mess, my lady."

"You defend him even now? When our son has been devolved into a mere beast?!" Madam Yu snaps and it's not long before the gathered Cultivators speak their own mind.

Lan Wangji's clenched fists are hidden as he listens to the blame being settled at Wei Ying's feet when it wasn't Wei Ying's fault for having a fear of dogs so extreme that it was able to cause an actual physical transformation. Although, from what Wei Ying had shared, some Wen Cultivator had made a modification to the relic and it was considered trash when it wouldn't work not long after the modification had been added. Never mind that Wei Ying somehow managed to figure out how to Dream Walk nor did he want to be almost turned into a Monster, never mind a Yao.

If not for Wei Ying's aid when it came to fooling the Wens from overlooking him with suggestions for Arrays and Talismans, using his own blood as a medium in their creation. If not for a search of his body, he might have been able to find a way to escape without Wei Ying using his Demonic Cultivation to summons Ghosts and rise the corpses. He hadn't wanted to leave, not when Wei Ying could lose himself to the Resentful Energy that he's been forced to learn to Cultivate in his current state.

Wen Qing had helped by not knocking him out with a needle when Wei Ying began to cause a distraction. He's not sure what to make of Wen Qionglin, but the Wen had shown signs of having been experimented on himself and had lead him out viva secret passages while Wei Ying's distraction keep the other Wens from seeing him getting away. Wen Qionglin didn't come with him, having left before he could think to offer such a suggestion.

The time spent in the Cold Springs weren't just for him to cleanse himself of the remenants of the experiement but also to try and reach Wei Ying. It had been successful for a few nights and it had been Wei Ying who coached him in what to say. He mostly followed the scriped but did not speak overly much about the timeline nor Wei Ying's theories about how to create flags or Talismans to enter into the city if he succeeds in taking over the city using Ghosts and

Corpses. About the means they could begin reverting the effects on most of the disciples and Sect Heirs.

Listening as they blame Wei Ying instead of going back to inquiring about their Heirs and disciples, it causes Lan Wangji to become rather tired and drained. He knew the names of the dozen that had been susptible and wished to inform those families of what news Wei Ying had passed along, particularly given that Nei Huaisang had been among that number, having become a giant fox Yao. It seems that Nei Huaisang is doing his best to make do with his current circimstances and given having met him when Wei Ying pulled him into a shared Dream, he can say that it seems that Nei Huaisang is more himself then he'd expected.

The other eleven are much more stable compared to the rest of those sent for reeducation, but then, their circumstance were very different then the main group and himself. He recalls the rewarding of what the Wens wanted in the others and how eager they'd been to engage in such behavior. One group had been groomed while the other had fallen into the transformation, although why it had been so easy for them to do so remains unclear and likely very private. For all that the latter group had been in the form of beasts, they still had enough sense of self to have a semblance of diginity and self restraint.

They might obey a command from a Wen but they could also not. It's clear that Wei Ying had done his best to resist such training and had suffered greatly for it. It's also clear that the Wens were in the process of deciding which method would reap the greater prize as it were. So they were comparing the two groups and Lan Wangji suspects that they had been coming to the conclusion of which method was the one to install greater obeyance in those undergoing the transformation.

In the end, the noise gives him a head ache and none seem to be aware of when he leaves. It's later that night that he manages to speak with Nei Mingjue concerning the state of his younger brother, his own brother is presence. "A fox. He is in the form of a fox Yao."

"Yes." Is all Lan Wangji states and drinks a bit more of the tea. "Is still himself, spoke with him when Wei Wuxian pulled him into a shared Dream."

"Wei Wuxian figured out how to Dream Walk?" Then there's a snort and a slight shake of a head. "Any other of my disciples end up like my didi?"

Humming a positive, he gives out the names of the four others and what kind of Yao they had been transformed into. A bear, a boar, a wolf, and a rat. Something about the way Nei Mingjue doesn't question why those animals causes him to wonder if the man has some insight into the reason why.

Wei Ying thinks it had something to do with getting laid bare to the world for all to see that might be one of the reasons why the dozen had been suspectible to being easily transformed in the first place. Lan Wangji wonders if the reason why Wei Ying thinks so has to do with his own self reflection upon his own transformation. Not that he could relate to such a fear.

"The seven others? We can write a letter to their respective Sect Leaders about them and what animal." His brother suggests and upon thinking about, hums in agreement that it might be a good idea, as it means that he won't have to worry about explaining himself or from having demands of answer concerning the rest of their disciples and Heirs.

When asked to go into detail about how the Wens had encouraged behavior, Lan Wangji measures his words carefully before answering. He is the only one who can speak of what happened right now and he can't keep silent about the matter, even if it sounds as though he's laying the blame of it on a certian Heir. He knows that unlike Jiang Wanyin, Jin Zixuan had tried to have his disciples be cautious about the whole affair, suggesting skipping days of meals just to be on the safe side. None really paid heed and, by the time he'd been returned to the group, Jin Zixuan wasn't exercising caution either.

It had been mere hearsay that Jin Zixuan had even made that suggestion as he'd been keep apart far longer then the other two. Other then accepting drinks, most of which being water, he'd manage to not consume any of the medicine but also didn't eat. He'd been stubborn and it served him well in this particular instance, when giving into temptation could have far reaching results to Lan Wangji's body and mind.

With the Cultivation World aware of what had been done to their Heirs and disciples, they retreated back to their Sects for a bit, then demands for how to address the issue began to get shouted by the various Sects. After all, without knowing the state of the Wens within Nightless City and thus the fate of Wen Ruohan, most had agreed to blame the Head Disciple of the Jiang Sect, after all, he's a well known troublemaker and he could have thrown his lot in with the Wens, aiding them in this experienment.

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The Wens that welcomed the leaders of Three of the Five Great Sects was one Wen Qing and a number of unknown Wen Cultivators. There's a cry of Gege and a furry person that'd been wearing Nei colors throws himself at the Sect Leader. "Huaisang!"

For all that the hair is a shade of red, with animal ears on the top and a fox tail wagging behind, it's clear that this person is Nei Huaisang. The other three that were hanging back, each of them sporting Sect colors, only one of which came from another Great Sect, a woman in Jin colors and sporting the look of a tiger, including having a forehead with black stripes. She is Jin Nuan, a third cousin to Jin Zixuan. The other two sport the features of a leopard and macaque of somekind, the hair coloring gave it away. He Su is the one with the cast of the macaque, Heir of the Tingshan He Sect and Ouyang Xun is the one with leopard features, distant cousin of the current Sect Leader.

In the four months since Lan Wangji had escaped, three months have passed and Wei Wuxian's hold over Nightless City remains. No

word had been sent out and it had taken the Sects a long time before committing to marching on Nightless City to retrieve what remains of their Heirs and disciples. In the intervening three months, Wei Wuxian had settled the matter of the Wen Sect's ambition in a very unexpected and yet violent way.

The result of the intervening months are seen by those three and their escort. Life had returned to the streets of Nightless City as the living once more dominate the streets. There's little signs of the previous wandering dead nor of the heavy Resentment that had been hanging over the city.

The mood is sober as the group moves through the city, heading for the Palace. It's clear that Nei Mingjue is relieved by the sight of his younger brother while Lan Xichen does his best to engage He Su in discussion while Jin Nuan speak with Jiang Fengmian. As they get closer, they find the entrance guarded by a pair of Corpses but they let them pass as various members of the escort is sure to buddy up with a member of those visiting.

With the arrival within, Lan Xichen asks, "How is Wei Wuxian? Lan Wangji mentioned him being forced to Cultivate Resentful Energy."

It had been a fight to keep Lan Wangji from accompanying him to Nightless City but his brother gave way to his descision as he is the Sect Leader since their father passing away. It wouldn't due for Lan Wangji to find himself conflicted by his sentiments towards Wei Wuxian if it comes to fighting the former man turned Monster, perhaps Demon. He didn't want his brother to end up heartbroken at his friend's death.

"He is well. A bit over worked." Wen Qing answers, the first time she spoke since they'd exchanged greetings at the gate.

"He's still using Demonic Cultivation." Nei Mingjue points out. Which causes something of a huff to come from his younger brother.

"Well, of course he's still capable of using Resentful Energy, they forced him to create some kind of core just to see if he could." Nei Huaisang states. "They've been the dozen of us do so, it's just that he's the only who'd been forced to do so out of only Resentful Energy. It's a trail for him to work out how to get his Golden Core to cohabit with his Beast Core."

"Don't call it that." Grumbles Wen Qing and Lan Xichen suspects that this is a well treaded aruguement. "It's what Wei Wuxian decided to called it." Aruges back Nei Huaisang with a fan out and fanning himself, it's a simple looking one.

"Yes, let's go with name that someone who named their sword Suibian decided upon." Wen Qing states in a drool manner and Lan Xichen keeps a slight smile upon his face while Nei Mingjue snorts slightly and there's little in the way of reaction from Jiang Fengmian.

"Perhaps now is not a good time to argue?" Suggests He Su. With a hum from the two, they continue on in silence until they hear a babe's giggling.

There's a soft sigh and a slight rubbing of the bridge of a nose by Wen Qing while the other Wens seem to relax along with sporting soft smiles. The sight that greets them upon entering the throne room, for Lan Xichen couldn't think of it as anything but, is that of a figure in coal black outer robe with darker greys with red trim holding what appears to be a baby. The head lifts up and they spy light gray eyes staring out of that mostly human face with ears facing them.

"Wei Wuxian." Says Jiang Fengmian and the ears turn back a bit while the head nods. "Sect Leader Jiang." The voice is rough and the words have a slight pitch to them.

"Sect Leaders Nei and Lan." The near man looking Wei Wuxian greets them. "I hope you've been well since we last met."

Polite greetings and exchanges get shared as Wei Wuxian ends up handing off the babe to Nei Huaisang, who promptly begins cooing

at the babe, causing a sqeal of joy and gliding out, all the while talking softly to the infant. There's a few wistful look sent in the direction the pair had gone from Wei Wuxian but he remains. Lan Xichen feels a bit more secured that not all of Wei Wuxian had been lost while they ran out of plesantries to exchange.

"So... About the others, that's... going to be tricky, I won't lie." Wei Wuxian brings up after a bit. "The methods they were put under were different along with behavior grooming."

"It's best you come along and see for yourself though." Admits the near human Wei Wuxian. "It's not pretty, not going to lie."

And so, they are shown the results of the Wen's devolving of various Heirs and disciples. "The physical transformation is easy to reverse, it's not just behavior that's the hard part. It's almost like something fundamental is either surpressed or gone and they're... well..."

Nei Mingjue did, in fact, see that compared to those they've already met and Wei Wuxian himself, there's still something human looking out. In the others, it's hard to believe that they weren't Yao who'd Cultivated a human form for the way they wear the robes, scratching at areas while moving about primarily on their hands and feet. The robes were mostly durable and it's clear that those wearing them have tried to tear them off.

If not for Talismans clearly sown in them, those wearing them would have been going about naked. There's patches of hair on parts of the body that shouldn't have any or that thick. The noises are more akin to canine with more then a few reacting to Wei Wuxian's presence then theirs. Growls with very pointy teeth being bared in snarls.

Rushing at the doors and taking swings at them as they walk through the area. "Jiang Cheng!" Jiang Fengmian cries out at the sight of his son and the way the Heir pauses at snarling and growling at the sight of Wei Wuxian to looking confused at his father, even tilting his head in a manner that one would expect of a dog.

"They seem to not like you very much." Nei Mingjue notes and Wei Wuxian seems to sigh. "Yea, it's unknown if it's due to some kind of impression or from earlier encounters." Admits Wei Wuxian, there's a hint of sorrow and regret that could be seen upon the fact and in those eyes.

"Encounters?" Inquires Lan Xichen and Wei Wuxian sighs. "Yes, I was Dream Walking a lot and I wasn't always in the right state of mind. So, I chased them about their Dreams but reframed from causing harm to their dream selves, just frightened them."

"I haven't been able to reach their dreams, not sure when I couldn't but, I can't now and it's been hard to try and reach them." Admits Wei Wuxian, which cuts off that course of discussion of why can't he reach them on a different level is he could Dream Walk. "The notes that were left behind... Aren't as detailed as we'd like." Before adding, "We do know that they didn't get examined daily as we did, that might have one of the reasons for it."

"You helped Lan Wangji from getting explosed eariler for it not working on him." Lan Xichen states and Wei Wuxian blinks a bit at him, a bit of confusion. Then it seems like something clicks.

"Ah... You mean you... Huh, well, I'll leave Lan Zhan to reveal that on his own." Wei Wuxian states with a slight wave of a hand and with a sad look sent to Jiang Wanyin, who's back at snarling at Wei Wuxian, hands on the bars and giving them a look at the palms of the hands, the way the fingers seem to be rather stiff along with the black nails that seem to curve foreward, bringing to mind a dog's own paw.

Nei Mingjue raises a bit of an eyebrow at the causal use of Lan Wangji's birth name from Wei Wuxian. "Anyway, I had help in Wen Qing, she'd been able to sneak tea for him to drink while I'd spoken with Wen Ning about scounting unused routes out of the city." Wei Wuxian adds.

"Sadly, by the time we came up with a plan and having Wen Ning sneak some of my Talismans to... Well, I'm sure you can guess." There's a rudeful look that crosses Wei Wuxian's face. "Lan Wangji shared with me about the nakeness that's becoming the normal among the others and, well, when he wouldn't... That's how he got exposed."

Silence descends for the remainder of the tour. It's unsettling to see far too many disciples acting so beastly, so inhuman for all that their appearances is far more human then Wei Wuxian's own or the others who'd been completely transformed into beasts and regard a semblance of human form. As they arrive at the exit, Wei Wuxian brings them to the work room and talks about some of the hows and whats that the Wens had created in order to replicate what had happened with Wei Wuxian.

They even get to look at the infamous mirror that started all this. After a while, they break it off for something to eat and refreshments. They get to see the others that had been transformed, not many of them had progressed enough to stand upright like a man or have thin coats, yet they wear a light robe that's been fitted to their frame, a sign that they'd allowed their measurements to be taken and for tailors to be in their space enough to put it on and take it off.

They send out messangers before night to give an update to the other Sects. It would take a while for them to arrive and to react at the state of their various members and Heirs. There's talks about ransacking Nightless City but Wei Wuxian inquires if have a better place for the research in curing their disciples and Heirs then Nightless City? Crimson eyes had glinted when asking.

The Sects decided to leave the matter in Wei Wuxian'd more then capable hands, well, some, lead by the Jin Sect did so with great reluctancy. The crimson bled away and various Sects send their own healers to help with treating the disciples. Books also come pouring in, mostly from the Lan Sect.

At some point, Wei Wuxian and the dozen gain a mastery over their bodies that allows them to shift between being fully human or beastial, plus between looks. By the time five years had passed, something of a solution had been developed, it wasn't perfect but it was the best they could come up with. And so, it's applied slowly to those affected and are sent back to their respective Sects.

While some behaviors had become standard, they had managed to cause a amnesia of a sort and physically revert them fully back to human. It became more of a matter of teaching them the correct behavior along with encouraging them to think instead of merely reacting. It's not the best solution but it worked well enough.

Sadly, Wei Wuxian would never be welcomed back into the Jiang Sect and Jiang Fengmian gave way to Madam Yu's demands in that regard. Then again, no many would welcome him to visit as they continued to blame him for being the cause of the situation, regardless of the truth of what Wen Ruohan had planned originally for the Indoctrination Camp and the quick war that would see the Wen rise fully above the Sects, particularly the Lan and Nei as they had plans to wipe both the Jiang and the Jin Sects from the face of the earth. Such plans could have easily been counterfieted, those that defend their statance by preaching loudly and often.

Not all of the dozen were welcome back to their respective Sects either, so they shed their Sect's robes and take up the colors of Wei Wuxian, black, grey, and red. The Wen Sect's official Sect Leader would be Wen Ning, courtesy name Wen Qionglin, while, in truth, Wei Ying, courtesy name Wei Wuxian, was the actual Sect Leader. His adopted son, Wen Yuan, courtesy name Wen Sizhui, would inherit the post of Sect Leader from both distant cousin and adopted father.

As for Lan Wangji, he married out of the Lan Sect and into the Wen Sect, husband of Wei Wuxian, thus the unofficial Madam of the Wen Sect, and second father to Wen Yuan. The two would go on to adopt many children and when Wen Yuan ascended to Sect Leader, the pair could be spotted wandering around, helping those that need it.

It's due to Wei Wuxian's experience with Resentful Energy that would see the Burial Mound cleansed by the third decade of Wen Sizhui's reign as Sect Leader.

It's unknown when but it's recorded that both Lan Wangji and Wei Wuxian would pass their respective Divine Trials and ascend to Godhood. It would be some decades later that would see Wen Sizhui, leaving the Sect Leader position to his eldest granddaughter, also ascend into Godhood.

The End.

Author's Note:

This was inspired by **It's not a fairytale** by OrcaOnAStroll , which can be found on AO3.

Unknown Consequences of Quest Lines: SVS

I don't own The Scum Villain's Self Saving System's 'Proud Immortal Demon Way'! Only, it's going to be a Cultivation online game instead of a web-novel.

Xin Xing is what he named his Demon character. The Xin is the character for Heart and Xing character can be either Successful or Thriving, he means it as Thriving. Dark grey hair, dark yellow eyes, the starter clothing allows for him to pick a color set, which, for the Demon Race being black, red, and purple. Of course, he goes with black and next is the usual option where he would have picked to either to increase his starter Stats, which are under the categories of Vigor, Mental, and Spirit or he can decide to spend the points into buying and ranking selected Skills to the max of Rating 2, there's a max of the number of Skills that could be at Rating 2 as well, which is having four at that max and two at Rating 1.

Given the nature of the server he's joining, there isn't any real choice as the Stat option has been greyed out. Leaving him to pick either ten skills at Rating 1 or going with four at Rating 2 plus one at Rating 1. The Skills offered are only twenty. And so, he selects, in this order Searching, Appraisal, Bartering, Lore: Demon Realm, Lore: Demonic Clans, Performance: Acting, Performance: Flute, and Performance: Acrobatics. With two points left to spend, he increases Flute to Rating 2 and, after a bit of debate, picks Acrobatics over Acting as it will likely come in handy in fights and exploring the world.

As he finishes, he sees his starting Stats, Vigor has a total of 8 points total, which is divided between Constitution, Dexterity, and Strength, the highest at 4 and his lowest being 1. His Mental total is 3, which is divided by Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom. His Spirit's total is 8, and it's divided between two for his Race along with

the sub-listing being Demonic Qi and Resistance, it seems that his Resistance has a 6 while his Demonic Qi has 2. He knows that each Character's Stats are also randomly generated for this server in a similar fashion with only 19 points total instead of the usual 25 points that his Race typically gets, Human typically get 20 standard points and Spirits get a standard of 30.

The Race Spirits wasn't an option and he'd been torn between Demon and Human... Until all the limited Human slots had been picked, it had been a mere two hundred Players for that Race. He'd been a late sign up for this Server, so he didn't have any solid ideas for a Character. Two of his friends were the ones to talk him into signing up for this Sever, it's some kind of custom server and very story driven, thus role play heavy, he's not overly familiar with the normal edition of this game, only checking out information when he'd been given confirmation about being allowed to join, which was two weeks ago, it's been almost five months since the closed to allowing people to sign up for it.

Xin Xing slowly rotates around before him with the room displaying signs of the Demonic Culture. The Lore skills allow players to get information viva pop up. The higher the Rating of the Skill, the more detailed the information given. He picked his first three skills due to taking his friends' advice before deciding on the others, again, following some advice his friends gave him about the art of Role Playing in games. He figured he'd manage to earn some money viva knowing how to play a Flute or joining an acting troop.

He's fairly sure that having a high Resistance is a good thing, although he'd rather not have his Mental at a total of 3. "I should be able to raise them." He murmurs as he presses the final confirm button. It's the first day of the prepping to the beginning of the Server becoming open. Each player is only allow one Character and that Character will be reviewed, if he doesn't get a message about Xing Xing, then, his Character has likely past the review, being approved.

Closing logging out of the Server and then the game, once back at his main hub, he goes through the list before selecting Eras of Cities

which is a city builder and manager. It'll be six days before the Server, which is entitled Proud Immortal Demon Way will be open for them to play their Characters, the game is Worlds of Wondrous Cultivation 3, the first of the game line that's multiplayer.

(Worlds of Wondrous Cultivation is a single player game where the only Race option had been Human at the beginning. Only through special hidden Quests could the player unlock various other Races, at the time Demonic or Spirit wasn't used as a general Race. What would be consider Breeds in the sequel game were considered separate Races in the first, which needed to be unlock one at a time, be it a Demonic Tiger or Tiger Spirit. Demonic types were noted for having black Qi and are easily enraged while Spirit types for yellow Qi and have difficulty with socializing, being described as emotionally distant. Humans generally have basic and balanced light green to either white or blue, depends on if they specialize in Physical Cultivation Skills and Perks or in Spirit Cultivation and Skills.)

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As the light fades, moving his hands before him, he turns them this way and that. Opening and closing his fingers individually. There's no greeting pop up, but then, he knew that wasn't going to happen. There's no tutorial for him to go through either. Glancing around, he finds himself in a plains area and mutters out the Menu Command. There's no portrait of his current looks, taking in the Stats and then checking his Skills, he wonders what possessed him to pick Performance Skills instead of Crafting Skills given his Mental total.

With a sigh, he checks for any Racial Inherit Perks or Flaws. "Demonic Fox: **Fox Fire** ." It activates but vanishes within seconds as his Qi ran out before he though to dismiss it. One of the Flaws is what he'd consider a minor blessing, at least, he thought it could be, it's called Intoxication Resistance, which means it takes him a lot to get drunk. He's fairly sure that his high RES could be blamed for this particular Flaw. It's his second Flaw that causes him to despair a bit as it's called Qi Medicine Resistance and it is fairly sure that any Healing Items or Medic Arts won't be overly effective on himself

because of this particular Flaw. This one means he'll have to be careful about his HP, making it worst has to do with how low it already is due to having such a low CON.

For other Perks, it's pretty much the flip side of his two Flaws, again, it's due to his RES and, yea, it's a lot listed, but he's a bit confused as to why there's an Aphrodisiac Resistance nor why it's considered a Perk instead of a Flaw? After all, it not like he has any reason to go around buying Aphrodisiac drug. "Am I missing something? I mean, this is a Cultivation game, right?" The player of Xin Xing muses.

In the end, he closes his Menu and begins to take in the room he's in. It's a shallow cave and looking around, he finds a few things that he notes as having some value. Picking them up and putting them into his sleeve, which is how he's to access his Inventory, it's not long before his Search Skill increases along with his WIS Stat. Doing some exploring outside of the cave, he again does the same to what he notices to be of value, his Skills and Stats increase within an hour of doing this.

With a better Appraisal Skill and Mental total, he goes through what he has picked up. With an increase to his INT to it being 5, he's able to use his Lore: Demon Realm to get a better idea of what each is used for. Some of what he gathered is very common and won't bring in a lot of money. It's about half a dozen of that will gather him better money for being rather uncommon given the location he's currently in.

Putting it all back into his Inventory, Xing tries out his Acrobatic Skill and does a few back flips before seeing how high he can jump, using his Qi to boost his jumps. He gets tired by the third jump and finds himself panting a bit, his Con goes up, which is a good thing given he'd managed to raise it only once before. Which gives him the idea to stick around and do some more physically taxing exercise in hopes of raising it even more.

By the end of the day, he's yet to wander very far from the cave where he'd spawned in. Still, he's satisfied with everything he's done,

the only Stat he'd been unable to increase is CHA but that's rather understandable given he's alone in this particular mountainous range. For Skills, it had been his Bartering, Demonic Clans, Acting, and Flute, two of which is the same reason as his CHA but the other has to due with lacking a Flute to use.

It's not until he tries to log out that he gets a reminder about what's needed for him to log out, which is a bed or a sleeping bag. Going through his Inventory just to double check his fears, yes, he lacks a sleeping bag and camping equipment. Closing his eyes, Xing takes a series of deep and calming breaths while repeatedly counting down from ten.

Letting lose a sigh, Xing begins walking away from the cave, down the slop. He does continue to wander around, grabbing what's uncommon and higher quality Items. Altering his path, sometimes going back to grab something. It's near what he'd wager is midnight that he gets his first taste of Combat in the form of something called a {Ore Skin Boar} which is a Rare Demonic Beast that lives in Mountains rich with metal ore.

Making very good use of his Acrobatic to dodge the charging attacks and putting distance between them, Xing considers if he'd be able to flee successfully from this monster. Then something happens that causes the monster's hide to glow before it flashes, which causes him to find it hard to see clearly. It's only hearing the hooves that he manages to dodge to the left, he'd been dodging to the right, so, there's an enraged bellow and he mentally curses as his vision slowly clears up.

One good turn deserves another. Xing things and waits for the last second before not just dodging, but aiming for the nearest eye, " **Fox Fire** !" The boar monster screams in pain and he tries to not pant at having pumped all his Qi into that attack.

It's a bit before his Qi returns and he continues to evade the boar monster. Ignoring the sounds of the pop ups are making, only giving it a bit of a mind at the fact that this fight is helping him get stronger,

the settings have the pop ups not show when in battle. He gets to the other side and does the same to the other eye.

Feeling a bit more secure, after all, he blinded the monster, he isn't expecting it to not be overly hindered when finding him. It's then that he pays attention to realize the snout seems to be moving, which means that the monster is using scent to track him. He continues to evade the charges of the monster, waiting for his Qi reserve to fill enough for him to use his Fox Fire once more and he'll target the nose for the third use of it.

This monstrous boar does the flare, he looks away as a hand covers his eyes along with him closing them. Xing focuses on listening for the hooves clanking upon the stones. As the monster moves, he lowers his hand and looks at the monster. Another series of dodging and he thinks he's got enough Qi for his Fox Fire, so, he waits for the demonic boar to charge at him again and prays that he's able to get the timing right for this, as this is risking injury from the tusks that are jetting out.

" **Fox Fire** !" Xing roars and pours everything into it once more. His hand doesn't move fast enough and he hardly feels any pain, likely due to his high RES. Still, he experiences a brief thrill of adrenaline as the monstrous boar seems to have crashed into the ground.

The sounds of pop ups are heard as he looks between his right hand to the monster for a bit. Straightening up, he cautiously walks over and, well, grabs the exposed throat. And so, he strangles the monster to death, which takes a lot longer then he expected.

The only reason he knows it's dead has to do with the pop ups finally explode before his eyes, with the oldest going first and the rest following in order. The bulk were just confirmation that his Stats or Skill increased. The last has to do with an increase to his STR before fading.

Looking at the monster's corpse, Xing isn't sure what to make of the fact that it remains and there isn't any loot in its place. "I'm... going to

have to butcher it, aren't I?" He mutters out loud and then looks at his only slightly pointed nails of his hands before looking at the slightly shiny hide that's copper with hints of grey about the hooves and covering the majority of the snout. He wonders what kind of metal that grey represent.

He knows how valuable this monster's parts are, the most is the pelt. With a check, his Qi is mostly up and walks over, deciding to see if he can't use Qi to sharpen his nails so he can cut into the body. He's felt how his Qi when he's used Fox Fire. So, he tries to call up the feeling, which causes it to take the form of the navy blue fire that's like Fox Fire.

Letting the feeling go, he tries again. It's the ninth time that he finally manages to focus the filling into his nails of his right hand. A pop up sounds out before appearing, congratulating him on discovering a Demonic Qi Skill: Strengthen Nails. Thankfully, he doesn't need to do much as an option shows up and he selects the Skinning option. Xing finds himself watching himself use his nails to skin the monster. Once he comes to himself, that option list is still waiting for him and he selects the Butcher option, which has his body do so.

With that, he manages to get the pelt and parts into his sleeve. Once that is done, he flickers his right hand around to shake off some of the red blood on his hand. In the end, he wipes his hands on his robes and then he studies the area and then the blood splatter on the ground before him. It's still night and Xing continues on his way down the mountain.

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It's about noon when Xing finally encounters a group of Demons that weren't looking for someone to either rob or gang pressed into being a servant of the leadership of the group. He's tired and wants a bath in hopes of getting clean, given the temporary buildings, which number about twenty and are similar to tents, he's not sure of what kind. *In other news, no bath.* He thinks to himself.

The Demons that he sees sport various animistic characteristics like horns and odd looking eyes, be it in color or in shape to the more extreme like a tail, wings, or an extra eye. He's hardly that surprise that the women look more... human, but then, it's more in having that 'classic' hour glass figure. It suddenly makes him wonder if his looks have changed upon logging in as Xin Xing.

"Greetings." One of the Demons sporting a set of horns from behind the pointed ears and antlers coming from the temple. The nose is smashed up with only slits for nostrils above the mouth. The skin tone is a dark brown and there's a few hints of crows feet at the edge of the mouth. The robes appear to be dark red with off yellow trim, he wonders what kind of material the rough but tough robes are made out of.

"Greetings." Xing returns, his Lore: Demonic Clans doesn't register any of the Demons to be important, thus, would be classified as commoners. "I'm looking to sell and buy." It's bluntly said and he's fairly sure that he made a social faux pas but didn't feel overly invested to reflect on what.

"This one would like to see what it is that sir is looking to sell." The greeter states, hands folding into the sleeves. He can only guess at the other gripping a hidden weapon.

Humming, he pulls out some of the more uncommon items he's collected, most of which are faint glowing stones and some {Ore Rock} that he's only can guess at with some being a few light consuming flowers. Xing notices a slight, intense stare at the flowers. He doesn't have the right Rating to identify those blooms correctly, in his check, it was merely brought up as {Demonic Ebony Pansy(Unconfirmed)}. "Those..." And then the greeter looks up at him, doing his best to mask his interest.

"I'm looking to purchase, for a start, a {Bed Roll} and would like to see what you have for wind instruments." He states flatly. The greeter clearly studying him with a calculating look.

Is he about to be cheated? Yea, he likely is but at this point, he really was just done with the game and have been wanting to log out for some time now. His first encounter with his fellow Race saw him kill two out of the three of the Demons, as did one ran away, and he looted more {Ore Rock} and four clay pots of various poisons. The second had been only a pair and he got away viva using Fox Fire to set one on fire and pushing them into the other. Third had him fight a few examples of the first Demons sporting Rat traits with a singular Demon sharing traits from the second encounter, only larger and sporting slightly different looks.

When he finished with the mob of Rat Demons, not all of them died by his Qi infused nails or Fox Fire as they had been spooked. The odd one out cursed them out for their cowardliness along with offering to only maim him a little before hauling his skinny ass to their Boss. Which, Xing did object to but it was a harder fight, given that this one actually had a sabre and used it. He got away with setting the hair on fire and snapping the straps of the leather belt so it would tangle up with the legs, then he ran to the nearest tree and would then leap from tree to tree as quickly as he could to put distance between himself and that cursing Demon plus jeering mob of Rat featured Demons.

By the time dawn arrived, he'd gotten down from the trees and changed his direction. It's at the edge of a coulee and noticed signs of fire viva smoke. Upon getting closer, he did notice other signs that he's likely going to encounter something, it just surprised him to find such a small traveling band that didn't look like the Demons he'd encountered before.

Finally seemingly getting an idea about Xing, the greeter starts waxing on the Quality of what's being offered and waits for the other to finish before countering the points, particularly about the blooms. It goes back and forth for a bit before he threatens to withdraw the blooms, which gets a startled 'No!' and then the greeter coughs and tries to recover from the miniature break in his business manner. The amount for the blossoms then become the focal point for the next

few rounds and he settles on 6 Gold and 5 Silver for each bloom he has, which he bring out the rest of the nearly three dozen he'd picked from the various bushes he's encountered.

More importantly, Xing now knows what they are called, {Light Absorbing False Pansy}. The dozen {Ore Rock} gets sold at 2 Silver and 9 Copper each, but the other isn't interested in buying all he has on him, which is fair, given how common they can be found near the mountain and having that river near the camp sometimes having carried a few down from the mountain. The total amount he gets from greeter is 199 Gold, 90 Silver, and 8 Copper, the Gold and Silver look like tiny boats while the Copper are those coins with a hole in the middle, they also seem to have different mints.

"About your purchases, please, follow me." And the greeter leads him to the left side of the camp. They stop before a wagon and he wonders where the beasts of burden are, along as what kind of beasts were used.

It's not long before the most important item comes out of a longish box. It's still rolled up and made out of leather, it's been used before and thus it should be cheaper then a new and unused one. Picking it up, he asks, "Given it's been used, how many copper are you wanting for it?" Taking in the weight and turning it over to looking a bit more at the few strains of fur from the streams.

"1 Silver and 20 Copper." And begins a debate over not just the price but his need for one. Xing pays 1 Silver and 6 Copper, all the while during their bartering session, the greeter had been pulling out the small collection of Flutes, some of which are made out of nice Quality material but he doubts at the sound they'd give.

"Mind if I test them?" Xing inquires as he picks up one of the more plain Flutes, it's made from a purple wood. "Is sir sure he's capable to playing one correctly?" The greeter inquires in fake innocent tone.

Rolling his eyes, it's a bit of autopilot but he manages to do a simple Twinkle Twinkle Little Star upon the {Southern Vampire Wattle Flute}.

As he pulls the Flute from his lips, he looks at the bit over two dozen Flutes, ignoring the greeter's clear surprise at him knowing how to play one. Picking one that seems to be bamboo made, putting down the purple flute as well.

{Blooming Ten Year Bamboo Flute} is a touch heavier but as he runs his fingers over the flute's surface, there's something carved on the back side of the Flute. Turning it, the carving seems to be a short poem and he is illiterate, having not picked up any of the Knowledge Skills concerning reading and writing. So, he merely hums and twists the Flute over and tests it by going with some other simple tune, which is likely native to this world.

This goes on and the camp's Demons come stand around, listening to him test each Flute, some proved to be what he expected while others exceeded his expectations. And if his playing only got better and better... Well, at least none are trying to hurry him through to making a choice right away. And so, it takes most of the early afternoon to narrow down the number of Flutes he's slowly increasing Skill helps him pick out sounds the best for what kind of music he's looking to play.

Once it's down to three of them, and they are the {Blooming Ten Year Bamboo Flute}, {Opal Bone Flute}, and {Silver Inlay Gigantic Lacquer Stem Flute}. "The price of these three?" Xing inquires and the greeter gives him the prices of each, "{Blooming Ten Year Bamboo Flute} is 1 Gold and 73 Silver; {Opal Bone Flute} is 23 Gold, 68 Silver, and 84 Copper; and {Silver Inlay Gigantic Lacquer Stem Flute} is 63 Gold, 97 Silver, and 78 Copper."

"The Silver Inlay is the cause for why it's so expensive." He muses out loud as he looks at that Flute. With a hum, he then examines the final two. One is plant and lighter while the other is more like stone and far heavier. While the hints of rainbow of the opal does look nice, he's unsure of if that means it'll shatter easier then the other one, even by dropping it by accident. *Which leaves...*

"I'll buy this one." *It's cheap and can be easily replaced.* He tells himself as he picks up the {Blooming Ten Year Bamboo Flute}.

"Would sir want to look at tassels for his purchase?" The greeter asks and he shakes his head. "No thank you."

Money exchanges hands and he plays a slightly more difficult song on his new Flute. The greeter begins putting the other Flutes away but is clearly listening and enjoying the free performance he's giving the gathered Demons of this camp. As he finishes and puts the Flute into his sleeve and thus his Inventory, which he did to his other purchase. The greeter offered him a look at the rest of what they have, which he agreed with and does go through the contains that he's directed at.

And that's how he bought three slender knives of a simple appearance, a butcher knife, a pair of winter robes with one being dark gray and the other being a light blue, three traveler's robes that match his current robes in color, a straw hat, three water skins that are big enough to hold four liters, and then cooking supplies, including dry ingredients like flour and a small jar of oil for doing some frying, curious to see if he can't fry the monster boar meat at some point. It also caused him to sell more items in the form of roots, leaves, stems, and blooms, either bloomed or as buds to help refill his coin purse.

And so, he walks out of that camp having emptied out some of what's useless for things he can make use of along with having actual money to his name. Xing would find a nice spot in smaller coulee by evening, he'd done his best to travel a bit of the way viva tree tops. He hadn't encountered many monsters since leaving the camp, but assumes it might have to do with the high number of Demons within the area, the more... meek types and more valuable plants have been chased away, hunted, or been harvested.

So, once he's got his camp set up, Xing gives cooking a try, and isn't surprised that he gains said Skill by managing to cook some of the boar with hasty carved wooden sticks and sliced the meat up to

create kabob, with no vegetables between the slices. The kabobs were a bit burnt but upon biting down on it does he realize that he's been hungry for some time now. "Right, role playing." He mutters and also realizes that he likely also have to do the other kind of business as well.

It's when he tried to sign out that he finds out that the Server is on a temporal speed up, as in, the time difference between in game time and real world time is a day per ten minutes in the real world and he can't log out until an hour had passed in real world, which is six days in game. The informative pop up also detailed that the Serve will close at 5 am in China and reopen at 7 am, which is 4 pm where he lives and the time the Serve will come back on is 6 pm. It had been a bit after 7 when he logged into the Server.

And so, he falls asleep. Hoping that he's in a safe enough spot, after all, given he's been awake for nearly two days. It was surprising how fast he fell asleep.

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"So... What did you end up making?" Asks Philip while sitting across from him while at the library of their school. "I mean, you know about mine! Liang Ye, rogue, con-man Cultivator."

He hums, knowing that's true. "Might as well wait for Garth and Pat. I don't want to share it more then I have too." Which wasn't long as the two arrive, sliding their packs under their respective chairs.

"Did he?" Pat asks and Philip shakes his head. "So... you going to spill? I mean, you know about ours." Garth points out.

Sighing, he replies, "Xin Xing, Demon." He gets pitying look from the three. "So, your stuck solo playing." Sums up Pat as she reaches out and pats his hand in consolation.

"I started out with a six in my RES but only a two in my Qi." He admits and there's a whistle from his two friends while Pat mutters a

simple, "Lucky."

"I only had ones across my Mental." He continues. "My DEX was the highest with CON at the lowest. Which, looking back at how events ended out playing out, was likely why I'd been able to use my Acrobatics so effectively."

"Acrobatics?" Philip asks with a hint of bemusement while Pat looks a bit interested while Garth seem to working out why he'd pick such a Skill. "So, you just leap around in a fight?"

"Works very well when you're traveling from one tree to another." Is how he replies. "Just curious, did you guys pick the Skill that grants you the ability to read and write?" He doesn't recall their Characters perfectly, after all, they weren't his responsibility.

"Didn't need to." Pat admits. "You kind of need it to read Cultivation manuals as well as to write letters to try and join a Sect."

"Oh, huh, that's kind of interesting." He muses. "But then, I guess you don't start with a Qi ability."

"What? Wait, hold up, you get a Qi ability right off the bat?! How unfair!" Whines Philip and he remarks, "Demonic Qi at two."

"What was it?" Asks Garth curiously. "Fox Fire." He admits and wonders if he should share the list of Perks and Flaws he has due to having such a RES before deciding it's not something they need to know.

"Hmm, so, you couldn't use it a lot at the beginning then?" Pat muses and he nods. "Spend the first day sticking around where I spawned and just, doing things and collecting whatever looked valuable. Only to find out that I needed a bed or sleeping roll in order to log out."

"And then found out that you can't log out until nearly seven days had passed in game." Remarks Pat and he nods. "So, bandits?" She

muses and he blinks before it dawns on him what she means.

"Nope, the Demons I killed didn't have money, just ore rocks and some clay pots for poisons." He corrects her impression. "I got money from selling the various items I picked up, mostly the ore rocks and various plant parts."

"Aarg, really? You picked up a bunch of rocks and sold them for actual money?" Philip moans and Garth gives a very fake look of sympathy along with a series of pats on a shoulder. "There there." Garth adds.

"I spawned in a cave on a mountain." He states with a shrug. "The Demon World is suppose to be more dangerous, so, ecology of that world kind of calls for it? It wasn't until noon of the second day did I encounter a traveling camp of Demons that weren't interested in attacking me. Was just glad they had what I wanted to buy along with buying what I was looking to sell."

"What did you end up buying?" Pat asks curiously and he lists everything besides the mention of the flute that had been his second purchase, after all, he didn't think it worth mentioning nor about how those Demons had gathered around as he was testing out various flutes.

"Just how much money did you earn to buy so many things? Demon goods are always marked up compared to Human sold goods." Philip states while Garth adds, "Got a wider selection though. No need for a black market."

"Hm, well, the most expensive would be the blossoms of Light Absorbing False Pansy." He admits, "Nearly three dozen of them, six gold and a bit of silver for each."

The mention of price per blossom, they each sport various looks of shock, surprise, wistfulness, and envy. "Well, damn. How'd you know they were that valuable?" Asks Garth, the first to recover his voice.

"Didn't know what they were, neither of my two Skills were Rated that high." He admits. "Which two?" Asks Pat.

"Appraisal and Lore: Demon Realm." He answers. "Neither were the ones I upped the Rating on." He admits.

"So, you did go with Appraisal, Barter, and Search like we suggested then?" Philip pipes in and he nods. "OK then, I hope you plan to make it up to us in some fashion in the future." Philip states and he merely smiles before glancing at the clock of the library.

Garth brings up the reason they were suppose to be visiting the library in the first place and thus, they reviewed the list of books they can pick from for a book report. He considers just what kind of book he would find interesting enough to read without forcing himself to. They leave their bags under their chairs as they went around the shelves to see the book covers and read the summary on the back.

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In the eight months since this Server, he'd learnt a lot of about Fox Demons along with learning that yes, Xin Xing's Fox Demon blood is notable in his appearance what with him having fuzzy ears, sharp canine looking teeth, and having the ability to manifest a fox tail. As for why he'd invested in learning about Fox Demons, it seems his Fox Demon blood is that of a sub-variant instead of that of a more common and jack of all trades type that is Common Fox Demon. The hint has to do with his grey coloring of hair, it signifies one of the two known mountain breed of Fox Demon which is, so creatively, called, Rock Fox Demon. Despite the element in the name, their Qi elemental is actually wind and their specialty is in illusions based upon sound, which covers music.

The second mountain Fox Demon is called Snow Fox Demon and they have white but instead of black marks they instead sport light blue, which notes them from the Ice Fox Demon, who have the typical black markings. Ice Fox Demons' primary elemental Qi is water with wind as a secondary while Snow Fox Demons' primary

elemental Qi is wind with their secondary being water, their names do say what they have the easiest time creating when combining the two elements. Ice Fox Demons primarily live in the Northern Kingdom while Snow Fox Demons can be found where mountains are like his own, which means the two mountain breeds are often in conflict over said territory.

As for the other sub-variants of the Fox Demons are, Moss Fox Demon, Stone Fox Demon, Spiral Fox Demon, and Abyssal Fox Demon. The Moss Fox Demons are known to live in Jungles and sport dark green markings instead of black, the primary coat color being any. Stone Fox Demons are known for having grey coat without any black markings or lighter coat for their belly with them also just possessing the max of three tails and then their Qi nature being earth, which they use to turn their bodies into said element so that they can merge into earth and stone to travel through said stuff without a trace showing where they are within said material. Then there's Spiral Fox Demons come in orange with shades of yellow for markings, what's notable is the red spiral that's found either on their heads, chest, or lower back as for powers, they are also well known for having dual elemental nature, which is generally fire matched with some other one but it's not always. Finally, Abyssal Fox Demons sport total black coats with them possessing two different eye colors, they are known for either conjuring illusions of or having beyond the typical nine tails, and like their name suggests, they are commonly found in the Endless Abyss.

Letting out a sigh, Xing considers the Quest Board of the city. There's no real rating system to what's posted which means he's got to rely upon his own judgement. Thankfully, he's spent time not just studying up on Fox Demons but on learning other things that he thought would pay off.

There's a request for collecting five monsters, alive it seems. A living {Flesh Swimming Beetle} seems to be worth more then a dead one, strangely enough, but luckily, there's ways to encapsulate one using a particular Talisman and common tree sap. Having spent a lot of

time and money on learning Demonic counterpoint of the general Cultivator Skills, he doesn't need to spend money on buying said Talisman as he can create his own. It's more of a question of being careful when it came to dealing with the frightfully dangerous and yet tiny bug as he didn't want one getting into his body, after all.

Given the ease of which said monster insect has with ignoring most organic material, Xing is in need of inorganic material for both footwear and what passes off as 'socks' of this particular game. It's a matter of finding a genuinely made without the maker cheating by having used something other then said material. He's hoping for boots, which means he could get away without having 'socks' made out of something similar, after all, it's rather expensive given that it's also a casual display of wealth by both powerful Demons and wealthy ones.

So ignoring that one, he continues reading. Most, upon skimming, are fetch or collecting requests. The few that weren't, well, seem to have them meeting with someone about a Quest. With a soft sigh, he selects the Quest concerning bringing back a mini statue from an old manor that belonged to a previous Eastern Duke, he's not sure which one given how restless said Kingdom is as there isn't an agreed to King or Emperor. The only given hint of what the statue is, has to do with it being tiger.

It's only when he checks through a book he owns about Directional Animals did he realize that tiger isn't a symbol of the east but the west direction. The symbol of a dragon is used for east, for the north is a turtle, and a bird for the south. Considering what he knows, the Western Kingdom hasn't had a structured governing body for nearly a thousand years. With the fall of the Pei Clan, which had been the main line descendants of the founder of the Kingdom, the name of whom he doesn't known but the Pei Clan had been a sub-variant of Tiger Demon, likely white in color given what he read about the Directional Animals, well, unless there's more to it then that?

Either way, Xing thinks that it'll be something interesting to do, after all, if this statue is still not found within this more then likely estate, it

means that it's not been fully looted by many. It takes him nearly six weeks of travel to made it to into the Eastern Kingdom. He'd done a number of quick Quests along with being sure to go through the various self improvement Daily Quests. Of course, he log out and into throughout that time, done over three days with varying time played.

He'd been unsure if anyone else hadn't completed the Quest by the time he arrived within sight of the estate and he'd been unsure if he'd gotten the right place, so, he'd asked around among the locals that lived in a village near the estate. The history of the Copper Bell Mansion was simple, built by Duke Hua Ling, who was a plant Demon, who didn't care about the name, hence the seemingly silly name. As a plant Demon, the Duke didn't have a definite gender nor did they marry as that's not how the Duke's kind reproduces, didn't think of a different one other then the one the architect had put down as a project's name by the time it finish getting built.

The point of the Duke being a plant Demon is also why it got abandoned after... well, the final assassination attempt, it did succeeded but it also kind of didn't. Given the rampant vines that are trying to escape out of the property's barrier, the story goes that the Duke ended up reacting to the poison mist of the assassin by seemingly withering up. Then, as the assassin was waving to bring in whoever was waiting for a signal, the body exploded in new growth and it wasn't long before the whole manor gets covered by the Duke's new growth, roots digging in firmly the ground and in months, a great tree over takes the outside of the manor.

Various attempts had been made to cut into the manor and the plants surrounding the gigantic tree that had been the former Duke Hua Ling for various reasons only saw the tree giving off a glow that encouraged the various plants to mutant or evolve into more dangerous kinds. So, it became challenging to even get at the tree, let alone trying to get into the encapsulated manor. There isn't a lot of information about the former servants and he wonders if they managed to get out or if they died within the manor.

It makes sense that those servants that hadn't been at the manor at the time of the assassination lived pass what happened to the manor, it's the ones that had been in their respective rooms that causes him to wonder if they could have lingered after death, transforming into ghosts or their corpses becoming wandering dead, he knows from listening to his friends that it's something that happens in the Human Realm of the game. He hasn't encountered any restless dead in the Demon Realm but it could be just a matter of time and that time is now.

It was pretty late when he finishes with his information gathering and speaks with the only tavern about providing some entertainment for a meal and drink. Many seem to sit silently as he plays his {Blooming Ten Year Bamboo Flute}, it's hardly the first time he's done this kind of thing and Demons seem to be more incline to be friendly with him. For himself, he's come to find playing music as relaxing and de-stressing activity.

As the evening ends, a waitress brings him that free meal and drink along with praising his playing. Xing is sure to be polite while talking with her before she hurries away. Alone, he eats, sampling each of the dishes before taking a sip out of the drink, it burns a bit going down and it's then that he realizes it's liquor he'd been served.

Oh yea, drinking age being... Huh, is there even one in this game? Xing wonders. Still, he does his best to eat between sips, as he finishes, he downs the last of the liquor before heading to the room he paid for upon arriving in this town.

Getting ready for bed has him ordering a bath and being sure to take care of his long hair. Once he's managed it, he blows out the candle and gets into the bed. Upon waking, Xing bushes his hair and then changes his under robes and then begins to add the other layers for his outfit. Pulling out the basket he collects the layers of yesterday's outfit, it's not full yet so he has a bit before he'll need to do his laundry or to play others to do it for him, it depends if he's in just feeling lazy or is busy.

Then comes putting his hair in a work ponytail and going through his various knives, a war fan, and a staff. The staff was for trap checking, it's the ninth one he's owned and unlikely to be the last one, given the nature of the task he used it for. Next was going through his stock pile of Demonic Qi Tools and Talismans plus going through the book of Beginner Arrays, it's the Demon edition, of course. Once that's done, he double checks his supply of various papers, inks, and brushes.

As he can't ever get rid of that one Flaw, there isn't much point in carrying healing potions, balms, but then, he doesn't really need anti-poisons and the like in turn. Given how little pain he'd felt throughout various fights, he had to check the Perk list in search of an explanation and it seemed that he's had Pain Resistance since the beginning, which makes him really wonder if RES was a broken Stat. *I'll figure out a way around that Qi Healing flaw one of these days.* Xing promises himself.

Once everything it packed up into his Inventory, he heads down and orders breakfast. What he orders is whatever local specialty there is for congee, eating something light given what he's going to be doing today. Done, he pays and leaves to begin scouting about the barrier. He'll be seen leaving the area this morning before sneaking back, after all, he didn't know weather he's being paranoid about this Quest but it seemed like a good idea to stay cautious.

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"So, how's things as Xin Xing?" Pat asks as they take a break from doing their homework. They're in her parents' kitchen, grabbing some snacks and refilling their respective glasses with soda.

"Eh?" He hadn't expected her to bring it up, after all, it's not like he's playing in the same Realm. It's generally Garth, Pat, and Philip talking about shared adventures, gossiping, and making plans. He's pretty sure they have their own Group Chat for doing just that.

"Come on, Aaron, you hardly talk about your time on the Server." Pat continues and he... guesses that's right. "Unless..." There's something odd that flickers in her eyes.

"Unless?" He parrots back with a questioning tone. Confusion likely evident upon his face.

"Well, Demons... They are strong believers of Might makes Right." Pat replies and that doesn't really explain anything in his opinion as he's fairly sure that in the Human World of the game, it's pretty much the same, only they do it in a more cloak and dagger way then Demons.

"I'd say that Demons are more straight forward compared to Cultivators or Humans." He reasons out loud. "As for Xin Xing, things are going rather strange since I collected this tiger statue from a former Duke's estate."

"Tiger statue?" Pat inquires, gently encouraging him to continue to on about the topic. Humming as he takes downs a bit of his soda before he begins to elaborate upon the issue, "So, you know about Directional Animals in Chinese Mythology? Tiger, turtle, dragon, and bird?"

"Sounds familiar." Pat admits and he nods. "Tiger is west, turtle is north, dragon is east, and bird is south. It's also something Japan shares it as well." He explains.

"So, there was this miniature figurine of the White Tiger and it's a Relic of the Western Demon Kingdom." He continues as he gently swirls the contains of his glass as he tries to organize his thoughts concerning his particular snag for Xin Xing. "It was on a request board and I thought it would be nice to see another part of the Demon Realm, ok? So, I wasn't in a hurry, not worried about time as someone else could have already picked it as a Quest."

Pat states, "Ok. So, did someone?"

"No." He says as a sigh. "You see, the Eastern Duke who'd owned it, well, they were a plant Demon." He looks over at Pat to see if she knows that there could be plant Demons.

"Ok? How was that a problem?" Pat asks curiously as he takes a sip of his soda.

"So, they don't have any particular gender and don't really have body Heirs." He explains. "But, well, there was this assassin attempt on this Duke and went in both directions at the same time? The Duke wasn't able to continue on as a Duke but nobody could loot the estate due to how the Duke's body engulfed the manor, making into like a huge tree in the end."

"Then, as people tried to get into the mansion, they'd cut through the overgrown plants and in doing so, those plants began to either mutant or evolve into higher kinds." He continues as he recalls how thankful he was to have so many Resistances to so many things. "Many had become able to induce aphrodisiac reaction in various kinds of Demons along with classic poisons with various kinds delivery systems or acid sprayers."

"Well, at least you had plenty of anti-elixirs once you saw the estate?" Pat muses and he snorts before stating in a dry tone, "Ah, did I mention I started with a six in my Resistance? And that I started off with a rather robust list of Resistance Perks? Oh, and two Resistance Flaws."

"Poison being one of the Perks then?" Pat muses and he nods. "Yip, and one of my Flaws has to do with Qi Medicine Resistance." He admits, "With it, I hadn't seen much point in investing in healing stuff."

There's a look of sympathy from Pat. "Sounds rough. I can't imagine playing without that kind of hindrance."

"I'm looking into it." He admits as he thinks about the few Clans that sport a regenerative trait that's strong enough to regrow limbs. "Oh,

did mention that I did some research about Fox Demons and found out that there are sub-variants? The kind of Fox Demon I'm descended from is call Rock Fox Demon? Seven Demonic breed total."

"Anything special about being one?" Pat asks and he replies, "Wind for Qi Nature and gray coloring." He doesn't share the tidbit about audio being the medium for illusions.

"So, did you get the statue?" Pat asks as he finishes drinking his soda. As he refills the glass, his thoughts return to the subject of said tiger statue. "Yea, I got in." He debates over sharing how he found his way into that manor or about what he encountered once he got in.

"I found the statuette that was made out of some kind of white steel and had once had painted black stripes." The metal's name ended up having the triple question mark in brackets so he's unsure of its name. "Which brought up the optional Quest to pursue the Kingship of the Western Demon Kingdom and when I declined it when it popped up, another optional Quest is a Kingmaker quest-line. They also show up daily upon waking up in the morning."

"And people are hunting you down for it?" Pat muses and he nods. "Yea but I also can't sell it as it's bound to me, it seems that picking it up with your own dry blood on a hand was a bad idea." Stated in a very dry tone as he glares at his left hand, it was the hand that had said dry blood.

"So, you're still soloing and now anyone looking to rule the Western Demon Kingdom has to go through you." Pat muses and he nods with a sigh, a hand running through his hair before rubbing behind his nose. "And do to this being a world changing item, if I die, I die permanently." He admits as his hand goes down and he looks down into his glass.

"The reason your not dead yet has to do with the lack of accepting the King path." Pat muses and muses, "Philip would be so jealous

over such a situation, wishing it had been his Liang Ye in that position."

He hums in agreement. "Yea, Philip's gotten pretty power hungry ever since Liang Ye got that fragment of that mirror." The name of the mirror isn't one he knows off the top of his head. "He really wants to use that mirror to create his own pocket dimension." For what purpose, he doesn't really know but could only guess. *Likely for the prestige of being the first player to have recreated such a Legendary item and having something like it.* He muses.

"Well, it's not like Garth doesn't have his own plans concerning launching his Gongsun Shu into the spot light." Pat admits before looking at the clock display upon the microwave. "I think we should head back up, we still have a bit more to write."

Putting the lid back on the bottle, he puts it into the fridge while Pat finishes with her soda bottle, which he also puts into the fridge. Soon enough, they pick up whatever snacks they came down for. Moving to the side, he let Pat head up the stairs first. Walking back to the office/study that belongs to Pat's dad.

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Looking at the half-Demon, one Luo Binghe, Xing wonders for the first time if he shouldn't be thankful for that one troublesome Flaw as {Heavenly Demon's Blood Parasite} counts as a Qi Medicine technique. Thus the idea of the food being laced with the Heavenly Demon's blood doesn't bother him as much as it does the others gathered within the room. All having been summoned concerning the situation of the Western Demon Kingdom.

In game, it's been years since he came into possession of that statuette that is also a {Relic of Kingship}. Then again, the Server had been spend up to help progress the story of this Server's game and thus the two Realms of the game. The fact that he'd been solo playing for so long, it's still something of a surprise that his Xin Xing is still alive and whole compared to what's happened concerning the

circumstances that happened concerning that mirror fragment that Philip's character had and the execution for Evil Cultivation that Garth's character had been found guilty of practicing with Pat's character getting handed a prison sentence for her ignorance about Garth's character's actions.

It would be half a year before whoever owns the Server allows those players who suffered perma-death of their character to create another one. If there were space for Human characters, those who'd played Demons got first choice to decide if they wanted to try being a Cultivator or pursuing some other career path besides that. Which saw Garth and Philip making Demons, Garth's Demon is named Nanguo Zhou and is of feline Demon descent and Philip's second character gets named Ye Wang and is descendant of a breed of Lizard Demon, which are generally of the Southern Demon Kingdom. As for Pat, she's just waiting out her sentence instead of going through with suicide so she can make a second character.

And so, as the tension continues to build as few of the various Demons refuse to accept the hospitality of their Host. Given the previous sneers and comments before the half-Demon entered into the room, it was fairly clear they mistrust Luo Binghe's intentions to try and rectify this matter. Many thinking that he'll just lay claim to the empty post himself or set up a figurehead of a King who'll answer to him.

While he's incline to agree with that sentiment, Xing just wanted to get this issue over with and be rid of the statuette. Being so paranoid, it might have done wonders for his incentive to learn the typical Art that is Illusions but with the Status of {Stressed} he ate more and didn't have very restful sleep at night. He's also fairly sure he'd have been driven to drink if he could get intoxicated from drinking liquor or turned to some other drugs. But since that wouldn't work for him, he's become rather dependent in musical pursuits to de-stress plus, learning new instruments helped him hide his identity as many know him as a Flute playing Fox Demon that sports gray hair.

There's been only a bit of small talk going on as he spends time sampling the various offered food and drinks. Waiting for things to get on track concerning the issue they were summoned for. The son of the King of the Northern Demon Kingdom arrives and seems to glide towards the man who defeated Mo Yu, whispers into Luo Binghe's ear a report of some kind. Once done, Mo Yu stands up straight and waits for a signal of either dismissal or to be given some order.

A slight gesture and Mo Yu leans back down, this time it's Luo Binghe who whispers instructions to Mo Yu. "As you command." The Ice Demon states before gliding out of the room.

"Gentlemen and Ladies, it's time for us to discuss the matter that brought us here." The half-Demon addresses the room with a seemingly charming smile. Given the way most react to the smile, it seems that Luo Binghe really was nice looking, if one likes men.

Many eyes flicker at him and he pulls the statuette out of his Inventory, getting up a bit as he places it a bit more to the center of the table. Settling back down, the various gazes are now on the statuette, which still sports faded and chipped painted stripes. The eyes are purple gemstones while he still doesn't know the definitive name of the metal it's made out of. As his gaze lands upon Luo Binghe, the other seems to be staring at him, the mark upon the forehead glows lazily along with eyes being the same red as that mark.

Then they break looking at one another and he leans a bit more into his chair. The half-Demon is rather intense after all, he wonders a bit about what kind of life he'd lived before ending up in the Endless Abyss. There's a lot of rumors about Luo Binghe's background, but there's likely some truth to be found in some of them. Given the ease of which the other uses the Demon sword that's named {Xin Mo} with confidence, there's history between Luo Binghe and Demon Saint Sha Hualing, and he's rather distasteful when it comes to dealing with Demons as he'd been a member of a Cultivator Sect.

He's not sure when various Demons piped in about their qualifications only that as he comes out of his musings over the rumors centering around Luo Binghe but it was growing in volume. Most claiming blood connection to the Pei Clan or about boasting their family/clan's accomplishments. It's not long before bids began to come forth and he never liked when that came up, as though money was all that's needed to make one a King.

Well, I guess it could have, if it weren't for the fact that it devolves into threats to just kill me and claim it before I ever thought about a price tag. Xing muses to himself. His eyes drift towards Luo Binghe instead of the statuette and wonders about the man's motives for taking the role of Kingmaker. His gaze changes to taking in the various paintings that decorate the room and then works on a particularly odd techinque so he can see the paintings or decorations behind him without turning around, it's a self targeted hybrid of Divination and an Illusion to do so. It's a tricky visual Illusion.

"This Lord is rather curious about Xin Xing's claim." He blinks before starting a bit as it seems he's just been dragged into the conversation. Blinking as he let's the Illusion go to stare at Luo Binghe, his mind rather blank and thus, he doesn't really have an answer to what seems to be an inquiry or an order.

"Pardon? Lord Luo Binghe?" He voices as he's not sure if he heard it correctly. Then his mind takes in the statement before stating as politely as possible, "This one isn't interested in the position nor does this one think this humble one's opinion should carry any weight upon this matter as this one is a mere wandering musician."

"It's been this Lord's understanding that this statuette is bound to one such as yourself." Luo Binghe replies. "Such relics, this Lord has heard, don't just bind themselves to someone at random. It this this Lord's understanding that if the applicant isn't suitable, they are drained of their Qi and Life."

Eh? Xing's gaze flickers to the metal statuette. There's an answer he could give, he's sure, but saying it's likely due to his RES likely would

be breaking character. Which, he's been fairly good with, having only receive two separate warnings about it throughout his time playing on this Server. After all, he's very much a foreigner in regards to the target audience and the Culture that's within this game isn't one he's typically exposed to never mind live within. It's only due to very good translation programs that he's able to understand the language within this game.

"This one isn't sure if that is truly the case and thus, must bow to Lord Luo Binghe's superior knowledge upon this topic." It seems to be the only thing he could say in this situation. "This one does not feel as though the mantle that the statuette bestows is a right fit upon this one."

And why did it seem that his reply seem to bemuse the half-Demon? There's a slight up taking of the lips and there's something about the manner of which the Demon Lord, soon to be King of the Southern Demon Kingdom, says, "This one will take that into consideration."

As the various eyes shift from him, he wonders when the total of the Demon Realm will bow down to Luo Binghe as Emperor of the Realm. *Likely some time after he claims the Southern Throne.* Xing thinks to himself as the others, once more, being to sway Luo Binghe's regard in the matter of Kingship of the Western Kingdom.

For all that Demons have such a wide variety of traditions and polite manners, third person speaking continues to be regarded as proper and formal manners. *It's the same in the Human Realm.* He recalls the complaints of his RL friends.

Soon enough, the evening comes to an end and before leaving, Xing makes a showing of stowing away the statuette into his sleeve. He knows that if he didn't, about thirty minutes and it'll be in his Inventory, having vanished from where he left it. Once in his room, he begins preparations for security before he makes use of the wooden tub that's filled with water, a simple use of a Talisman and the water is rather hot, but by the time he's ready to enter it, it should cool down enough to be merely hot warm instead of just hot.

Stretching a bit before entering into the water, Xing manifests his twin tails before entering into the tub. It takes him a bit to clean his tails and his own hair, being sure to use the right items to ensure it remains healthy and nice looking. As he gets some under robes on, he begins preparing his own security measures concerning his stay within this room for the night.

He is sure to place the {Minor Scrying Mirror} on the inner door of the wardrobe before plastering only six {Temporary Space Expansion Talisman} within it. It'll take a bit before the space will be the right size for himself, so he continues work on the room, particularly with the bed. The Illusions that he has the most trouble with has to do with death scenes as he has to account for methods on top of how powerful the assassin doing it is. The more powerful, the harder to fool, particularly given they might be expecting an Illusion given it's known he's a Fox Demon, what's unknown to the majority at large is that he's a sub-variant on top of that.

Setting up the {Wind up Comb Music Box} between the bed and the wall, there's a simple Talisman warped around the casing. He sets up the trigger Talismans at the door and the window. At the hidden door that he found, he sets up a Barrier Array that he will leave up for the next few days they'll be discussing this matter. While Xing would love to check the ceiling for another hidden door, he isn't a Cultivator and he's yet to find an Array that can have something as small as a sword float in the air with someone on it.

The final trap has to do with the fake statuette that's on what passes as a night stand. There's obvious traps and hidden traps about the room. All of which are simple as he'll have to remove them come morning, before the servants assigned to this room arrives to do so.

And so, he enters into the wardrobe and unrolls his bedroll. With an Alarm Talisman upon his left wrist set to go off two hours before dawn. Xing does his best to just... fall asleep.

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It's the pounding of the door that wakes him, there's a servant standing there once he puts on something over his night robes. The servant informs him that his presence is required and then comments that he'll send someone over to help him dress. Blinking a bit blankly at the servant's back, Xing didn't have time to finally realize what that implies and as his face heats up, he shuts the door.

The room he spent the night in isn't the one he was led to. Practically a minute of being in that room, Mo Yu arrived into the room viva a portal, picked him up before stepping through another portal and left him in the room. And thus, whatever assassination attempt that was going to happen wasn't going to be targeting the correct room, nor would he be within the room for them to find. So, without worrying about needing to set up his own security, Xing takes a quick look to realize it's likely a servant's room, which likely means he's in the Servant Quarters.

Shaking his head, he resists the urge to yawn as he walks around. With a sigh, he considers what to wear viva going through his Inventory. While he would like to have a bath, as he didn't have one before going to bed, he unties his hair from it's sleeping style. As he begins to comb his hair, there's a quick knock on the door before someone enters, the servant is on the short side and might be a young teen at most, a preteen at the least plus being a maid given the cut of the uniform.

This young servant's ears are on the side of the heads, reminds him of a rodent's. Eyes are slits with their color being purple with the face seems to suggest a muzzle or snout. He notes that there isn't a notable tail, or if there is one, it might be a tiny thing that could be hidden under the cloths. The teeth he glimpses seems to be a mixture of rodent and smallish fangs.

Soon enough, the servant takes charge and takes over combing his hair. Once it's done, they move onto his robes and then on styling the hair, he gets asked for something better then a hair tie. It takes him a bit to pull out the collection he's been gifted throughout his time in the game. The servant tuts at the selection before sighing

while picking out a rather well carved hair piece that's made out of {Jade Maple Wood} with a hair stick of {Thorn Abyssal Oak} with white gold inlay that goes throughout the hair stick.

The hair is in a style that's rather complicated, likely the most complicated he'd worn since he arrived in for this discussion. He's not sure why the servant gives him an expectant look as he puts away the hair accessories into his sleeve. "What?" He finally asks.

"Jewelry." He isn't sure what to make of that statement but, sadly, he does have pieces he's also been gifted. "What kind?" Xing asks with a bit of bafflement.

"Just... all of it. I'll pick out something." The servant states after sighing and rubbing her nose bridge. Giving him a good look at the tips of the fingers that has natural black 'nail' about the finger tip, the thumb doesn't have the same on it.

And so he does, necklaces, bracelets, rings, brooches, belt accessories, rings, and things that could clamp on his ears, leaving the actual earring in the Inventory. His ears are not pierced nor does he want to pierce them. The servant hums at the collection, some were wooden, others stone, and then there's a few made out of various metals, most of the metal used is either gold or silver.

Xing isn't that surprise that wood and gold pieces at considered with a great deal of intent. He feels like a doll as he begins trying on various selections that the servant picks out, even spinning when asked. He's fairly sure that this is taking far too long but she seems to be rather firm about making him presentable, which only causes him to wonder about what kind of act is going to be put on about whoever it was that was allowed to enter into the estate to 'assassinate' him.

It's a bit over an hour before he leaves the simple room he spent the night in. About his left wrist is a dark wooden bracelet with a clear gemstone, it's carved like a eight legged dragon, the name of the dragon escapes him. On his belt is an ornament sporting a black

stone talisman with a tassel that's a neutral grey strings. Right wrist sports a golden linked bracelet that has tiny ruby gemstones on every second link. There isn't anything hanging from his neck nor about his throat.

While the servant clearly displeased at the lack of make up, she seems rather displeased that she couldn't enhance his natural features. It seems she be-mourns that she can't enhance his eye lashes. Still, he's handed off to a different and older servant, one that possesses a monkey while also sporting horns that wouldn't look out of place on a ram or goat, only they are a polished dark red. The eyes of his guide are reptilian gold and green.

He's lead out of the Servant Quarters and out into a courtyard before entering into the main manor. Xing gets something of a tour of more of the manor as he's lead back to the Guest Wing. He gets more then a few casual looks from guards and from the servants, he blames his Fox Demon heritage for giving him a very human appearance.

Xing is proven correct, that what's about to happen was going to be a pageant as he's right on time for the dramatic arc of the act. He listens with half an ear to Luo Binghe's antics and the reactions from the other guests. It doesn't some as much of a shock when one of the guests finally breaks his polite mask to lunge at Xing with a very thin sword, an example of the 'mythical' soft sword, that had been hidden under the wide cloth belt.

He moves to the side and is sure to break the wrist upon catching it, forcing the soft sword to fall to the ground. He stares into the other Demon's eyes, which are a silver grey. "Forgive this Lord for not reacting quickly enough in defense of honorable guest." It's not long before he lets go of the wrist as the other Demon is lifted into the air viva the neck, which has the hand of Luo Binghe about it.

"This one must apologize for being bring trouble into Lord Luo's estate." Xing says, it's said respectfully and politely. It's more for

social graces then because he actually feels like that. Being sure to do the right bow directed at Luo Binghe.

Lines in a play. Xing muses to himself as Luo Binghe ignores the final pleads of the attacker is giving while slowly get choked out. Being more alert, he does his best to keep watching the crowd of watching guests, figuring that someone might try something while this was going on. *All the world is a stage and we are mere actors playing out our parts.*

It seems that none had the nerve to act out and as the body drops to the floor, Luo Binghe addresses the others while sporting some Demonic Qi slowly moving off of his body in the manner of fire. Threatening tone and body language, all designed to cow those around himself. And Xing notices lust flaring up ever so often in the eyes of those other Demons, it wasn't just in the women's eyes but a few of them men's own.

Even he finds it hard to not shiver at the sight and listening to that tone, Luo Binghe's Demonic Qi is heavy in the air, seemingly causes gravity to grow heavier and heavier until it's like he couldn't remain standing, that any more pressure and he'd be on his knees or flat on his butt. He truly doesn't wish to be on the receiving end of this Demon Lord's fury. He's only got two tails, after all, he's no match for this half-breed. He knows that Heavenly Demons have been known to unite the four Kingdoms of the Demon Realm, taking the position of Emperor with all bowing down to them, looking to carry their favor.

It's why it's so widely believed that Luo Binghe is looking to follow into his various ancestors' foot prints. There's been a few Heavenly Demons who died before doing so, with many become famous. Although he doubts that history recorded how it went down properly. Between being immune to most poisons, it's their regeneration that's the roadblock for killing them in a duel, never mind with armies. It's most likely through assassination that those few Heavenly Demons died to, poison or some other, likely decried unhanded, means.

And so, Luo Binghe pronounces his decision after reigning in his Demonic Qi and as they all recover from such an experience, he states, "This Lord has given it much thought and given the under handed manners that have been employed, decides to support Xin Xing's candidacy as the carrier of the {Bright Steel Tiger of the Western Rule}." What a mouthful. Xing thinks before it really registers what Luo Binghe had just done.

"What?" He states but it's drowned out by much louder protests who clearly forgot about what just happened just seconds ago. *Hold on, since when did I throw my name into this?* He mentally complains as he finds it rather hard to work his mouth plus it was dry, likely due to being open. His lips moved but nothing was said.

I don't want a kingdom to rule! I'm not playing this game to try and manage anything besides myself! This is suppose to be about me not doing empire building! Like, of any kind! Xing thinks as he face palms his mouth after closing it with a soft click of his teeth.

In what way have I shown myself to be a leader of men? Err... of Demons? He wonders to himself. *Or power hungry. Or ambitious. Or... well, anything besides being a good musician and survivor?*

But there's no way Luo Binghe is going to change his mind. Of that, Xing is sure. The man, the half-breed is known to be stubborn and is beginning to be rather ruthless when it comes to ensuring what he wants to happen to happen. Still, he's not fully sure when he's been guided out of that hall, doesn't really remember being told to follow either. And yet, he's in a rather spacious office that he's fairly sure is belonging to Luo Binghe.

It takes him a bit to calm himself down, his fingers twitching as though he was playing an instrument. Focusing on his breathing, his eyes being closed, he can pretend he's playing a calming tune. When the door opens, he listens for it to close before opening his eyes and looking over his shoulder before turning his whole body around to give a proper bow, "Lord Luo."

Once he's held it for the polite amount, he straightens and Luo Binghe moves to sit down behind the desk. The look is rather hard to read. That it's just the two of them, it causes a bit of unease and he waits for Luo Binghe to break the silence.

"This Luo Binghe recalls hearing Xin Xing play nearly a year ago." He's a bit surprise at the admission. He also has an idea of when, due to him only using his actual name during more populated celebrations.

" **The Festival of Spice and Wine** ?" It was held once a decade at Bone Mills' Ridge. Spicy food and various kinds of alcohol, it wasn't just rice wine like was typical to China and Japan, but fruits, grains, potatoes, and types of honey.

He'd played his signature flute, the one he bought on his second day of playing. Xing had played many tunes, even ended up singing once a night for the three nights of the festival. He muses, "Lord Luo must have visited briefly as this musician does not recall anyone mentioning Lord Luo's presence."

"This Lord did not want the attention that doing so would bring if this Lord had announced his intentions to participate in the festival." *In other words, he didn't want people making plans to try and assassinate him or challenge him to a dual.* Xing muses.

"This musician hopes that Lord Luo found his playing to his satisfaction." He states and Luo Binghe's lips quirk upwards. "This Lord found Xin Xing's playing to be very satisfying. And this Lord wishes for Xin Xing to play him a tune before we begin to discuss how to begin bringing the Western Kingdom to accept Xin Xing's ascension to Kingship over said Kingdom."

Xing politely bows before producing his {Blooming Ten Year Bamboo Flute}. And so, he plays something that'll take a bit to play in full. In doing so, he hopes to steel himself and to put off the discussion as much as he's able to.

Epilogue

He is nineteen when Proud Immortal Demon Way gets released. He'd been nearly fifteen when he signed up for the Server that would get recorded, the records were what is used to make said series. The end of the Server had been when he'd been seventeen and it would be some time before he'd been contacted concerning Xin Xing's casting role, as it were.

His parents got involved along with other parties due to... well, given how involved he'd become concerning Luo Binghe's rule, yea, his Xin Xing would be a center player when it came to the Demon Realm Arc and so he had to be contacted. Given he'd been a minor when he'd played as Xin Xing, yea, his parents had to get involved, although, it seems that both of his parents had been more aware of the sexual nature that could come up then he'd been, they figured it would be a safe way for him to experience such things and... well, given the minor... ah, harem? Of admirers he'd accumulated upon ascending to Kingship, never mind the random admirers he'd had before.

Yes, it does seem that he'd had admirers due to not just being a decent fighter and Talisman knowledge but, more due to his ability as a musician on top of it all. It seems that being one or the other was more common but being both? The lack of visitation to the Human World seems to cause him to be even more impressive? That he also learnt other instruments?

Not that he ever had a... roll in the hay? *I think that's how dad put it.* Nope, he'd stayed a virgin until the end of the Server.

It had taken some time to work out an agreement involving Xin Xing along with any need of him making appearance concerning the promotion of the game mod, whether his Character will be part of it as a NPC, and, then, any appearance of he himself or participating in any extra content concerning PIDW. Which is why he's attending the premiere online event that will see the first three episodes being released and them doing a bit of Q&A between breaks or pauses

when one of three Hosts decide to do so. Given that the Server had been open for people throughout the world, those that could group up for the streaming premiere, they did.

Not that he'd be in company as there had only been another three from various parts of North, Central, and South America, besides himself being in Western USA, there's one was in one of the Territories of Canada, somewhere in Mexico, and the other in Chile. The Canadian is the Player of one Gongyi Xiao, who's a Cultivator and former Head Disciple of Huan Hua Palace, who ascended to Sect Leader near the end of the Server's timeline. The Player from Mexico's Character is Yang Yixuan, the only Disciple hand picked by the War God of Bai Zhan Peak. The Player from Chile's Character is one Jin Zhao, Head Disciple of An Ding Peak.

And so, as he sips from his glass of water, computer finishes with its updates thus it begins booting up, he's still got nearly fifty minutes before the pre-show part of the event begins. Which should take an hour and half. He's going to have to go over the settings and ensure that everything is up and running with a few techs that will also be in charge of arranging the streams from the Americas. After nearly twenty minutes, he's joined into a video chat with Jin Zhao, who he smiles a bit and greets by introducing himself, the thirty something year old does the same.

Minutes tick by and they chat lightly about anything, really. About fifteen minutes, the other two are brought into the chat, again, introductions are made. There's some light chatting for almost five minutes before they change chats. Quick intros are had, it's not long before the pre-show begins.

He can only hope that he doesn't embarrass himself.

(The pre-show premiere went over well! The next day, the rest of the series is release. Which is a lot of episodes.)

(When the fans wrote their own fan fiction, many pairing would spring up and, unsurprisingly, Xin Xing would be one of the fan

favorites to be shipped with any cannon or author's OCs. It wouldn't be until his friend Pat bring up one of the more popular stories that Aaron would become aware of just how popular of a bottom Xin Xing is portrayed. It caused him much embarrassment and, later, teasing by many among his friend circle along with family.)

((The game mod would be release three years after the release of the PIDW due to many, many problems. Many of those who'd had Characters in that Server would be paid to continue playing those Characters. The reason should be its own story.))

Extra List of Character and Payer Info

Character = Player

Xin Xing = Aaron

Gongsun Shu(Dead), Nanguo Zhou = Garth

Yan Mei = Patty, Pat for short

Liang Ye(Dead), Ye Wang = Philip

Different World, Similar Lives: Naruto

I don't own Naruto! Set in a Magical Game Universe! No Chakra or Tailed Beasts!

Ruto studies the object that's hovering above the box he'd opened. He didn't know where it came from, the box had been to his left and nothing seems to hint where it came from. Upon opening the box, this ball of black had been resting within and then, it slowly began to change, the black transforming into a navy blue as red, white, and yellow dots begin to litter the surface, not all that different then a starry night sky.

It began to float as one point of yellow became the focus upon it, reminding Ruto of the sun. It's yet to do anything else and he's rather reluctant to touch it. Chewing on his lower lip in worry, he glances around a bit more but it's early morning and few people are walking the streets, going about their own business.

Finally, he's unable to fend off his curiosity and the itch to feel the orb that's just floating there, clearly something expensive and yet, isn't sure it why it's with him. Ruto isn't sure if it's the right course of action and yet, he does touch it. Then . . .

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Standing in a space that's mostly white but there's soft glows of yellow that seem to be like mist about him. For some reason, Ruto doesn't feel . . . He just feels safe? Like nothing could hurt him here?

Then, a pair to people appear, a man sporting blond hair and blue eyes. The second is a woman with long red hair and gray blue eyes. They are wearing cloths he's seen visiting Warrior Mages wear and he swallows as he feels rather out of place,

he's a street urchin after all, he's got no parents nor would his parents be in the same league as this pair.

"Naruto... Son, I can only hope you weren't given this particular Orb of Unity but if that is so, then it seems we both are dead and you have just turned eight years old." The man states and he flinches at the mention of Orb of Unity. "So, Happy Birthday son and I trust that you'll be able to request the next few days off from Novice School to deal with the ordeal you're about to undergo."

"And if they know what's good for them, they better allow it." The woman states there's a dark look that crosses her face. Although it's gone quickly as the woman smiles, "As you should known, as one of the last member of Uzumaki Clan, you've got a lot of expectations upon your shoulders and thus, this Orb of Unity is in the process of taking stock of what you known and what you need to know."

Uzumaki Clan? **Ruto wonders. Clan suggests a Magical Legacy that stretches over two thousand years of age. While the term Family is used for those that have survived two hundred years.**

His guts clench as he gets a rather bad feeling that something about this isn't what it should be. After all, how could *he* be a member of a Clan given his life so far? As he runs a hand through his hair, he is a bit startled by the fact his hair seems to be blond and is confused, typically, his hair is generally brown...

"We just want to tell you that no matter what you do in your life, that even though we were not around to see you grow up, that you know we love you, baby!" The woman says and the man nods in agreement.

What they talk about after that declaration of love isn't something Ruto could follow. The people they are talking of, particularly fondly, and of the places mentioned... He's never

been and he's unsure if things are about to get better or worse, but he also was struggling with the idea that... that... this might be his actual parents.

Ruto doesn't want to believe it, doesn't want to let himself hope it so, but, what little he knows, you can not activate an Orb of any kind unless it was designed to allow you to do so. He's not sure what Unity means, the more common Orb that he's heard people purchasing from Mages are generally Orbs of Glory, which is used to pass along family stories of past members, history really. The other that they might buy is Orbs of Fortune, which are used to pass along family recipes and list of properties, maybe even secret cashes that previous members had created.

At least, that's the impression Ruto gets from what little he's heard. Given few are willing to answer questions of an unwanted orphan, or giving the correct information. Soon enough, he notices that red has been added to the yellow that's whirling about him in a wispy form.

Finally, the pair give their farewells, letting him know that the process will be starting soon. As they vanish, something pops up and the end part of the right keeps changing. Looking up and away from the sides, he notices that there is a starry sky above his head.

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As he wakens, Ruto... no, Naruto finds his head pounding and his whole body tingling. Groaning, as his vision swims and he begins to note the ringing in his ear. Hunger and thirst don't help him at this point, never mind exhaustion but Naruto isn't able to sleep. He's too tired to sleep.

As nobody have stumbled upon him, looking about, the spent orb is resting upon its place within the box. It's a dull white gray, all of its reserves spent in transferring not just Clan history but basic

knowledge on various subjects that he would have learnt if he hadn't been abandoned on the streets. Just thinking about all of that knowledge makes his stomach turn and his head pound even more.

So, focusing on personal details, Naruto is now aware of his name, his parents' names, and the lineage of his mother's Clan. That he's not eight years old is rather interesting and recalling something, stating out loud, " **Profile** ."

Name: Naruto Uzumaki

Age: 8

Day of Birth: Oct. 10th

Class: Mage

Class Lv: 1

Out of Class Lv: 3

Overall Lv: 4

Job: N/A

STR: **8**

DEX: **12**

CON: **10**

INT: **9**

WIS: **10**

CHA: **6**

Academic Skills List

Magic Skills List

Physical Skills List

List of Equipment **-**

Nothing bound

He manages to lift his hand and tap the up facing arrow for each of his Skills Lists. There's a lot of N/A among the Academic and Magic Skills but his Physical allows him to see his current Ranking in most. Those Skills he just absorbed are still needing time to settle within his brain.

As he lets out a sigh, his personal **Profile** vanishes as he lost interest. There's not much he can do, so Naruto merely waits for it to become bearable before getting up to start looking for food and heading for the well to grab some water to drink. The sun is rather high in the sky and with nothing better to do, he dozes, doing his best to think of nothing.

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Naruto slips through the gates that allow entry into the Prestige Dungeon known as Vilk's Lair. He's here due to a **Locate Object** Spell that he'd used to locate a missing **Clan Heirloom** . One Izumi Uzumaki died within this Dungeon and it was going through **The Archive** of **Province Faiasutomu** (Goggle translate: Firestorm) that he even learnt about said cousin. It had taken months to get that information, after all, that cousin died over two hundred years thus he did have a lot to read through.

He's fifteen years old as of two months ago and Naruto has done his best to make the most of the years since he learnt the truth about himself. He wonders who it was that swapped him with some other child, not that it helps given that said swapped kid had been killed, making it 'official' that Naruto Uzumaki is dead. He'd learnt that little

fact when he'd been nine and it left a very sour, bitter taste within himself.

There's plenty of throwing knives about his two bandoleer and belt along with a boot dagger, foot long dirk, and a **Ritual Knife** , which he uses to carve **Spell Glyph Arrays** into things or using it to cause him to bleed in order to achieve **Boost Spell Effects** by use of **Blood and Sacrifice Magic** . Upon his left wrist is a wood and bone bracelet that he Crafted and Enchanted himself, having taken ten months to create it to his satisfaction, it's purpose is to prevent scaring upon his body. The boots he's wearing were Enchanted by him during creation to muffled noise of the wearer. The belts keep the throwing knives held upon them clean. There's a copper and opal collar necklace that's Enchanted to disguise the voice of the wearer.

Upon his right is a metal arm guard that's made out of a dulled iron. Wearing a washed out white shirt's right side has the long sleeve cut by the elbow while the left goes all the way to the wrist for the sleeve. His hair is short and currently, due to a monthly spell, is black in color. There's a scarf covering the bottom of his face, it's a simple brown. The pants sport patches he sown up himself and are a darker brown with stains that won't wash out. The boots are soft leather that's been dyed dark blue, the leather coming from a Salamander Horned Rabbit, so they possess some Fire Resistance.

After waiting for his eyes to adjust to the low light that is the Dungeon Entrance, Naruto takes a deep breath and slowly lets it out after holding it for a time. Doing his best to calm his nerves down. He's spent the pass week observing the Guard Camp outside of this Prestige Dungeon, who's more to keep people from entering into this Chimera's Dungeon then guarding the **Kingdom of Faiahato** (Goggle translate: Fire Heart) from, what few Monsters that actually exist within said Dungeon, spill out of it.

Vilk is recorded to be a rather odd Chimera Monster and thus, the Prestige Dungeon that this Chimera had become the Dungeon's final Boss. Sighing after a period of time, Naruto casts **Dark Vision** upon himself as he stares between the two halls upon having finished

Searching the Entrance of this Dungeon, wanting to be sure there isn't any hidden cashes that previous people had stored stuff away for whatever reasons they had. Picking the left, from the various accounts from previous people who entered this Dungeon, they always went right.

Given that none of them have ever encountered the Chimera Boss, it's a given that the left is where this Monster likely occupies. The right is a labyrinth that's filled with traps, both mechanical and magical, with pockets of rooms that sport Mob Spawn Pits that are generally spawning Monsters of Bats, Insects, Rodents, and Spiders types. The left hallway though? It's a got statues of varying kinds that are made out of various material, including metal and at the end of the hallway is a massive set of doors that are locked with a gear puzzle.

For all his careful Searching as he slowly walks down the hallway, Naruto doesn't find any traps of any sort. None of the statues that line the hallway seem hollow and a **Ritual Casting** of **Detect Magic** shows nothing on the statues as he walks for the duration of that Spell. So, his nerves still haven't settled as he comes up to the door sporting said gear puzzle.

And so, Naruto tests the wheel that should unlock the door but it doesn't move and the sound it makes after trying echos. Letting go of the metal wheel with a lick of his lips, he steps back as he looks high up the door. There's clear welded bars that act as ladders plus spots where one could shuffle about the surface of the door. He could guess which of the gears he needs to slide into place but also spies what's blocking it.

Stretching his shoulders before rotating his left arm while his right hand is on the shoulder. A quick turn of his head, he relaxes his arms and studies the path he needs to climb to get to the high point of the door. Naruto figures he'll start from the top and proceed downwards. Walking to the right, he begins climbing up the welded ladder.

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With the final gear sliding into place, Naruto let's out a sigh before shuffling back towards the bar ladder. It's been two days since he worked on the puzzle that is the lock of this door. Taking breaks when he got too frustrated and snack breaks as he doesn't feel ready for a heavy meal. He even only got about five hours to sleep, although he did lay in the sleeping bag for an extra hour before getting out of it.

As he climbs down, Naruto internally debates the pros and cons of entering once he's on the ground. As his foot goes flat, he has come to the conclusion that he is better off taking a bit of a break along with taking care of his various knives and going over his Spell List, ensuring which are already charged up and waiting to be release. Taking a sniff, he also decides that a quick sponge bath was in order too.

With that, Naruto settles down near his camp and stripes off his throwing knives bandoleers. As he unbuttons his shirt, he blinks as the gears of the door begin to shift and the wheel is now spinning. As the various clamps unhook, he's unable to look away as it seems that his break wasn't going to happen. Just as the doors begin to explode outward, swinging towards him as it were, he's rushing to close his shirt along with grabbing his two bandoleers that he had dropped.

With the doors swung open, the chamber... room... whatever is dark for some minutes. Then, as he finishes adjusting the bandoleers and begins to button up his shirt, something sparks within the room. After a few more sparks, something catches and a row of flames seemingly rush forward on his left. Then it happens again on his right, flames dancing before a wall, casting the previous darkness that had claimed the space behind the doors once occupied.

As his eyes adjust and he glances at the sides, it's clear a wider hallway and the flames are on a stone oil tench. The walls sport carved surfaces and he can't see the end of this hallway. Letting out a sigh, he turns and packs up his campsite before he walks through the door way.

Walking down the hallway, he's cautious as Naruto isn't sure there aren't traps to be triggered here. The floor is more sandy then the previous hallway, thus triggers could be harder to spot. The carvings change a bit, they were crude and more shallow at parts but that changes. It's near the end where he's got a fork of sorts that the carvings sport statues that the flames project shadows onto the scenes behind them. The one who carved this clearly incorporating light into their art.

Looking away from the walls and studying the two doors. One sports dull red paint and a simple handle and is on the right with the more fancy door lacks a handle along with sporting antlers in something that could pass as a Coat of Arms from the lands west of the ocean. This door is made of metal, Naruto assumes it's iron? It's grey in color.

Letting out a sigh, he suspects that he needs the handle in order to get pass that particular door and he knows a bit about Engineering but not enough to Jerry-rigging an alternative way to unlock this door. Naruto rather not find out what could happen if he fails to do it successfully as well.

Which leaves , Naruto walks over to the right door, *doing things the way Vilk wants them to go.* The door gives easily and there's a slight stench, it's old scent of decay along with stale air.

The floor is seen easily, there's no sand nor dirt near this part of the area. About fifteen to eighteen feet from the door, he finds his first trap. Thus, Naruto is careful and manages to identify it as a Floor Spike Trap, there's about five rows of fake floor behind and in front of the trigger with 7 cm (cm is short for centimeter) between each whole and it seem that the spikes are between 10 to 11 cm thick, that's if there's a gap between the surface of the spike and the edge of the hole is either 2 or 3 mm (mm is short for millimeter). The trigger is a pressure plate that's about 12 cm long and 6 cm wide and more centered to the right then the left.

Triple checking to ensure there's not another pressure plate on the left, Naruto keeps to the left and stops at the final row of the whole of the front, checking for anything before him, after all, getting pass one trap and walking right into another one is just smart. It's not until he checks the wall to the left that he notices something and looking to the right, notices something else.

Huffing, Naruto looks about the floor before looking up at the ceiling. Crouching, he takes out his dirk and holds only slightly above the floor before slowly raising it up. As it enters the space, something comes swinging down from behind and goes forward. Holding his dirk there, some time later, it comes swinging back from the same direction from before after a certain amount of time. Once it does so for a third time, he pulls the dirk out of the space, it's about 30 cm above the floor as he estimates the size of the space.

And so, taking it slowly, testing things out in a cautious fashion, and ignoring what few skeletons he comes across, he arrives at the end of the hallway that does spot what he came here for. Given the way the skeletons he's seen had been settled, knows that the hard part is about to begin. No matter how he looks at it, he doesn't see how this final effect triggers, so, he **Ritual Casts Detect Magic** , which takes a good ten minutes, given he hopes that there's no timer that got set off upon his approach of the pedestal.

He sighs as he notices the spell on the pedestal and looks around the area before looking at the floor and then ceiling. So, Naruto pounders how to solve this particular trick. Studying the handle and then at the pedestal.

When his Spell ends, he waits before redoing it, which he hopes he'll have an idea to test out. "Well... what is it detecting when it comes to the handle? It doesn't have anything on it to signal to the pedestal of it's removal..."

After about two hours, he sits down and pulls out something to eat along with one of his water skins, this one has a weak beer. "The floor will flood due to the Enchantment upon it and once water gets

to a certain point, the ceiling will activate a series of Lightning Spells." Naruto mutters out loud.

"So... how does it return to the pedestal?" He asks himself after finishing his pouch of grain and dried fruit mix along with having drunk a third of the beer within the water skin. "It's an overly light bit of metal either..."

Nodding to himself, Naruto puts the empty pouch into the Inventory along with capping the water skin and doing the same with it. With a huff, he begins to go through with **Ritual Casting Detect Magic** , once more. **Ritual Casting** a Spell means that he doesn't use up a **Pre-Charged Spell Slot** , it takes so long but it doesn't use up a lot of his **MP** like if he were to **Willful Charge** a Spell, which eats up a lot of **MP** and also causes a bit of a strain on him physically.

With it taking hold, he walks out of the room and studies the floor outside of where the pedestal is. There's a grid of a sort and it finally makes sense why it had only been mechanical traps to this point. Pleased with this particular discovery, he returns to looking at the handle, taking out one of his throwing daggers from his belt.

Poking the handle with it, moving it back and forth about the flat surface. It's not until his dagger touches the stone that the Enchantment acts up. As he pulls the dagger away, he watches as it almost goes off only it dies down upon noting that the handle was still on it. Giggling a bit giddily, he does it again and he slowly sobers up as he suddenly gets an idea of how to get around this.

Putting the dagger onto the surface, he watches as everything settles down. Then, Naruto grabs the handle and picks it up, he holds his breath as it almost goes off only for the presence of the dagger satisfy the Enchantment. His mood is light along with a wide grin upon his face and so, he retraces his steps through this trap filled hall.

As him being mildly drunk fades, Naruto face palms once he's back at the door over how he'd acted getting the handle. He hadn't even

thought to swap out one of his **Pre-Charged Spell Slots** with either **Haste** or **Jump** . Looking at the handling in his other hand, he lowers the free hand from his face. "Right, so, that's why they say you should only drink after a completed heist." He mutters, it had been his first time downing a beer, which had been something he stole as nobody sells such drinks to anyone who's not sixteen years of age, well, at least in the Kingdom he's in has that as an age limit.

Walking out of the door, he moves to stand at the metal door. Looking between the handle and the spot where it's to go, he walks over and tries to insert it. It takes a bit of angling but it enters into the door. Turning it the opposite way then he put it in, the door clicks before he's able to pull it open.

The sound of something swinging begins as the door opens enough for him to walk through. Cocking his head, Naruto guesses that it's swinging axes or something like that. So, he walks slowly down the hallway until he feels a rush of air and a flash of something, it takes a bit before he confirms that it is an axe swinging back and forth a distance before him. As he times it, he manages to rush pass before stopping suddenly as there's another just coming down right after the first.

With a curse, he **Willful Charges Haste** and begin his journey forward. Stopping and going between the spots where the axes are swinging. As the Spell's duration ends, he's breathing a touch harder and checks his **MP** before looking at his Spell List, checking on **Haste** 's cool down. Thankfully, Naruto came to a halt in a stretch that was fairly spacious and so, he settles down for a quick nap.

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Naruto wakes to the sound of something heavy swinging, slicing the air along with slight rush of air. As he struggles to continue to sleep, it's no good, and he generally begins to remember where he is. Letting out a yawn as he begins to stretch his arms and shoulders.

Then, it's another issue he has, which he sighs as he runs a hand through his hair. And so, he gets up and prepares to attend his issue. Naruto finishes and does a clean up with a few **Willful Charges** of various Spells before taking inventory of what he's wearing.

Taking out a water skin that has actual water within it, he gulps some of it down before capping it and putting it back into his Inventory. Feeling refresh and ready to continue on with transverse this portion of the Dungeon. Waiting for his **MP** to finish filling up, he pulls out a Note Book along with a bit of Charcoal and jots down his experience so far concerning this portion of the Dungeon.

Finishing up, he puts the two back into his Inventory and claps his hands to get the remains of the Charcoal from his hand. Whipping the hands together and then brushing his hand upon his pants a few times. Calling up his **MP** , he sighs before going back to his Inventory and looking for something to occupy his mind for the next few minutes.

There's a stolen book, which he knows will fetch him a good price... Once a year has passed since he stole it. It's a first edition and, well, pulling it out, studies the cover. The title is Changes in Clouds and Fate by *Yami Ga Tsuka Suru* (Goggle translate: Darkness Passes).

Opening the cover, there's a blank page, then the next has the title along with an image of some clouds plus a loom with cloth coming off of it. There's shadow upon the loom's portion where it's merely just threads and it's getting woven into cloth. Another couple pages and he finally gets to the Prologue of the story.

Before he knows it, he's just about to read the third chapter before recalling to check on his **MP** . Finding it full, Naruto closes the book and puts it back into his Inventory. Resolving to continue from the third chapter once he's done, he readies himself through some stretches and walks back near the way he came before **Willful Charge Haste** and continues on his racing way, dodging the swinging axes.

Coming to the end, once he crosses the threshold, the swinging axes slowly come to a stop, one at a time. Not that Naruto watches as he's a bit more baffled by the sight that's before him. It's hard for him to accept and yet, it's clear it happened as he glances around the room, he notices a slightly glowing **Magical Door** to the left side, not that far from where he's standing.

Feeling a surge of disappointment, Naruto walks over to the center of the room and the four skeletons laying there. The large one sports antlers and is the size of a bull. At the neck area, there's a rusty dirk while there's various swords and arrow heads about the spot. He's sure he could find other arrow heads about the room if he would only look.

Only Enchanted items survived the ravages of time, looking as good as they were when their owners had been alive. Picking up the skull that's feline like, save for the antlers, Naruto turns it this way and that before setting it back down, in a gentle manner.

With a huge sigh, he walks away from the skeletons and heading for the stairs that lead to the **Storage** and **Vault** of this Prestige Dungeon. Sure enough, there's two large rooms, one sports potions, food, and other consumables while the other sports Equipment of both, magical and mundane. Sadly, his Inventory isn't large enough to collect it all, so, he wanders through in search of what he came here for, which he finds. It's a **Pendant of Ocean's Heart** and after pricking his finger with said **Ritual Dagger** , the blood he dropped upon it gets absorbed, thus recognizing him as its new owner.

Smiling, he puts it on and checks his Equipment List and checks to ensure that there isn't any hidden surprises about the **Clan Heirloom** . Humming that someone had put a Curse on it, but the Curse expired not long after the previous wearer likely died. Smirking, Naruto **Willful Charges** a Minor Water Spell upon the palm of his left hand and is very pleased when the cost of MP wasn't anything major. Dispelling it, he closes his left hand and begins to study the various treasures about him.

The coins were the easiest to loot and didn't take up that much room, even though it's nearly ten billion coins, not all of which are gold or silver, but it money he didn't have until now. Next, he goes for the gems, preferring uncut over cut. Not all are loose but he nearly fills his Inventory with said treasure. Shaking his head, he looks for something special, after all, having seen the **Magical Door** , he suspects that if there's a magical item that would attune to said **Magical Door** , he could come back without needing to go through the various traps.

Sure enough, he finds a few of them, each ranging from various quality. Thus, he is rather spoiled for choice and after checking each over, Naruto settles on the **Staff of Greater Portals** . Sadly, what other anchor points it had been previously attuned for likely don't exist any more. Using his **Ritual Dagger** once more, he binds it to himself, so now he's the proud owner of a white golden staff that's mimicking a branch of a tree with clear amber gems all along the length while the top sports a mixture of flowers and leaves upon the top part. Each of the amber gems would sport a color as they would denote the number of magical anchors the staff was attuned too.

And so, he heads for the **Storage** to browse what it contained before heading for the **Magical Door** in order to attune his new staff. There's a few glass bottles of alcohol, which means it's from else where as the various countries here prefer clay jugs to store their liquor, some gigantic ones were inspired by gigantic wooden barrels that foreigners are said to keep in their basements, complete with taps at the bottom of the jars to pour out the liquid. Leaving them be, Naruto notices some preserved plates of meals, he hums while feeling very tempted to see if the food is as fresh as it looks, given that the spells preserving them might have a time based one.

Sighing, he resists and instead, finds a collection of one use Spell Scrolls. Spell Scrolls can be used by anyone as long as they can read the often short phrase that's written at the bottom of the scroll. Expensive, in the end, as the paper, ink, and brushes/quills need to be of a specially created to store **MP** to be used instead of taking the

MP from the speaker. Sadly, the selection of Spells weren't ones he doesn't already know, being from a Clan means that Spells learnt from previous generations are passed down and if not for the **Orb of Unity** , he likely wouldn't even know he was a Mage in the first place due to someone placing a Curse on that Knowledge that targeted him and those that didn't know in the first place.

Same went for the Spell Books that were within the **Vault** . So, he studies the other one use items, the potions and Magical Tokens. He pockets a bag of **Exploding Silver Pebbles** and **Random Hoof Animal Pills** . Naruto is satisfied with what he's pick and walks out.

It takes a good four hours to attune his **Staff of Greater Portals** to this Prestige Dungeon's **Magical Door** . Given he's never had to do something like this before, he's just satisfied that it worked in the end. With that, he checks with of the amber gems is glowing before putting his staff into his Inventory. Not wanting to go back the way he came, he Searches the room and does find a hidden door that leads to what can only be called living quarters.

Poking around the other rooms, Naruto is very pleased at the sight of what appears to be a natural hot pool. Stripping everything off, he slowly enters into the pool, very pleased with the temperature of the pool along with getting clean after getting worked up over the various things he's encountered within this Dungeon. It's as he's laying in the pool that Naruto considers why the Dungeon hasn't pick a new Dungeon Boss or how it is that it's still around.

Digging through his Clan Knowledge, what little is known of the nature of Dungeons is that once the final Monster Boss is killed, **Exit Gates** would spawn before people, signalling that the Dungeon has been conquered. Then, what treasure and items wasn't claimed by the ones who killed the Monster Boss, it would linger in the area until a new Dungeon comes into existence and gets transferred to that one. That there isn't a living Monster inhabiting the Final Room...

Shaking those thoughts out, he finally gets out of the pool after his skin prudes up. Changing his attire but keeping the weapons out,

Naruto heads back to the Final Room and... Well, he's fairly sure that the Ghost wasn't suppose to be there when he'd last been there. And yes, the transparent shape of what the Chimera Monster must have looked like when alive did sport something of a white outline but the glowing bright blue eyes is rather hair raising.

'So... You took the left Path here, huh?' The Ghost of Vilk muses while doing a great show of looking him up and down. The mouth not moving at all, yet he hears the slight echo within his mind, knowing instinctively that it belongs to the Ghost before him.

"Well, yea? I was kind of hoping not to run into anyone to get to you." Naruto admits in a frank voice, his not sure if he could deal with this Ghost if they got violent.

For a time, silence hangs between them and the Ghost finally turns from looking at him, looking down at the skeletons that are piled near the center. ***'You picked up my skull. Then... put it down gently.'*** The tone is clearly bafflement and Naruto's a bit unnerved that this Ghost knew that tidbit of information. There's an underlying question hanging after that statement as well.

"So I did." He states at last after a bit. "I've never seen a tiger skull with antlers before."

The Ghost's head is suddenly looking at him, there didn't seem to be any motion from the head looking down to turning to look at him. The eyes are unblinking as he does his best to control himself. *Eerie.* Naruto can't help but think.

'You left their Equipment alone.' The Ghost of Vilk notes. The head cocking a bit as one of the almost human looking forelimbs hand like paws forms a fist while resting upon what passes as a chin.

"They didn't have anything I wanted." Naruto states in weak defense, which is true, what coins they had carried had ended up in the **Vault** while the magical items remained next to their previous owners. He

really wants to ask, *"How are you still lingering? Your not suppose to be a student of Necromancy Magic."*

Yet, he suspect that it hardly matters. Whatever is causing this Dungeon to linger, it's clear that Vilk the Ghost is either the cause or another symptom of the lingering effect. Naruto wonders at how long it's been since the four died, near each other, after one another.

'So young.' The Ghost sees to mutter. ***'So full of life.'***

The words spread unease into his being and he tries not to flinch or start looking around like a cornered mouse. He may not feel confident about his odds of surviving a fight with this Ghost but he knew damn well that appearing like prey and acting like it would only cause this to go from maybe salvageable to dead very quickly. He knows that Undead Monsters are capable of consuming **HP** and **MP** while leaving the body unharmed, which they could then possess with ease, until it's falling part from rot at least. It wouldn't make them alive once more but give them a taste of what it once was to be alive again.

'So human.' Vilk the Ghost states with some disdain and the look that appears upon the feline face could be disguise, a feline version of it at least. ***'And yet...'*** The Ghost suddenly appears a few feet before him and he couldn't stop himself from taking a step back, after all, even if the Ghost is floating 1 or 2 cm above the floor, if Vilk had still been alive, they would have towered over him, particularly when reared up on the back legs, that appear to be those of a canine. ***'I. Am. Not. Done. With. Life!'*** Fangs are bared and the lizard or snake like tail is moving back and forth.

"Contract! We can... Homounculus!" He stammers out, his heart beating fast and pretty much saying the first few things that crossed his mind. But, well, Vilk hasn't advanced towards him but nor has the Ghost's muzzle close. "Resurrection with a Homonuculus body. It's a theory my Clan thought up but never..." He explains once he feels his throat loosen from panic that had tightened it. "Plus, with your

bones... I could use them for the frame, it might speed the process of creation up by a lot."

Finally, the Ghost isn't threatening in pose but sporting a thinking one instead while its head seems to flicker from looking at him to back to where it's skeleton rests. It's not something his various ancestors invested a lot of time and resources in, but that doesn't mean that they hadn't mused upon Necromancy and what possibilities it could offer. He knows that one actually had, during a time of famine, would use bones of various farm animals to grow that kind of meat upon those bones while combining it with Alchemy. He had been a butcher and he made enough to pay off various loans that he accumulated or his parents.

Having both the bones plus the Ghost? Add in a Resurrection Spell? Good odds that Naruto could give Vilk a second chance at life. "Contract with clauses to ensure I would work on this project with you agreeing that I'm to be spared from harm during the project and, if I don't do anything stupid after completing it, after it's done and you're alive once more." He states.

With **Pendant of Ocean's Heart** , he'll be able to claim his rightful properties and fortune plus place in Mage Society. With that and once it's been sorted out, he's confident that he should have the resources needed to follow through with his part. Suddenly, he feels something cool being pressed at this throat but, finally, it passes and Vilk remarks, ***'Let us discuss this in a more... private setting, shall we?'***

And with that, the Ghost seems to vanish but there's a glow near the hidden door that he'd come through earlier. Praying to his ancestors for luck, he walks back to the door and enters it. Hoping that he's capable of coming out of this negotiations alive and mostly whole.

**/ - o f - **

"Only three years." Vilk muses as the Chimera Monster flexes his right hand. "And you fulfilled your end, true to your agreed word at

that."

Of course, given the merriment of side tracking over the course of the nearly four years of knowing Vilk that dealt with things that circulated over War between the various Kingdoms of this Continent and the private matter of finding out who it was that 'misplaced' him as a babe to trivial things like Quests concerning gathering materials, killing a certain number of Monsters, escort/body guarding... As for the creating the meat of the body, he really didn't do much once he had a clay cauldron that was big enough to hold the total skeleton plus what body weight it would get. Other then ensuring the right potions got poured in and cleaning out the spent liquid viva a built in tap every few months.

It was finding the right quality of Ritual Items for the Resurrection Ceremony that took almost three years in their own right. The body that came out ended up crimson in coloring, not that Vilk seems to mind, the eyes remain that bright blue that Vilk had as a Ghost though. The Prestige Dungeon still exists and given it's been four days since the Ceremony, no word had spread over it's vanishing, which means that Vilk still has a home to return to and to govern.

"When do you want me to take you home?" Naruto inquires. It had been something being haunted as it were by Vilk, who had been aggravating at times but helpful at others. He knows he'll miss having Vilk around, oddly enough, the former Ghost had grown on him. He suspects that he'd grown on the Chimera too.

For all that things have changed, some things ultimately hadn't. There's few people he can trust and plenty of people looking to step on/take advantage of him. He's still got a long ways to go to grow his influence to the point he feels he's got enough sway that few would confront him out in the open. He's not stupid enough to think he can keep anyone from ever not talking smack about him, even in private. Nope, having people force to be oh so polite and cautious around him in public will just have to do.

Vilk merely hums while lingering in the wooden tub that he'd bought some year ago for just this purpose. As he looks at the time, Vilk muses, "So... What are your plans concerning the Uchiha Clan? I mean, they seem rather determined to keep that lake and the surrounding lands instead of returning them to the Uzumaki Clan." *To you.* He hears at the end, but it was never said.

"Well... Did you know that there's this little organization cutely named Root? You wouldn't believe what kind of dirt this group's dug up on them~. Like, say, a coup against the current Royal family?" He remarks, he's fairly sure Vilk knows this little detail but then, it likely didn't really affect the Chimera in any meaningful way.

"Oh, yes." Vilk remarks. "That. Huh, so, how do you plan to use Root when its been destroyed?"

"Oh, but who really knows about that little massacre? It's not like that inner circle was big to begin with." Naruto remarks with a sly smile. "Those 'agents' are use to different handlers approaching them. What's so suspicious about another new Growth to answer to?"

For all that Vilk's head is that of a tiger, the barking laughter doesn't seem suited to the coming from the Chimera. "True. So very true~." The former Ghost remarks and he suspects that the Chimera would lean back save for the tail that's resting behind him, keeping him from leaning upon his back upon that portion of the tub.

"So, I'm still figuring things out on who to approach first and what kind of look along with name I should use." He can tell that Vilk is interested, it's on how the ears are positioned.

Ending It Here

Autumn Eyes: SVSSS

I don't own Kateyou Hitmat Reborn nor The Scum Villain's Self-Saving System.

_ X 0 - T - 0 X _

At seven years old, a slave boy wakes with a gasp with a hand going to the back of his head. Breathing heavily as distress floods throughout his tiny body, Xiao Jiu's thoughts are scrabbled up as it seems that something has happened to his other existence, Sawada Tsunayoshi, who's about to turn fourteen this coming October. There's nothing to feel out of place at the back of his head and his breathing slowly down as he begins to collect his emotions and thoughts.

Looking around the room, it's clear that it's still night, which is rather odd. To his left, there's Qi-ge, sleeping and to his right is the wall. The rags covering him don't do much to keep him warm. As he tries to calm down, Xiao Jiu finds it hard to fall back to sleep.

As he lays back down, the slave boy feels rather warm, as though he covered himself with a series of blankets. Xiao Jiu tries to make sense of what happened in his older existence for him to wake in his younger one. "That baby... He said something about Mafia?" He murmurs out loud in Japanese.

"I left for school..." He continues and finds that's when his memories began to temper off. "It felt like something... Then..."

Xiao Jiu shudders as he recalls the feeling of burning. Like he'd been becoming far too hot for his body. The sensation of his body suddenly being too small for him and then...

He swallows as he rolls to his side, facing Qi-ge. Seeking comfort from the older slave. Closing his eyes, Xiao Jiu can't help but feel as

though his life has changed, for the better or worst, well, he doesn't known.

T S _ ^ _ S T

He huffs as he walks away from the town, away from his 'owners'. Xiao Jiu had spent a bit over a year trying to convince Qi-ge to come away with him but the other refused. Qi-ge wanted to protect the other street urchins/slaves and nothing he tried seem to sway the other.

It's not like Xiao Jiu didn't care but at the same time, he got a strong ***FEELING*** that things were going to be worst if they don't leave. That ***FEELING*** has gotten more intense these pass few days. And so, he's stealing away at nearly nine years of age from the town and whatever ruinous events that were waiting to occur.

It's going to be autumn soon, yet the nights are still rather warm. Few want to travel at night but he trusts his gut/instincts to keep him safe. It's how he's been able to save up the odd coin or bit of jewellery, keeping them in stashes along with trusting the urges to move the contents out of them when they crop up.

He's spent some time tricking some knowledge of written characters from various kids with families, focusing on those who's parents are tradesmen and merchants. *I should pick a last name and maybe, pick a new first name.* Xiao Jiu muses to himself as he reaches the tree line of the forest that surrounds the town. The expanse of fields served to give townsfolk warning of anything coming at the town, particularly from the woods or down the road that passes through the town.

As he wanders through the trees of the forest, Xiao Jiu notices that his sensor range seems to have shrunk then what it had been. He can only guess at the reason for why that is as his dark orange eyes, sunset eyes, keenly looks about the darkness of the forest. He's walking slow pace as he's heard many stories about the forest,

depending on the family, the stories could be about Demons snatching up wandering kids to strange spirits.

There's little mention of humans being the ones who snatch up kids and he's fairly sure that it's what typically preys on the wandering kids who either take dares to enter into the forest or they get separated from their parents while being in the forest. As far in both of his lives, that of Sawada Tsunayoshi and Xiao Jiu, it wasn't supernatural beings that caused the hardships he'd faced in those lives. It's always been humans who'd been the cause of misery, kids taunting and beating on Tsunayoshi or other street urchins/slaves fighting him over food, coin, sleeping spots...

letting out a sigh, Xiao Jiu pushes such thoughts from his mind and taking a moment to close his eyes, trying to get a feel of the forest around him. Time seems to slow, slightly above him and to the south-east of where he is, he feels something falling slowly through the air. A kind of rodent that sported a tiny spine hidden in the bushy tail. To north-east is a kind of owl stalking a hopping lizard? It's shaped kind of like a rabbit but it's got none of the long ears, fur, or cotton tail that a rabbit should have but scales and two rows of tiny teeth with forelimbs sporting only two fingers with poison claws tucked at the chest.

There's various insects and other crawly things about him but the three mentioned are the largest living and moving beings he can sense. Then comes him noticing the plants, the sensation of a leave falling from a branch and the feeling of sap oozing out of a fresh cut to the trunk... Roots under his feet and the buried bones of animals and discarded fur and feathers.

Straight ahead of him, there's a rotten box that contains something interesting. And so, Xiao Jiu focuses on it, it's just a silver bell, the silk tassel dirtied up. Within the silver bell is a bead of white jade. There's a power to the bell, so it'll be worth it to dig it up, he decides.

And so, time begins to speed up. The rodent with the spine makes contact with a tree trunk. The owl's head moves as the lizard's back

legs finally press off the ground. That leaf falls to the ground and the chirps/cries of the other living things fill the air.

Walking to the spot he knows the bell is, Xiao Jiu crouches down to the spot. He coats his hands in energy before beginning to dig within the dirt. Large clumps of dirt get pulled up with his left hand coming up and putting his right hand into the ground before it happens again.

By the time twenty minutes had passed, he has the hole dug and he's feeling around for the box. Smirking, he fills his muscles of his arm with energy before wrestling the box out of the ground. The wood gives way halfway up the hole and the clamp of dirt falls to the ground that holds the bell.

Snorting softly, he reaches for it, gently breaking some of the dirt off. It takes a bit before he feels the silk. Chuckling, he pulls the bell up viva the silk, there's still a lot of dirt clinging to the silk and the bell. He feels a bit tired and hungry but he ignores it for brushing the dirt from the silk, it's a bit dark so he can't get a good idea of the color of the tassel.

It's a belt ornament and he wonders if it was meant for a child or an adult. Putting the item into a pocket, he gets up off the ground. His legs feel stiff, the muscles had become rather cramped. Still, he pats the dirt off his robes before continuing on his way.

His range has increased a great deal from before. And so, he continues on his way, he hasn't felt a tug in his gut, just the ***FEELING*** of something heavy lifting from his shoulder the further he gets from town. It's a very nice feeling, even though he gets the sense of storm winds slowly surrounding himself, it's like he's got nothing holding him to the ground, that with a slight motion, he could be picked up from the ground and become a toy in the storm wind's 'hands'.

T S _ ^ _ S T

It's been about eleven years since he left Qi-ge and his 'owners' behind. It's spring and he's been going by Shen Qiao along with having a very strong foundation in Array and Talisman with his second and third studies being in supernatural plants and non-human/Demon beings. Even though he's been studying Cultivation, he's not yet settled on a way to create a Golden Core.

He's not sure why he gets odd, disjointed feels whenever he tried to pick one. And so, he's been focusing on finding plants and ways to ensure he's not losing any of his spiritual potential as he's grown older, which means he could begin losing out on creating a strong Golden Core. Thus is the reason he's traveled so far just to sell a few basketfuls of Antler Thorn Oracles, which make a very good Qi nourishing pastries or Qi stabilization pills.

Could they be grown as a crop by a Sect that specializes on farming such spiritual plants? Yea, but the wild growing kind is of better quality. In the wild, they grow very bushy and tall. The leaves are a rich navy blue with the thorns being soft brown slowly changing into a soft white in color by the sharp tip of the thorn. Although, the 'domesticated' type grows year round while the wild type show up for a year before going dormant for five years.

Walking into the shop he's been nudged to, the former slave boy notices a woman in white and green expensive robes. *Ah yea, Qing Jing Peak.* Shen Qiao muses upon sight of the Sect uniform. Must be an important member, perhaps a Hall Master?

The clerk seems displeased with him, then again, given he's wearing dull colour robes and of a simple design. He is the maker of majority of his wardrobe and so, they each have sown 'spells' upon them. Which would make many a noble clan would drool over the idea of hiring someone so capable getting hired to do a single set, never mind having a whole wardrobe worth of such robes.

His current robes are gray and black in color without any embroidery on display. His long hair is in a simple half ponytail and upon his belt, hangs that bell he dug up in that forest from a decade ago, although

he did replace the purple silk tassel with an orange silk that compliments his sunset eyes. The bell will ring in alarm when he's close to some form of undead being, depending on how powerful said being is, the range of the bell possesses with weak having a short range and the strong having a wide one.

"This Master is still considering the matter." The woman Cultivator states when the clerk's attention switches, both in where the eyes are gazing and the look upon the face. The clerk sends a spiteful glare at Shen Qiao, but he didn't care all that much, merely waiting for the clerk to greet him.

"What is it." The clerk asks in a very oily voice, "that bring you here today?" Its like asking causes the clerk pain, like he cut him or caused some old injury.

Raising an eyebrow in reaction, his natural bitch resting face doesn't really show any of his amusement over this clerk's reaction. "How much are you willing to price a basket of wild grown Antler Thorn Oracles?" He inquires curiously.

The sneer upon the face makes it clear that the clerk doesn't know a thing about Antler Thorn Oracles. "We don't need more Antler Thorn Oracles." The clerk is clearly looking his nose down at the mere thought of buying from him. "We have plenty in our inventory." *So take yourself out of here, we don't have any business to be had.*

"Oh? How many baskets does young one managed to bring here?" Inquires the Qing Jing Cultivator.

Oh, so it's like that, huh? Shen Qiao muses to himself. "Well, this humble one doesn't want to speak of it." Then glances towards the clerk before continuing, "After all, it's clear that this one isn't welcome in this shop."

There's a bit more interest now in the woman's eyes, so, as he waits, her gaze sweeps over him, first to the bell upon his belt before a slight flicker of surprise as she seems to notice the 'spells' he's

stitched in these layers. "This Master wonders just how humble one such as you could be."

"This humble one stitched these robes himself, I'm afraid." And there's a clear flare of anger from the clerk at someone so poor being within his presence. "Majority of my wardrobe are ones I cut and stitched together by myself. So, this simple Cultivator isn't worthy of such regard from such a noble Master as yourself."

"If you don't have any business here, get out!" The clerk snaps at him. "We have no need for such as yourself." By that, the clerk means, dirt poor wandering Cultivator.

"Well, if that is how Merchant Bing feels, then this Master shall heed such a declaration." The Master Cultivator says smoothly. The feel of panic raises as the woman heads for the door before a rush of anger and pride has the clerk start yelling at him as he gives way to allow her to exit first.

Ignoring the idiot clerk, he follows after the Cultivator. Once out of the shop, the woman inquires again, "How many baskets was that?"

"About thirty." He admits, one of the baskets wasn't full. The Cultivator hums before asking, gesturing at his robes, "Cut and sown by your own hand, huh?"

"Yes, that's right." Shen Qiao agrees. There's an odd feeling of Rightness that settles over him.

"Well, come to my Peak then. Perhaps you can teach a few of my disciples how to do it properly." She says. "And perhaps you'll pick up a few in turn."

Ah. He feels a bit strange as emotions swirl within him. "Am I getting recruited? Or am I just a visitor?"

As the woman begins to walk towards a carriage, she replies, "Only one way to find out." Shen Qiao follows after her once he feels a bit

more settled emotionally.

"This one hopes he will not disappoint Peak Lord Su Xinghe." He says, what little he knows is that the current generation has Xing as their common character, which means Thriving. The door remains open and so, he joins her in the carriage.

And so, Shen Qiao feels like he's on his way home. It's an odd feeling as he's never felt such in the years since he left Qi-ge and their 'owers'.

T S _ ^ _ S T

"So... what's your name?" Peak Lord Su Xinghe inquires, it's been six months since he'd entered that carriage and sold those baskets of wild grown Antler Thorn Oracles to Cang Qiong Mountain Sect, particularly having to go to An Ding Peak to do so.

Blinking a few times before he realizes that he never did introduce himself to his current teacher, perhaps his Shizun. "This disciple prefers to be called Shen Qiao." He replies.

Other then a visit to Qian Cao Peak after a month upon Qing Jing Peak, mostly just to check up on any conflicts that might rise up from switching Cultivation paths, he's not spent a lot of time in Peak Lord Su Xinghe's company. After all, other then attending a few classes, meals, and dealing with certain body needs, Shen Qiao has pretty much taken to living in the library.

There's always something interesting to read within it and it's not like I don't have a sleeping bag on my person. He muses to himself. Rather curious as to what prompted her to inquire after him.

"There's going to be a cross Peak Tournament." The Peak Lord states and he inclines his head, guessing that she needs to know in order to put his name down as a member of her disciples. Then her eyes flicker to his right wrist and he offers it.

It's a strange feeling, having someone probe through his spirit veins and at the spot where he'll be creating his Golden Core. He's got bandages about that area to help him not accidently injury himself by pooling his energy within it along with his Qi. He knows he's got to be careful, that orange energy that's coursing through his being can be complimentary at times with or at odds with his Qi.

Given he'd once had a dual existence in his childhood, it could just mean that the orange energy is one that comes from a different world. Thus, it's just foreign to this world and thus to the way the world operates. His gaze goes back down to the painting that he's waiting to dry while Peak Lord Su Xinghe leaves the room.

His thoughts drift to the few attempts he'd had with his shijies in regards to sowing. In the end, it's hard to dumb down his explanations when the various shijies don't have the same ground work in Arrays and Talismans as him. So, a lot of what he tried to explain got mistranslated or just confused them. *Which is why few of the disciples likely make use of such when creating art.*

The imagery of a bamboo forest with leave gently getting blown by wind is a rare sight upon the Peak. He's cheated a bit by having created a wooden plaque that help ground the effects as he paints them then trusting his ability to hold it as he paints. It's tricky process but from previous tries and looking at old examples, likely worthwhile.

As the paint finishes drying, Shen Qiao rolls the page and puts it into the scroll case to protect it. Then picks up the wooden plaque and puts it into his sleeve's Qiankun Pocket. Carrying the case to the pill by the door, he sets it down, trusting that his modifications to the case will ensure that it won't open until two hours have passed.

It's the middle of dinner by the time his painting had finished drying and so, he doesn't bother for entering the Dinning Hall but the kitchen itself. There's a few An Ding disciples within it, collecting the dirty dishes, it's likely they are being punished and thus, there's none of the usual kitchen servants within the kitchen. So, with the five

disciples from another Peak, he begins to take stock of what's within the kitchen, particularly what's going to spoil soon.

Taking out a ribbon, he pulls back his sleeves before he begins going through the process of cooking by chopping up vegetables and the little bit of meat scrapes that were left over from whatever the cooks created for the Hall Masters' suppers. He's got plenty of experience cooking for himself, although that's generally by camp fires or just open flames.

Having a kitchen is something he's getting use too and generally, it's been a quick learning experience but in the end, the kitchen of the Dinning Hall survived his early efforts. Few of the kitchen servants seem incline to report his antics or, perhaps, just decided it wasn't any of their business if a young 'master' wants to make their own meals. In which case, they likely thought him to be rather snooty as he either doesn't trust them to make something or he just doesn't like the idea of servants he didn't pick handling his food.

Sure, he could just explain that he didn't want them to bother making him something or setting aside something for him but he suspects that, by this point, he wouldn't be believed. Given the An Ding disciples had seen him, it's likely that some story will be made and spread. Depending on the incline of the disciple telling it, who knows what spin it'll have.

Glancing to the door that leads outside of the kitchen, he finds the Peak Lord standing there with a slight tilt of her head. Taking a second to study what he made, he guesses that he did make enough for two. So, as he arranges the dishes, he listens as the Peak Lord walks to a point that is a hidden closet, enters it and comes out with a jar of wine as he finishes with the tray.

No paying much mind to the hidden door, he waits for the Peak Lord to exit before following after. The house is made of bamboo. He knows that each Peak Lord either builds or orders the building of such a bamboo house while also personally destroying their Shizun's

bamboo house. There's different building plans in the library, some were smaller then others and about two could be consider mansions.

The porch of the bamboo house is rather large and sports different wind charms that make soft noise as the wind blows to do so. The main room seems to serve as a dinning room with a kitchen to the right and a hallway to that goes beyond this room that can be found to the left corner of the room. And so, left most room that sports an actual door should be the bathroom, with about two tubs, one set up as a mini hot spring while the other serves as a typical bathtub. He knows the layout of this house from having looked through said blueprints.

Setting up the table for their dinner, he does his best to keep his eyes focus on his task. All around him, he knows that there's a number of decorations that might ensnare his gaze. Once Shen Qiao finishes setting up the table, the jar of wine gets set down, and so, he goes about pouring a cup of it as the Peak Lord begins to select portions from the various dishes.

Once he sets the jar down and put the cup where it should go, he bows politely. After a bit, Peak Lord Su Xinghe inclines her head. And so, he settles down at his place, he does his best to mind his manners as he takes a portion from the various dishes.

He wonders if she actually wanted supper or if she just took advantage of the opportunity before her. There's little in the way of conversation and when the Peak Lord finishes her cup, she waves at him before pouring herself more from the jar. As the various dishes hold nothing upon them, he suspects that the meal was acceptable, given what he'd used to make it, not that it ultimately shows on her face.

"Acceptable." She states and so, they go through the whole polite aftermath that is suppose to come about because of it. It comes to an end after about forty minutes and he's pretty much dismissed, he doesn't try to clean up, suspecting that a servant will either later tonight or in the morning, when bringing her morning tea.

Perhaps for the first time since he arrived, he actually headed for the male dormitory to get some sleep, of course, he does a quick pit stop before continuing. He vaguely remembers which room he'd been led to, all thought months ago. Shen Qiao doesn't notice anyone within this room, so, he enters it, noting that there's no belongings within.

A bit of quick dusting and he's getting ready for bed. Putting on a different set of 'spelled' bandages for bed, he does a bit of stretches before settling in. Soon enough, he's fast asleep.

T S _ ^ _ S T

Unlike the rest of the disciples upon the Peak, Shen Qiao is the only one without a sword. Then again, he's still working on forming his Golden Core. Thus, he's spent the last few weeks studying up on what rules there generally are concerning this inter Sect Tournament, to learn what he's able to wear and use.

He's only allowed a single 'spelled' layer of robes and there's a minimum of three types of Talismans that could be used. As for Spiritual Tools/Weapons, well, it's generally their sword but since he doesn't have one, he could bring in a Spiritual Tool. The loop hole on the Talismans has to do with the number.

So, in the end, he had created a hasty Spiritual Tool after debating between fan or bandage. In the end, he figured the bandage would be best. After all, being able to trip up or tie up his opponent could be of benefit. The length of it is rather long while also testing out a modified kind of 'spell' to allow him to alter the length, having to create something like a pocket for the bandage's extra length.

He'd registered his items with An Ding Peak a week ago and since no letter or disciple came over to talk to him about it, Shen Qiao assumes it's been approved. So, with the Spiritual Bandage about his upper body, the inner most robe sporting a slashing resistance 'spell', and about sixty of each of the three Talismans, which are Cursed Cloud, Flash Bang, and Voice Throwing.

So, following the other Disciples over the Rainbow Bridge, Shen Qiao does his best to settle himself. He's determined to win, he might not have been here for a year yet but he's not settling on trying his best.

C V P + (= | =) + P V C

Su Xinghe watches the fifth match of the day. It's something of a free for all unlike the previous matches. In the end, with so many disciples that were still vying for the position of successor that's on going with some Peaks, among which is her own. So, they changed things up a bit, in order to thin the numbers or else they'd be doing this for almost two weeks.

"So... you have your eye on any particular disciple, Shijie?" Inquires Yuan Xinghai, who's the current Peak Lord of Zui Xian Peak. Her Shidi has already pick his successor.

She gives a none committed answer, after all, for all that she had recently brought in a stray in the pass year to her Peak, she's rather unsure if he's got any plans to try for the post as her successor. Sadly, few seem to be able to follow along with Shen Qiao's lessons about stitching 'spells' into cloth, never mind anyone interested in learning what short cut he's using when it comes to his Qi Paintings. Never mind that it seems that there's been none of the usual antics that generally occur when new disciples are accepted, neither of the more established disciples have been needed to visit Qian Cao Peak nor had said stray.

Her gaze does sweep pass him in the area. The only one without a sword and the few that thought him easy prey had been taken down. "That Qing Jing brat isn't bad in hand to hand." Remarks another of her Shidi, the Peak Lord of Bai Zhan Peak, Xie Xingnie.

"Is he a guest disciple?" Asks Yuan Xinghai, who's likely overheard the comment. "Perhaps." Is all she admits, her eyes settling on him for a bit before taking in the number of her other disciples and their

clear mind set that is rather embarrassing, given that Qing Jing Peak is often considered the Tactician of the Sect.

Su Xinghe finds it rather disappointing that none of them seem to think beyond their own safety and own fights. That it hadn't occurred to any of them to rally the other Qing Jing disciples to their banner and sweep through the mass of chaos. Soon enough, they fall before members of the other two Peaks that they've been paired with.

"Oh, ho! Is that legal?" The exclamation comes from Xie Xingnie and she's a bit surprise by the cloud of darkness near where she last saw Shen Qiao.

"It is, along with another surprise he might be using in that cloud." Remarks Ximen Xingling, the Peak Lord of An Ding Peak, in a bragging tone, as though Shen Qiao being a member of his own Peak. "I didn't think so, when he submitted the form but I had Shang Qinghua to read through the guide lines and it seems that Talismans are allowed, just three types."

That, she admits to herself, *is what I've been hoping for, in my successor.* Yet, Su Xinghe knows that it's unknown if he'll be able to form a powerful enough Golden Core, particularly given he'd kept from Cultivating a path in the proper way. *Almost twenty years of age.*

She knows that wishes won't change anything but it wasn't the first time she'd wished he'd come to the Sect at the proper age. Cang Qiong Mountain could have only benefitted from such a talent, perhaps might yet still. I'll just have to let things play out and trust that Shen Qiao will still be able to form a strong enough Golden Core. She decides as the cloud of darkness fades only for a Flash Bang Talisman to go off, or, well, in particular, a series of them, about three in total.

And so, the winners get announced, all three of them, with Shen Qiao being the first to be named. There's still a bit of tension in said

Cultivator's shoulders but, she likes to imagine, those sunset eyes glinting in pleasure over his victory.

As this is the last battle of the day, it's not long for the Peak Lords to rise up from their seats and begin to head back to their respective Peaks with those disciples able to follow after in their wake. As the group assembles, there's a few who glance or glare at the Shen-shidi, while said disciple doesn't seem to pay them much mind. There's a mere questioning look in his eyes and she doesn't pay it much mind, without another glance at Shen Qiao, she leads her disciples back to Qing Jing Peak.

C V P + (= | =) + P V C

Liu Qingge stares at the Qing Jing Disciple before him, there's no sword in the other's procession and he had witness that free for all that happened the first day. As the other had been allowed to use Talismans, at least two of them, Cursed Darkness and Flash Bang. He considers such cowardly but at the same time, the other had won without having a Spirit Sword.

"What's your name?" He demands and those sunset eyes seem to glow slightly, it's an odd coloring for eyes to be, particularly human eyes and yet, the Peak Lord of Qing Jing Peak didn't have a problem with someone with such a feature from studying at her Peak. He wonders just what kind of blood could cause such a color to be inherited.

"This Shen Qiao wondered if Head Disciple Liu had taken the time to listened to the announcement." Remarks the other, Shen Qiao, in a tone that's sporting a hint of amusement. He swears there's a hint of a smirk, too.

He snorts as his hand goes to the hilt of Cheng Luan, his irritation at this young master surging. *Lazy.* Liu Qingge decides. *It's the only reason why he doesn't have a sword at his age.*

"Cheap tricks won't work on me." He declares and the other tilts his head slightly to the left. "Oh? You consider the use of Talismans to be a mere trick?"

He gives a sharp nod before pulling Cheng Luan from its sheath while the Qing Jing disciple seems to glint, the orange in those eyes seem to surge a bit. The way the orange moves, it remains him of flickering flame, it's almost hypnotic, which he is why he growls, believing it's a trick to waylay him.

As he charges with Cheng Luan in hand but, by the time he's within range, something is tightening around his legs. With a pull, his legs are pulled together and he falls flat on his face, he manages to keep his sword from being under him. As Liu Qingge recovers his wits, he finds a white bandage about his legs, he tries to break out but it doesn't seem to work, the bandage seems to constrict a bit as he tries to force the bandage to shred itself.

What follows if a very embarrassing moment of his life along with the beginnings of... something undefined. As he looks around, he finds the end of the bandage snaking from Shen Qiao's left pants leg. "Cheater!" He declares.

"Not really." The other states in a calm voice while there's a slight bemuse smirk ghosting the lips. "As I don't possess a Spirit Sword, I can register this bandage as a Spiritual Tool. Same with how I was allowed to register those Talismans from before."

"After all, we do have a Peak who's disciples are expected to master the creation and use of." Shen Qiao adds as he feels something snake around his arms, he finds the end seemingly expanding in length with each loop, which is how his arms become bound with ease as he'd been a bit too stunned to react in a timely manner.

With Cheng Luan now upon the ground, he begins to struggle to get his arms free but the end of the bandage is beginning to snake about his upper body, going from his right shoulder and neck down to his

left side before beginning to loop about his body. Many accusations and names escape his mouth without him giving it much thought.

"This Shen Qiao will enlighten Liu Qingge- shixiong about this humble one." There's a smile that reminds him of a cat that's caught its prey. "This Shen Qiao was a mere rogue Cultivator not that long ago. As in, about nine months ago is when this one was invited to join Qing Jing Peak by Peak Lord Su Xinghe."

He stills while there's a lot of whispering going on among those in the audience and he even hears his own Shizun inquire to his Shigu, his Shijie, Peak Lord Su Xinghe. Liu Qingge finds it hard to believe what he'd just been told and yet, what did Shen Qiao have to gain by lying about it? "Did Liu Qingge- shixiong not wonder why this Shen Qiao hadn't participated in the Immortal Conference that occurred recently? Or that he never met this Shen Qiao before this inter Sect Tournament?"

And so, he stares at Shen Qiao, his heart pounding as he feels his face heat up. He's familiar with embarrassment and so, he concludes that's what he's overwhelmed with. As he recovers himself enough to swallow, he begins to curse out the Qing Jing disciple while resuming to struggle against the bandage, which has warped him up about the waist now.

As his mouth gets covered and he's wiggling as he strains against the bandage, in the end, the match goes to Shen Qiao. Once that's been announced, the bandage is quick to loosen before returning to the owner, disappearing up that pant's leg. What's surprising and causing more embarrassing is that the other steps forward and picks him up viva the collar of his uniform, he bats the hands away.

After a few seconds, the other sighs before turning and walking out of the arena. Liu Qingge gazes heatedly at the other's back before pushing himself up off the ground. As he glowers around, he forms a Sword Seal and causes Cheng Luan to raise up from the ground. With his other hand, he sheaths his sword before stalking out of the arena.

Without any real thought, he heads back to his Peak and began to destroy the training dummies that are posted there. His mind reviewing the feel of the bandage about his body. Of how helpless he felt.

His face continues to burn from embarrassment.

C V P + (= | =) + P V C

Winning the inter Sect Tournament was fairly easy, given that Liu Qingge-shixiong had been the one everyone knew you had to beat. As he had eliminated said Head Disciple on his second match after the free for all of the first day, few seem to feel all that confident when facing against him in a fight. Particularly as said future Peak Lord had sulked off back to his Peak after their match.

There's plenty of acidic glares from various Qing Jing disciples, majority of which being the men but there's the odd woman to send such a look at him. The Bai Xhan Peak disciples were very vocal about his method of winning against their Shixiong. He gets some polite congratulations from members of other Peaks besides his own and Liu Qingge-shixiong's.

So, following behind his Shizun to her bamboo house, Shen Qiao considers what kind of conversation they'll about to have. They go through that the song and dance of polite conversation and of the steps that teacher and student are heavily focused on. So, when the lull happens, he's content to let it settle for a time, it's clear that his Shizun has her own thoughts to organize.

"You are having trouble forming a Golden Core." She finally states and he inclines his head. "It's not because I'm too old." He states, knowing she likely thought it was his age that was the cause, not when he'd been able to find various plants and consume them in order to ensure that his age wouldn't be a problem for nearly a century, if the books and those he'd become acquainted with during his eleven years of wandering around without any particular goal in

mind are correct about the order of consumption that could help build upon such benefits.

"It's... my eyes weren't always like they are." Shen Qiao goes on to admit. "They were hazel green when I was younger, though I will admit that the brown did begin to alter to a more orange brown."

He holds up a hand and focuses on the energy that's flowing through his whole body, that doesn't keep to his spirit veins. Willing it to pool about the palm of his right hand. It's slow but the skin of his palm does begin to get tinted orange before it begins to spiral up out of his skin. There's clear intent on the way the orange energy would raise and fall, acting like a flame.

Then, he gets tired and the effect begins to fade away. Closing his palm, he offers his hand to her. Shen Qiao doesn't look at his Shizun. "It's an odd power and doesn't keep to my spirit veins. It doesn't really affect my Qi, it compliments it in ways, particularly when I will it to but it also gets into conflict with it on certain things. Not many but, forming a Golden Core seems to be an issue of conflict." *Pooling and holding Qi in a particular area within my spirit veins is the ultimate issue.*

Shen Qiao knows that it's this orange energy that also seems to be the source of how accurate his ability to sense danger and safety. It also seems to be what allows him to connect easily to his surroundings without needing to meditate for hours. Temporal effects of entering that state is generally like a snap shot of the world around him, everything seems to freeze while he's able to think easily as he observes the area. It's an odd, out of body experience as he's body doesn't move and yet, he seems to be able to wander the area with just a thought.

"Interesting." Peak Lord Su Xinghe after she checks his wrist, this time, the Qi isn't just probing through his spirit veins but throughout his bone, muscle, blood vessels, and skin. It's rather uncomfortable but is more focusing on keeping that energy from surging forward to expel his Shizun's Qi.

"This is why you are so focus on studying Arrays and Talismans." It's not a question, particularly since she had withdrawn her examination and he pulls his arm back to his body. "As you can't manipulate Qi internally into the beginnings of a Foundation."

"I will need your written accounts." He nods in agreement. "Of course, we will need to involve some of the other Peak Lords." Shen Qiao suspected they did.

"For now, continue doing as before as you likely know what works and what doesn't." Shizun states. "Be sure to bring such by curfew."

"Yes Shizun." He says as he gets up and gives her a bow before leaving to begin the task of going through his belongings for said accounts.

T S _ ^ _ S T

Shen Qingqiu stares down at the blank page. The book before him allows him to write or draw some that will show up on a different book. The holder of said other book is someone he'd encountered during his teen years, before he joined Cang Qiong Mountain Sect.

That the person is a Demon doesn't bother him, after all, Tianlang-Jun is the uncle of an associate of his, one Zhuzhi-Lang. He suspects that whatever issue that Huan Hua Palace had with the Heavenly Demon, it was more of a private issue and hadn't really involved the Sects. Thus, why he had Shang Qinghua gift a Qiankun Pouch to Zhuzhi-Lang, most of which should be used to help ensure that Tianlang-Jun's safety and health until which time the Seals holding the Demon under that mountain can be undone.

The book, well, he's written any number of stories, most of which involve lovers being betrayed by those they trusted. That they parted in death, often with empty vengeance having been enacted. Glancing towards the urn on his shelf, it contains the poisoned body of one Su Xiyan, who'd also been pregnant, the child she gave birth to hadn't been affected by the poison.

He doesn't know where the babe ended up, Shen Qingqiu had been more interested in questioning what lingered in the area about how Su Xinyan ended up in such a state and place. The answers... He closes his eyes, it's hard knowing but not being able to go through with the emotions such knowledge sparks.

So, he's been making use of his Shidi, Shang Qinghua's connections with the Northern Demons for various reasons but mostly, for picking up any happenings of Demons and Huan Hua Palace. It seems that the future Mobei-Jun is incline to sharing such knowledge, he assumes it's due to said Demon having a personal issue with said Sect as well.

On the human side, Shen Qingqiu has people gathering information about any dead Huan Hua Palace disciples. The number of dead disciples of the male gender during what should be Su Xiyan's teenage years and some of her adult ones is rather large. The fact that the Palace Master has picked up a young boy who shared some similarities with Su Xiyan doesn't sit well with him, not when he suspects that the man having lusted after said student.

Gently shaking his head, Shen Qingqiu regards what it is he wishes to set to the page before him. Autumn Eyes is the pen name he's using and he's, well, tried of just writing out short stories. He knows what it is he misses from his previous existence as Sawada Tsunayoshi, it's Manga and Anime.

Without thinking too much about it, Shen Qingqiu draws something of a self portrait before adding a leaf like make about the upper face. The image is rather cartoonish and he is sure to have the sword on the opposite side that he generally wears it along with having a fan in his off hand that he generally holds it. The head is a bit large for the body and yet, as he finishes, he writes the characters of the pen name to the right of the cartoonish self portrait.

Studying it for a bit, he decides to add some color. And so, by the time an hour has passed, there's a colourful self portrait of Autumn Eyes. The mask is a dull red with the robes being a rusty yellow with

dark orange trim. The sword sheath is a dull brown with the fan's wood being a rich dark red with autumn leaves upon the open fan.

Doing it with a brush is rather trying. He recalls pencils, particular those coloured ones. As the paint dries, his mind is in the present but back in time, when he'd had another body, name, and life. It wasn't a good one, any attempts at **TRYING** all end up tiring him out and having more trouble with his balance for the next few days.

Sawada Tsunayoshi had a mother, looking back at her with a more mature mind set, Shen Qingqiu knows she wasn't all there. That she seemed to be off in her own world and he blames that absentee father back then. Now, he suspects that she just didn't have the strength to face reality of her life, that it was ultimately on his mother for living that kind of life, always waiting on that no good father as a life line. Putting her whole existence on the line for a man that clearly didn't want to have a family, not really.

Letting out a sigh and feeling rather tired, Shen Qingqiu closes the book. The paint is likely dry and so, he gets ready for bed. His emotions and mind trying to untangle themselves from that old pain and yearning. It had taken him a long time to accept that it's likely that Sawada Tsunayoshi died that day, that his hopes that the body just went into a coma or something was just a daydream.

C V P + (= | =) + P V C

It surprises Tianlang-Jun of what gets added to this strange book of his. Checking the next page but there's nothing, and so, he returns to the first page. The image is at first just black lines but then, color begins to bloom. By the time it all comes into focus, he's rather intrigued.

And so, he studies the silly looking individual that sports the characters for Autumn Eyes by the right corner of the page. The style is rather childish but, the more he studies it, the more it begins to appeal to his sensibilities! The little figure is clearly a Cultivator, the

orange eyes reminds him of someone he knows his nephew is friends with.

The robes' colours do bring to mind autumn, which, is likely the point. Even the fan sports tiny leaves of brown, orange, and red upon it. The hair is in a half ponytail and sports a simple orange ribbon. There's a smile upon the face and the mask that looks to be made out of reddish leaves allows one to image the eyes crinkling up in emotion.

Letting out a sigh, bemoaning that he's stuck in this tiny cave, various Talismans softly glowing, keeping the earth and stone from collapsing into his space. There's another set of Talismans that are steadily working on dispelling the Seals upon him that keep him rooted to this spot. His nephew had commissioned this set of boxes that share the same pocket space, allowing for things to pass from one box to the other.

They finished the day before he received that letter. *It's hard to believe.* Tianlang-Jun muses. *That only five years had passed since that day.*

One box on his person and the other upon his nephew's, Zhuzhi-Lang. It's due to them that he'd been able to keep in contact with his nephew. The Talismans he'd had on his person had activated on their own, creating a space as the mountain descends upon him. At the chains of Seals that pierced his being.

And so, for the first year and half, he'd been unable to move from where he'd stood that fateful day. Then it changed, he'd been able to move his feet and sit down, finally. That he laid down and had a long, restful sleep. He'd let his nephew know of such a development.

Tianlang-Jun assumes that he'll be able to leave in about another five years or, perhaps, less. Still, there's been no new developments concerning his nephew's search for Autumn Eyes. He really wants to met said Cultivator, if only to convince him to sign the cover of this

interesting book that had been gifted to them. *Perhaps I can convince him to expand some of those stories?*

Ah yes, he's read and re-read the various short stories that this book slowly possesses. The stories were ones that had gotten him thinking about what happened, what went wrong all those years ago. At first, he'd considered that Su Xiyan had betrayed him but as more stories got added, he began to wonder if she actually did, after all, she hadn't been there, had she?

And why should I believe everything that my enemy says? Tianlang-Jun reasoned to himself after a while. *A-Zhi hasn't found any leads concerning Su Xiyan.*

And so, walking over to where he put the box, he opens it and sticks a hand in, pulling out ink set along with paper and brush. Sitting down, he begins to make his ink from the ink stone, his mind going over what he'll write to his nephew.

C V P + (= T S _ ^ _ S T =) + P V C

As he settles down upon the cliff that overlooks the expanse of meadow below. Shen Qingqiu is just one of the three to arrive on time, his Shidis of Ku Xing Peak and Qian Cao Peak have arrived along side himself. They give each other slight nods as they pick their spots, waiting for those who wish to join the Sect to begin arriving from the stairs.

With the sun rising still some time off, there is various disciples milling around below, near the stair case. Most are likely eating something as they move to and fro. Most of those disciples are from An Ding Peak and he has his doubts about what last minute tasks they are here for. Not that he has much evidence nor was his Shidi here for him to inquire.

And so, as dawn approaches, Shen Qingqiu finds himself mentally going over what statements he's gotten from Shang Qinghua concerning the experimental Talismans that were meant to allow

human crops to grow in the Demon realm or whatever plants that Demons wanted to domesticate into a farming crop. Most of said Talismans are used in the Northern Demon Kingdom, so, it's a bit hard to get a baseline given that he's had to modify most to allow plants to survive without any soil to anchor into along with altering the snow and ice around the roots to be more... firm.

Still, he's been able to get a number of ingredients that were plentiful in the Demon realm instead of money. It's the arrangement he'd set up with his Shidi, which Shang Qinghua is both happy about, given the amount of funds needed concerning various issues that maintains the Sect, but also a bit exasperating given some of the things he wants to acquire are not from the Northern Demon Kingdom, thus are troublesome to get.

And as another one of his Shidi arrives, it's dawn, which signals that the candidates should be gathered at the bottom of the stairs, ready for the test to begin. Most of the children trying to join should be around ten years of age, but there's been a few times teenagers had tried out. Generally, fifteen and sixteen being the uppermost age that one can be accepted into the Sect. His thoughts change from the previous thoughts into regarding something a touch more personal.

He knows Yue Qingyuan was once such teen candidate to be accepted, that Qi-ge had found his way to Cang Qiong Mountain Sect, so much so that he ended up as the succeeding disciple of Qiong Ding Peak and thus, the over all Sect Leader. It also seems that either Yue Qingyuan hasn't recognized him or the other had decided that his leaving meant their past is just that, the past. Shen Qingqiu hadn't felt incline to inquire all that much with his former fellow slave. He isn't sure if he wanted to try and re-spark that old friendship, particularly given that the other had, in the end, held little trust in him, despite having strove to prove himself trustworthy.

Yue Qingyuan does trust Shen Qingqiu and he doesn't want to lose that by bringing up memories of lost childhood. He wasn't ashamed of how he'd acted as a child, being a street urchin slave wasn't a kind existence in the end. That the adults around him at that time

had no problem ignoring the situation is the reason why it had been allowed to happen. So, being kind in such a situation, it wasn't a virtue but a hindrance, something to be exploited.

Recalling the last time he'd tried to beg, to pled for Qi-ge to come with him in leaving... It brings up sour feelings and old anger. He might not know what events have occurred with his old friend, but knows it left its mark on his Sect Leader. In the manner? He doesn't know, just that there's a sorrow clinging to Yue Qingyuan like a leech and it's unlikely the other will ever fully be able to address it as well.

As children begin to show up near the stairs, his thoughts on the subject comes to an end. The first among the group of children are near the older spectrum. His Shimei, Qi Qingqi, arrives with Liu Qingge and Yue Qingyuan. There's a number of Peak Lords greeting the arrival of the Sect Leader and only return to watching the candidates upon getting their greeting returned.

Liu Qingge moves to sit by him, Shen Qingqiu can practically feel the scowl upon that face of his. The other Cultivator never seemed to recover from that defeat he'd experienced during their match in that inter Sect Tournament. They've sparred every few months after he got Xiu Ya, which occurred early in his third year within the Sect, about two months after they figured out a way to allow him to form his Golden Core. The 'container' they created to house that orange energy only lasted two months instead of their estimated six, thankfully, he'd been able to create it and fortify it within that time, he'd ended up in the Spirit Cave for a month with a slight fever.

He came out of said caves with his Golden Core proved that he had done it as they'd hoped, to ensure that the orange flame like energy couldn't purge it from his being. It's been a bit hard to add to it, but it seems that all those plants and methods in preserving his potential had paid off well. Thus, Shen Qingqiu went from the successor with the weakest Cultivation to the one with the strongest and he's been able to keep up, although the methods in order to do so have had to evolve to allow for said growth, but it's more then worth it.

"That one." His Shidi gestures with his head, causing Shen Qingqiu to realize that there's been a conversation going on around him without him realizing it, being too consumed with his own thoughts. As for the child that has just been gestured at, they seem to be either ten or eleven, then as he takes in the robes, decides to add a year or two, which is eleven or twelve.

"You plan to pick him?" Qi Qingqi inquires and the War God of Bai Zhan Peak replies with a grunt, "If he wants to come, he'll walk there under his own power."

He's incline to agree with his Shidi, it's a well established tradition of Bai Zhan Peak. That the child in question will find the Cultivation method of Bai Zhan Peak to be the best is something he suspect to be right. "Street urchin." He murmurs out loud.

"There's nothing wrong with that, Shidi." Yue Qingyuan gently rebuffs and he inclines his head. "This Lord knows, after all, this one traveled widely during his youth. So much so, one might wonder if this one hadn't had the same humble beginnings." His sunset eyes turning to regard their Sect Leader.

"Ah, then this one misunderstood Shidi's comment." The older man admits. "It's not like he'd be suited to Qing Jing." Comments Liu Qingge.

"This Lord agrees, that child would learn better under those with great focus on physical Cultivation then spiritual focus one." Shen Qingqiu agrees, although he does his best to ignore the tug, the pull that would return his focus to said child.

He's unsure why the energy is trying to draw him to the child, in the end, he resolves to check in on the child in the future. Shen Qingqiu doesn't doubt that the child will join the Sect as a disciple, it's just, which Peak will he try for? It might not be Bai Zhan Peak, but it wouldn't be that surprising if the child did end up there, after all, his Shidi is rather... *famous* .

And so, he studies the group, he knows Ning Yingying wishes for a younger disciple but already considered an alternative to that particular request. There's a few from wealthy families he could pick from but, well, given the way they glance off at the disciples from Bai Zhan Peak, it's clear where they plan to try for. Ming Fan had tried his first time to join but he'd failed, thus he'd accepted the boy as a favour to both the family and the boy himself.

Having gotten such an aspiration out of his system, the boy was more settled in joining his Peak. Far better then if he'd taken Ming Fan right away. Thus, he takes a moment to regard whether it would be worth it, to approach them when they fail. As sheltered children, it'll be a shock to their system about what life would be like if they success in passing through the testing of the Peak.

In the end, Shen Qingqiu doesn't feel any other incline to any of the children. And so, his thoughts began to turn into a different direction. Namely, what kind of pages he'll be adding to the book along with what kind of story he'll wanting to draw. In the end, he'd come to create a manga as he'd run out of interest in writing up short stories, he wanted to do something different and so, he in the end, created a manga. He often thinks of it as Little Cultivators World, although most of the 'stories' involve Cang Qiong Mountain but there's some that involve the other Sects, although he'll admit, when ever he does Huan Hua Palace, it... well, it's a bit dark but he'd done his best to make it comedic regardless of how dark the issue was being shown.

And so, the day ends, there's few Peak Lords remaining upon the cliff. Either they had new disciples to greet or they didn't find anyone they think is suitable. "Thank you for keeping me company, Liu Qingge. After all, there's a few who tried for your Peak." Shen Qingqiu says once he's incline to leave.

"You seem to have a lot on your mind." Remarks his Shidi and he inclines his head. "Yes, it seems that there's a lot of thoughts that kept me occupied this day."

They both had raised up from their respective seats. The remaining disciples will ensure that the remaining candidates will be safely taken down the stairs, back to their families. They both take out their respective swords and with a parting good bye, they head back to their respective Peaks.

T S _ ^ _ S T

Cartoonish version of Liu Qingge, termed Xiao Qingge, glares at the ground, the Immortal Conference came to an end. Approaching Xiao Qingge is Xiao Qingqiu. There's a fan that's slowly moving and upon spotting his Shidi glaring at the ground, is curious. A questioning mark appears over Xiao Qingqiu's head and he approaches.

"Xiao Qingge, what has the ground done to you?" Inquires Xiao Qingqiu upon approaching. Head tilted to the side in a questioning manner while the closed fan rests on his chin.

"The Endless Abyss opened up here." States Xiao Qingge with arms uncrossing and going to the hips. "Xiao Bing turned out to be a Demon!"

Xiao Qingqiu sighs, but Xiao Qingge doesn't pay it much mind. "So, I demanded to know why he joined the Sect and the Devilish Demon claimed he didn't know he had Demon blood!"

Image of a woman in Huan Hua Palace uniform appears over Xiao Qingqiu's head. Then a cartoonish image of Tianlang-Jun gets added. Then, an image of Xiao Bing joins the two with arrows pointing out which features came from the respective previous people with the word Mama and Papa.

"Yes, I believe it." Xiao Qingqiu admits as the image vanishes above his head. "Half-Demons are a thing, Shidi."

Xiao Qingge blinks and looks rather startled at the comment. "You knew he was a half-Demon?!" A finger is pointed at Xiao

Qingqiu.

"You didn't notice? I mean, she was rather famous Cultivator. Her teacher was said to be rather fond of her?" Xiao Qingqiu remarks with another questioning mark above the head.

"..." Xiao Qingge takes many different thinking poses before a look of frustration crosses his face. "It doesn't matter! I got fed up with his lies and tried to cut off his lying head!"

Image of Xiao Bing falling down, the head and body separated. It goes away when Xiao Qingge admits, "I only managed to cut off one of his arms though! He fell down before I could finish the job."

There's a breeze that goes through the spot as Xiao Qingqiu considers this particular news. "So...? You regret cutting his arm off?" Inquires Xiao Qingqiu, head tilted slight to the other side from before in a questioning manner.

"What? No!" Xiao Qingge snaps, arms crossing over the chest once more. "I just want to glare at his body some more!"

"Xiao Bing's arm got cut off? His Demonic heritage is free?" Muses Xiao Qingqiu. "Welp, you might want to start praying now, Shidi."

"Eh? Why?!" Demands Xiao Qingge. "There's no chance he could survive without an arm!"

"Heavenly Demons' can regenerate limbs." Explains Xiao Qingqiu. "Xiao Bing is the son of Tianlang-Jun and Su Xiyan."

"Odds are good, he's not dead." Continues Xiao Qingqiu. "And if my information about the Endless Abyss is correct, there's a sword down there that we likely don't want to see welded."

Xiao Qingge looks interested in the sword. Image of different kinds of sword appear over his head. "What's it called?"

Xiao Qingqiu gets a scary appearance with the top of his face getting shaded. "Xin Mo." Gets whispered.

Xiao Qingge considers this before snorting like a boar. "What are the odds that half-breed will find such a sword?"

Xiao Qingqiu counters, "What were the odds that we'd house and teach the bastard son of Tainlang-Jun?"

Xiao Qingge considers this point. Then turns away from looking at Xiao Qingge. "Even if he does come back, I'll be sure to defeat that Devilish Demon!"

Xiao Qingqiu stares at Xiao Qingge's back before turning away and walking away. Thought statement above Xiao Qingqiu's head, *Right... Like you'll be a match of a half-Demon who survived the Endless Abyss for a few years.*

Letting out a sigh, Shen Qingqiu re-reads that manga section of that book he'd created to keep Tianlang-Jun entertained. While the scene he drew wasn't how that particular conversation went between Liu Qingge and himself, but some of it was what his Shidi shared with him. The fact that Luo Binghe's Seal broke and Liu Qingge did try to kill the young half-Demon, only managing to slice off an arm while the younger fell into the Endless Abyss.

All he did was grill the other about what changes Luo Binghe had undergone, in the end, the demonic mark upon the brow and crimson eyes were all that seemed to change. Thus, he finally realized just who's kid his Shizhi was.

A few dozen pages later, he re-reads the one that he'd draw concerning idea of how to confront the Old Palace Master. The image of his 'alter ego' causes a slight smile to grace his lips. He did a cartoon version of all three men who have Heavenly Demon blood,

sitting down and allowing Autumn Eyes to explain a easier, simple plan that involved abduction of said man from his Sect. There's a lot of reasons why it would work, mostly because the Huan Hua Palace disciples were, on average, weakest out of the four famous Sects.

The next part that got added the month later has to do with which plants to use to ensure the truth comes out of the old pervert's mouth. Compulsion towards self truths being the most important ones he listed. Then he named titles of various books to ensure that such a scene could be seen and heard by so many people.

That the three did go through with his suggested plans did warm him to a point. Closing the book, he considers the request that Tianlang-Jun had and the one Luo Binghe had. Both were understandable but also troublesome.

Tianlang-Jun wants to know who Autumn Eyes is and to get an autograph upon a bit of fan art that the man had drawn up. Shen Qingqiu suspects there's more to that request then what the Demon has given. Yet, he is thinking about it if only to deal with the issue of his son's request, which also involves his Shidi's stubbornness.

Luo Binghe had came out of the Endless Abyss, although not without spending about two years within. It seems the heir of the Northern Kingdom had thought his idea concerning how to deal with his Uncle to be a good one. So, the heir search Endless Abyss randomly until he did find Luo Binghe. They struck a deal, once they got over a battle, which is understandable given the feral state that Shizhi had regressed into.

So, things went well for that heir and then Tianlang-Jun got wind about this son of his being in the Northern Kingdom. His eyes settle upon the urn as he can only guess what events occurred between the father, son, and nephew but in the end, Luo Binghe wanted a rematch with his Shidi and he suspects that a grudge is between the former teacher and student.

He understand why the two had their opinions about one another. The terms of no killing the defeated fighter but that doesn't cover crippling. He didn't want Liu Qingge crippled, for all that the other had no compulsion about causing what he believed to be a crippling blow. *The difference has to do with Luo Binghe didn't end up crippled while Liu Qingge would be.* He thinks to himself.

So, in the end, it's not much of a question of when he'll end up introducing himself to Tianlang-Jun and meeting Zhuzhi-Lang again. It's a matter of, will he be able to convince the elder Demon to help reattach Liu Qingge's arm? And what price would he have for such a *grace* ?

The urn didn't belong to him, Su Xiyan's body belongs to the man she loved enough to save his son. He hadn't burn the body, he'd done everything to preserve it but also needed to store it somewhere he can keep an eye on it. Thus, he created a Qiankun urn to hold the body of Tianlang-Jun's lover and Luo Binghe's birth mother.

Getting up, he walks over to where the urn rests. Picking it up, he considers things. It's not like he hadn't had plans to return it. He had commissioned an outfit just to do so.

Pulling out the Sending Stone, it's a permanent way of communication. Pooling a bit of Qi into it, he waits for the stone to turn a blue, for now, it's green. When it does, he's once more seated at his table with the urn upon the table before him. "Yes?" His Shidi's voice, the Peak Lord of An Ding Peak sports an echo quality.

"You still have that outfit commission stored away?" Shen Qingqiu asks. "The one with the leaf styled mask?"

"Oh, yea? You want me to deliver it?" Ask Shang Qinghua.

"No, taking it out of where you stored it and bring it to your house. I'll be arriving within the next two hours." He explains. "I also wish for you to make arrangements so that I might pay a visit to an old acquaintance of mine along with that uncle of his."

"Old... You mean..." There's clear dawning of realization, as though something finally clicks into place within his Shidi's head.

"Yes. I think you understand the reason for this visit." He muses and he hears Shang Qinghua sigh. "Right, I'll have it arranged within the time period." The other promises.

The stone returns to a green before he withdraws his Qi and it returns to its natural coloring. "It's time for a reunion with your lover, Su Xiyan."

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Tianlang-Jun looks up as A-Zhi enters and the sight of the Cultivator's eyes, suddenly, he recalls that brat that he'd seen his nephew with. The one with eyes that seem to be like the sunset. That dark orange that no human should have and yet, that kid did.

He recalls that the brat couldn't Cultivate properly and thus, focused his efforts into Arrays and Talismans. Into knowing plants and beasts. Who'd stitched a snake doll for Zhuzhi-Lang as a gift when the other admitted he felt something going to be happening soon in his life. His eyes drift down to the sword and some how, he suspects that he knew what happened.

Shen... Huh, what were the odds? Tianlang-Jun muses with a slight shake of his head as he returns the polite greetings. The outfit does very much look like the one the other did draw for the character of Autumn Eyes, complete with leaf make and the sword sheath.

"Well, I never though I'd see you again, brat." He remarks with a grin and the grown brat sighs while Zhuzhi-Lang blinks. "Shen... Can't recall the other part but I'm sure my nephew remembers it better, eh?"

His nephew's eyes widen before the name comes out, " Shen Qiao." The grown brat chuckles slightly, a hand goes through his air. "You weren't suppose to guess so quickly." Remarks the brat while he

could tell that his nephew was overjoyed to see this friend of his once more.

"Anyway, I believe you will do right by her." And urn comes out from one of the sleeves. "I used my chances to learnt what befell her instead of searching for her babe."

His heart almost stills at the thought of what the brat could mean by that. "She... You..." Words escape him.

"You were Sealed before he released her after drinking the poison." The brat explains, which clears up a few things about what the old pervert had said. "He wouldn't let her out of the cell until either she drank it or gave birth." *And tossed the babe into the water of the prison.*

His left hand moves down before balling into a fist. Yes, Tianlang-Jun can imagine why the old pervert blamed him for 'dirtying' her. And why she died of poison. The man, even under the combination of truth compulsion plants couldn't admit it to himself, couldn't confront the truth that his student died because of his own actions instead of Tianlang-Jun's. *That's why the antidote failed to work.*

Getting up and relaxing his fist, he picks up the urn and pulls it over. "Just unseal the lid and gently tilt it and the body will come out." Explains the grown brat and he wonders how good of a condition the body is in.

The short stories do make a lot more sense, the focus on those around the lovers being the cause of ruin for them... He'd hoped but hadn't really expected it to be so in their case. And so, silence settles and he wonders if there's a price to returning the body, after all, this brat could have changed in more ways then one.

"What do you want in exchange for you ensuring my foolish Shidi to not be crippled for life?" The brat asks and he blinks, snorts, then laughs, it's a mixture of disbelief and just plain humour. There's a slight sigh from his nephew while he tries to regain control over

himself, some tears having exit out of his eyes during his fit of laughter.

Tianlang-Jun looks over to where his nephew is and remarks, "Well, I think I'll be a bit busy with other things, so I might miss out on that rematch." He had been incline to witnessed the match but now, well, he saw an opportunity to give his nephew a chance to reconnect with this grown brat before him.

"Uncle!" Exclaims Zhuzhi-Lang as the brat turns to regard his nephew. His nephew stills, there's a slight redness to his nephew's face and ears.

"Ok, that's... ok. Sure, I'll speak with Zhuzhi-Lang about it." The brat agrees with a slight nod and he gives his nephew a Look about this being his chance. His foolish nephew shakes his head in denial.

"So, where's this painting you want me to sign?" Ah yes, he recalls that part and is rather bemused that the other remembers it. Pulling it out from his own sleeve, he puts it down upon the desk.

It's an image he'd drawn trying to mimic the style that the picture story had been drawn in. It's a rather unique way to tell stories and he rather hopes to speak with the author about getting them punished so that others might be inspired to put their own spin on such a way to tell stories. The image is of himself and Su Xiyan, he'd painted the robes, with him in Huan Hua Palace women robes and Su Xiyan in his masculine robes and coloring.

There's a soft snort and bemusing smirk upon the brat's face. "Really? Just, really? You sure you don't want me to sign a different one?" He suspects he knows why the brat is questioning his choice but he's certain that he wants this one to get signed. It's the scene he wished had happened. *It might yet happen.* The beginnings of an idea forming.

On the right of the painting is Autumn Eyes signature and then on the left is Shen Qingqiu signature with another one but this one is a

bit more familiarly done, Shen Qiao. It's a bit more messy compared to the other two, but that's fine. He knows just where to put this after ensuring it's been preserved in a frame, to ensure that the ink doesn't fade with time.

"Now then, why don't you two go out and re-familiarize yourselves with one another? It's been a few decades now, eh?" He suggests and his nephew flushes once again while the grown brat hums in thought.

"Unless Zhuzhi-Lang has other business? We could meet up later, just as long as we do so before the match." Suggests the grown brat.

Soon enough, the two leave his office and he smiles a bit. Tianlang-Jun feels a bit of satisfaction over the reunion. He knew his nephew had grown to like that brat with sunset eyes, even though he found himself put off by the brat. Not that it means that he disliked him, it was more that there's something a bit off with the brat and hearing how hard it was for the brat to Cultivate, he felt he was right.

He could only imagine how much trouble the brat had to go through just to Cultivate that Golden Core of his. In the end, the brat managed it and he's glad for his nephew's sake. He hadn't wanted the brat to die before his nephew got around to figuring out what he felt for the human. His gaze and hand goes to the urn, he can only imagine how well preserved the body was within the pocket space of the urn.

Either way, I'll be visiting the Mausoleum with this urn. Tianlang-Jun decides. Either he'll be able to revive his wife or she'll be entombed within. Both options were acceptable in his mind.

Ending it here

Peak Lords Return to the Skies: AoF

I don't own Age of Fire or Proud Immortal Demon Way(from The Scum Villain's Self Saving System).

As Shen Jiu wakes, it's to a hunger and the feeling of restriction. There's little time for him to consider the strangeness of waking never mind that it seems like he has two eyes. And so, jerking his head up with great force, something gives way and instinct grips him.

And so, a tiny gray body breaks out of an egg shell. Shen Jiu collapses upon the rock and breaths rapidly, there's a presence overhead of him. Blinking, the hatchling gray focuses on the huge green reptile while beginning to notice how different he ultimately is.

There's a pair of forelimbs, legs, and something new, that's behind those new legs of his. "A grey? I guess it's a matter of if he'll manage to win against his brothers." A voice comments to... herself.

Shen Jiu can't help but assume that the voice is feminine. It's the mention of winning and brothers that grabs his attention. Looking around himself, he notices that there's four other eggs upon this rock shelf with him.

Closing his jaws, he watches as egg toothed of his siblings break the shell. There's a certain instinct raising up within him, one that overtakes the urge to rub his snout upon anything around him. Angry hisses escape Shen Jiu's throat as he feels like he's trying to puff up.

Anger is familiar and something Shen Jiu knew what to do with it. And so, when one of his brothers break out of the shell, the scales being blue for this hatchling. Launching himself at the newly hatched rival, who bellows out a challenge, already readying himself for the coming fight with Shen Jiu.

Sadly, his tiny claws barely do anything to those blue scales while pain surges from when the Blue's claws. Managing to evade and break away from this Blue brother of his, Shen Jiu notices the lack of his scales and mentally curses at fate for such a development, many ills already settling in his heart once more.

He barely has time to recover before the Blue recovers enough to charge forward at Shen Jiu. As he moves to evade that charge and the following, clumsy movements, it's then that he notices that he's quicker then this Blue brother of his. Taking in the shelf, a plan begins to form within his mind.

And yet, the unexpected happens as it seems he forgot that there were other eggs hatching. A Red and Orange come at them, the Red brother at Shen Jiu while the Orange towards the Blue. He's sure there's a gasp of astonishment over this, the comment concerning the number of males that hatched seemed to surprise their... mother.

Shen Jiu feels the urge to sneer at this Red brother as he overestimates his charge and couldn't recover from Shen Jiu moving out of the path. He follows after, going for the snout of this Red brother of his. It takes a lot of effort but, in the end, the Red ends up off the shelf and the scent of blood causes him to wash away his recent accomplishment, remembering that he's still not the last male upon this shelf.

He notices a green hatchling but disregards them. Shen Jiu finds that the Blue had won, the Orange is dead and it seems like the Blue is trying to resist something, perhaps conflicting urges. The smell of blood, it stirs his own hunger and his eyes linger on the Orange's body a touch more then he'd like.

The cries of their Red brother from below the shelf seem rather distant. It's something that seems to be a stand off as the Blue and Shen Jiu stare at one another. For the moment, that overwhelming urge to fight one another seem to have peppered out and the more time passed, it seems that Blue brother didn't seem incline to continue to fight him.

Within Shen Jiu himself, there's a number of various things fluttering through his mind. The staring contest ends when the Blue seems to give into a particular urge and rubs the tiny egg tooth from his snout by their shared Orange brother's body. And Shen Jiu snorts, turning his head away, doing his best to sneer and give off the aura of I'm Above This.

Not that he doesn't know what that particular urge is, to rub off said egg tooth but he decided against it. There's a glare from the Blue, who growls out, "YOU!"

It startles him a bit as the Blue marches up to him. " Shen Qingqiu!" The Blue snaps out in a way that Shen Jiu knows but feels like it was rather odd at the same time.

And then, with this Blue brother before him, glaring at him, he flinches as a name almost escapes him. Before Shen Jiu realizes that the name called wasn't the right one for that Person to use. So, he inquires after musing over the coloring along with the tone, "Liu Qingge?"

And thus, he gets 'hugged' by this former Martial Brother of his from a past life, who is his blood and flesh brother in this new one. Some how, this turn of events seem to rather odd, particularly giving the sigh that comes from their new mother. Not that their... sister seems to pay it much heed, given she's started in on eating Orange brother.

[TT - TT]

Shen Jiu huffs as Liu Qingge seems to take this new stage in their lives a bit too of a melodramatic fashion. Oh, they have different names now, ones that fit in with this new life of theirs. Nithor is Liu Qingge's name while his is Niroth, when they are grown, according to their races' custom, NiThor will be how that name is spelt and his own will be NiRoth.

They had spent five years living with their parents and sister, Maier. They'd learn a lot, like that Red brother that he's manage to shove

off the shelf is not consider worth their parent's time. Thus, that brother of theirs is nameless and ignored. Where that Red brother of theirs wandered off to after their parents brought up the matters of the Lavadome along with something called the Drakwatch and their counterpart, which are called Firemaidens.

An Empire of Dragons, Lavadome. Shen Jiu isn't sure if he should be glad that the race he'd been reincarnated into could and did found an Empire. He's a scaless gray drake, which came with advantages and disadvantages, which he'll have to balance during this new period of his life.

Their sister, Maier, seems to be wavering over whether she would join the Firemaidens for a time or if she'll pursue something else. Given Shen Jiu had encouraged her musical talents, he rather hopes she'll pursue perfecting it, learning what passes as musicians for a Dragon, or, to use another term for female Dragons, Dragonelle. He would have avoided joining this Drakwatch if not that it's one of the ways a drake could earn a post later in life.

He suspects that Liu Qingge will surge to the front of the pack when they join. Even now, the former War God of Bai Zhan, enjoys brawling. Of course, this brother of his calls it sparring but given he isn't overly interested in fighting with claws or fangs, never mind with flame.

It doesn't help that there's so much chaos that's been on going for years, particular after the death of FeHazathant, the first Tyr. The current Tyr of Lavadome is one SiHazathant, who's mates with Regalia. There's a lot of politics that's been ongoing, things that many don't particularly like. It makes him glad that his parents had manage to get their promotion, so they didn't have to nest in Lavadome, so there was distance between the explosive situation that's waiting to go off within the capital of Lavadome.

Snorting, he tries to shake his thoughts from the situation that's waiting for them at Lavadome. That old egg tooth of his had long since turned into something of a permanent fixture upon his snout.

Shen Jiu hasn't found it to hinder him all that much and only has the beginnings of an idea of how to make use of it, now that he can 'breath' fire.

Feeling Liu Qingge not behind him, he pauses to look over at said brother of his. Following this brother of his eye line, he notices that it's dawn. It takes him seconds to realize that it's been far too long since he witness such a sight, be it from being in the Water Prison or growing up in a cave, under the care of NiGaar and Rasha.

Walking back, he sits down next to the Blue and joins him in watching the coming dawn. While Liu Qingge isn't who he'd want by his side, he knows that having someone else in the same situation as himself from the very beginning... It was an uncountable stroke of fortune and luck.

[TT - TT]

He never thought that he'd end up returning to the world he previously came from. Given the way his Blue brother holds himself, Shen Jiu suspects that never did Liu Qingge. The sight of a certain Beast before them, well, it brought back old memories of when the Beast was first upon his Peak.

"Now then, which of you are my dear Shizun?" The Beast inquires, the demonic sword remains in hand. Acting as though the Beast is clueless, not with that sword.

"Liu Mingyan?" Liu Qingge inquires and it's then that he notices the number of others, hugging the walls of this hall. The veiled Cultivator jerks slightly at her name.

"I'm disappointed with you, A-Yan." Liu Qingge begins in on a lecture towards his former younger sister. He pays it only half a ear, having caught sight of one dear woman he raised up and that one that he'd meet in the hell hole of a Household.

Shen Jiu's feelings towards these two were ones that still cause him to pounder upon them far too much. *Then again, I shouldn't have my previous life's memories in the first place.* He muses as Liu Mingyan finds her voice in order to speak up.

"He killed you! Murdered you!" Is her only defence, the life line, really, now. The only thing that had to be true or else, everything she'd been a part of, what she allowed to happen, was about 'if only Shen Qingqiu wasn't scum, hadn't murdered my brother, then I wouldn't have done these things'.

"He Did Not!" Roars his Blue brother, he shrinks a bit at the tone and volume. His head turning to regard Liu Qingge. "He. Tried. To. Save. My. Life!" It's said in such a way as to brand each word in the air, an impossible task, sadly.

As his Blue brother does his best to reign in his various emotions, there's many a voice decrying such a statement, which doesn't surprise him all that much. *Hypocrites.* Is all Shen Jiu could think as he lazily takes in the room, his mind slowly working through various plans.

"Enough!" Bellows Liu Qingge, wings flaring as the other moves as though to stand between Shen Jiu and those around them. "How would any of you know the truth of it? None of you were in the caves with us!"

Those within the room flinch at the volume, Shen Jiu didn't see the point. These were, in the end, sheep. They followed the herd without much of a thought or interest in the truth. None of his fellow Peak Lords had cared, particularly given that a certain Peak Lord had the means to figure it out through their particular brand of skills and techniques.

That Mu Qingfang never did so, it was a clear statement that he felt confident in what had ultimately happened. Not even Yue Qingyuan believed him about the matter. None wanted to think that a Qi Deviation could ever touch the 'flawless' War God of Bai Zhan, never

mind it would be the more likely option then Shen Qingqiu could best his more establish Martial Sibling.

As his Blue brother explains about his death, along with continuing to scold Liu Mingyan concerning HER life choices. Shen Jiu manages to tilt his head and take in the Array that help anchor them here. He does it as discretely as he could, given his size and how everyone is facing the pair of them.

There's plenty of people who voice their 'grievances' with him but Liu Qingge stands firm in his conviction. After all, he had haunted/attached to Shen Jiu back then. He's unsure of what else Liu Qingge had been privy too, but it's not like he can be overly angry over it. Not when it'd over and done with.

As he gets enough of a sight of this Array. It takes him a bit to muddle over what it means along with could it be used to their advantage? Shen Jiu might not be an expert on Arrays, but it also seems that Xin Mo might be the item that's holding it together, given it's rather shabbily created.

Turning to regard the Beast, the sword is indeed glowing more then it had before. And yet, it's clear that the Beast isn't paying that demonic sword any real attention. *Xin Mo. Heart Demon.* Shen Jiu muses, doing his best to recall what few bits of information he'd read and observed.

I'm his Heart Demon. Shen Jiu realizes when the Beast sends a Look that could mean so many things. *No, I'm the source of it. It's the Beast that's been nurturing it and Xin Mo has only help enrich it.*

And suddenly, he's tired upon such a realization dawns on him. It hardly matters, really. He had died in the Water Prison and yet, this Beast never would let it go. Let him go. Not until the Beast dies, likely viva that demonic sword in his procession. *Even now, that obsession is blinding him, isn't it? To what he has, all he can see is what he can't have.*

You learnt the wrong lessons from this old teacher, huh, Beast? He muses to himself. Having looked back upon his life, he knew what went wrong, the first, was swearing all of his loyalty to his Qi-ge without requesting that the other swear it back. It's clear that Yue Qingyuan... No, Qi-ge never had much trust in Shen Jiu.

He valued a promise made by a child when he should have put value on looking for a way to escape. That he'd placed far too much trust on a child who barely had the means to fulfill it. So many things rippled out from that particular promise made by that soft Qi-ge to that prickly Xiao Jiu.

Still, it's in the past, and I'm not a Cultivator. So, no Heart Demons plaguing me. No need for a Golden Core either. Not with a life that could natural reach a thousand years of age. Shen Jiu muses to himself, a slight smile.

The discussion around him, that had been going on and on. Something changing, feeling grass under his feet, he suspects things weren't going to last. The balance is changing, in which direction, well, Shen Jiu is sure that this likely won't be anything that really matters, in the end, in regards to Liu Qingge and himself.

The flow of events weren't easy to know what started it but how it ended... Xin Mo lodged in a certain Beast's heart. The Array flaring as the chamber had changed into that of a meadow before those people and chamber fade away, at least in Shen Jiu's view point.

"He's dead? Like that?" Liu Qingge inquires, turning to look at him.

"Xin Mo." He states simply. "It's never failed to kill its welder." Shen Jiu isn't sure how things will proceed for Ning Yingying but, in the end, all must face their Karma. Actions do have consequences, whether they are for the better or the worst, it's all about how one reacts and make due.

"Too clean." Liu Qingge grunts while he looks up at the sky. "Perhaps." He spreads his wings, readying himself for a flight in

hopes of helping to clear his mind.

"Your too forgiving." Is all this brother of his grumbles and with a laugh, Shen Jiu launches himself into the air.

He's nearly a hundred years of age and things were going well for the two of them. Sure, they will part when they find a Dragonelle they fancy, might even have clutches with them. Life in this world is still new, it's fresh in a way that he doesn't recall it being when he'd been human.

In the sky, Shen Jiu, no, NiRoth flaps his wings. He has an easier time of it, compared to those with scales. He's body is so much lighter, even though it also means he's not as protected as those with scales. *Advantages and Disadvantages.*

The End

Author's Note **:**

Yea, I wrote this within a single day. Funny thing, I found out that E. E. Knight actually began on writing a sequel series for his Age of Fire world. So, yea, I wanted to write something and given how Dragon Champion began... Well, why not? After all, I've read plenty of fan stories concerning Liu Qingge sticking with Shen Qinggiu|Shen Jiu after he'd died, so it's also something of a tribute to those too.

Divine Interfaces: RedwallGamerUniverse

I don't own either the Redwallish society setting nor the idea concerning gamer universes!

Name: Vert

Current Species: Mouse

Age: 16

Divine Profession: None

Chosen Profession: Mercenary

Faction Membership: Mercenary Guild

Level: 36

Divine Passive: Tactile Learning

Trained Passives List:

Observant

Level Headed

Tracker

Bandit Hunter

Ambidextrous

Scenery Awareness

Blind Fighter

He closes his Profile after his gaze lingers on Blind Fighter. It's a list where his oldest are listed first and his newer ones are at the bottom. Vert slightly shakes his head, it wasn't that he'd been sparring when he achieved that last one, it was just that all the black smoke made it hard to see during the eradication of one Prince Von Foxthrone, who's Transmigration ended up with him as a Pine Marten instead of this Kingdom's Royal Family's preferred Species, which is some variant of the Fox Species.

Not that Vert had any real investment in what was going on between the cousins. Really, he'd come to this Kingdom due to having gotten news about his family's killers having joined Prince Von Foxthrone's forces. Most of said forces having been recruited bandits, well, there's always the Mercenary Guild's standard bounties concerning infamous bandits.

He'd been 12 years old when he arrived and he'd been 13 when he killed C. Redcap. Unlike a few, particular infamous bandit leaders, the Rat hadn't been a member of the Mercenary Guild once upon a time. So, there's little solid information about C. Redcap, even that name C. Redcap wasn't the Rat's actual name but a kind of mocker that the Guild assigned to him based off of descriptions. The first C stands for Coast for where the first sighting of him and his group while Redcap means he enjoys smearing blood of the dead onto himself.

Letting out a soft sigh, his gaze shifts from the pew before him to look up at the Divine Relic that's near the alter at the front of the church. The name of this church escapes him and, honestly, this is his first visit to one since his family funeral. The Divine Relic is a sceptre that isn't overly decorated. It's wood it's seems to be made out of is almost smoky gray and about its surface are copper spikes. There's a faint glow of white and he's heard a few people exiting as he were entering that the white actually swirls about the surface of the Divine Relic.

He can't see it from his position but his attention is drawn when a group with a Fox enters the church. The guards seem to be four

Shrews, a Ferret, Stout, and Hedgehog. The Fox sports a hooded cape but the sight of the Hedgehog means he has some idea of who this particular Fox is.

The nine are heading for a particular hallway. A pair of Shrews breaks off to stand guard at the entranceway of the hallway. These two sport spears like the others but their secondary weapons are light crossbows instead of swords or maces.

Vert averts his gaze, raising it up to the wall that's above that hallway entrance. There's a tapestry hanging there, a Badger in full body armour holding aloft a depiction of this church's Divine Relic above their head. He assumes that the Badger is an important person in regards to this church. There's white light symbolically radiating from said Relic.

The surrounding area is slowly changing, with it being more green where the Badger is standing while to the far left is fleeing troops, no singular uniform look to them, some look like Rats, Shrews, Voles, and other, common, Species known for being incline to aggression. To the opposite side of the tapestry, there's a village and the villagers are mostly Mice, Squirrels, Hedgehogs, and a Rabbit near the back of the group, this Rabbit looks to be richer then the others, at least, that's what the more colourful cloths suggest at least. All of this group are looking at the Badger holding the Relic up.

There's a bit of a sour feeling at the sight of the Mice in the tapestry. Vert knows that majority of his Species are rather... passive and timid. It's why depictions of Mice as the pitiable victims are rather typical in art and in stories. It's like how cowards are often depicted as Rabbits, due to their general nature of easily frightened and being notably skittish.

On the flipside, Rats are universally depicted as henchmen or general banditry. Foxes are typical for those who are considered clever thinkers but sly selfish people. Shrews were the typical angry drunkards while Ferrets are bloodthirsty, cold blooded murders.

Stereotyping by Species doesn't make a lot of sense, in Vert's opinion, given that when someone gets to the right age and Level, they can appeal to the local church for Transmigration into a different Species. It costs some Levels along with de-aging the person some years as well, but many think it worth it. It's a touch uncommon for parents to end up having kids that are a different Species but it happens. Like the two Princes that were cousins who underwent Transmigration in hopes of becoming Foxes, it just so happened that for whatever reason, Prince Von Foxthrone didn't become a Fox but a Pine Marten instead.

Before his family died, Vert had always pictured what it would be like to be something other then a Mouse. He'd admit, after they'd died, it did occur to him from time to time until he'd turn 14. By that point, he'd given up on such an idea, after all, he still didn't have a Divine Profession, as he never petitioned a church when he turned 10 to go through with such a ceremony, which is generally regarded as a major milestone in life.

He'd sworn to himself that the only way he'd enter a church ever again was either as a body or after avenging his family. Hence, Vert had avoided them for nearly a decade until today. Today is the day that he changed into something other then his leather and cloth padded armour, leaving behind his two swords, hand axe, and most of his hidden knives save for the one on his belt, which is out in the open.

He'd been 9 when he'd joined the Mercenary's Guild, he'd hope to pass himself off as a dwarf size Rat by keeping his head covered. It's only later did he realize that the Guild doesn't have an age limit and, well, while it's open for all Species to become members, certain Species never have. Vert's not sure if that's true, given how old the Guild ultimately was, but the application didn't request his Species, which might have to do with Transmigration allowing one to change it. It likely makes paperwork easier, not having to update all of the records when someone Transmigrate into another Species nor, perhaps, keeping track of the various Levels of their members.

Looking towards one of the stained glass windows, this one depicting a harvesting of a wheat field by Mice. Which reminds Vert that his family's occupation being migratory crop hands. They'd been rather poor, mostly getting paid by a small share of the crop they were helping to harvest then in money. It hadn't just been his parents who died but his grandparents, granduncles and their wives, uncles and their wives, cousins, second cousins, and those who'd been adopted into the family either as children or as adults.

They'd travelled between two Kingdoms, never settling down. Vert can't remember why that was, just that they had little in the way of money or material goods while foraging and hunting as they travelled. He can barely remember what his parents looked like, let alone recalling their voices or the faces of every member of his family. He'd been the only survivor, having hid high up in a tree, having defy his parents' grounding him to the tent.

To this day, he can't believe how he managed to remain high up in that tree and am very thankful that it had been a moonless summer night. It's likely due to the leaves of the tree that he hadn't a good view of the slaughter or else he might have given himself away. That night... he doesn't recall it, nor when dawn arrived and he finally climbed down.

Those that came across the site, well, he doesn't know for sure who they were. Only that it wasn't long before he'd been whisked away from the site and some days passed then the funeral. It was at the funeral that it finally settled the whole event for him, that he was alone in the world, that none of his family survived.

His eyes go to the next stain glass window as he does his best to blink rapidly to fight the tears that threaten to fall as he recalls that grief that spurred him into being angry at, well, everything and everyone. It wasn't long after that he'd collected what belongings he could and left. He hadn't a destination in mind, then.

Vert just wandered around, keeping away from villages and roads. Living off the land and polishing the hell out of his various knives.

He'd survive winter and when spring came... so did some clarity and he began to think, to plan for his future.

The stain glass sports a Hedgehog in a Brewery's basement. There's a wooden stain in the right paw while there's a ladle in the left. It's an image that suggests that the Hedgehog is taste testing the brew, either already had or about to. The large kegs behind the Hedgehog implies bounty and that it's next to the harvesting Mice, it could imply the two scenes are related in someway.

Doing his best to distract himself from his thoughts, his emotions, he gazes at the next one window, which is a bit away from the other two. This one sports Squirrels cutting up a large log, between the two is a large saw. It's in rather deep within the log that's getting cut. It's tilting more in one direction too, at one of the two in particular. About the scene is a forest in the background, suggesting that this is happening in a forest, at a make shift lumber yard.

The next stain glass window sports a Beaver carpenter in a workshop. There's an unfinished chair, with the Beaver fiddling with putting in a leg. There's the back while the chair is resting upside down upon the table, allowing the Beaver to put in the legs.

Thunk. Thump. "Shh!" A hard but very soft voice rings out.

Vert's ears twitch at the soft sound while forcing himself not to direct his head in said direction. The lack of weight upon his belt is suddenly very noticeable, but then, a hand had went to where he usually has his sword resting. Heartbeat speeds up as many thoughts flicker within his mind over the whys and what fors.

And so, he lowers his gaze from the stain glass window featuring the Beaver carpenter. Staring blankly at the wall, Vert turns his head to where the Divine Relic and presses his lips into a hard line as he wrestles with the thought of dashing up to it in order to weld it, after all, a sceptre is not that different then a mace. Trying to reason if it's worth trying to weld it, not knowing if it would even allow itself to be picked up by the likes of him.

Focusing on the sounds near where the guards are, Vert gets to his feet and does his best to walk in a general fashion up to where the Divine Relic is set up. He's seen others approach to pay their respects near it, typically standing before the alter that before the Divine Relic and where they approach from.

There's sound of wood groaning and he can imagine someone crouching upon one of the likely wood beam rafters that's above his head. There's no hanging candelabra above them, so there's no reason for such a sound to come from above. There's about six candelabra stands upon the dais that he's approaching with not all of the candles alight, only the center candle sports a flame to create some kind of atmosphere or setting upon the dais.

He is within dashing distance of the alter that is resting before the Divine Relic when he hears wood groan. Vert turns in that direction to witness a group of five dropping to the floor, their head covered up but there's other ways to tell what they are, most likely it was just to obscure who they are individually. Three are, unsurpringly, Rats while the remaining two are slim and long, which makes it harder to pin what they are, after all, there's a wide array to pick from with that kind of body, like a Marten, Stoat, and the like.

The Rats make it to the floor before the other two and are already darting forward while the posted guards are slow to react. Forcing himself to look away, he races up the steps leading up to the dais and over the, thankfully, mostly un decorated alter to wrap his hands about the hilt of the Divine Relic.

[Registering User]

[User: Vert the Mercenary]

[Assessing User: Vert the Mercenary Authority]

[Authority Unknown]

[Scanning User: Vert the Mercenary Profile for Profession Markers]

.

[User Vert the Mercenary lacks Profession Markers]

[ALERT! ALERT!]

[ALERT! Conflict Occurring within Save Zone!]

[ALERT! Assessing Situation!]

[ALERT! No Qualified User within reach!]

[Resolving Alert!]

.

[Resolution Decided]

[User: Vert the Mercenary attempting Access Authority]

[Is User: Vert the Mercenary seeking to Resolve Conflict? Y N]

Vert finds himself at a loss about the various messages that popped up fairly quickly the moment he tried to heft the Divine Relic. And now, it seems that he's getting asked if he's looking to solve the fight that's occurring within the Church. He glances towards said spot and...

Blinking a few times at the sight of everything being muted in color along with those assassins seemingly frozen along with the guards they are clearly planning to kill. Heart thumping loudly in his ears and yet, when he tries to let go, he can't so he can only twist his head this way and that to try to see if those others within the church are also in the same state as himself or if frozen like those fighting.

What little he can see, they are also frozen and also muted in color. Looking at the Divine Relic, that message hangs there, clearly waiting for Vert to pick one of the two options. "Yes." He states weakly before squaring his shoulders before stating more confidently, "Yes, I plan to do something about that fight."

It takes a bit but the **Y** glows and there's another rush of messages but he's given time to read them before they vanish. Most of it seems to be proceeding with Profession Assignment, which he is only beginning to suspect might be him getting a Divine Profession, most of it seems to be taking his whole being into consideration given the number of waiting messages that crop up.

[Profession Consideration is PALADIN]

[Registering Query concerning Implementation of PALADIN as User: Vert the Mercenary Profession]

As he left for a long time with no messages besides the typical waiting ones. Thus, Vert has plenty of time to consider what this means along with this unknown Profession that is called PALADIN. By the time anything has changed, Vert has come to the conclusion that he might be the first to be assigned said Profession and he's had plenty of time to go through various kinds of emotions but also notices that he's not feeling exhausted by how much time has passed while he's in this odd state.

And so, he's rather surprised by how quick things finalize before the issue concerning the time different fades, leaving him with a singular statement of reapplying the Safe Zone's Protections. The feel of the sceptre's weight as he hefts it. It's so surreal, to Vert, that he just stares at the Divine Relic as he turns it about.

There's a gasp and he recalls the situation and tightening his hands about the sceptre, hefts it up and bellows the following words without any real thought, "Sanctum Revival! Inititate Program!"

The head of the sceptre glows and then, the air around him ripples. Soon enough, the fighting ends as everything that the ripples touch glow a soft white or yellow. Noticing that someone is about to bleed out, he holds the Divine Relic with a single hand while gesturing with his now free hand. A more silver light flares from his hand and then the heavily wounded guard lights up a second after the silver light fades.

"It's a miracle!" Rings out when one of the Rats' long daggers bounces harmlessly from the neck of the other guard. None of the attacks do anything and yet, it's the same for the guards, nothing they do harms the assassins.

By the time the assassins give up and try to rush out of the church, they run smack dab into a barrier. It's a bit before the Head Priest arrives within the room. There's a bit of a look of interest at him hefting the Divine Relic but Vert had been a bit busy being a touch numb by everything that's happened and is currently happening.

And so, he offers the sceptre to the Head Priest, which is taken, although it looks like they find the Divine Relic a bit heavy. Which is rather interesting but Vert doesn't see the point in voicing his questions. Still, the Head Priest makes use of the sceptre, the assassins slump down, likely fast asleep.

He backs away as others climb onto the dais. It's becoming rather noisy and he does his best to ignore it. Bringing up his Profile, Paladin has now replaced None when it comes to his Divine Profession. There's something new added and it's clearly related to his shiny new Divine Profession.

As his Profile closes, he does his best to pay attention. Soaking in the feeling of not being the only being around that's capable of movement along with the lack of messages.

Ending it Here

Revenge of the Jiang Siblings: Mo Dao

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation nor D&D content.

Wei Ying leans upon the desk to get a better look at the metal. The characters are rather odd, there's this character with a tiny circle and then an incomplete circle looking part with a line in it. This character is rather eye catching, given it's between odd triangles, with long hanging ends. The coloring of the triangles are red with the compact circle character being a dark purple, at least, when he tilts his head to the side.

The two lines that comes before the first triangle are also in that same shade when Wei Ying looks at it in the right way. All of this is top center of the flat metal surface and he kind of... wants to touch the characters, lines, and triangles as it seems they are raised up too. The corners are also raised while it looks like leather occupies the sides and yet, it's got the impression of scales.

Closing his eyes and taking a few breathes to do his best to gain control over his urges, the nine year old feels his shoulders relax a touch after a few breathing exercise he'd been taught. Feeling the itch of curiosity loosen, the child opens his eyes and this time, looks at the strange painting that's both colourful and sports clearly non-humans in some battle scene with some huge gray with bluish tinted lizard sporting four pairs of limbs that sport rather thick claws and semi red spines upon the back.

The non-humans are wearing cloths that aren't robes. There's this one that's got tusks like a boar and dark skin that's got a bear chest while fighting with an oversize axe. The one next to this tusk being is clearly a woman... only she's short and is wearing odd metal armour while welding an other oversize item, this time a hammer. The hair is yellow brown and eyes sporting a lot of green.

Then there's the final two that sport almost human looks but something is clearly off. The taller one sports long pointed ears along with navy blue hair with purple eyes. The cloths don't have metal on them while there's a staff sporting some carved bird at the top. A glowing bright green upon the hand that's near the chest while the other holds the staff.

The final one is tiny compared to the three along with sporting a crossbow as a weapon. The hair is rather bright, it being a light blue and eyes being a purple blue color. The skin color being a light shade of gray and might, also, be a woman. At least, it kind of seems like the chest's clothing gives that suggestion?

It's rather odd, given that the tiny one might be the size of a young child or older toddler. Wei Ying isn't sure if he's guessing right, in either case, in regards to that tiny looking person. The other details of the image appears to be of some place deep underground, what with the pointed cones of stone that can be seen, one large one pointed downwards and two smaller ones pointing upwards.

There's a creak and he hears Jiang Cheng scold him from the other side of the slightly open door. "Hurry up! Bring it over here!" The Young Master of the Jiang Sect demands and yet, Wei Ying still has misgivings about following through with the demands of the other boy.

After all, Wei Ying is sure that this metal thing isn't something he should touch. Particularly as his curiosity is slowly growing and that urge to touch is making his fingers itch to feel the metal and the scale leather. "I don't think we should... I think that's what it wants." He replies in a hush tone as he gets down from where he'd been perched, to take a few steps back.

"It wants? It's not alive! None of the others reported noticing any Qi coming from it!" Scuffs Jiang Cheng, who fully opens the door and enters. Marching up to the desk while giving Wei Ying scratching looks, clearly thinking that Wei Ying is just being too cautious and playing at being a coward.

"Don't!" Wei Ying warns upon noticing how Jiang Cheng is about to grab the item, after moving about to get onto the chair to stand over the desk. "We should go!"

Wei Ying might not be living on the streets any more but that doesn't mean that the instincts homed during his years on them have left him. The metal item is far too enticing to be natural! "It's dangerous!" He states as he glances between the two.

There's a huffing sound from Jiang Cheng after the other boy studies the metal's surface. "How ugly!" The Young Master whines, finger tapping the surface. Then noticing him flinching each time the finger taps, the younger slaps his hand upon the top, causing Wei Ying to almost jump.

"Dangerous? How's this dangerous! It's not doing anything!" Jiang Cheng snaps, going so far to show the palm of his hand in Wei Ying's direction. "See?" A clear sneer upon his face.

When Wei Ying stays quiet, Jiang Cheng snorts and then looks at the metal once more before fingers brushing about the sides. As Wei Ying begins to inch towards the door, the Sect Heir picks the thing up, there's a bit of surprise upon Jiang Cheng's face at how easily he does so while Wei Ying pales at the action. Yet again, Wei Ying feels something is going on, he just can't put his finger on what until they arrive at Jiang Cheng's room.

"Too easy. It was too easy to take it." Wei Ying mutters to himself while Jiang Cheng tries to figure out how to open it.

"Scaredy Cat." Scoffs Jiang Cheng as his fingers get under one of those raised corners. They both jerk when it flips up with a thunk.

Once Jiang Cheng recovers, he's quick to do the same to each of the remaining corners, which then causes the top to begin rising up, revealing metal pushing it up. Soon enough, there's a floating almost desk. It's something that Wei Ying knows isn't normal, particularly given Jiang Cheng's reaction.

In the pass nearly three months of having been in Lotus Pier, Wei Ying is still getting a feel for his place within the Sect, never mind the Jiang Family and thus, he's gotten to be fair when it comes to reading Jiang Cheng's expressions. Moving away from the floating metal as best as he can, Wei Ying is getting the feeling of dread that's chilling him to the core.

Young Master Jiang approaches the floating almost desk and upon touching something, a voice sounds out, "Welcome to Adventures and Adversaries Second Edition! The latest and most advance version to date! We now have a difficulty setting and new win conditions! Including optional Skill Grinding Game System instead of having Levelling Game System!"

The voice sounds light hearted and upbeat and yet, it doesn't explain anything of what it's saying. It's clear Jiang Cheng has no clue anything as the voice continues to list things they didn't have a clue has to do with playing a game. And yet, it seems that Jiang Cheng seems eager to make use of this 'game'.

"I'll go fetch Shijie." Wei Ying says and bolts out of the still open door. It wasn't long for him to find her, as she's just leaving her room.

"Shijie! Shijie!" He states as he hurries towards her. Rushing through the bow, which Jiang Yanli nods at in acknowledgement.

"What's wrong A-Ying? Where's A-Cheng?" The eldest child of the Jiang couple inquires, the beginnings of worry upon her face.

"You know that metal thing that got brought back by Senior Li and the others?" Wei Ying asks and there's a slight look of confusion, which has him giving her the summery of the incident along with how skittish the group had been and how relieved they'd been when it had been turned over to Uncle Jiang, who had it at his desk but had to do other things, in particularly, Madam Yu had returned in a foul mood and an injured hand maiden.

And so, the pair of children head for Jiang Cheng's room. Jiang Cheng seems to be rather absorbed by the strange metal almost desk. When Jiang Yanli approaches, Jiang Cheng scowls and seem to want to cover something but stops upon seeing that it's his older sister. "Jiejie! You have to play with us!"

"Oh, and, Wei Ying, go... get some snacks from the kitchen." There's a particular look in Jiang Cheng's eyes upon regarding Wei Ying. It's clear that it's just something to get rid of him, and while Wei Ying is now on edge for another reason, he glances at Maiden Jiang.

"Go on, A-Ying." Jiang Yanli says. "I would like to speak with A-Cheng alone for a bit."

Nodding, Wei Ying does leave, not happy as there's a sense of doom in the future. As he manages to get out of the door, he closes it and stands there for a few seconds, trying to make sense of... well, everything. With a sharp command from Jiang Cheng, "Hurry up and go!"

And so, he does. While at the kitchen, Wei Ying finds a pair of servants chatting about overheard conversations going on with the returning group of Disciples. Fixing his face behind a bright smile and doing his best to cover his nerves, he engages the pair in conversation with intent to get the latest gossip with hopes of getting something that might help in regards to that 'game' that Jiang Cheng seems incline to play.

| X _ X |

Hawk is the name that's next to Name. Race is Aasimar with Background being Urchin. His Level is 1 and his age is 9. There's nothing next to Class.

Other then his Int and Str, all his Stats are 10, his Str is 8 while his Int is 18. There's not much more to find on this page, well, besides an image of what he looks like as Hawk, which is bright white hair and bright golden eyes while wearing worn cloths with a brown

mouse poking out of a vest pocket. Looking up at the top, he notices the 'Tabs' and touches the next one, which is entitled Skills and the next one is Features.

Two Skill boxes coloured in are Sleight of Hand and Stealth is all that he finds under Skills 'Tab'. Under Features 'Tab', there's more to be found, like the Tool Proficiencies which have under it just two things, for now, Disguise Kit and Thieves' Tools. At another section of this page is Background Feature which has City Secrets written there and goes into details of what that means for him as Hawk. Sure, there's a lot of blank spots on this page as well, which are just waiting to be filled.

Looking up at the Background 'Tab', Wei Ying touches it and it's here that information concerning his Race is and to the side, taking up the larger portion of the page, is History, which is Hawk's life story and hints to personal involvement. All in all, it's not all that different then his own history, only there's a hint of not just one party looking for him? There's portions that note his Personality Traits, which is rather bemusing to read, although Rats have replace Dogs as what he fears, then again, there's mentions of stories concerning Wererats, an urban lycanthrope type that are generally evil and how some types of rats could spread that kind of Curse on their own.

As for that mouse he saw in that image of Hawk's pocket? It's name is Timid and his character nursed it after finding it injured. The mouse refused to leave and thus, Hawk got a pet, which means that Wei Ying has a pet to be mindful off, which is rather different then previous experience.

The final 'Tab' is Equipment but the one before it is Quest Line. There's little under Equipment and just few Copper Coins. Changing to another 'Tab', it's then that he finds that there's a Quest in progress, which entails just surviving a year before the Main Questlineline begins. It seems that this Quest is a 'Tutorial' of the game, to become familiar with how this world is and his new rules that govern him as Hawk.

As there's nothing more for him to do, he closes it and Wei Ying closes his eyes as he lets himself feel whatever for a bit before opening his eyes, resolve to get into the role of Hawk and to begin figuring out what he wants as a Class. He has time and this part of the game should be easiest part, well, he hopes so, then again, it's not like he's inexperienced with this kind of thing...

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Jiang Cheng, well, Drake Holden, looks out at the courtyard with a smirk. The lack of that servant's son in this House is well worth it, in his opinion, particularly as the other boy hadn't been given time to make a Character for the game, which means that the servant is likely in his actual station in life, unlikely capable of pursuing the Main Questlineline, when the time comes. After all, a servant's place is in the servant quarters doing servant's work.

And when I win, my wish of having him out of my life will happen. Mother will be happier, with that mother of his out of existence too! Drake thinks with a dark spark of satisfaction.

He'd done everything to ensure his Character starts with every advantage he could get. Sure, there's some Hindrances to even out the Privileges, like, sadly, to be a member of the Imperial Family, he wouldn't be the first born, he wouldn't be the Heir, the Prince Apparent. Drake is third son, but he'd read up on things and found that he'd have an easier time leaving when the Main Questline begins as he won't have any duties or lessons keeping him at the Palace.

Jiang Cheng had been sure to have high Str, Dex, and Con while not caring all that much about Int, Wis, and Cha, which he has under 10. He'd picked Sorcerer for his Class, after all, that's the one where he's able to use magic without studying it. Jiang Cheng picked out his Spells, which aren't many as of yet, but it's only a matter of time before he Levels up.

Yawning, Prince Drake feels a touch sleepy and his eye lids are getting kind of heavy. He finishes the tea before allowing himself to fall asleep.

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"Prince Drake is dead." Reports the assassin and Prince Justin smiles. "It seems he forgot to put on his mother's gift this morning nor did he seem to notice that I wasn't his usual man servant." The assassin includes, offering up said necklace.

"I see." Prince Justin remarks. "My elder brother will be devastated, I imagine. Particularly given that our Draconic Lineage had shown up in the younger Prince."

"Ah, I will have to think of what I want to wear for the funeral." The uncle of the now dead Drake Holden muses while admiring the pendant upon the golden chain. "I wonder which bastard brother will bring in to replace my poor, dead nephew?"

The assassin doesn't response, merely waiting for a clear dismissal. Which comes as Prince Justin pockets the necklace and stands up. Picking up the wine glass, Prince Justin walks over to stand before the large portrait of his brother that's above the fire place.

"Long live the king." Remarks Prince Justin.

[Death by Poison]

[Rebirth Conditions are Not Met]

[Reincarnation Conditions were Disabled]

[Player Cheng Jiang is in Limbo until Game Ends]

[A&AII would like to thank Player Cheng Jiang for playing!]

All Jiang Cheng could do is curse out the game while ignoring the highlighted portions of his Hindrances list, namely that Tutorial Quest

had been skipped along with a rather long list of Enemies, the name of Prince Justin Holden, younger brother to King Vincent Holden is highlighted.

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Jiang Yanli, or rather, Kimberly Summers brings up the Party Notice she'd had received nearly four years back. The one that informed her that her brother's Character had died. The fact that barely three hours into the game when it came up. The cause of death had been poison along with mention of it being caused by a NPC, Non-Player Character.

It had taken some time to learn what became of Drake Holden's body, in the vain hope that she could recover it in order to pay for Revival but, given he'd been a member of the Royal Family of the Kingdom of Stone Den. And so, her brother's Character's body is out of reach. Which means that it's on Jiang Yanli to win and hope that in doing so, Jiang Cheng will be alive at the end of it, after all, the game did understand that only Wei Ying was the one who was to die in a permanent manner... right?

The grief she felt as it sunk in that her little brother might be dead for good... Jiang Yanli had tried to talk her A-Cheng from enabling Permanent Death and had been sure that he'd changed it. *It should have been Wei Ying who died.* Jiang Yanli thinks darkly as she dismisses the Party Notice and then does her best to smooth out her expression.

While her brother had went for Royalty, Jiang Yanli hadn't spent so much time on doing anything concerning her Background, which was Noble, same as A-Cheng's. Although, unlike her A-Cheng, who stuck to Human as his Race, she'd gone for Half-Elf as Elves are noted to being beautiful but she hadn't wanted to be something totally non-human. She'd painstakingly describe her looks, Jiang Yanli hadn't wanted to look mediocre and given she had the chance to look... not mediocre, she took it.

Going so far as to pick something from the list of Privileges to ensure it. Jiang Yanli had been a touch more careful concerning the Hindrances compared to her A-Cheng, although she's not sure why Invoking Love at First Sight could be a valid Hindrance, in her opinion, it seems like a blessing. Either way, the first year had been... she'd enjoyed being an only child. Her parents were nice but also busy, leaving her to be raised by a nice nanny who was a Halfling older woman by the name of Lyre Coals.

As for Lord and Lady Summers, the social standing is an Earl, which isn't all that high up in the rankings but there are those holding lower positions under them. It had been a bit of an adjustment to have superiors who aren't her father but there's a certain freedom, when compared to what Jiang Yanli had been raised in, it's clear that, as Kimberly Summers, as long as she keeps to a certain standard, she'd be free to pursue whatever takes her fancy.

It's not an uncommon tradition for member of Nobility to spend a few years as an Adventurer. This tradition also allows for women to do so as well. And so, when the Tutorial Year passed, she'd been able to ask for permission to do so. Her Class, after all, is that of Wizard, which allows her to, as long as she's able, to modify Spells or create Magical Items, as long as she has both the time and money.

Jiang Yanli recalls when she'd been able to pick a School of Wizardry, well, Necromancy was among the choices for the simple reason she had been hoping to find a way to bring back her A-Cheng. But, in the end, she'd gone with Lorehold in hopes that the Ancient Companion would be of aid in her pursuit of both, the Main Questline and finding a way to bring A-Cheng back to her.

Regardless of School, it hadn't stopped her form learning spells from the School of Necromancy. Jiang Yanli had also been doing her best to work out a spell or find an item that will ensure she's able to locate her A-Cheng's soul. After that, well, there's methods she can use to store her A-Cheng's soul until she has a vessel ready to act as A-Cheng's new body.

Looking down at the table and then back up, Jiang Yanli returns to watching the Quest Board where she'd posted a lead concerning the Main Questline. It's her way of trying to find Wei Ying as A-Cheng hadn't given the boy a chance to make a Character, which means that the boy could have ended up as anything and with any Class. Without a name, let alone known which Race to keep an eye on, Jiang Yanli is having a hard time trying to find Wei Ying in order to fulfill her A-Cheng's wishes along with an option when it comes to ending the game early.

If either Party is wiped out, the game ends with the surviving Party winning. And given Jiang Yanli's lead in regards to the Main Questline requires her to enter into the Skeleton Grove... Well, she's not sure she can trust anyone not to betray her in the middle of it as it's a place that few have come out alive. Those that have come out Cursed or crippled, be it having lost a limb or one of their senses being gone. A blind man with working eyes... A woman unable to feel pain...

And so, when a Halfling approaching the Quest Board, Jiang Yanli takes a moment to study him. Black hair that's slightly wavy... The cloths are purple as well. And yet, she knows that a lot of people have black hair and favour purple cloths. It's when the Halfling picks her bait Quest does she allow herself to feel hope.

The Halfling's eyes are hazel green when he turns around and then heads for the counter to speak with the bar keep. It's a bit before a group enters into the Adventure's Traven and they are all wearing purple, just different shades and in different amounts. The Halfling waves and calls the group over, Jiang Yanli hears the name of this Party and she isn't sure if she should just cut her losses, given this Party has been famous about tackling difficult Quests.

Weed Heart is the Party's name and they take after their name sake a little too well, which is a very common plant about the continent. The Party numbers ten and the leader is a Ranger by the name Garth Flare, who's a Tiefling. The Second in Command is a human woman named Ellen Nightbane, who's a Druid. There's a white

haired kid she spies next to the Ranger and it takes her a bit to muse at the sight of Garth's Ward. Although some wonder if he isn't the Tiefling's bastard son.

After all, Tieflings don't always breed true and given how old Garth is, to had hair going gray, it might be true. The Ward's name is a bird, which is rather bemusing given Rangers do have Animal Companions. In some ways, the white hair and yellow eyes do remind Jiang Yanli of many different animals, not all of them being birds.

And as Jiang Yanli's gaze switches from the unimportant boy to the Half-Orc with the group that have settled at a table. The Half-Orc is a newest Party recruit and is a rather odd one at that, given Rave Bloodmist and is a Wizard, of the War Magic School. On either side of the Half-Orc are the Tabaxi twins, one being a Rogue and the other being a Fighter. Both have black coats but different white markings and she doesn't know which is which besides that the Rogue's name is Coal and the Fighter's is Night.

It's then she recalls the Halfling is Cro Bernard and is the Party's Cleric, his Deity is Leira, who's the Goddess of Illusions. Cro's wife isn't with the Party at this moment but Vivian Hope is a well known Bard. Taking in the members of Weed Heart, the remaining three members aren't always around but they are Elves and are Monks, just of different paths. Butterfly of the Mercy Way, Monkey of the Drunken Master, and Owl of the Shadow Way. Those three have responsibilities towards their respective Monasteries along with being wanders.

So, Jiang Yanli considers how to approach Weed Heart. After all, she needs to figure out which of them had the potential of being Wei Ying.

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As she comes too, Jiang Yanli blinks before doing so once more. "How did you think you'd get out of the fall out concerning failing to

turn in the Sapphire Orca?" A voice inquires, a young one and it isn't that surprising to find Hawk leaning at the door frame.

"General Young wasn't impressed, you know, when he heard about the killing of Lieutenant Hammer, you know." The Warlock continues on to explain, Jiang Yanli recalls Lieutenant Hammer, the Dwarf had look so similar to Wei Ying that... Well, it hadn't really mattered on top of the fact that he'd been a child of rural peasants, thus another similarity to who she'd been hunting for.

"Clover hadn't known your reasons while Ivan? You know, your travel partner for nearly eight months? He noted a... trend when it comes to those you seem incline to kill." Hawk adds after a bit of a pause. "Black hair, gray eyes, and of low birth."

"Nothing to say?" Hawk asks after a bit and Jiang Yanli doubts anything she'd say would help, particularly given it sounds like Ivan hadn't minded his own business as they'd had agreed upon when they first met. "Well, I suspect that they'll have some way to get to along with ensuring you'll be willing to speak while subject to the Zone of Truth."

She presses her lips together in displeasure, given how far she is from where her parents are... Jiang Yanli isn't as sure that she's got the social standing to be turned over to where she's from. But, what really matters is, the Ghost Fruit isn't in her possession and thus, her progress concerning the Main Questline now comes into question. She'll have a year, now, in order to get back on track or else, she fails.

Which means, once she's dealt with this fall out, Jiang Yanli will need to track down Weed Heart to learn what they did with the Ghost Fruit, while hoping they still had it, and then find information concerning the Gunn Brewery to turn that Ghost Fruit into Spectral Wine. That she currently lacks her equipment and is wearing simple garb that is rather cheap along with mostly meant to cover her up.

"You don't feel guilty, do you?" The golden eyed Warlock inquires. "Not a single bit, over the lives you've taken so unnecessarily?"

"I have my reasons." Jiang Yanli states as her gaze moves to settle at the Warlock. "I need to win."

The Warlock seems to look sad and away for a bit before resolution eclipses the sadness and returns to looking at her. "So, that's how it is? How fair is that?" The Warlock asks but she hardly cares about the opinions of this almost teen.

"I wonder, will they decide to have you executed? Will you be sorry then?" Jiang Yanli rolls her eyes, after all, this is all just a game, it's not real, in the end. *Nothing matters besides winning.* Her gaze is towards the barred window.

"Well, farewell then, Ms Summers." Hawk states, doing a bit of a bow. "I suspect that we'll never meet up again."

The door closes with the Warlock gone. There's nothing for her to think of nor are there other prisoners being held within the cell across from her. Even when it opens, it's the clicking of the keys that suggests it's a guard.

And then, there's a particular voice that sends a shiver of dread down her back. "Ever so beautiful and ever so cold, my dear." Reynard states.

Her head and gaze turn towards the Elf, who she knows is a Artificer on top of being a rich merchant. Red hair, leaf green eyes, and sporting somewhat tanned skin. Then again, that's likely from working at a forge. Reynard had been, still is, enamoured with her, having done his best to pick gifts that he had thought she'd like.

"I had told you, didn't I?" Reynard remarks once he's near the bars of her cell. "We would meet again and that you will accept my advances when said meeting happens?"

"You really should have picked other means to go about your... hobby but, well, you were young and oh so sure that nothing could track it back to you! Ah, how filled with youthful certainty young people are and so sure you'd encounter who it is you hunt without needing to put any... true... effort into it." Reynard continues on speaking.

"Your wrong." Jiang Yanli states, but her heart is thumping rather rapidly within her chest. The Elf hadn't changed much from the last time they met, which was nine, perhaps, ten months ago.

"I don't think so." Reynard states. "In the end, I doubt it matters. After all, your own conduct has alienated you and allowing people to tack whatever accusations upon you, namely being an agent of a rival kingdom or a part of a terrorist cell."

"You've worn out a lot of goodwill and left a lot of loose ends, in more then one manner." Reynard states. It's clear what emotion is within those green eyes and Jiang Yanli feels disgust and yet, a hint of terror, given how little ability she has to defend herself.

"So then? Shall we come to an arrangement?" Reynard asks in a light tone.

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[Winning Conditions Met]

[Hawk played by Ying Wei Wins!]

[Congratulations!]

[Ultimate Prize consists of Ziyuan Yu, Yanli Jiang, and Cheng Jiang being Erased from Ying Wei's World]

[Would Ying Wei wish to sell everything and convert all money into currency of Ying Wei's culture?]

[Yes] [No]

All around him is a white area and Wei Ying feels numb as he can't help thinking over the Ultimate Prize that they'd been playing for. "They wanted... they wanted me gone? For my mom to... to..."

And then Wei Ying feels sick to his stomach along with realizing that neither of the siblings had come to care about him. Not like he had. It's not long for him to be overwhelmed by the emotions while tears trailing down his face. His nose getting stuffy.

It takes a fairly long time for his emotions to become exhausted. Wei Ying feels drained and rung out. And so, not really wanting to be reminded of this, picks [No].

[All equipment and money to be stored for any future use by Ying Wei?]

[Yes] [No]

Staring at the options, he sighs and picks [Yes], after all, Wei Ying just wanted to get out of this. And the next message was a simple farewell for now and things get so bright that he closes his eyes. Holding them closed until he hears something odd and then a bunch of clicks.

Opening his eyes, Wei Ying finds himself in a room and he looks around, it's bare and looks like nobody had ever lived within it. Looking down, he finds that he can read the language upon the metal box. Getting to his feet, Wei Ying takes a few minutes before deciding to take it back to Uncle... no, Sect Leader Jiang's office.

Once he's put it back, Wei Ying wanders a bit about the building, coming to stand by the Ancestral Hall. It takes a bit for him to realize something is different and he approaches a pair of plaques that he's sure weren't there from his previous visits here. On one of the plaques is the character Wei, the same Wei he has.

"Ah, A-Ying, come to pay your respects to your parents again?" As he's about to brush his fingers against the wood, Wei Ying holds still

before turning to look over at Jiang Fengmian, who's approaching him. And Wei Ying isn't sure what is the source of the surge of emotions threatening to overtake him once more.

"Let's light up some incense together, shall we?" Wei Ying nods, unable to think he'd be able to speak. Already some tears are falling from his eyes.

A gentle head pat and within minutes, there's a pair of incense sticks burning in an incense pot. "It'll be supper soon, so be sure to be along soon, ok?" Uncle Jiang suggests and he nods his head once more.

Soon he's a lone in the Ancestral Hall and Wei Ying feels so... so guilty and in need of confessing, even if it's not what he'd wanted to happen. Still, telling his parent's plaques about the game, of his time as Hawk the Celestial Warlock, and of the 'prize' he'd won from winning the game. Even though he'd been about to finish the second last Quest concerning the Main Questline when something had happened that saw him winning without finishing the Main Questline.

Feeling a bit lighter, Wei Ying gets up and does his best to wipes his face. "I'll be back." He promises his parents' plaque.

And so, Wei Ying eats with the other Disciples, but so did Uncle Jiang. Looking around, there's a lot more older Disciples about, who Wei Ying hadn't known or encountered. There's no mention of Jiang Yanli nor Jiang Cheng, let alone mentions of Madam Yu or that Uncle Jiang is married.

After supper, he seeks out those that had brought Adventures and Adversaries II back. They seem to be having a meeting of their own. "Seniors... Jiang Cheng wanted to play that game." Wei Ying begins and eyes widen, it's clear they knew who that was.

He's hurried into the room and after a bit, Wei Ying gives a summary of the events that led up to the game starting along with mentioning how he'd been unable to create a Character upon returning from

taking the tray of dishes back to the kitchen, once they'd been eaten while the two had created their Characters while snacking on such dishes. There's little he sees fit to share about his time as Hawk nor with Weed Heart besides having to need to find a way to get a Class, given he didn't start out with one and having formed a Party with Garth and the others.

There's some questions concerning the messages at the end, it seems that, besides asking about selling that stuff and converting it into proper currency, they didn't get any other messages. As Wei Ying becomes quite, the others talk among themselves over the very idea of playing the game once again and about who it was that picked that 'Ultimate Prize'.

In the end, it's clear that someone would need to examine the set up that the Jiang siblings had put in for that game session. As the discussion disperses, the others seem to remember that he's there and they are quick to assure Wei Ying of his lack of blame on this matter, that there's nothing for him to feel guilty of. That the siblings clearly hadn't thought about the what if Wei Ying would succeed in winning their game session.

Wei Ying is once more wiping tears from his face for what feels like a third time of the day. In the end, he gets sent off to bed as they work out how they'll try to check the game's settings. It's doubtful they'd be able to undo it without playing the game on settings similar to what were used.

x = Epilogue = x

Without Madam Yu, there isn't many musings concerning Wei Ying's parentage nor about Sect Leader Jiang cheating on her. Well, given that to the world at large, Sect Leader Jiang isn't married and thus doesn't have anyone in his life to cheat on. And so, Sect Leader Jiang is a rather popular bachelor, one that many feel hope will begin thinking of marriage now that Wei Ying, son of his Sworn Brother, is a part of his Sect.

Rumours circulate around the odds of Wei Ying getting adopted by Jiang Fengmian and becoming his Heir. A few muse over the idea that bringing Wei Ying is a trail run about bringing in a bastard son. The odd rumour is the one that goes so far as to suggest that Wei Ying is Jiang Fengmian's bastard son, it's not overly popular one, given that Wei Ying didn't get legitimized right away, thus ensuring that the Sect had an Heir should anything happens to Jiang Fengmian.

Given that Madam Yu never existed, those Disciples that had seceded from the Sect during the years of said marriage, well, no marriage meant they never did. The general mood of the Disciples are light and the local merchants generally lack gossip concerning the Main Family, given Jiang Fengmian is the only member of the Main branch. And when one speak of Madam Yu, it's the wife of Sect Leader Yu instead of the third sister of said Sect Leader.

As for Wei Ying and his feelings concerning the Jiang siblings, he recovered from complicated feels concerning the pair. After all, Wei Ying had thought that the pair had liked him, had begun to think of him as a brother, despite their mother's attempts to keep them from interacting much. But for Jiang Yanli, who'd been so kind to him, to be the one going around killing those that remind her of Wei Ying... Well, it didn't all that long for him to do so.

The group who brought A&A 2 to Jiang Sect, they continued on being Disciples of the Sect and had discovered what game settings the late Jiang Cheng had enable and as none felt overly incline to risk their lives to play the game to bring the three back. After all, none of them had cared much for Madam Yu and it's clear that Jiang Cheng was more like his mother then his father.

Given what kind of Character the gone boy had created, after all, didn't the kid know that Sorcerers need a high Charisma to be able to cast spells? Never mind when they gave the lists of Privileges and Hindrances a quick skim, which already had alarming insight to what it is that Jiang Cheng ultimately valued along with how short sighted the boy already is and the doubt that the kid could grow out of it.

None of them were surprised that he'd died so quickly within the game.

Looking at Jiang Yanli's Character, they did find a more well balanced Character but that she also used the Privileges and Hindrances... Then they read over her in game history did they sigh at the many failure to stick to finishing various Quests, well, aside from the Main Questline. Not that doing so was overly impressive, given the penalties of being unable to pursue it or out right failing to complete the linked Quests.

Before closing up the game, they did give their shidi's Character a look, knowing that the other had been at a disadvantage in not having been allowed to create a Character. Seeing what the other had to work with in both Stats and Skills, at least for a year in game and then, well, their respect for the younger boy increases given the many hardships he'd overcome with a good attitude, empathy, and solid reasoning.

They did change the settings, ensuring that the next group to accidently trigger the game won't have a chance to die right off the bat nor get erased. Which might be a good thing, given that Sect Leader Jiang had taken the game to a Discussion Conference and, well, things happened that caused the Wen Sect to intervene, who hadn't been in attendance, thus unaware of what it is they claimed ownership of.

All they know is that the game caused some kind of schism among the other Sects and, thus, might be of beneficial to study it for future use.

As for the Sects in question, well, they were a bit more concerned with the actions of Sect Leader Jin had taken while in the game. Even those Sect under the Jin banner weren't thrilled by the treachery that cost not just the defeated Sects but all of them to lose the game. None had been able to convert any of the money and belongs they'd worked for had been allowed out of the game in either into actual money or into what the equivalent is in their world.

None of the Cultivators in question were happy about not having access to the game but at the same time, they can't match the Wen Sect's numbers nor quality of their Cultivators. Many pray that the Wen Sect doesn't get the game to work while a few hope that they might alter the settings so they might be more lethal, perhaps some of them might end up dead.

Either way, the game ends up in a secure room, forgotten for years. Charging away from curious eyes, after all, that last game session had cause it to develop a massive world compared to the previous sessions. That a certain someone didn't have it generate the money he earned was one of the reasons why it had the minimum power to generate a game session for so many people.

That a certain Sect Leader had been a touch too greedy was a blessing. And so A&A II rests, it can already guess at how many Players it'll have to entertain during the next session.

How to Avoid a War: Mo Dao

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation nor D&D content.

Wei Wuxian almost groans at the sight of something from his childhood, the item that altered the world by erasing three members of the Jiang family; Yu Ziyuan, Jiang Cheng, and Jiang Yanli. Not that anyone beyond the group of Disciples that brought it back to the Sect and himself remember the trio. He dimly recalls that the Wen Sect had taken possession of the game, although given no news circulated after they had done so, Wei Wuxian had put the issue of it out of his mind. The duties of being the Head Disciple had come to roost upon his shoulder a few years after that Discussion Conference.

There's murmurs slowly erupting as Wen Chao is a touch busy flirting with his current bed warmer, seemingly ignoring the worry that's beginning to spread among the Disciples that were current guests of the Wen Sect. Not paying the others much mind, Wei Wuxian takes in the sight of the Wen Disciples but none of them seem apprehensive or on edge. This could mean a lot of things but it's clear that none of the Wens here are aware of what this game is capable of or just never experienced what Adventures and Adversaries 2 is capable of.

The murmurs become silent when Wen Chao finally decides to pay attention to them or had decided that the feeling within the room is suitable level for his enjoyment. "Who here recognizes this?" Demands the Second Young Master of the Wen Sect.

When none had moved nor answered, Wen Chao took things in his own hands. Going so far as to point at Wei Wuxian. "You, Wei Wuming! You're Sect Leader brought this to that Discussion Conference."

"Unbox it!" The Second Young Master Wen orders as the hand goes down. Wei Wuxian knows now isn't the right time to do anything, so he approaches and flip the corners before taking a step back as what happened when Jiang Cheng had been the one to open it happens once more, including the greeting.

"Welcome to Adventures and Adversaries Second Edition! The latest and most advance version to date! We now have a difficulty setting and new win conditions! Including optional Skill Grinding Game System instead of having Levelling Game System!" The floating mini desk, Wei Wuxian can see it clearly, that there's almost like a painting that's no dissimilar to what had been on the top of the lid.

The reactions of a few swords drawn while a certain bodyguard moves to stand between his charge and the floating metal. More then a few have backed away while Wei Wuxian considers what he knows concerning how to set up a session, all hear second hand from both his Seniors and Uncle Jiang. "Do you want me to set it up?" He ventures to inquire when nobody from the Wen Sect approaches the floating metal desk.

"Yes... Yes! But if it goes wrong, it's you who'll suffer!" Snaps Wen Chao and he inclines his head before slowly approaching the more flat part of the desk.

He switches the Generate Character off which causes Character Creation to sport 100% next to it. Wei Wuxian enables Character Creation within Game Loading and then asks, "Should it be Wen Sect verse the other Sects?"

"Of course! As if you'd have a chance to win." Scuffs Wen Chao before any of the others could, perhaps, advise a negative.

Changing the Vs Setting from Major Sect plus Subsidiaries Vs Major Sect plus Subsidiaries Vs Major Sect plus Subsidiaries Vs Major Sect plus Subsidiaries to Wen Sect Vs Other Sects. Wei Wuxian doesn't touch the Death Settings, which means that nobody dies permanently if they die within the game session.

"Any particular look to the World?" Wei Wuxian asks, that Setting is Default Random. "What nonsense are you speaking? Just, whatever!" Is the answer to that particular question.

"Understood." And so, Wei Wuxian selects Familiar Random. "Enable all Races?"

"Must you ask such stupid questions?" Sneers Wen Chao and Wei Wuxian can only guess that he's causing people to feel a bit, on edge, likely feeding people's paranoia as he enables that option.

Before finishing, he goes back to where Character Creation is and pick from a 'Menu' Group Session. "Done." Wei Wuxian states and looks toward the Second Young Master Wen. "Would you like to do the honours?" A slight upturn of his lips, tone sporting a touch of a challenge.

"Fine! Which is it?" Demands Wen Chao after some time passes without Wei Wuxian pressing anything.

"The big green one." Wei Wuxian states calmly, a bit surprised as the desk moving to face Wen Chao. He's hardly the only one as there's a collective gasp and Wen Chao freezing in his tracks for a few seconds before recovering and putting on a brave face.

"Just the green one? How drool." And with that, the button is pressed and the room is engulf in blackness that lasts a bit before Wei Wuxian is in a space with the others from the Indoctrination Camp.

"So... Is this a good time to admit that I've played this game before?" Wei Wuxian inquires to the group of wide eye and unnerved Disciples.

"Yes, I think so." Nie Huaisang pipes up after a bit of waiting for someone else to react to his admission. Many others nod in agreement although a few have collapse upon the ground.

"Where are we?" And other versions get voiced as something like a gear clock slowly ticks away. Wei Wuxian replies to the rampant questions, "I enabled Group Session for Character Creation, so, we can Create Characters together."

"Ah, ok, so... Races? Really?" Pipes in Jin Zixuan.

Wei Wuxian admits, "Races can add to your Class, like, a Wild Elf makes a better Druid then a Wizard... And you don't know what either of those are yet."

"Well, what did you have for your... Character?" Asks one of the Lans and he answers, "I didn't get a chance to pick but I ended up an Aasimar, which is someone that's born with a connection to Good Deities, I had Darkvision and could heal people without using up a Spell Slot."

"Ah... ok, so... What was the other thing?" Asks a young Master from a minor Sect.

"Ah, well, I didn't start with a Class but I became a Celestial Warlock after making a Pact with a Qilin after the year of Tutorial was up." Wei Wuxian hadn't touched the Tutorial option, which were already enabled nor did he do anything about the Selecting Win Conditions, which was Random Easy.

"It's like pretend? Your Character is a role in a play or story. You just get to decide things about them, like, Name, Age, Background, Gender, Race, Class, altering your History and Describing how you look." A few seem to be a bit curious about this, in particular Nie Huaisang looks rather eager.

"So, when it allows us, I could go first to show how it's done?" Wei Wuxian offers and none of the others seem incline to go first, so the few that make murmurs of agreement are easily heard. And so, for a bit, they wait around, although Wei Wuxian does answer any questions concerning his previous experience easily but also without mentioning the siblings, like, at all.

[Wen Party have completed their Character Creation Session!]

[Party Creation about to begin in: 20]

[Party Creation about to begin in: 19]

As it counts down, the group stirs with some even moving to stand up. Once the count down is gone, a familiar image appears hovering where it had hung; where the gear clock had been before as well. Wei Wuxian steps forward and does a commentary as he creates his Character.

And so, Wei Wuxian puts in Wangyu, Wang for Royal and Yu for Feather, as a name, being sure to turn to a certain Second Young Master Lan to give a wink before continuing on. The age he selects is 18 and puts in man, although that switches to male when he moves onto the next part. Seeing he's got nothing for Stats, he selects Rolling Stats and gets 16, having rolled two 6s, a 4 and a 2 on four six sided dice. His next roll is 14, the one after that is 10, after that comes 12, another roll is 15 and the final roll is 13.

Instead of putting them to which Stat, Wei Wuxian goes through the list of Classes. He takes his time, doing his best to read the description that pops up when he pauses on the Class for those who haven't move to stand behind him. In the end, he picks Bard and his reasoning for it and then begins to assigned which rolls to which, also being sure to explain what each governs as he puts the 16 into Cha and the 15 into Wis with his 14 going into Con, 13 going into Int, 12 into Dex, and the 10 into Str.

And then, Wei Wuxian begins to tackle Races, beginning in what order they are listed in, which is Aarakorcra, reading what's given, once more for those a bit further away, thus unable to see. As he comes to an end, he decides to be a bit whimsical and recalling what he'd gifted a certain Jade, picks Harengon.

He then applies the plus 2 to his Cha, it's now 18 and the plus 1 into his Int, its now 14. Wei Wuxian picks Medium for his size and then,

to his surprise, an image appears of a common brown coated human rabbit in traveling robes. There's a bit of a startled noise from the crowd but he does some changes, namely, making the coat black and eyes a baby blue color that causes them to pop.

Then comes him picking his Background and he goes through them for the crowd before he picks Entertainer. Soon enough, the rest gets generated and he's given the option of picking Spells along with a number of other things. Which Wei Wuxian does his best to describe as he goes through them.

With his Wangyu complete, Wei Wuxian steps back, which causes the game to save the Character under his name, Player Ying Wei. The next person to make their Character is from the Lans, Su She, is the name that comes up before a blank Character Page appears. Su She ends up with a lot of 14s for his Stats and picks High Elf for Race with Noble for Background, the Class ends up being Wizard.

And soon that gets saved, with Su She stepping away to allow someone else to make their Character. Not everyone feels brave enough to forgo Human as their Race but their Party does round out with many trying out various Classes, well, save for Rogue at this point. Members of the same Sect also had a tendency towards a narrow number of Classes as well, like how many of the Nie picking Barbarian for their Class with one in four or five picking Ranger instead; although Nie Huaisang is the truly odd one of his Sect for picking Druid on top of Wild Elf for his Race, although for Background, it's the same as the rest of the Nie, Outlander.

The Jin have yet to create Characters yet and neither has Lan Wangji. In the end, what seems like a stand off between the two ends with Lan Wangji approaching the spot. The Lans tended to pick either Monk or a magic user Class but a wide array of Backgrounds along with Human, if not Human, then Half human Race or Elf.

Wei Wuxian can't help but feel a bit more energized about seeing what Lan Wangji will make. Zhan Lan appears before a blank page and instead of picking a Name at the beginning, he rolls. First roll

is... a 9. 15 is the second, followed by the following, 13, 13, 15, and ending with another 9.

Without any real haste, Lan Wangji puts one of the 15s into Cha and the other into Str. Then he puts the two 9s into Dex and Wis, which leaves the 13s for Int and Con. Then comes Class and it's a surprise to see Lan Wangji pick Paladin, making him their third one for the Party.

This time, it's Gender and it's not that surprising to see man become male with Age being 19. Background is the next to get picked, Sage gets selected. There's a pause now, that lasts for a bit but in the end, Race is the one that seems to get attention next and he's a bit surprised to see Harengon getting picked, size picked is medium, which makes it so he's not only member of that Race within the Party with changes go looks being next, soon enough, there's a white coat along with bright amber yellow eyes.

Name is that's picked is a mere Wu Ming, Wei Wuxian is rather curious as to why Lan Wangji picked that for a name while the final touches get added, like picking two other languages due to Sage Background along with increasing Con by 2 and then Wis by 1. As Lan Wangji steps back after finishing with his Character, it now leaves the Jin as the only ones who need to make Characters.

With a scowl, Jin Zixuan marches over and like everyone, they see his birth name appear in that strange manner before that blank page. Like Lan Wangji, Young Master Jin begins with something else, this time Gender, which is male with the second to be done is Race. Leonin gets picked, although it almost looked like Dragonborn was a close choice. Wei Wuxian could only guess at why Leonin had been picked but it's likely that the Jin will follow their Young Master's lead for Race if not for Class. There's number by the Stats that the Leonin grant, an image of appears, and this leads to dice getting rolled.

13, 9, 8, 14, 6, and 14. Then an option to reroll the 8 and the 6 comes up, which has happened before. Jin Zixuan does so and get 10, which replaces the listed 6 and 13, the 8 fades away before

getting replaced. It's Class that Jin Zixuan goes through, picking Artificer. With that picked, the rolls get assigned to the Stats, with one of the 14s going into Int and the other going into Con. One of the 13s goes into Wis and the other into Con. Str gets the 9 with Dex getting the 10.

Age is 20 with Background being Far Traveler. And so on and so forth. The Name that gets chosen is Lung, the Lung that stands for Dragon. With the name getting inputted, Jin Zixuan is done and takes a few steps back after reviewing what he'd created. With that, the rest of the Jin Sect Disciples do end up picking Leonin or Far Traveler, in order to have something similar with their Young Master. It's here that they get a few picking Rogue for their Class, each of them setting a hard face while looking at the crowd, almost challenging them to comment on their choice.

And so, they end up with five Jin Rogues but they did get another three Clerics, although Mask, God of Thieves did get picked as the Deity for two of them, with the third picking Wuakeen, Goddess of Trade. The rest had mostly gone with Fighter or Ranger, Archery being their Fighting Styles throughout those two Classes.

The other Deities that had been selected among the others who had decided on being Clerics are Azuth, God of Wizards; Deneir, God of Writing; Helm, God of Protection; Lathander, God of Birth and Renewal, and Try, God of Justice. They now had thirteen Clerics, four Druids, three Paladins, and seven Bards, which includes counting himself. So, they have healing magic covered fairly well along with having sixteen Divine casters.

It takes a bit before the game realizes there wasn't any new people approaching. And the collection of Players Characters vanish before that gear clock appears once more. Then a message appears.

[Registration of Characters Complete!]

[Game will begin in: 5:00]

[Game will begin in: 4:59]

And the count down goes down in a rather strange manner but everyone is getting the last of their nervous chatter over and done. The surrounds change slowly as they reach 2:00 on the count down, becoming brighter, like stars coming into existences around them. When they get to 0:30, it seems like they are suddenly floating and then, comes 0:10 they begin to fall before white overtakes their vision.

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Yu Ying rolls his eyes at hearing the giggle and the wood scrapping upon wood. Picking up his pace, he heads down the stairs of the inn. There's still a number of things for him to do before turning in. As he arrives at the tavern portion of the inn, various members of his Party are in various groups while a few of them are having an early supper as they'll be replacing those on watch.

It hardly matter that they are in a village, not when there's the quick way of ending the game by assassinating the other Party instead of advancing down the Main Questline. They haven't seen much evidence of the other Party but, with their numbers, they could have split up many times over in order to hunt them down. *And our other healer in this is That Woman.*

Without a wide array of Classes within their Party, which is what drove Yu Ying to pick Paladin, and recently, decided upon Oath of Devotion. Many of the Party are rather resentful about following Wen Chao's order concerning how they should make their Characters. They might quiet down when he's around during the early days but now?

There's a few languages besides Common and its various dialects, thus, someone among the Party decided to learn a language that neither Wang Lingjiao or himself knew, given they were the only ones that weren't Human. Yu Ying is a Goliath and Wang Lingjiao is a High Elf. It's hard to pin point when the rest of the Party had

decided to follow suit with the instigator but it's clear that they've gone on to learn, on the sly.

So far, it seems that Dwarf is favoured but there's another, more... guttural language that seem to be heard in low tones. Yu Ying isn't fully confident of naming the language, given it's animalistic tone, it might be some beastfolk language, perhaps snake or lizard? Given the odd lisp that sounds similar to Lizardfolk accent he'd heard back when they were at that farming village that was a mix population of beastfolk.

The primary butcher shop of that village had been owned by a pair of Lizardfolk, they seemed to be brothers. The pair had sported moss green scales with different splashes of cream white on their throats and chest. The pair were the ones who'd been willing to sell anything to them by the time they were given a Completion Notice when it came to learning how to the Money System, along with the Reputation System, works, thus they ended up with a lot of weaponry made out of bone and a lot of meat when they left the village and it's surrounding land.

That was nearly six months ago and it seemed to set a tone of sorts, at least, until he managed to talk Wen Chao into letting Wen Bolin, who picked Ranger, going on to Beast Master Conclave. His animal companion is a Leopard that he has her named Xiurong and he's a bit glad that their Party number had increased, even if by one and it's a simple beast. It had taken some weeks after the third village but, Wen Chao finally did give in and they were finally able to earn money along with being able to buy better stuff.

Sadly, it only ensured that Wen Chao would begin to enjoy other activities, which still put pressure on their funds as the Second Young Master Wen takes that Woman out and about. Never mind the sly purchases to be sent to certain women, who caught his eye. Women that clearly weren't interested nor seemed interested in him. Wasted funds.

Thankfully, the rest of the Party were more then willing to work with him to ensure that those gifts of regard didn't get to said women but pocketed to be sold at some point, be it at the next village over, to the rare wandering merchant, or to whatever Adventurers they encounter who might like the item enough to purchase it.

Taking a look over the stable, where Wen Bolin should be with his Xiurong. The other Party Ranger, one Wing Lei, who picked Hunter Conclave. As they only have the two Rangers, the rest of the Party are made up of Fighters, although they had done their best not to pick the same Archetype but it's also how they now have other people capable of using magic, an example of which is Eldritch Knight.

Finding Wen Bolin at the stable along with two others, who picked Cavalier for their Archetype. As they don't have the funds for mounts nor do they feel confident about splitting up to go off in search of wild horses or some beast to tame to be their mounts. Conversations decline until they stop at the sight of him.

"Anything new information?" Yu Ying asks those gathered within the stable. It's more then likely that they don't but they also suspect that's not really why he's outside.

"Ah, there does sound like there's a pair of Harengon making names for themselves." It's hardly new news about sightings of a pair of Harengon, one is white and the other is black in color. One is on his way of becoming a famous Bard and the other is making waves for being a Paladin, given that Harengon are said to be immigrants from another world; a world said to be as cruel as it is beautiful.

He sighs, can only guess what new song has been making its way through the various taverns and bars. While he has accepted that there is good odds that among the other Sects, some have likely decided to pick other Races, given having spied some Harengon and some of the other Races, Yu Ying doubts that any of them would pick any of the beast looking Races, not when there's Elves, Gnomes, Halflings, or half breeds like Half-Elf and Half-Orc.

They've encountered plenty of other Adventurers during their time within this game, some having existed before they arrived within this world and during their time here, have seen new ones step up and form up their own Adventuring groups. They do pay a bit more attention to those of a more human cast to their features along with those that showed up around the time they did. It's costly, paying for news upon particular members who are also Adventuring around but it's a way to keep tabs on those they suspect are members of the other Sects. *It helps that there's Adventuring Halls in most of the medium size villages and in all cities.*

Mentally sighing, Yu Ying begins asking about who's on what rotation for Quest hunting and looking for information concerning the Main Quest. It's not that he doesn't know, it's just, it keeps him from listening to the pair going at it. He's temped, oh so tempted, to pick up some hobby, like reading or wood craving while the pair have decided to engage in such activities in their, often, shared room.

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"So... We won?" A certain Wild Elf Druid inquires at the count down. "Seems so." Remarks Jin Zixuan, who's finished getting something out of his teeth viva using one of his claws.

"I wonder what caused the Party wipe?" Murmurs a certain black furred Harengon from the lap of a certain white furred Harengon's lap, who's sitting upon a pillow and with a arm behind the Bard's back. It kind of brings back memories of what happened when he was a child, only he did know how the final member ended up.

"Well, a win is a win." Jin Zixuan states and those within the room can't find it within themselves to care, after all, they had just finish dealing with some kind of Possessed City and its puppets pretending to be inhabits. *Creepy that builders thought it a good idea to build the entire city with a bone from that dead Storm Giant.*

It wasn't in line with the Main Quest but it was a way to fill up their coffers due to needing to partake in gambling to advance said Main

Quest, which involved bankrupting the Gambling Hall's current owner to spend time figuring out the next hint by studying the building itself, which did, finally, involve needing to set the whole building on fire and watching some kind of recorded scrying scene play out over the burning building. They didn't get a lot for the burnt wreckage of a Gambling Hall but they did get out of it without dealing with time in cells, what with paying off various officials and locals to look the other way about the whole burning building and all.

"Well, think about it like this, we get to keep everything we have in our respective bags." Someone points out. "Oh yea! We won. We! Won!" And thus, cheers erupt and there's some hugging along with a bit of a friendly back slaps among other antics.

Wangyu smiles in a good nature fashion, all the while not bothering to move from Wu Ming's lap. "It's been... What, eight years?" He muses softly to the Paladin.

"Seven years, nine months, and three days." Wu Ming gently corrects with a slight humorous note to his tone. "Going to miss this." Gently mutters his white furred counter part.

"Which? Being cute as a bunny?" He inquires. "Or having a fiancée that's as cute as a bunny?" Reminds himself once more to get Lan Zhan a pair of rabbits, hopefully one that's white and one that's black.

There's a positive hum from his, Wangyu's fiancée, no clarification about which of the two he agrees with or that he just prefers both to be the same. "Going to have to wait before we take those three bows now." He states with a sigh, which causes Wu Ming to tighten his hold upon him, causing him to curl up a bit from how he's sitting upon the Paladin's lap.

As they go through with a final kiss, the world around them alters. By the time they pull back, they are standing yet hugging. Both human, back to being Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji, one the Head Disciple and the other, the Second Young Master.

As their respective arms move from the other's body, someone is reading a message out loud. Yea, Wei Wuxian kind of remembers something like this coming up from that one time. Which had come into play upon arriving into the game world as Wangyu, given he had been given his previous Character's belongings with a minor reminder of what he'd selected from back then.

Soon enough, they turn to regard the main message and study their fellow Cultivators. It's been just about eight years since they had started the game, thus it's kind of something to get use too, them looking human, never mind they themselves being human once more. It's not long after He Su finishes reading the message, mini options appear before each of them, inquiring if they would like to liquidate everything into their native currency.

He doesn't accept that and when it asks if he would like to exchange the coins into native currency, he selects yes. Wei Wuxian then accepts the offered Bag of Holding and wears it. Looking around, it seems he drew a lot of attention at his choice. It's not long before people either follow his example or they get a pouch that's likely larger on the inside then outside to fit all of the correct coins from having sold their various weapons, armour, and other such items.

With the last one making their selection, they are shifted back to that previous hall. Wei Wuxian notices that the game has returned to its previous, resting state. It's then that they notice that the Wen Disciples are down for the count. Feeling a bit more bold after staring at the prone figures for a bit, he approaches and nudges one of them. They don't seem to wake, so, he crouches down and checks their pulse.

"They are alive." Wei Wuxian reports to the crowd within the hall. As he gets up from his crouch, one of the Nie check one of the doors while a Yao Disciple wanders over to the other. "Nobody seem posted here."

"Well! What say you that we do the noble thing and take this group to the Healing Wing?" Wei Wuxian addresses the crowd with a bemuse

smile.

"It wouldn't be right, given how kind our hosts have been." Remarks Nie Huaisang in agreement, likely realizing that this could cause a lot of trouble... for Wen Chao and the other Wen Disciples.

And so, volunteers volunteer themselves and collect one of the various Wens. It takes a bit of time to ask a servant where they need to go for the Healer Wing, but they get it, along with the fact that they drew a lot of attention as they go in that direction. Soon enough, the various Wens are settled within the care of Healers and they head back to their respective rooms, after all, there's plenty of people who would like to go through their Bag of Holding to ensure their belongs were fine.

Wei Wuxian wonders if anyone touched the game but didn't see the point in checking. After all, things are going to be rather interesting either way, given he suspects that each Bag of Holding is attuned and might not be able to be open by anyone save their owner.

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"Report." Wen Zhuliu tries to figure out where to begin, but doubts it matters a whole lot, given how irritated Sect Leader Wen is. "It seems that enough time passed for that strange game to have strength enough to begin another game." He begins and then speaks what little he remembers of the events involving how the game got set up by the Jiang Head Disciple Wei.

There's no motion from his Sect Leader to halt when he brought up Character Creation and the orders given by his second son, Wen Chao, when it came to making Characters. Reporting who selected what and any name changes, if any, that occurred. Whenever a particular order given by Second Young Master Wen comes up, there's a slight narrowing of eyes and a feeling of pressure, which he kind of slows down his report until his Sect Leader returns to normal looks, thus he does his best to speed through said results.

Soon enough, he finishes that Trial Year within the game. Which brings him to trying to explain what he recalls concerning the end of that year's message. Which brought up a bunch of information that focuses on why the Main Quest was so important along with the win conditions, namely, finishing the Main Quest before their opponents or by their opponents either all dying or being unable to continue on following their Main Quest after a year in game.

Wen Zhuliu isn't sure if he really needs to cover Second Young Master's reaction to that information, particularly when the beginning of starting their Main Quest involved them needing a Written Invite to one of the Kingdoms' Palaces to meet with the local Emperor. Of Wen Chao's confidence in regards to him being able to just ordering for such from one of the Imperial Guards. He recalls the fit Wen Chao had upon learning that he couldn't demand such upon them arriving at one of the Capital Cities, which involved them needing to leave that Kingdom as quickly as possible, less they end up getting arrested and executed due to Wen Chao's attitude and arrogant demands.

There's a hiss from his Sect Leader concerning Second Young Master Wen's behaviour towards how to achieve such a thing. There's a clear closing and holding of his eyes as he continues and that pressure returns. And yet, Wen Zhuliu continues on reporting how they got around to evading any hunting party along with how he'd advised Second Young Master that, perhaps, he should take the time to sight see through this new Kingdom of Yi Tien; the Tien for Celestial and the Yi for Plum.

"The name of the previous Kingdom?" Inquires his Sect Leader. "Kingdom of Hong Jin; the Hong for Red and Jin for Gold." He reports.

"I'll want you all to write up your actions and will read them later." Sect Leader Wen states and he feels a bit of relief, after all, they had been within that world for nearly eight years. "How did you all come out of the game unconcious?"

Wen Zhuliu swallows as he recalls his last moments as his Character, Yu Ying. "There was this... female Devil." He's unable to find the right word to use for *Succubus* . "Second Young Master became... enchanted with her and she used him to fuel some kind of Summoning Array viva some... Dual Cultivation method."

"How did she get near him?" Asks his Sect Leader. "Ah, it seems that she had the ability to assume different appearances. I suspect she killed Second Young Master's bed servant and impersonate her." Wen Zhuliu states, in honestly, none of them suspected such a switch until they witnessed it occurring after the Summoning.

"And her change in behaviour didn't alert any of you to such a switch?" Sect Leader asks and Wen Zhuliu can't honestly say that it had been any worsening of behaviour from the woman, in fact, it had been the opposite for the pass month. Her behaviour had seemed improved in certain regards, never mind that they've all just gotten to the point of ignoring the pair's behaviour for the most part.

"There wasn't all that much difference between the two in behaviour." Wen Zhuliu explains simply and he can tell that there's this odd look of incredibility at that thought. That this maid's behaviour could be so bad that none noticed something inhuman pretending to be her. "Second Young Master favoured her greatly." Letting his Sect Leader figure out if he means that she became spoiled by such treatment throughout their time within the game or if being the only woman at his son's side gave her a sense of entitlement above her station.

"You lost." Wen Zhuliu assumes that they did indeed lost. "My youngest has proven himself incapable of as an Heir." His Sect Leader states and he doubts he's expected to speak up in defence of the Second Young Master, never mind that he's just not wanting to do so. Spending so many years shadowing the spoiled Young Master and trying to keep the man from ruining their finances and credibility, he just couldn't find it within himself to make any excuses on the Second Young Master's behalf.

"You'll be Wen Xu's bodyguard once you have finished with writing up your experiences." States his Sect Leader. "I'll be ensuring that my youngest is as safe as possible along with sufficiently entertained."

"After all, if all he wishes is to bed women, then I expect that something productive comes from such endeavours." Muses his Sect Leader and he tries not to snort at the fact that Wen Chao has been put out to stud, that his own father no longer holds any hope for him to grow into a better person; that the only saving grace this son can do is producing grandchildren, who will hopefully, prove better then their father.

And so, he's dismissed.

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As they are given back their swords, Wei Wuxian wonders what became of Wen Chao. Walking out of the gate after Jin Zixuan and his Disciples, he glances towards Nie Huaisang before looking towards Lan Zhan. He misses the other already but knows that it's rather unbelievable for them to act like they had within the game.

As far as those outside of the game knows, Wei Wuxian and Lan Zhan had only known each other during that year of study at the Cloud Recesses. That he's doing his best to be Lan Zhan's friend but the other remains rather frosty in regards to his attempts at extending a hand of friendship to the other. It would come out of nowhere, them deciding to marry one another.

In the game, they were Wangyu and Wu Ming. Out here, they are Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji. It'll be sometime to lay the ground work of their engagement. And so, he looks over at the other Sects and then at his fellow Jiang Disciples.

Turning back to the gates, he begins leading his Sect back to Lotus Pier. He's not sure what had changed within the Wen Sect, just that something had shifted. Be it the game now having power and thus,

Wen Ruohan wanted to examine it, to test it, and, maybe, figure out how to exploit it.

Given how much the game generated, perhaps it will be a while before it can be activated once more. And thus, it'll take them some years to make the most out of it. Time that can be used planning and preparing for the worse.

It's not that surprising that they don't want them around. After all, they did find out that yes, the Bags of Holding they got from the game weren't transferable, same goes for the items within. Only in their respective owners hands will such items come alive and could be used. Given that belongings always return to the Bag of Holding by the end of the evening... Nor could they part the Bag of Holding from the owner for long before it returns.

They can't find the means to destroy such bags either. So, there's a bit of distrust about what items they are in possession of. It seems the Wen Sect has decided to remove the current wild cards from their sphere, to allow them ensure that they couldn't cause the game to spend its charge on a game just to use up some of its power.

Either way, there's no point in worrying overly about the Wens having Adventures and Adversaries in their procession. Given it's got limits and thus there will be chances in the future to figure out how to deal with either getting the game away from them or seeing if it'll be the thing that causes the Wen Sect to fall into disarray due to greed or ambition among its membership.

This is an End

Hoofin' It: MDZS

I don't own Grandmaster of Demonic Cultivation.

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"So... Deer huh?" Muses Bai Ming at Wei Wuxian as the newly altered Cultivator joins them after being released from the Healing Hall. "Guess so." Replies the thirteen year old to the seventeen year old.

"Well, at least it's not a goat or sheep." Which is known for being common for those of farming families. "Or even that of a boar!" Comments Li Wing to Bai Ming's left as Wei Wuxian settles to the right of the seventeen year old.

"Shh!" Hushes Cong Jun, who then looks about the room, half expecting sighting a certain Young Master. "Oh hush yourself, Junjun!" Li Wing counters. "Young Master Jiang isn't going to be showing up anytime soon, not when his transformation is still occurring."

"Not like anyone here is like our Wei Wuxian, huh? Only needing three days to finish!" Continues Li Wing, who gives the thirteen year old a playful grin. "Wasn't your father the one with the body of a deer? While your mother was that of a horse?"

"So I've been told." Wei Wuxian states as the younger shifts his weight, trying to get comfortable with his new body. "I wouldn't have minded something as common as a horse." Admits the younger Cultivator.

"Makes you wonder if horse would have been... Ah, it doesn't matter, right? It's not like Maiden Jiang seems interested in progressing her Cultivation to this point." Bai Ming muses after swallowing but before putting another portion into his mouth.

Other then Wei Wuxian, who's body is that of a Tibetan red deer, the two of the three do have the body of horse while Bai Ming's lower half is cow, or as most call it, an ox. Which Bai Ming is still rather self conscious of, given that a dark coated ox is considered a feature of the Nie Sect in the way that a yellow dun horse body is a feature of the Jiang Sect's family or yak for the Wen Sect. For all that the Jiang Sect is willing to recruit Disciples from anywhere, when someone ends up with a body similar enough to one of the other Sects, they do get gather pointed looks and musing about what relations, if any, their parents or grandparents had to lead to such a result.

"I'd say sheep for her." Comments Li Wing a bit more softly while sneaking glances towards Wei Wuxian. After all, for some reason, the younger Cultivator is overly fond of Maiden Jiang and is quick to defend her honour.

Wei Wuxian doesn't seem to have heard, being a touch busy finding himself eating the newly arrived meal, which is fit for someone who just finish having gone through the transformation. "Maybe, but she's kind of similar with Sect Leader Jiang, so maybe not." Finally has Cong Jun joining their conversation.

"It hardly matters, you know?" Comments Li Wing. "Maiden Jiang isn't interested in much in the end. Not even the typical Arts that a good Gentry Lady is suppose to be proficient in."

And she's to be the future Madam Jin? Bai Ming can't see how that will work out for either Maiden Jiang or for the Jin Sect as a whole. "The workings of the Gentry isn't for us to understand." He states in hopes of ending that particular topic as he, too, doesn't want to accidently set off Wei Wuxian.

"So... Did you get a glimpse of our Young Master?" Inquires Li Wing to Wei Wuxian as the other's appetite slows down and it's clear that the other's focus isn't on his food. This seems to cause the younger to realize that they were still at the table.

"Ah, more heard but, well..." Wei Wuxian trails off and it seems that he's not comfortable about sharing anything about what's going on with Jiang Cheng's transformation, soon to be Jiang Wanyin once he's done with it and can leave the Healing Hall. "It's not confirmed but... the initial tests suggest the hooves will be split."

"Boar!" Crows Li Wing and Bai Ming can't say he'd be surprised if that's the animal that their Young Master ends up sporting. Cong Jun sighs just as someone comes around to switch out some of Wei Wuxian's empty plates and bowls.

"Well, Madam Yu's mother also had boar for a body." Admits Wei Wuxian and they nod, the Yu Sect is rather new, not even having been around for a century yet, so, there's not any real animal associated with the Sect. The former Sect Leader Yu had an exotic body of a Tian Shan ibex while the founder simply possessed the body of a horse. The current Sect Leader, Madam Yu's brother, the animal being a takin. As of yet, Sect Leader Yu isn't married as of yet, so the current heir apparent is a cousin of his, Yu Guiren, who's animal body being a long-tailed goral.

"Well, with patience, we'll see who's right and who isn't." Bai Ming states and his fellow older Cultivators snort while Wei Wuxian pipes in, "Well, I'm sure there's going to be some sore pockets when it comes about."

"Which brings up my winnings, right Li- shixiong?" The younger member of the table inquires in a very sweet tone and even Bai Ming was a bit puzzled over what kind of bet did Li Wing allow Wei Wuxian to place. "I believe you gave me a one in three for deer and since the bet was a tael of silver... Well, I expect my tael by dinner today, ok?"

Snorting as Li Wing's muttering, Bai Ming shakes his head while Cong Jun asks, "Well, other then deer and horse, what was the third?"

"Anything but!" Chimes in Wei Wuxian and all Bai Ming could thing, *Of course.*

Jiang Yunru isn't sure what to make of her distant cousins, the Young Master Jiang, Jiang Wanyin, and Maiden Jiang, Jiang Yanli. She's been part of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect for two months now and while she's come to understand that when her Cultivation progresses for far, she'd end up having her legs replaced with the body of an animal and that means she'd be out from under her parents deciding who she'll marry. Which was a plus in her books, given that her father had been trying to set up something with someone who'll be in their thirties by the time she'd be mature enough to be married off, on top of the fact that the man is suppose to have two concubines along with a wife already.

Which is why she doesn't get why neither of the pair seem to be putting any real effort into Cultivating? After all, Young Master Jiang ended up being a disgrace, what with only getting his legs changed but not being powerful enough to get an actual boar body. Just a set of hairy legs with split hooves but bare thighs and no tail. Which is a similar state that the Second Young Master Wen is in plus some cousin of Young Master Jin. Which, according to records, means that they need to put more effort into their Cultivation to overcome this disgrace, which there are records of people being able to do so.

After all, Wei Wuxian is well read and has been more then happy to help out Jiang Yunru and the other new Disciples. So, of course Jiang Yunru trusts his opinion, particularly given that the other spent plenty of time in the library coming up with training that should help her cousin in progressing in correcting his Cultivation and gaining a proper body of an animal, although bets seem to remain on boar being her cousin's animal, which is the animal that his mother, who'd title should be Madam Jiang but is going by Madam Yu, for, some reason that nobody is willing to talk about.

As Jiang Yunru comes to the end of the forms, Wei Wuxian gives her a nod of approval before moving to help Ning Kang with his stance. As she begins again, Jiang Yunru notices her other cousin, Maiden Jiang pass the training field with a servant carrying a bundle. Jiang

Yunru isn't sure why Maiden Jiang isn't taking her Cultivation training serious, particularly given she's to be Madam Jin upon marrying Young Master Jin, who is a Cultivator himself and has the body of an argali.

And there's a basic lesson that she'd been taught, that most get taught Jiang Yunru is sure, is that Cultivators don't marry mortals. Given that lack of transformation, that should mean that her cousin, Maiden Jiang, is a mortal. For all that she'd been born to a Immortal Gentry family and thus, should she really be marrying Young Master Jin?

"A-Ru." A gentle voice calls out, bringing her back to where she is and what she should be doing. "Sorry, shixiong."

"It's fine." Wei Wuxian says with a sigh and it's then that she notices that she's hardly the only one who'd been watching Maiden Jiang. "I guess now is as good a time for a break." There's plenty of cheers of approval over that suggestion.

As Jiang Yunru begins to walk to sit upon one of the benches, she watches as Wei Wuxian, her shixiong, begin to approach where Maiden Jiang is, the tail only twitching once during the walk. Most of the Disciples do end up with horse bodies, she herself is hoping for a dun horse body to prove that she is indeed a descendant of the Founder of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect! That she isn't wasting her time trying to be a Cultivation, that she is a Cultivator.

"I think I'm going to end up a sheep." Jiang Yunru hears Ning Kang say in a dispassionate way. "Well, given my great uncle was a Cultivator and his animal was a kiang! So, who knows, I might end up with a donkey or a wild ass for mine! After all, family does count for something, right?" Cai Xueman pipes in.

"Shouldn't you want something more... graceful?" Asks An Chi while Ning Kang nods in agreement. "Like a deer? Like Wei-shixiong's animal?"

"I'd just be happy with anything, you know? Just as long as I'm *proper* ." Pipes up their fifth, Liu Duyi and that does cause them all to become rather silent as they know that it's a touchy subject, given the state of her infamous cousin, Young Master Jiang.

"Three improper in a single generation." Cai Xueman mutters softly and what's unsaid is fairly clear. Given how ominous the number four has.

"How sure are we that there isn't a fourth?" Wonders Liu Duyi and they all seem to send him looks of disapproval at the same time. "What? I'm just saying that given how disgraceful it is, there might be a fourth, just not among the Great Sects." He states in his own defence and, well, Jiang Yunru wonders if she isn't the only one to feel a shiver go down her spine.

"Well, word is that doesn't the Young Master Nie have weak Cultivation? Like Maiden Jiang?" An Chi states and continues, "Well, given how Sect Leader Nie is, maybe it won't be long before Young Master Nie tries but ends up improper due to it and that would make it five, then."

The dread does clear up a bit at that though. Sure, it would be bad for such to happen but it would, at least, ward off the effects of four improper Cultivators existing at once. "Your Jiang character is the same as the Sect's Jiang, right?" Pipes in Cai Xueman, looking at her.

Jiang Yunru blinks before nodding. "Yea, I'm actually a distant cousin to the current Sect Leader." It goes without saying to include Sect Leader's kids also being related to her or her to them. "A younger brother of a previous Sect Leader got married to a Rogue Cultivator and none of their kids were interested in Cultivating. They were my great-grandparents and my parents wanted me tested to see if I could Cultivate."

That her father had hoped Jiang Yunru did have the talent was for her alone to know, well, likely for now. But the looks she got from the

other four clearly sport their surprise to learn such a thing. "So, you're hoping for the typical horse for yourself?" Asks An Chi and she nods.

"It'll be strange if there isn't a Jiang with that dun horse body in the Sect, you know?" Jiang Yunru says and the others blink. "I mean, Night Hunting is dangerous and, well, Sect Leader does go out on them during his touring of his territory. So, you never know if something might come up, I mean, that's what I got considering Wei-shixiong's mother is supposedly famous and yet, she died on one."

"Oh really? How so?" Asks Ning Kang.

"Her master was the famous Immortal, Baoshan Sanren! And Wei-shixiong's mother's name even shared a character as her master, Cangse Sanren." Jiang Yunru had been curious about why the Madam of the Sect was so incised over this particular dead Cultivator, never mind the relationship between Sect Leader Jiang and this dead woman.

"And his father? He was a member of the Sect before leaving and marrying Cangse Sanren." Jiang Yunru continues to share information about Wei Wuxian's parents. "His name is Wei Changze and he'd been a good friend of Sect Leader Jiang, back when they were young, even getting to study at the Cloud Recesses with him!"

"So... his mother was a deer?" Asks Liu Duyi and she shakes her head, "Nope, she'd been a horse."

"So, Wei Changze was the deer?" Asks Ning Kang and Jiang Yunru nods her head. "Yip! Got a look at a picture back when I was getting tested and his deer wasn't that of a Tibetan red deer but a Sichuan deer. I could tell due to the almost black coat that the painting had."

"Of course, Sect Leader Jiang hides the painting." Jiang Yunru continues on to explain about why they likely hadn't seen it. "Actually, you might need to keep silent about the pair as it might set off the Mistress of Lotus Pier, due to her still comparing herself to

Cangse Sanren, even though she's been dead for so many years now."

"What, really?" Cai Xueman exclaims before any of the others could recover from this bit of information. "Yea, really. And given she's due to return, well, there's likely going to be a scene signalling her presence."

"And if you don't believe me, then you can ask our shixiongs and shijies or just the servants." Jiang Yunru suggests and it's clear that the thought of some Madam of a Great Sect could act so was rather hard for them to believe, but then, they joined the Sect a few days after the suppose to be Madam Jiang left to go out Night Hunting with her handmaidens.

"Also, while you haven't seen Young Master Jiang as of yet. Just so you know, he's suppose to take after his mother in both looks and personality." Jiang Yunru adds and would be happy never needing to interact with her cousin at all.

Not long after, Wei Wuxian approaches them and tells them that their break is over. They get up off the benches and walk back to the middle of the training yard. As they finish their warm ups and begin to do the same, they hear the beginnings of a yelling scene near the gates.

"Madam Yu is back." Wei Wuxian mutters and its clear to her that he isn't happy about this. Jiang Yunru might not have the Cultivation to hear the yelling clearly like their shixiong's mood is going down and there's even a wince at one point.

"Ah, should we stop? Training?" Asks Ning Kang.

Jiang Yunru is sure that there's a slight flinch before Wei Wuxian pulls himself together. "That should be for the best." Their elder says, it's clear that the tone is fake and Jiang Yunru feels bad for him.

"We'll see you tomorrow?" She asks and Wei Wuxian gets a sober look as he merely waves them off. Jiang Yunru isn't the only one unhappy about the lack of assurance but there isn't much they could do.

"He'll be here tomorrow for training, right?" Asks Cai Xueman.

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Sadly, it wasn't Wei Wuxian who was waiting for them at the training ground the next afternoon and while Bai Ming wasn't a bad teacher, he wasn't able to answer their inquiring concerning their previous instructor. It wouldn't be long before they would learn about the 'punishment' that their shixiong was ordered to undergo due to the lack of progress concerning Young Master Jiang's Cultivation.

It wouldn't be until three weeks later before Wei Wuxian returns to overseeing their training. Although he did look pale and wane, it wasn't long before that fades. It's their first experience with the Sect's Madam and they never met her face to face, which Jiang Yunru is happy about.

By the time they were here for a year, they had also encountered Young Master Jiang and it takes the others sometime to recall what she'd informed them about this mother and son pair but they seem to vow that they'd do what they could to never come face to face with the Madam of the Sect.

"Who's that?" Shang Xiulan inquires to her aunt, Lan Dongmei, nodding towards the Cultivator with the deer body. "Oh, him? That's the Head Disciple of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect, Wei Wuxian." Her aunt says and she feels her tail flicker rapidly behind her as she recalls the various stories she'd heard about the Jiang Cultivator.

"That's him? How come he isn't third on the list?" Shang Xiulan asks as she tries to calm herself down, although her tail is a tell, given her animal is that of a common muntjac.

Her aunt chuckles and her horse tail swishes in almost rhythm with the soft laughter. "Oh, well, don't you know? The Lanling Jin Sect are rather known for their wealth." Remarks her aunt and she stomps a back hind hoof in a bit of annoyance.

"Should he even be listed? Given he's engaged to the daughter of Sect Leader Jiang?" For the life of her, Shang Xiulan can't recall anything overly positive about said Maiden Jiang. "And does it really count? She never underwent the transformation due to her lack of Cultivation." *Even if one ignores what has become of Young Master Jiang, at least he tried to press for the transformation then not try at all.*

"Ah." Her aunt then shrugs her shoulders. "I doubt that it'll go through, I've heard that many matchmakers are rather ominous about the match and for that very reason. They are ill matched, in body, mind, and spirit."

"Then why hasn't it been called off?" Inquires her younger sister, who's not yet eleven and Shang Xiulan had forgotten her, given she's standing near her instead of sitting upon her back. "A-Yin, it's likely politics and you know how frustrating that is, right?" Shang Xiulan says to her little sister.

"Ack, politics. How come that isn't outlawed?" Shang Suyin whines and both aunt and niece chuckle at the youngest's statement.

"You'd need to do politics just to do that." Shang Xiulan explains to her sister. "And yes, that's stupid but not everything can ever be simple."

Shang Xiulan looks away and then about but the Jiang's Head Disciple is already gone. Letting out a soft sigh, the topic changes to her sharing what rumours she'd heard while helping their aunt collect what plants and seeds can be found around Cloud Recesses for this season. It's as Shang Xiulan escorts her sister back to her dorms when Shang Suyin comes to a bit of a stop.

"Ah, just curious but, the Jiang Sect is the one with that Young Master?" Shang Xiulan winces a bit at how bluntly asked that comes across, particularly given how they might be caught gossiping. "Well, it's true that Young Master Jiang couldn't transform correctly."

"So, he's in attendance for the lectures this year?" Her sister asks and Shang Xiulan gives a bit of a nod of yes. "Then... does that mean... he's attending classes? That anyone can see him?"

"Yes, the only way for one to correct such an appearance is to sort out their Cultivation." Shang Xiulan explains. "It's hoped that a change in scenery will help Young Master Jiang break through his current troubles." Which is unlikely given what little I've heard about him from Nie Huaisang's complaints when we were meeting up for book meetings.

"Anyway, you know the rule." Shang Xiulan reminds her sister, who gives her a bit of a blank look. "Which one? The one on the wall or the one among family?"

"Both." And her sister huffs but nods in understanding. Shang Xiulan is sure to glance around as they continue on, glad that they hadn't gotten caught.

"So, how did it go, Shixiong?" Inquires Bai Ming to Head Disciple Wei as the younger arrives at the inn. There's a clear look of despair for a second before the look is covered up.

"Nothing new besides getting to meet the famous Wen Qing." The other comes over to join them at the table, after being sure to check the various tables. "It turns out that little Wen I found was her younger brother!"

It's not long before his table mates go through the usual routine while Bai Ming considers the whole issue that's been on going for these past few years since the issue of Young Master Jiang's incomplete transformation. In his humble opinion, it wasn't fair to hold his shidi

turned shixiong accountable for what's lacking with Young Master Jiang's Cultivation base, that he couldn't complete his transformation.

It's not like Maiden Jiang ever pressed forward in her own training. Then again, she likely would end up in the same state as Young Master Jiang at best, dead at the worst. Bai Ming thinks to himself as he drinks from his cup while there's a lively discussion going on among his fellow Disciples.

Within Bai Ming's own mind, there's this thought that, perhaps, it's a sign from the Heavens themselves that Jiang Wanyin shouldn't inherit Yunmeng Jiang Sect. There's been word of some changes to the other two Cultivators with the same problem, that Second Young Master Wen's feet had finally gotten split hooves and the tail is no longer naked. Same goes for that cousin of Young Master Jin, only it was more that a coat of fur had finally sprouted to cover the legs with the legs beginning to look more proper in appearance, no hooves as of yet but compared to the lack of changes going on with Young Master Jiang, the two are clearly trying to fix their Cultivation.

The Wens have Wen Qing while the Jins have money to spend in finding aids. Bai Ming reminds himself. *Sect Leader Jiang is leaving it up to Wei-shixiong to help while Madam Yu is busy snapping at both for lack of advancement and if not for her absence from Lotus Pier, I'd worry for Wei-shixiong's life as I suspect that it wouldn't take much before Madam Yu finds some reason to execute him.*

Looking down into his cup, Bai Ming feels a touch helpless over how things are going with his shidi turned shixiong. Feeling a nudge in his side, he blinks rapidly as he comes out of his thoughts to turn in that direction. "So?"

"So what?" Bai Ming asks curiously, it's clear he's been hundreds of Li away mentally, for all that his body is presence at the table. "What kind of woman are you looking for to marry?" Li Wing asks with a swish thud of his tail across the floor.

"Now, why would I do a silly thing like that?" Bai Ming states in a casual tone. "When I know for a fact that you lock will nit pick at it or find something to mock over this or that." He downs the remains of his cup while they good naturally try to persuade him into letting them know.

While Bai Ming might feel like going along with it, he glances at Head Disciple Wei and he just feels exhausted, drained. "Anyway, perhaps that's enough for the night? We should get some sleep, given there's still activities happening tomorrow." He states and the others grumble but they do finish off their drinks.

They each contribute to the paying of the meal before they head off to their rooms. Bai Ming pats his shidi turned shixiong on a shoulder in a comforting manner. "Just because Sect Leader and the Madam are set to hold you responsible, doesn't mean that you are." He informs his shixiong.

"Thanks, shidi." Wei Wuxian states with a slightly weak smile. "Night."

"Night, shixiong." Bai Ming returns, giving that shoulder a slight squeeze in comfort before heading on to his own room. And thus, he gets ready for bed and puts the situation surrounding Young Master Jiang and Wei-Shixiong out of his thoughts, sleep claiming him a bit after he gets himself situated upon the mattress.

That the Madam of the Sect is cursing everyone and everything, well, with the exception of herself since she woke near dawn. The woman not one bit happy about how Lotus Pier got taken. *Then again, is she ever satisfied?* Jiang Yunru wonders as she tries to get comfortable, regardless of her bindings.

Jiang Yunru still recalls how Madam Yu screamed at them to go in for killing the invading Wens instead of hindering and knocking out, which is traditional warfare when Sects get into fights with one another. It hardly seemed to matter to Madam Yu, as Heaven's

Punishment kept striking her as she attempts to kill her opponents, same went for her handmaidens to some extent. Given the nature of said phenomenon, it was only a matter of time before she fell, from exhaustion or by someone taking advantage of her increasing unstable sense of balance.

Not that she saw how Wen Zhuliu got in close to Madam Yu, him with his livid musk deer body allowing him to dart in to land a solid blow, temporarily shorting out Madam Yu's Golden Core, which on top of Heaven's Punishment, knocked her out cold. She dimly recalls her Wei-Shixiong shouting for them all to surrender; to put down their weapons. What little she can recall has most to do with bright flashes and thunder instead of the fighting itself.

Not that Jiang Yunru herself had needed such an order, given how she'd been given quite the blow to her head and hadn't been in much of a condition to resist getting bound up near the beginning and was only just starting to recover from the ringing in her ears and her vision swimming about. She kind of recalls hearing him repeating himself a lot. Of shouts from the Wens for the handmaidens of Madam Yu to stand down.

As a young Wen Cultivator attended to her is when Sect Leader Jiang arrive with his group of Disciples. The whole incident was fairly short, although her older relative did demand to know the hows and whys of the Wens' actions. *Not that it mattered.* Jiang Yunru muses to herself. *Not when the Lans of Gusu Lan did nothing to warrent getting their Sect burnt.*

With everyone securely bound, the Wens were left overnight out in the open as there were too many of them to move, never mind that there wasn't any holding buildings within Lotus Pier. So, other then simple blankets being put on them, the Wens left them be, and Jiang Yunru had a hard time getting comfortable enough to get a good night's rest.

And now that it's dawn, she and the others can't help but stare at the appearance of the Jiang siblings just approaching from the still open

gates of Lotus Pier. And Jiang Yunru just feels so... empty and defeated at the very sight of the pair. *What was the point then, of sending them off if they'd just, you know, just walk back the Lotus Pier near dawn of the next day?* Jiang Yunru doubts she's the only one who's feeling a wide array of emotions at the sight of the pair of dumbasses.

"Mother! Father!" Jiang Wanyin cries out and rushes towards the now silent Madam Yu, who's likely silent by sheer dumbfoundedness of what's going on before her. "Those damn Wen-dogs!"

"This can't be happening." Mutters one of her shidi. "It is, sadly." Murmurs one of her shimei.

"Jiang Cheng!" Cries out Jiang Yanli once she's next to her younger brother. "We need to go!" There's tugging on Jiang Wanyin's sleeve but the other shakes off his older sister's hands.

"Look around for something to cut the bindings!" Snaps Jiang Wanyin, glaring at said older sister. "Don't worry, we'll get you out of this!"

As Jiang Yanli begins to wander around, begging for one of the Disciples to tell her where to find a knife or sword, there's cries of, "Intruders! Intruders!"

"Run you brats! Get out of here!" Madam Yu finally recovers and snaps at the two. "I ordered you two to head for Mieshan Yu! What are you two doing back here?" Her shouts louder at the pair.

"But... We're here to get you out of here!" Jiang explains and Jiang Yunru glances toward the nearest building as a group of four Wen Disciples come charging out, with lassos already preparing to be sent to tie them up.

It's rather comedic scene that plays out as the pair do try to run but the Wens are faster and they have the advantage of having something ranged. The group of four spilt into pairs to pursue one of

the two siblings. A scream comes from Jiang Yanli as the rope gets around her upper body and she's unbalanced, landing on the ground while Madam Yu sprouts out meaningless threats at the Wens.

As for Jiang Wanyin, it's near the same time, with an uplifted leg getting snatched while the second manages to land over the head. There's clear thrashing from both Sect Leader Jiang and Madam Yu along with worried cries of "Jiang Cheng!"

The pair are carried back into the building by the four Wens. It's a given what's going to happen to the pair, well, at least to her. Jiang Yunru doesn't participate in the various conversations going on. Those that weren't near to see what happened getting told of what just transpired.

All the while, Madam Yu is causing a scene, attempting to wiggle hop towards the building while cursing out not just the Wens but Sect Leader Jiang and Wei-Shixiong for being useless, when Wei-Shixiong wasn't any where close to the scene with Sect Leader Jiang being a bit far from where Madam Yu had been when the pair arrived.

The Wens are more active now and a few come to check on them. It's not long before Madam Yu to direct her ire at one of them in particular. Thus earning a beating from the Wens, who then drag her back to near where she'd been last night. Some of that group heads for the walls and the rest into the building.

And it's half a shi chen of waiting before a simple breakfast occurs with them all getting a cup of Congee that they drink directly from the serving Wen's hands. It's not much but it does help with the beginnings of a gnawing hunger. Jiang Yunru suspects that they were all rather sore and would love to be able to get unbound.

The Wen in charge of the invasion shows up, the look of the uniform shows his ranking within the Qishan Wen Sect, which is rather high, which isn't that surprising. "The intruding Jiang have met with Wen

Zhuliu." The Wen states near where Madam Yu is, the voice is clear as many of done their best to be quiet.

"Currently, Jiang Wanyin is experiencing his body reverting back to that of a mortal while Jiang Yanli is out cold for now." The Wen explains with a clear smirk upon his face, given there's likely some Wen Cultivators that likely got some serious injuries due to Madam Yu and her handmaidens, it's understandable why he's getting enjoyment from Madam Yu's reaction to the news.

"The pair are now condemned to mortal-dom and shall never be able to regain their former level of Cultivation." And Jiang Yunru finds this news to be of some interest as she wonders if he's telling the truth or not. "Well, it hardly matters, given there's a proper Jiang Cultivator among your Sect, well, other then yourself."

Jiang Yunru does her best to not react when various gazes land upon her. She keeps her head held high, after all, it's true. She managed to get the dun horse body that is suppose to set someone related to the founder of the Yunmeng Jiang Sect apart from other members.

Did it cause her to be targeted by Madam Yu? Yes, but Wei-Shixiong always did his best to attract Madam Yu's attention from her. It's how Jiang Yunru began her studies of Medicine, to tend to the injuries her Shixiong got on her behalf. And yet, she still feels proud of all her efforts paying off in the body she got, that there's still proper Jiangs in the next generation asides from her cousins.

"Best remember that we have your children, Madam *Jiang* ." The Wen continues as he looks down at Madam Yu. "If you wish for them to continue receiving care, you best control your temper and consider your words far more carefully."

With that hidden threat, the Wen Disciple begins to walk away. A bit later, one by one, the Wens help one of her martial family get up and attend to personal needs before being brought back, although not all of them getting tied up once they are brought back. When it's her

turn, Jiang Yunru is glad for various reasons, on in particular has to do with Madam Yu glaring at her and making snide remarks.

"Does she ever stop?" Asks on the Wen Disciples keeping her company as she finishes up redressing herself. It takes Jiang Yunru a few seconds to realise that the Wen Disciple is talking about Madam Yu.

"Ah, no. You'd either need that Silent Spell I've heard that the Lans are in possession of or gagged to keep her from speaking." Jiang Yunru admits, was it disrespectful to state that? Yes but as she's the target at this point, Jiang Yunru would love for Madam Yu to stop. "That's if you want her wide awake."

"How tiring." The other Disciple states with a dry tone as they leave the room. The pair sport a goat and a horse respectfully. "Well, either way, she's scheduled to be taken last. Particularly after her two servants of hers get to go before her." The first speaker remarks and Jiang Yunru hums in understanding.

"I doubt you'll try anything but, well..." The first Wen, the goat body, shrugs and Jiang Yunru does understand. "It's fine, I'm just surprised that you're not retying us all up once we are escorted back out."

The two seem to get what she meant and as she exits out of the building, she's back at the spot and Jiang Yunru doesn't make things difficult for the pair as they tie her up. One of her shimei get selected and then it's a shidi, it goes on and on with Wei Wuxian being the first notable person of importance getting pick before those older Cultivators are escorted off to deal with such things.

Sect Leader is fourth last and then one of the handmaidens gets selected as third last. It's been a rather long day but everyone can sense the tension that's beginning to become more and more pronounce as Madam Yu struggles with her temper. It's clear that news has spread about what's about to occur.

And yet, there's nothing Madam Yu can do besides explode with verbal venom the moment that it's clear that it's the other maid who's going to be allowed to deal with body functions before the Madam of the Jiang Sect. "This is intolerable! I am the Mistress of Lotus Pier! I have waited long enough and yet you still refuse to give me my due?! You think my maids are more important then I?!"

The woman tries to stand, even bound up as her legs are along with her arms. The tail of Madam Yu's boar body is wagging with the woman's fury. "Third Lady..." Her Sect Leader tries to soothe the situation only for the woman to turn on him with a sharp head turn plus some look that Jiang Yunru images as being loathing.

Jiang Yunru just doesn't get how it was that her cousin of a Sect Leader could let this woman run rampant over not just the Disciples of the Sect but also with himself. She doesn't bother to pay the scene and words any real mind, her head turned towards the building, she thinks there might have been someone standing near the door but there isn't one now. Feeling second hand embarrassment and shame at the actions of Jiang Fengmian and his wife, namely Madam Yu, as was clear that Madam Yu's temper and pride was taken into consideration when deciding to go through with this minor power play.

Thus, a clear showing at the lack of control Madam Yu has, particularly given that the Wens could easily decide to bring out either of her cousins and do plenty of things, like cut their hair or whip them to death as neither of the two are proper Cultivators. Thus, killing them wouldn't cause Heaven's Punishment to be invoke in anyway. One would think she would have considered the current situation concerning my cousins, her children. Jiang Yunru thinks as that Wen from this morning arrives with Jiang Wanyin, who's unconscious and without wearing his Jiang Sect robes, it's just the inner robes covering his whole body, in particular it's the sight of her cousin's mortal legs that really hit home the fact that, her cousin no longer possesses a Golden Core.

There's a howl of outrage and even more struggling going on from Madam Yu. Jiang Yunru watches as the three approach near the spot where Madam Yu is. There's a gesture and it's not long before Madam Yu gets a few blows before one of those who were about to take the second handmaid surges forth with something, that something turns out to be a gag. This gag gets shoved over the head before fitted upon Madam Yu, this gag is rather special as it is one that covers her lower mouth as well as a bit of her nose.

Something seems to flare upon the cloth gag and Jiang Yunru muses that it's the Wen Sect's answer to the Lan infamous Silent Spell. The way Madam Yu tries to get the gag off while her legs kick about. "My Lady!" Her Sect Leader shouts out and tries to get close but the original Wens prevent it, moving to ensure he doesn't wiggle in that direct any more.

"It seems that it's true. You don't really have the right skills to be a proper Madam of a Great Sect." Remarks the important Wen Cultivator after making a hand sign, which seems to cause the cloth of the gag to dim.

Madam Yu's legs stop kicking about along with her trying to get the gag off. "There's so many rumours going on about you, Madam Yu and we now know how much truth there is concerning your treatment of your husband's Head Disciple." The Wen continues to speak and Jiang Yunru isn't the only one who likely flinched or looked down in shame at the mention of Wei-Shixiong's treatment.

"Whipping a Disciple with a Spiritual Tool is a rather extreme punishment after all." The Wen remarks and continues easily, after a bit. "The use of which, among majority of the Sect, tend to be for severe crimes, namely betrayal, before expulsion from the Sect."

"How shameless is the Jiang Sect? How can a Sect Leader allow their Head Disciple to be whipped so with such a Spiritual Tool that is Zidian without following through with expulsion from the Sect?" Jiang Yunru tries to shift her weight as she feels guilt over those times she'd seen that happen.

"How thick faced Sect Leader Jiang is to continue to allow that same Disciple to continue being named Head Disciple when never given the respect and protection such a post entitles that Disciple to!" The Wen makes a motion with a hand and her cousin gets put down but the pair keep their hands upon the shoulders, keep Jiang Wanyin's upper body up.

"It seems that Jiang Sect seems to think Head Disciple equals whipping boy!" The Wen glances towards her Sect Leader. "Well! The Wen Sect are of the opinion that the Jiang Sect have it backwards, whipping the successful and proper while rewarding the incompetency and improper is far too much!"

"For ever whip mark upon Wei Wuxian's body, we're going to give former Heir, Jiang Wanyin, two strikes." The Wen declares. "And given that Zidian was used, a Disciple Whip shall be used as a stand in."

And the Wen does a rear turn while a Wen Cultivator sporting a common ram's body seemingly appears behind the pair holding Jiang Wanyin, in his possession is one of the few Discipline Whips belonging to the Jiang Sect. As the important Wen along with the Wens who'd been about to take the second handmaiden away begin to head for the building. Those were the ones that were going a touch slower, almost expecting to be given orders to continue about their previous business.

"No... You can't... You'll kill him!" Sect Leader Jiang states and everyone knows that even with a Golden Core, the Discipline Whip injuries are troublesome to heal properly.

"Your wife should have thought out her actions before she resumed her previous course of behaviour." The Wen with the common ram's body sums up while the Wen Leader continues on without seemingly hearing anything. The Wen tests out the whip's balance a few times while her cousin slumps in defeat.

Jiang Yunru doesn't look away as the whipping begins. There's a few of her shijie and shimei who whimper or cry out after a blow. From her shixiong and shidi, there's a few who bow their heads down that she sees out of the corner of her eyes. Yet Jiang Yunru finds that her ability to feel seems to have escaped her and so, she just watches as the under robes of her cousin become bloody rags and blood begins to drip to the ground, slowly becoming a puddle.

Wei Wuxian isn't sure how he ended up getting put under Wen Qing's command as since the day Jiang Wanyin was whipped to death, he'd found it hard to care about his situation and surroundings. He had known the Wens had been interested in his back but hadn't realised why they'd pay his whip marks any mind until Wen Bingwen's announcement. The punishment of his shidi and the Heir of Jiang Sect coming to pass simply due to Madam Yu's inability to control her anger and pride.

"It's not your fault, Young Master Wei." Wen Qionglin, Wen Qing's younger brother, pipes in from across from him. While his gaze is upon the open book before him, his attention wasn't upon the contents anymore.

"I know! I know..." Wei Wuxian had a debt to the Jiang family and he couldn't do anything to prevent what happened. He knows it's Madam Yu's own inability to control herself that caused Jiang Wanyin to die, but it doesn't feel like it, given that the number of whips given had to deal with the number upon his own back.

"I know it here." Wei Wuxian taps his temple before adding, "But not here." He holds his hand over where his heart is.

It's been two months since the fall of Jiang Sect and there's an engagement going on between Jiang Yunru and Wen Qionglin, as Jiang Yunru's horse body shows her clear relation to the founder of the Jiang Sect along with her blood relation to Uncle Jiang, who also has the classical look of the Jiang family. As Jiang Yanli no longer possesses the capacity to Cultivate, thus, the only woman left with

clear blood connections to the founder is his shimei. Thus Jiang Yunru is the only one who could be used to join the Jiang Sect and the Wen Sect together.

For a few weeks, Wei Wuxian had been suspicious of Wen Qionglin's nature but once he's been reassured, well, he'd felt adrift as he isn't incline to give his all to the Wen Sect. Yet, he can't really bring himself to think of himself as a member of the Jiang Sect given the responses of Madam Yu but also Jiang Yanli. While Uncle Jiang doesn't blame him over anything that had happened, that wasn't the same for the remaining Jiangs.

Jiang Yanli held it as his fault for not having the Sect fight longer or for not escaping to help them in getting them to safety. Then she held it against him for allowing the Wens to see his whipped back. It hurts, the kind shijie thinking that if they hadn't seen his back, they wouldn't have gotten the idea of whipping Jiang Cheng, never mind to death due to doubling the number they saw upon his back. It's a massive emotional blow and he's surprised he's still alive from having his beloved shijie hating and blaming him for what Wen Bingwen did to punish Madam Yu.

As for Madam Yu, well, it's clear that she's just doing what she always did. It's worse this time as there's no coming back from having Jiang Cheng dying viva Discipline Whips. That the shidi he grew up with and though he'd be serving as his second in command for a time was dead.

Wei Wuxian had been held responsible for Jiang Cheng for so long that he doesn't know what to do with himself without Jiang Cheng around. It's like a huge part of his life is just... gone and there's this empty space that's just there. He knows that he couldn't Cultivate for Jiang Cheng, that every Cultivator is responsible for their own progression or lack of progress. Yet, Madam Yu and to some extent, he's sure, Uncle Jiang and shijie, did and that weighed upon him, thus he couldn't help but feel responsible.

I'm such a mess... Wei Wuxian admits to himself as he tries to work out his emotions and thoughts. "Young Master Wei should learn to forgive himself for not already being a god." Wen Qionglin stammers out in a firm sounding tone.

"Eh?" He isn't sure what to make of that statement and it must have shown. "Young Master Wei can only be held accountable for his own actions." Continues the Wen sitting across from him. "As Young Master Wei isn't a god, his power is limited to that of his own Cultivation on top of that."

The fierce look upon Wen Qionglin's face also sports a hint of earnest and for Wei Wuxian, it finally comes to him that, in the end, truly, the past is the past. And that, while he can't fully get over what has happened nor how his relations with the Jiang family seem to be gone, it doesn't mean that he has stopped being alive. It just means that his life has been altered, not unlike when he'd been kicked out of the inn and told that his parents were most likely dead.

Life isn't going to stop because of a little hardship nor emotional distress. What he had with the Jiang family... It wasn't perfect, likely wasn't right, but it had been all he had up to that point. Now, Wei Wuxian is again at a loss but he isn't a child nor is he powerless.

"I think..." He pauses before stating a bit more firmly, "I will be fine."

"I just need a bit of time to allow myself to mourn properly what needs to be mourned but, in the end, things will get better." Wei Wuxian states, it's acknowledging that he does have something to be sad about but also a promise that he won't loose sight of the fact that, he's got a future. It might not be the one he thought he'd be living but it's one nonetheless.

Wen Qionglin studies him before nodding. And Wei Wuxian feels like he's able to breath a bit more easily, that some weight or tension isn't in him. It takes him a bit to focus on pushing the matters to the side, it's hard, admittedly but he manages to and begins to read the book that's before him. "One day at a time." He states, it's something that

he'd say to Jiang Cheng, back when he'd been doing his best to lighten his shidi's mood over the lack of any major progress or a backslide.

One day at a time. Wei Wuxian promises himself.

Author's Note:

Well, this is something that I got inspired reading this story about Steve Rogues and James 'Bucky' Barnes getting involved in some magical ritual that created a world where the Super Soldier Serum caused them to take on the likeness of centaurs and them dealing with results, including whether or not they want to go back to how things once were or embrace what has happened to them.

And so, given that Golden Cores are something that's as unseen as the Super Soldier Serum, I thought, what if they are permanently altered by having Cultivated one? Oh sure, there's plenty of stories concerning Cultivators being Shifters or capable of transformation, be it whole or partially. Plus, I kind of wanted to ensure that they really couldn't afford to be gender bias over who should Cultivate, so, for them to get around to having kids, there would be a need for a heck of a lot more women Cultivating then is generally shown or expected in this particular setting.

Also, the older the Sect, the more likely the family feature breeds true, as seen with the Yu Sect in the first portion of the story along with why both the Jiang and Jin family still have family members that don't inherit the animal body, it's why Jiang Wanyin is suppose to have a boar body but if Jiang Yanli had taken her Cultivation seriously, she might have gotten a blue dun.

Sect List of General Animal:

Jiang family notable feature being dun horse body centaurs.

Characters within the story sporting Jiang Family are: Jiang Fengmian and Jiang Yunru

Wen Mao and thus the Wen family feature is yak.

Nie family feature is dark furred cattle, generally regarded as having an ox body.

Bai Ming is five degrees cousin to both Nie Mingjue and Nie Huaisang viva a great, great grandmother having been a daughter of a Nie Sect Leader/sister of a Nie Sect Leader.

Lan family feature is Goitered Gazelle.

Jin family feature is a Mainland Serow.

Jin Zixuan sports argali instead of the standard Jin Family feature.

The Legacy of the Cursed Springs: Ranma

I don't own Ranma 1/2

/Start

Date: January 9th, 2025

Time: 4:30 AM

Country of Origin: Canada

City Location: Saskatoon, SK

Video Title: Must be Seen to be BELIVED

As the teacher presses a button upon the remote, the biggest historic turning point plays out for the class. "Hello world! I'm Doctor Benoit and I know what I'm about to show should be regarded as impossible by our current social norms along with our current understanding of the world at large." A man sporting dark brown hair with a skunk stripe that's sporting a crimson colour to it instead of the usual white.

Hazel green eyes closes for a bit longer, almost as if the almost thirty-year-old is doing his best to remember his lines, his prepared speech. Fingers push up a part of glasses as one Daxtin Benoit, the herpetologist, speaks, "I was located Jusenkyo of the Bayankala Mountain range, which belongs Qinghai Province, which is ultimately located in China."

"A number of bizarre animals have been reported south of this area that sports hundred, perhaps even thousands, of natural springs." The good Doctor continues with a tone sporting bitter bemusement. "I mean, who would believe that a gigantic chimera being that sports features of cattle, bird, eel, or ape could ever be real? It's got to be a

hoax, right?" A very bitter smile graces the face of the soon to be famous, or regarded as infamous in some circles, man.

"And yet, I witnessed such a thing and more the closer I got to these natural springs that the locals considered to be cursed." Dr Benoit states. "There should be links to various images that I had taken along with short videos being posted in chat, pinned as well."

Their teacher had already reviewed the various links in last week's class and the chat logs the week before that one. Heck, they had reviewed what ancient historic recorded could be recovered about others who'd fallen into these springs in the past, including one of the local settlements that use to use the human cursed springs to transform animals into appropriate forms so they could bed and have children with such... victims. *It might as well be considered bestiality with a side of rape.*

"Now then, in regard to the history of these springs and the curses they carry, and yes, I mean curses as each spring might have started off with the same curse but the expression of it depends on a single factor." Dr Benoit goes on to repeat what is now regarded as solid facts in regard to the Valley of Curse Springs of Jusenkyo. "If there hadn't been a 'drowned' victim of the spring, the spring absorbed the 'drowned' victims' form." The man does in fact use those quote marks with his fingers when saying drowned.

"The definition of 'drowned' is something that I'm sure people will be frothing at the mouth over in the future when they get around to studying the springs." And he nods in agreement. Ryan can still recall how so many scientists couldn't get over the idea that a statue could 'drown' never mind the few fish themed springs, though people do accept any oceanic life being understandable when it comes to not being able to survive in fresh water.

"Now, for those who fall into a spring that already had a 'drowned' victim, anyone who falls within or gets hit by said water is forever force to take the form of said victim when splashed with or within cool or colder water." Dr Benoit states with a clear confidence and

Ryan knows it's also from experience. "For the now cursed being to return to their original appearance or body, they must be splashed or immersed with warm or hotter water."

"And thus far, there isn't any known way to remove this temperature-based water curse." The cure being rather painful and if done wrong, it could cause the person to remain in the cursed form, it becomes their natural form in regard to the order of the world. When the method came to be known, along with how it could go wrong, governments had put laws into effect to protect cursed people from anyone trying to rob them of their humanity.

"Now, people are clearly demanding evidence and, well, I'm going to provide it but first, let's take a look at what equipment I have set up to ensure there's proper evidence." With that, Dr Benoit moves to take the camera and shows off the equipment, including those assisting him in recording this live event. There's various video recording evidence and introductions of the four who are at various monitors.

Soon enough, the camera is set back down, only its setting widens a great deal. "Ok, drum roll please..." And there's a count down from five to zero. Watches as cool water rains down from one of the makeshift showers.

The change happens without any hiccups and there's a leopard cat within a pile of cloths plus a pair of glasses. At this point, the chat explodes and, of course, it's at this point that various other links are posted into the online stream's chat box to replay the activation through different equipment. One Alyssa Thomas approaches to collect the cloths while putting the glasses into a case.

The next few minutes is of the leopard cat that is Dr Benoit performing while David Russell, a friend of his, narrates along with voicing instructions from chat to prove at this is still a live along with showing that there's no way that this is some kind of trained animal, given how there isn't much haste between the suggested action and

Dr Benoit performing, to the best as his can as a leopard cat, acts or answering in the suggested manner.

It's at this point that they know that searches begin to happen concerning the location within China while this video is getting shared. Alyssa Thomas arrives by the time fifteen minutes had passed since the beginning of performance. Once the planked mobile wall are set up around Dr Benoit, there's another count down from five and then, the other shower rains down warm water, a naked Dr Benoit is now moving to stand up with the planked walls about him.

A long, dark shirt is tossed at his face, which causes giggles from the crew and once it's on, he begins to put the planked walls away. It's not long before the stream ends, but history had been made and people are now questioning just how such a curse could remain unknown. The image fades and the machine projecting that video seems to get shut off.

"Of course, this marks the beginning of Doctor Benoit making appearances nor transforming between his cursed leopard cat form and his original one." Mrs Hawkins states and the lecture that comes after that is not anything new information that they hadn't already reviewed. So, it's easy for Ryan to tune her out as he focuses on his tablet and going through search results for anything new being uploaded in regards to methods to manipulate Instant Powders to achieve desired results.

There's something that's just been uploaded and so, he selects it before closing the internet search for a pdf of the various tests that people did with Dr Benoit as the solo, then one of many, test subjects. There's mention of the infamous The Jusenkyo Preservation Society attempting to kidnap and/or kill the good Doctor for exposing the nature of the cursed springs to the world, which got them investigated and arrested. The records did give more credit to this springs' being around for centuries along with a good list of what crimes this group had done and were in the process of doing.

Moving on to a different article that covers a group of tourists visiting the spring a few weeks after the live stream of Doctor Benoit and goes review the footage they recorded with their cell phones, which led to one Kimberly Amber, low profile streamer, jumping into a spring and then there's her cloths floating with a stoat trying to get out of them. Someone is smart enough to grab a branch and would pull the cloths covered stoat out of the spring.

The reactions of those who'd been taking the video exclaiming in shock at the truth of what just happened. Given the location of the springs, the videos would get uploaded onto their preferred streaming site once they get within range of a stable WIFI. The video he's watching has another two members of this group delibrating getting cursed by leaping into different springs, both men and thus they stripped before doing so as to not get caught up in their own cloths if they end up in smaller forms.

Steven Baker would get cursed to transform into fox while Julian Smith finds himself cursed to transform into a kind of wild goat. With three members getting animal curses, the group retreats and the video ends. It would take them a good two weeks to reach a small size city, they had been paranoid that someone might try to arrest them on trumped charges or something.

The video would help support Doctor Benoit's claims along with their names becoming well known. They did run into trouble returning to France with the authorities on charges of them 'stealing' from a 'historical' site. Which caused its own political sensation and would cause an escape from their detainment center, one that is worthy of an action spy film. There's been at least three movies based on their escape, one is more faithful to their accounts then the other two.

Another article he picks to read involves Russia switching targets from Ukraine to focus on capturing the cursed springs, thus began a war between the two. It didn't work out for either, after all, there had been a group of Ukraine Hackers who hack both countries to wear their forces out. Both parties wouldn't figure out there's a third party, believing the other country was just using VPNs to seem to be

coming out of Ukriane, which is actually rather bemusing as the Hackers had been rather spiting mad that they forgot the basics of hiding their location, they realized it later and would go about shrouding it later but for the first few months, it was easy to track them back to their country, even to their houses.

Soon enough, the bell goes off and they gathered up their few belongings before leaving the room. Once at his locker, he grabs his lunch kit as he swaps his tablet for his cell phone and blue tooth ear buds. It's three weeks until Halloween and he's in high spirits that he'll find a method for his Halloween costume, it's pretty typical these pass decades to use Instant Powders with actual costumes or just the Instant Powders on their own.

/Break

Ryan can't find any links regarding that download to see if they updated it or added some kind of glossary. So, it just means he'll have to rely upon his own judgement when it comes to going through the hefty old German texts that, if he's to trust Google Translate, seems to be about customizing an appearance of what could be translated into Homunculus. It's unlikely that Homunculus were actually successful in the olden days, but with knowledge they have now concerning genetics, it would be child's play to create them.

Studying the large human looking cake pan, he needs a way to keep it steady. So, back into the kitchen he goes and after a bit to trying various situation, he heads out with the self-driving car to go pick up some kind of clay. As he's slowly making headway in understanding the instructions, he adds new items that he'd try if this method works.

Most methods when it comes to creating hybrid Instant Forms tends to be mixing the two powders together, often in different portions, before putting them into the water to create Instant Water. If this works out, Ryan is can see how he'd be able to do this for the upcoming Christmas Contest for Charity. He might even win; even though they don't know what all of the prizes will be for this coming contest.

Arriving at the store, Ryan exits out of the car, ensuring to grab the key from where it's clipped in. Pocketing it and his cell, he walks through the parking lot. It's nearing supper so there's dozens upon dozens of parked cars meant for the various restaurants that surround the crafting shop. Strolling about the aisles, he is tempted to buy some of the faux leather to create a harness but settles for a synthetic quartz of thumb size, it's clear.

It's needed for this stabilization amulet that he'll need to create to keep up the form's appearance. He'll know created it correctly by it becoming cloudy, the instructions don't mention if, or what, colour will overcome the gem. Copper chain and silver jewellery wire for the amulet. With the supplies for the amulet taken care of, he ignores the rest until he finds the clay, taking out his cell, he tries to find the right clay for the amulet while picking up a few of the bigger portions for holding the cake pan steady.

The kind of clay he's needing is hard to get a real translation. Pull out his cell, he does searches concerning the term used with the word clay. It takes minutes before looking at the options on the shelves, looking for anything that had been mentioned. By the time a good thirty minutes have passed and he's tried looking up the translated term plus clay but doesn't get much besides it seems to be a type of pottery glaze. Which he searches up and finds a DIY recipe for this dark orange glaze.

Taking a moment to consider the clay he's already picked up; he weights it in his mind whether he should pick up more or if what he's got is enough. Deciding to look for a small portion of white clay that should take the glaze's colouring just fine. Before leaving from this section, Ryan checks to ensure he can use a BBQ or over as a pottery kiln and gets mixed results over the issue but figures that buying a cheap pan for him to put the clay on before putting in the over would be the smartest option along with seeing it there's a larger cake pan.

He finds a larger one that's more blank and flat compared to the one at home, which brings up the idea if he still needs the clay to create

a steadying block. In the end, he decides to buy the clay as he's sure he'll find something to use it for. With the new cake pan and cheap cookie tray added to the basket, he heads for the cashier.

With that, he heads out and to the car. Pressing the button on the key to unlock the door, once in, inserts the key. Once he's selected Home, the car begins driving forward and out of the parking lot. Going over the instructions for the amulet, he is sure he'll be able to shape the silver wire into the right shakes, it's keeping them in the right shape when inserting them into the clay for the amulet. They are to be infused into the amulet, which makes him assume that they need to be covered by the clay plus they are to surround the quartzs crystal in a circle.

Once home, he notices that his younger brother, Michael, has been through his human Instant Powders. Most of his boy/man are untouched while the girl/woman are down by two. He just sighs, it's not like he has many of those, given he'd only been able to purchase them by groups of half a dozen, he'd only used one three, coming to be four, years back. Like many of his peers, he'd been interested in what he'd look like if he were born the opposite gender.

Given his brother is the same age as when he bought those Instant Powders, he could guess what he'd done with the two that are missing. *One for himself and one for a friend more likely.* He checks his supply of boy/man and finds the number unchanged, which is what he's more concerned about.

Taking a pouch, he leaves the garage and puts the key back on the hook. Heading to his room, Ryan settles the bags on his bed before pulling out the pans. With them, he heads for the kitchen and slices the plastic off the two. Putting them on the table, he checks and does notice that the human shaped one doesn't settle itself flatly on the table. Returning to his room, he takes out a number of items until he's got the clay, at which point he takes the bag and what's within it out of his room.

It's not long before he's put parchment paper upon the cookie tray that he bought along with greasing the parchment. With that done, he begins opening up one of the clay portions and heads for the bathroom for some dental floss to slice up the clay. It works and slowly, he lays the sliced clay upon the parchment paper. Then he begins to work on the pan before turning to shaping the clay to hold the pan. Bit by bit, he creates a clay cradle for the pan, ensuring it's a smug fit.

He's still got two thirds of what he'd opened up left. Wrapping it up, he puts it to the side. Checking his cell over the DIY oven kiln, he puts the clay plus pan into the over before setting up the temperature. Setting up the alarm to a point between the two suggested times, he starts it and heads for the bathroom to wash his hands. As he finishes up to somewhat satisfactory results, exits out.

He makes a quick dinner for himself before dealing with the left-over clay and the unopened package. Putting them out in the garage for safe keeping, he goes through the tools for things needed to cut and shape the silver wire. He heads to his room for the quartz crystal, silver wire, and a tablet that will hold the image for him to work with.

Returning to the kitchen, he works away, even checking on the stuff within the oven. Time tics away, with him taking tiny breaks for the bathroom and to wash his hands. After a few times of needing to take the white clay from the silver and fixing it, he manages to create the amulet, it's a rather large and thick rectangular brick that's about the size of between his index and thumb and three index fingers thick.

Setting the result to the side, carefully wrapped up along with things around it to help keep its shape, he goes to take a shower. Taking a bit of ten-minute break afterwards to check his Email, he returns to the kitchen to begin creating the glaze, once he gets what he needs, he collects them and then takes out a mixing bowl. Measuring out the right portions to create a small amount of the glaze, it's likely that he'll have a bit left over.

It's nearing midnight when he finishes baking the glazed clay amulet after removing the parchment that's still attached to the pan baked clay base. Placing fresh parchment on the pan, not enough to cover it like before but enough to cover the area for the amulet but an inch around it. The amulet came out a nice dark orange with the quartz seeming to have an inner light, which means he created it correctly.

Clean up takes him until nearly two am and he's sure to take the two back to his room. Setting them both on the desk, he moves what remains on the bed elsewhere and goes to bed. Tomorrow is Saturday and Halloween is on Monday. So, he has all weekend to let the stuff set before use.

/Next Day

Staring at the illusionary image of a boy/man that's being projected after he held the amulet and managing to speak the spell means it must have succeeded. He's got a small bowl of Instant Wolf with an eye dropper next to it. There are no real features of the face and altering how he looks; he gets to see the insides of the 'man' in the pan. The muscles under the skin, the blood vessels, skeleton, and organs shimmer in place of a complete 'man'.

He begins to realize what those specialized tools likely were for as he holds still and watches as the illusion shifts to go through those sights naturally. Given that most of those required rituals that take three to five days to enchant them, he is just relying upon luck and an eye dropper for his Halloween form. And so, he's careful about how much he drops on the head and aims for the tips of the hands plus the toes.

The head does sport a bit more hair upon the face while the ears did seem to move a bit up on the side of the head plus slight points. The fingers and toe seem to sport black nails plus looking a bit shorter. The nails don't look that sharp but then, he knows that it's felines that have the sharp claws he'd want for a werewolf. So, after adding another two drops to the head, one a bit more near the throat, the teeth do alter and there's fuzz on the more pointed ears. The nose

has altered with the bones of the mouth seeming to come out. The hairiness does increase with some about the neck now.

Putting the bowl to the side, he gets up to get a smaller bowl from the kitchen and then adding a bit of Instant Tiger into it before adding a bit of water. With that, he cleans the eye dropper before taking a bit of the new water and very carefully lets half a drop touch the illusionary 'man'. Yip, the changes to the hand is now hairy and the nails seem to remain unchanged. Sadly, he adds a bit too much on the 'left' hand of the illusionary man and this time, there's sharper nails but the size of the fingers does shorten.

Setting aside the eye dropper, he uses a stir stick to mix up the water that's under the illusion. Doing so does fix the problem of the shorten fingers but the fur is more on the orange side then before. It takes time but he fixes that by using Instant Wolf to counter the colouring. He focuses on the 'right' hand and mixes the water there. Then adds a bit of Instant Tiger, trying to get the same nails which has him mixing them once more before adding Instant Wolf.

Letting out a sigh, he truly regrets not preparing the tools earlier then yesterday. Still, the fingers weren't as short as they'd been, and the nails continue to sport black. It's hard to see if they end in points given how tiny the hands are.

As he watches the shifting illusion, Ryan sighs. He moves the combination of pan and clay block onto the shelf before mixing the Instant Tiger with the Instant Wolf. Once he's got his clothes off, he dumps the contains on himself, the transformation is primarily that of a wolf. Stretching his body and walking for the door, he presses it open before walking to the entertainment room, settling on the couch as Michael is playing on the flat screen on a previous generation Sony PlayStation.

His appearance does get a glance from his younger brother but that's about it. And so, he just watches his brother and online friends storm a compound of some Survival Builder game. Listening to the one-sided conversation on his brother's end, Ryan closes his eyes.

It's not long before he drifts off, after all, he woke to the alarm he forgot to turn off so, he got perhaps four hours of sleep.

/Halloween Eve

The cloths were stylized after 1990s Goth scene with the amulet being held in one hand as he dumps the contains of the bowl over his head. There's a tingle that spread throughout his body and he looks down at himself, noting the open toed boots that show off his blacken toenails and then at his hands, the nails do end in points with a slight pink of his hand palms.

The amulet sports a navy-blue light, it's still rather clear and as he approaches the full body mirror, the image reflecting back is very much like that illusionary 'man' with animalistic features. Pulling back his lips, he notices his teeth and he touches the ears, which have raised half an inch from where they are normally.

Putting the amulet down on the desk, he runs his fingers through his hair. What feeling he has of his fingertips is rather dull, but it feels coarse. The colouring of both his hair on his head, neck, hands, about the wrist, and what he can see of his feet, don't sport the exact same colouring, which is understandable given he added Instant Tiger to his hands. Touching the fur on his left hand, it's clear that the orange of the Instant Tiger isn't all gone, it's just mix more with the brown, causing it to be a lighter shade compared to his head and toes.

Then he begins testing out his voice. First is humming, next he voices a greeting in a lower tone, then normal tone, and with a near shouting tone. The low vibes in a way that reminds him of a growl, the normal has a slight tilt to the pitch, and the near shouting is nearly high pitch howl. With a voice that's sporting a lower register then normal, he is bemused over the changes.

Being sure to grab his wallet and cell, he exits out of the room. It's not long before he's on his way to the Halloween Party being housed at Violet's, her parents signed off on it. As he walks the blocks, his

brother had taken the car to attend a Halloween Gaming Tournament, which began right after school at a rented space.

His brother should be home by ten pm, not that he expects to be home later then nine pm. So he should be in bed by that time. As it's nearly five when he left and it takes him an hour to arrive that the house. "Yo!" He calls out and it's clear that the blink and look upon Glenda's face that she doesn't recognize him viva his voice nor his looks.

"Hey?" Nick, who's just finish knocking on the Halloween Door Knocker. The pair are dressed up in matching costumes, characters from the latest Final Fantasy television series. He'd wager that the hair dye and hair style is likely done with enchanted hair gel that also coloured their respective hairs. The cloths and faux weapons were most likely bought from a popular Halloween Store.

"It's Ryan, Ryan Hammett." He states as casually as he could, and the pair get that dawning realization coupled with the pair giving his appearance a second look over. "Wow, what did you do? Drink some Instant Water to get that voice?" Asks Glenda but they are interrupted with the door opening.

"Xena! What a surprise! I thought you would need to baby sit your sister on her Trick'n'Treating tonight?" Nick asks the horned teen in a nurse costume; the horn is likely the result of Instant Ox being applied to a particular location on the head.

The joke is pretty much in evident at first glance. "Well, my dad returned early and decided to take her for me. So, I just slap dashed this up." Xena states with a simple gesture of her current look.

"It's a CLASSIC, Xena, I repeat, it's a CLASSIC!" Nick declares, which earns him an elbow. "Glad you can make it." Glenda states as she moves to give Xena a shallow hug before entering into the house.

He finishes climbing the stairs, which catches Xena's attention while Nick enters after finishing his nervous giggles. "Xena." Ryan states as a greeting and like the pair before, she isn't sure who he ultimately is.

"..." Xena doesn't seem to have any clue but there isn't much time until a group of younger kids at approaching the driveway. Most of them sporting costumes that are air inflated, like wings or looking like they are riding a horse.

He moves out of the way to allow the group to pass him to get to the door, saying the age-old Halloween Eve greeting. "Trick or Treat!" Xena pulls away from the door frame to reach for something, it's likely that there's a bowl with treats for Trick'n'Treaters.

With tiny candy bars getting put into bags, the group leaves after that, most thanking Xena for the treats. "Ryan." He supplies as he hears the sounds of a movie playing in the basement now that he's near the door frame.

There's a few in the living room that's near the front porch and closet. He notices a full Instant Donkey along with someone dressed up as a pink scaled dragon. The pair are likely a couple costume from the old movie Shrek, Dragon and Donkey.

"Ryan?" Xena seems to find her voice and the group of six in the living room perk up at the name along with the sight of him. "Well, yes, I'm sure that's my name." He tries to sound drawl, but it rumbles out kind of like a growl.

The Donkey's ears turn to face backwards at the sound, it's clear that whoever that is, they can hear above average with those long ears. "How's things going?" He asks as he looks back at Xena.

"Everyone is pretty much here, what with them getting dropped off by relatives or just sending the cars to the nearest lot." She states before remarking, "Seems like someone bought a scammer's sell pitch about a human speaking jackass."

The Donkey of the group's nears go flat and there's a series of baying with a end order of teeth snapping in the air. It's clear that everyone is bemused over the reaction that Xena raised out of their transformed peer. He mentally sighs as he does kind of feel for the person but also admits that they really shouldn't have expected anything advertised to be true, after all, if they figured out how to allow an Instant to speak normal like, it would have made the news.

Xena moves to allow him to enter, and he does so, taking a bit to get closer to the group to figure out who's dressed as Dragon. Seeing its Lizzie, he realizes who the Donkey is. "Ben. Lizzie." He greets the pair before going on to greet the other four, Xena is dealing with another group of Trick'n'Treaters.

"Gothic Beauty and the Beast?" Inquires Vic while his twin, Zack, pipes in, "I see the Beauty, so, where's the Beast?"

That prompts a couple of chuckles, and he snorts in turn. Though, he admits, his idea was more from the near-human forms from two old tabletop games, Werewolf the Apocalypse and its successor of a sort, Werewolf the Forsaken. The first was Gothic Punk themed, thus he though dressing as a Goth would pay homage to the original game.

The twins are dressed as a Holy Cleric and a Devilish Warlock from the popular series Hell Dasher. Vic as the Devilish Warlock with his brother the Holy Cleric. The final two members of the group of six are Helen and Marco, Helen is dressed in a Vampire Hunter get up with fake blood upon the faux leather armour that sports plastic wooden steaks. Marco sports an Eastern Monk attire with a plastic ring staff with a series of plastic rings hanging from the plastic ring that's at the end.

"Well, I feel threatened." He states as drily as he can at the group. "As for me being the Beauty, wow, I now know I don't want to meet what you mean by Beast."

Ben snickers as best as he can give his current state while Lizzie murmurs her agreement with his desire not to run into what their definition of a Beast is, particularly in regard to how he, Ryan, looks right now. Zack chuckles while trying to play it off while Xena gives Vic a peck on the lips. "What movie is playing downstairs?" He asks after a bit of conversation with Marco and Helen about his costume and what inspired it.

"I think it's that classic, time-honoured homage to the season of ghosts." Zack states in a very solemn tone and it doesn't take long to realize which movie it is. "Which version? The 1980s one or the remake of 2040s?" He asks, one is a timeless classic and the other is a shameless reboot, even more shameless than the one that came out in the 2010s which was gender flipped protags.

"The 1980s." Replies Lizzie and he nods, he's seen that one enough for the month. "Followed up with the sequel made of the same decade." Marco finishes and he lets out a sigh.

He recalls watching the classic 1980s and the 1990s cartoons every Saturday morning with his mom and then, later, his younger brother during October. There'd been other Halloween cartoons he'd seen due to his mom, but times change and as they change, there's never any way to get that time back. "Is there anything left from dinner, or it hasn't been ordered yet?"

"Ah, yea, I forgot to ask about that!" Xena exclaims and what follow is asking for their vote on either pizza or fried chicken getting delivered. He votes for pizza while majority of the others go for the chicken. That gets texted to Violet, and he can only guess at her reaction.

About twenty minutes since he arrived is when the last three who said they could make it arrive. The three are dressed up as classical vampires, complete with ancient suits. Faces pale with red lips with crimson eyes plus sharp looking canine teeth. What's makeup or what's illusion is something he can guess about but that doesn't

mean he gets it right. The trio head down after chatting for a few minutes.

As time passes, food gets delivered with everyone sending Violet their share of the total once it's shared. He's a bit more careful of what he drinks when the soda doesn't taste right, sticking to water. Nothing serious got brought up and when addressing Ben, they had to keep it to yes and no for him to be included.

A few of the basement dwellers come up to join them for a bit while some of the group would head down to socialize with them. Pictures get taken, some as single and others as couple or groups. Ryan is rather satisfied at how few of the others can easily recognize him.

As eight draws near, people begin to head out and he catches a ride home with Tim and Conner, with the pair being a few blocks from where he lives. Thanking Tim, who's car is driving them, and saying bye to Conner, he exits out of the car. As he approaches the front door, the porch light comes on and he unlocks the door, tapping the security pass code in, he closes the door and locks it.

As he checks the house, it's clear that his brother is still out and thus, he begins to take off his cloths. Once he reaches his room, he tosses what he's carrying into the dirty cloths' basket. As he stripes, he looks at the amulet, which still sports that glow. Once he's done, he goes to have a warm shower to dispel the effects of the Instant Powders.

It's not until he's out that he realizes that something went wrong. Moving to stand before the sink that sports the mirror, he finds that he's still transformed. Running a hand through his hair before tugging slightly at the wet matted hair, it doesn't give, and it does sting in slight pain if he pulls to hard.

Heading back to his room, he picks up his cell, which he needs to retrieve from the pockets that were in the dirty cloths' basket plus his wallet. It takes him nearly ten minutes to recall where he last had it but once in hand, he is quick to bring up the instruction and then, for

the next forty minutes, mentally reviews the steps he'd underwent regarding splashing himself with the Instant Powders.

Gripping the amulet, he tries speaking the words in reverse, the incantation he'd used on Saturday to give that method a try. The glow hasn't changed and so, he heads for the bathroom. Putting the amulet under warm water doesn't do much and then he tries to think of what might work. It's a bit before he decides to see if holding the amulet while having a shower would work, as he had been holding the amulet when he splashed himself.

Which... works! Feeling his panic subside, he notices that the colour is gone but the inner glow remains within the quartz of the amulet. He lets out a chuckle before drying himself off with the towels once more. Leaving the bathroom behind, turning off the light, he returns to his room.

Looking at the amulet, he is only getting use to the idea that without the amulet being on him, he could have remained under the effects of the Instant Powders. Which begs the question of if it would have reversed after twenty-four hours or until he'd showered with the amulet. He's tired and decides, as he puts something on before going to bed, that he'll likely figure it out come December, as he wants to create those tools for more control over how those Instant Powders express themselves.

/Break

He'd forgotten which of the two was Instant Man and which is Instant Reindeer. In the end, he figures it hardly matters, so, he puts the contains of the right bowl into the pan. Speak the incantation with the amulet only for the colour of occupy the quartz is green. Looking from the amulet, he watches as an illusion slowly appears in the pan.

It's that of a reindeer and like before, given time, the illusion shifts to give the appearance of the muscles and other inners. Watching it, he takes time to consider if this changes things, after all, he hadn't

expected to work from the beast to include that of man, but figures, this might work just fine.

And so, he begins his task of introducing Instant Man to the illusion. This is the first time he's done this with the freshly enchanted tools. He has his tablet out and the cheat sheet he took weeks to create, one that details what each tool does and how to use them, aka, what incantations he would need to speak to get them to work.

The first thing he does, is focus on allowing the form to be bipedal which involves the bones and muscles of the spine before the rib cage and pelvis plus those muscle groups. It's tricky but soon, the illusion does show the figure standing upright like a man. Next is the forelimbs, namely the hooves, three fingers plus a thumb, it works for him, even if the fingers are a bit thicker then he'd likely be comfortable with. He doesn't do anything with the coat of fur, as it works for what he wants.

Going through the cheat sheet, he shrinks the antlers while also working on the throat plus how the head is held. The head shape is one he slowly shapes to mimic a slightly cartoonish cross of a reindeer and a man. The muzzle remains but is much shorter plus the alternation to the tongue and teeth, shrinking as needed but keeping them mostly like those of the beast. Enlarging some muscles here to help hold the head up, bulking up his upper body to be more clearly masculine,

Bit by bit, he alters the Instant Reindeer template into something that should work for the twenty-one days that the Contest requires the participants to dress up for, well, that's including weekends as he doesn't plan to undo it in case, he can't repeat the right appearance. If he's right about the amulet's importance to regain his original appearance, that it'll break the time limit of the Instant Powders, then... Well, he can already imagine how many people will lose their shit over this method, not just over the shear amount of customization that it offers.

He also gets the dimensions of the body so he can work on the decorative harness afterwards. Ryan is sure to put them on his cell phone. It also takes him a bit to realize that there's something lacking, something that deals with the bathroom. And so, he manages to tease out such a body part before shrinking it down, when he does a quick search about it on reindeer along with moving it.

Mentally noting that option for the future, he takes a few minutes to study the illusion with a critical eye. After a bit, decides to take a look at it again in the afternoon. For now, he needs a break and so, he sets both bowls on a shelf while putting the tools onto the cloth. He takes the empty bowl and heads out of his room.

It's not long before he's grabbing a drink and heading for the entertainment room. His brother is in his room, playing on his laptop and thus, he is able to boot up the PlayStation and log into his own profile on it. It being Saturday, he has a few days to go to craft the harness for his costume for December. he's already got the faux leather and the cheap metal rings for it plus a good size bell for the collar that will be separate from the harness.

He'll begin work on the harness tomorrow, which is Sunday. That gives him five days to create the harness and the bell collar. He'll give it an inch or inch and a half extra to the measurements to give him some room to adjust the two on his body without always needing to unclasp it to adjust it.

**/ December 1st **

With the harness hanging from him and wearing a pair of shorts he'd bought for this, he's got a dozen of them, he is sure to have the amulet in his offhand as he takes a few steadying breaths. Straightening, he dumps the contains over his head and soon, the shorts are stretched near their fullest while his upper body fills out the harness. The bell of the collar jingles as he gives himself a shake.

The weight of upon his head increases but that's what he expects. Looking into the mirror, he gets his first, actual look at what he'd created. It's, again, pretty much the illusionary image that the pan showed off, it's just, now, it's got life to it, as in, his life. Looking at each of his hands, he flexes the hand with the amulet as he sets the bowl down.

Having only three fingers is odd but it also doesn't feel that odd. The fact he has a thumb helps; he reasons to himself. And so, he places the amulet down as well. Taking steps about the room, getting use to his height and bulk along with the fact he's got hooves and is glad he had modified the legs, so they aren't that noticeable digitigrade instead of the typical plantigrade of humans. He'd done his best to ensure his hooves would support his weight, having enlarged and strengthen them as best as he could.

The gait is different, it's like walking around upon his toes only there doesn't seem to have the option of plant the heel upon the ground. Feeling as secure of himself as he could, he ducks a bit once the door opens to get through. The antlers don't knock on the door frame, but he can't shake the feeling that they did touch it. His hooves click clank upon the wooden floor of the hallway as he heads for the kitchen.

His school belongings are next to the door, ready for him to grab them and go. His dad is at the table along with Michael, they both don't notice him until he's going for what he'd bought for him to eat. It came about when he realized he hadn't done much to the digestion track and he might need to watch what he eats. So, he bought a lot of greens, like kale and lettuce.

If it gets too expensive, he's sure he can buy cheap dried greens from the local pet shops, after all, rabbit food should work for this Instant Transformation, given they have similar diets. As he manages to not drop a bowl as he grabs one, he hears someone choke and it seems like someone noticed his appearance. Not that it bothers him, as he is busy figuring out if he should grab a fork as he walks over to the fridge after putting down the bowl.

He isn't sure how much he'll need to eat as he pulls out a bag of mix green salad. A glance towards the table, he finds his brother looking at him, whatever was on his phone forgotten. Closing the fridge door, he grabs the scissors that are on the side of the fridge to cut into the bag. Once done, he puts them back onto the side as he walks to where the bowl is waiting for him.

It's clear when his dad finally takes note of what going on for, he hears a bit of a choking cough as he fills the bowl as best as he can. As he finishes with the bag, he rolls it up before taking it and his bowl from the counter. Once he's finished with the fridge and is moving to the counter island as he isn't that confident with sitting down right now, he notices his dad glancing at him a few times over the course of him eating with a fork.

"You know, I hear pictures last longer." He manages to state in what he intends to be a dry tone. It timber is a bit loud and there's hints of awkward vocal empathise. Which, well, makes him a bit more aware that he might need to look up better means for the future for his vocal cords, after all, some birds are able to mimic human speak, right?

Perhaps he shouldn't be that shocked when both of them aim their respective cells his way and take his picture just as he finishes closing his muzzle, pulling the fork away. Ryan feels his ears swivel forward as if having their own mind. The pair snicker with Michael quipping, "Deer in headlights."

Snorting in annoyance, which has him also shaking his head a bit, he focuses on his meal of salad. Soon enough, it's time for school and he heads off with his brother. He considers the car and moves to get in the back, leaving Michael to decide which of the front seats he wants. It's a tight fit but he manages, particularly keeping his bag next to him on the next seat.

The drive gives him plenty of time to reconsiders his choices in regard to his whole life, his courage seems to be deserting him. Remembering the previous years that he's witness the seniors

participating in this contest and how he'd have judged them concerning their choices... He suspects that the same will happen to him, after all, he's pretty sure his looks will be judged as being cartoony, given he's got three fingers and a thumb or big hooves or even the size and shape of his head.

They arrived and it takes him a few deep breaths before he exits out of the car. There are a few people lingering in the parking lot, which, perhaps, is something of a tradition as he recalls seeing a collection of participants lingering in the parking lot, particularly if they drove to school. The other locations are generally the various doors.

There's a group of seven formed of elves, a Santa, a Mrs Claus, and a reindeer. They are all costumed up, there doesn't seem to be any Instant Powders used, if there was, it's not evident from this distant. It's like he can feel a number of eyes upon himself as he begins walking away from the car. His brother is gone along with the car key, which means he'll have to wait for him after school unless he drops the key off during lunch.

He manages to walk pass the group that's lingering near Ben's van. Giving the group of seven a nod, he returns to focusing on walking forward. There are onlookers who have arrived or been waiting on seeing the various costumed up seniors. Entering the building, he heads for the offices and hands over the envelope with the contest application plus the donation amount for the use of Instant Powder.

The secretary accepts it and goes over the contents of the application before taking a good look. Soon, they go over the verbal agreement, which is recorded, and to ensure he's able to participate in class as he hadn't put anything down for speech impediment. There's been problems in the past over Instant Powders causing difficulty with schoolwork and activities, thus, the need for verbal agreement. So, full body Instant Powders are only allowed on the final day before Christmas Break, which is a rather easy day that does turn into something of a school wide party when the final hour hits.

He's handed a school permit to be placed upon his collar or harness. Putting it on the main ring of the harness that's stationed upon his chest, he walks out of the office. With that, he heads for his locker to put his bag away along with grabbing what physical books he needs for his morning classes.

Once done, he heads for the class, which will be starting in about fifteen minutes. Within ten minutes, the rest of his peers come shuffling in, all but two having signed up for the contest and have their permits pinned on either side of their chests. Most picked to dressed up as elves, there's another reindeer and the rest dressed up as Santa or Mrs. Claus.

Soon the final bell goes off and Ryan does his best to not allow the staring to get to him. Class begins and that's that. The teacher begins on reviewing their last lesson to ensure nobody has any last-minute questions before beginning onto this day's lesson.

The day goes by, with plenty of looks sent his way whenever he's about the halls or with people approaching him for pictures with a side of questions about how he mixed up his Instant Powders or which site he got the mixture instructions from. His answer is some downloaded instructions and just followed them once he had everything set up.

He does have his doubts about the instructions he downloaded and yet, things seem to be working out, if he triples checked the translations from the original text. He'd been on the lookout for an English translated doc, but nothing has yet to release on the web concerning the method. Thus, his own creation of a cheat sheet on how to use the tools and links on pronunciation for the incantations.

His brother kept the car key and so, at the end of the day, he's waiting for his brother at the car. He's had some trouble with his cell and tablets due to his fingers, thus he's been using a stylist to use the pair of devices. Sure, it's clumsy to use one, it's an old one that belong to him for nearly six years now but it's all he possesses at this point that would allow him to make decent enough use of the

pair. He may find it within himself to look for a better one or perhaps he won't, it really depends upon how the stylist holds up these coming weeks.

"Annoyed yet?" Michael inquires in lieu of a simple greeting. Feeling his ears flicker backwards as he stares in what he feels is a deadpan look. It's unknown to him if it looked like it feels, given the lack of cowering or even a hint of a flinch.

"Unlock the car." He states as he moves to the back seat behind the driver's seat. The clicks sound out and he opens the door, carefully getting into the car. Antlers causing him some concerns and yet, so far, it seems that there isn't any damage to the car but it's just the first day.

Give it time, it's just been one, singular day. There's still plenty of time for an incident to occur. He finds it odd the feeling of sitting with a tail to be as interesting as it had been this morning.

The drive home has him considering how he'll get around to having a shower, after all, hooves plus tub isn't all that safe. Ryan isn't sure if the tub grips, he bought and placed in the tub will be that useful. He'd tried to cover his basic needs throughout the month of November but, well, it's one thing to imagine any problems he may have it's another to live them.

Arriving home, he heads straight for his room, after doing his best to get the bottom of his hooves cleaned. Once in his room, he spends the rest of the afternoon doing a portion of his assigned homework. Dinner saw him eating the remainder of the salad he'd had for breakfast. While not having eaten his fill, Ryan returns to his room, only he's doing a bit of research on universities and trying to figure out what career he wants to pursue in his life, after all, he rather not invests a lot of time and money to create a business centred around selling custom Instant Powders.

It'll be a matter of time before someone steps forward to claim the techniques and since I don't have the hard copies, I wouldn't be able

to profit all that much from it anyway. He muses as he finishes closing the search tab, in the end, he's sure that when it gets released, it'll be the talk for a few days so it's likely he'll hear about it in the coming month or at some point in January. The sale of the instruments needed for the technique are also likely a factor into why knowledge of this magical technique hasn't been released to the public, after all, h can see someone wanting to profit as best as they can before people figure out the enchanting methods for the tools.

As he waits for the next song to play on his list, there's an advertisement for Lightning Touched, which is one of the oldest and nearly scandal free online store that deals with magical items. They had once offered magical supplies and arranging for custom magical item but things... well, scandals happened, so yea, they sold off those portions of the business and focused solely on already created magical items that pass the International Safety Standards for Magical Sales.

Returning to dealing with his least easy subject's homework, he picks up where he left off earlier in the day. Listening to music while looking things up to help him make more sense of the topic he's been assigned to write about. He does take a break to use the bathroom, which is rather awkward given he has furry behind along with his hands not being as dexterous as they had been yesterday.

He works it out and returns to his room. Finally, it's nearing his typical bedtime, so, he saves what he has along with bookmarking the links he'd found helpful before turning it off. He'd changed his toothbrush and does find it interesting experience but still, he powers through.

As he lies upon his bed, void of pillows due to his antlers, he realizes that he'll have an interesting time of it tomorrow, when he'll have a shower. After all, he'll need to comb out his coat of fur and he's unsure if the items he bought will be able to fully reach every inch of his back. Ryan's loathed to ask for aid from his younger brother as well, if only to avoid teasing remarks that Michael could think up to use.

Over the course of the Christmas Contest, people dropped out due to various reasons, but mostly ruined costumes or something of their effect not being able to be reapplied. To nobody's surprise, Ryan wins the Contest, having managed to overcome the dietary issues he ran into along with grooming problems that had him dealing with fleas, which got fixed with magical flea shampoo and conditioner he bought in advance on the off chance he might encounter it. With his picture taken with the comical cheque for the Charity they voted on back in September, which was supporting victims of abuse.

Once home, he headed for his room for the amulet and then the bathroom. He was so glad to return to his normal body that caused him to tear up. Vowing to keep such things for short periods of time, at least until he's fully prepared to deal with the whole health issues that could crop up with the body he engineered with Instant Powders and the magical technique that's yet to make the news.

During an experiment, he found that if he didn't hold the amulet, it didn't cause anything to be off with the form he crafted, it just allowed the Instant Form to fade away like normal when he's in contact with warm water. Thus, he didn't see the need to include the amulet in future experimentation unless he had plans to stay in the Instant Form for a few days.

Graduation saw Ryan gearing up for university and doing a bit of part time work before moving out of his parents' home, moving into a dormitory. He kept the Instant Powders and the magical tools in the bottom of an old trunk, not seeing any need for them during his time living in the dormitory nor when attending university, struggling to keep up with the requirements for his chosen career.

**/ Week Since Graduating University **

Looking at his account, he despairs over the fact that his funds will likely be gone before he'd gotten settled into the house he's set to move into next week. Ryan still doesn't have a job lined up; he'd sent out his application to various companies but hasn't heard back from

them. And that's when it strikes him about his old idea about custom Instant Powders, causing him to open a new tab to do a quick search on the subject.

In the intervening years, there still hasn't been a peep over the magical technique he'd downloaded nearly a decade ago. He'd forgotten about the whole thing and yet, now, it seems that it might be a lifeline he needs right now. Looking through the so call science of mixing Instant Powders, there's little relatable progress in creating universal results. Most were on covering over the body to prevent the Instant Powders from touching the non-selected area. It was time consuming to get it done and while the results do look great, it often wasn't something anyone would want to endure repeatedly to achieve the look they want.

Ryan goes through his belongings until he finds the items in question. Since the Instant Powders don't expire unless, of course, they are mixed with water. With that, he is sure that his supply should still be good, even though he hasn't touched them for since he'd graduated high school. Next, he creates a new email address before he begins looking through the various sites to select the most creator friendly one, he signs up for it under the name **Crafting_Chimaeras** . It's also one that allows for the money collected by the site to be redeemed in the form of a Gift Master Card or a Gift Visa Card.

As he waits for the validation code to be sent to the newly created email address, he is setting up a workstation for him to create his first Instant Powder custom form in years. He'll have to think up an interesting look for his Profile Photo as he makes use of Instant Octopus for its skin color and texture ability, he's going for something on the simple side right now, so, Elf but with... a twist to it. He's looking through various drawings of Elves on various art sites to get inspired, and he does is sure that what photos he does end up taking will be of amateur quality.

The kind of an Elf he's bringing to life is one that's sporting mushroom cap growths in place of hair with bright markings that

make use of the Instant Octopus skin colouring effects. Dark orange is the basic colour for the skin tone, shading comes from different kinds of mushrooms which gets used for the arms and legs. Using the ability to pinch the shoulders and hips with vines coming out of the final mushroom cap, draping his back. He then uses Instant Girl to erase male genital from the form, making it sexless.

Then he figures out what he wants to do about the teeth and makes use of Instant Dog to create a mouthful of fangs. He continues to rely upon Instant Octopus to make the inside if the mouth pop. The tongue was more of a last-minute addition after he figured out what shade of red, he wants the eyes to appear in. Long and a vivid green colour, it stands out along with the dark blue he's using for the supposed tattoos. It does take a bit to create a simple loincloth to go with the primitive feel. He'd add a spear but didn't think he'd shape a discarded branch to his liking in a timely fashion.

Once clearing out the living room of any personal effects, Ryan applies the Instant Water and uses the tiny capture button to take pictures from where he set his phone up. It's different body shots along with crouching down with a wide, fanged smile and the following involves his tongue coming out. By the time a good fifty shots had been taken, he prays that some of them should be good enough for him to post.

Applying warm water, he considers whether he should work on a secondary photo session, just with a different subject matter. Like, perhaps, he should do a fully on fusion animal? Still, he is waiting on the code, so he contains himself on reviewing the photos he'd taken. After selecting which he figured will work, he begins doing some browsing for said idea.

As he makes himself some noodles for dinner, Ryan is thinking of a Qilin or Kirin for the second, although he's trying to figure out how to press the button to take the picture. Which means, he might need to select something smaller to ensure he use the tiny remote he owns. *There's Clouded Leopard and I think I got a pouch of Snow Owl...*

That would mean a small gryphon or a simple winged cat. He muses upon reflecting on sight of the living room.

The rest of the day goes by, and he's got the Instant Water for the mixture of Instant Clouded Leopard and Instant Snow Owl. He makes use of more Instant Octopus to help mingle the bird scale like skin with the fur of the feline. Then fusion of feather and coat patterns. The skeleton gave him a bit of trouble given the difference of bone density between the two species, but he works on it with help from fantasy anatomy sites. He leaves it for tomorrow as he wants to get some sleep.

Morning comes and he gets the code, which he then uses right away to validate the account. Next up, he goes through the paid tiers, which does include created videos. Something he'll have to muse over at some point in the future, but for now, Ryan picks Five US Dollars as the lowest tier, given access to two of the photos he'd taken with the Ten US Dollars tier being the highest tier, granting access to all the photos. Once that's settled, he uploads the photos he thinks works and then selects which two will be allowed viewing for that lowest tier, one of the basic frontals and then the one with the fanged smile that he's crouching for.

The rest of the morning has him figuring out the right angles for the gryphon shoot. He uses a prop substitute of the roughly same size as the gryphon. Checking the sensitivity of the button, he rigs up something to ensure that the slightest weight will trigger the button.

Once lunch passes and he'd looked up easy advice for budding photographers, which he then employs concerning the living room arrangement, he then strips naked once he has everything set up and makes use of the Instant Water. Transformed, he goes on to take pictures of himself, aiming for nearly seventy before heading for the bathroom to transform back. And so, he spends the rest of the day looking through the photos and picking which he likes, slowly slimming down the number of photos until he's got about two dozen.

Satisfied, he then checks on his new account, there's a few visitors who did a single donation, got a look before unsubscribing while a few left comments before doing so. A few donated an additional five to upgrade a tier and there's a lot of positive comments on those photos. He's already getting discussed under the New Accounts section, of course, only those who'd paid can see the photos, but it's brought a few people to check over his bare as fucking bones profile.

He uploads the gryphon photos, selecting six this time for the lowest tier and the remainder to the highest tier. He also puts in the Upload Schedule every two weeks with two sets of photos. He doesn't promise any videos, in fact, he might need to invest in finding a studio to shoot at if he's going to try being serious about taking tasteful photos. The fact that he uploaded again causes a stir and he gets a good amount of money from the activity.

Upon the third day is when he redeems the collected money in Gift Master Card form, as he needed money to pay the movers. Sadly, he's yet to hear from anyone concerning getting hired, so, he's already looking for places he could set up a photo studio, he might even hire an illusionist to create interesting and suitable environments. Someone who's studied to ensure their illusions to be a bit more on the solid side so that they can be captured by modern day recording equipment.

Ryan also seems to have set himself up for two kinds of photos, one humanoid and one fully bestial. The next humanoid will likely be something a bit on the larger side, he's dithering between minotaur or centaur while he's pretty much set on a spin on a Chinese Qilin. *Still got to figure out what I want for a Profile Photo as well.*

**/ Ten Years Later **

Reading over the E-Mail for the fifth time within the past thirty minutes, Ryan finds it hard to feel any emotion other than relief, relief he's been let go now that his company is now under new management. He's heard things about Jayden Roads, none of them

flattering and if there's even a kennel of truth within the rumours, then he pities those remaining with the company.

End of the month, huh? That's... about less than three weeks from now. He muses as he checks the calendar on the computer's right bottom corner. Moving on to the next series of E-Mails, he see them but there's little within the next two that were for his job, no, they were acknowledgement of the fact that there's going to be changes going on within the company. Mentions that the letters were going to be done being sent out by the end of the tomorrow's workday.

There's no personal E-Mail addressing him in any fashion after those two, nope, it's just the typical inquiries about projects' progress. It takes him a few tries to type out replies to said inquires, he'd had to edit his answers without implying that news about his firing. It's a bit hard, given it's in the forethought of his mind since he got around to reading that E-Mail a second time.

He just knows that he'll be distracted until he gets around to telling someone about his coming being let go from this company. Not that Ryan fears for his bank account, not when it's not like he's married nor even dating anyone at this point. He still arranges for a pair of photo sessions for posting under his account **Crafting_Chimaeras** and receiving money for the various tiers.

Sure, he does pay an Illusionist for enchanting the rooms to look the way he envisions but it's not like they meet up face to face. He'd gone through five in that first year of him posting those photos under that account and then two in the second before getting into contact with this current Illusionist, the name on the business card hadn't changed since they started up their business relationship, Mystery ReFlex. He'd thought it a typo at first but, after knowing the person behind the name for over seven years, guesses that even if it was, they either can't alter the title due to that's just how they are known by or they had bought so many business cards with it that it would be a loss to get the name corrected.

Letting out a sigh as he sends the final reply to a different department's inquiry, Ryan decides now is as good a time to go get a refill on his drink. Closing things and getting his computer to go into Sleep, he gets up out of his chair with the intent to walk out of his assigned work area. It's as he's walking out that Gerald Jardon, the gossip of the building and someone who didn't have a valid reason to be on this floor.

"Ryan! How's things going? Got any interesting news?" Jardon asks as the other falls into step with him as he is on his way to the nearest Staff Kitchen.

"Interesting news? Is there something going on with the project that I haven't been told about?" He deflects, sure, he wants to mention his firing but not to Jardon, who mind just exaggerate anything he might say about it.

"About if you're still got a job next month." Jardon states with a clear roll of his eyes. Ryan has his reasons for being cold with him and even now, he rather not associates with the man nor with his 'best bud' Jack Nickles, who works in HR.

Recalling Nickles, he suspects that Jardon is here more to get confirmation then anything. It's clear that Jardon knows, not that Ryan is sure if any complains over the breach of personal information will likely amount to anything. He's sure that there's been a few official complaints filed before concerning Nickles lack of care over what comes out of his mouth when he's with Jardon. Nothing seems to come from it, well, perhaps the odd slap on the wrist.

True enough, Jardon can't seem to contain himself, saying, "Well... perhaps it'll come this afternoon." As they reach the elevator, they find Albert Minds and Vicky MacDonald waiting, they clearly quiet down before they reached them.

"So... Anyone got anything to share?" Jardon asks with a predatory grin as he looks at MacDonald, who looks away with Minds giving Jardon a scowling look. Not that Jardon seems to care about Minds.

"Aren't you on the wrong floor?" Minds pipes up just as the elevator arrives. The doors rattle open with MacDonald stepping before the doors.

"I'm just ensuring that people doing ok, given the announcements that got sent out." Jardon states with faux innocence. He doesn't spare him a look as he gets in after Minds, who after a few seconds of glaring at the smug looking Jardon enters.

"I'm sure you are so concerned." Bites Minds with oozing sarcasm upon saying the word so. "It's not like you've got anything to worry about, given your good buddy Nickles."

Jardon holds the doors open as they were closing, not really entering as Jardon seems content to study Minds before looking first at MacDonald and then at Ryan himself. "Well, at least there's pair who can support one another due to similar circumstances. Just be sure to keep out of storage closets."

The hands move out of the way of the doors, and they take time to close. MacDonald lets out a sigh while Minds gives him a pitying look. He remarks, "At least we'll be away before Jayden Roads really begins his reign within the company."

"Ah." Minds winces while MacDonald seems to startle a bit. "Wait, that's who's joining the company? Jayden Roads?"

"Yea, he is." Ryan confirms and it seems that MacDonald leans back in relief. "Oh gods, this is great! Sorry, Al, but, if he's the one who's taking over then I'm so glad I've been let go!" She says to Minds, the two work on the same project up until a year ago, when MacDonald got moved to his department.

"Jayden Roads... As in... That Jayden Roads? Mister I-Am-God-of-This-Company-Now Roads?" Minds asks and he nods. "I'm... putting in my resignation by the end of the day." Minds states in a matter-of-fact tone and he doesn't blame Minds, it's likely that the next round

of firings will happen in three months, that is, if the man keeps to his usual course of action when being handed a company.

"Might run into trouble with that, given there's likely going to be a flood of resignations being sent when news circulates around about who's to be the next CEO." He remarks and Minds pulls out his cell phone, saying, "Right, might as well start it as soon as possible."

MacDonald sends him a smile that's sporting dry bemusement, which he shrugs. "So, you got the axe as well?" She asks and he sighs, leaning on the side of the elevator. "Yea, I did, not that I'm overly complaining when I saw whose name was written in as the future CEO."

"Hard to believe, you've been here for over nine years." MacDonald states and he shrugs. "Things change over time, it used to be a good place to work, for about two years, things just... started going downhill afterwards, when the company went public and got a Board of Investors."

"Only been here for four years and I thought things were going to get better when news that the current CEO is retiring." Minds remarks in a distracted manner. "I mean, what was the point of the survey we did four months back?"

The elevator comes to a stop and with a ding, the doors begin to rattle open. Ryan exits first with Minds following, all the while pressing the tiny keyboard of his cell phone. MacDonald is the last one out and it's clear that the first round of fires might number a bit more then Jayden Roads is known for, given the number of agitated employees milling about the five tables and about the counters.

Soft conversations being a background murmur as he makes his way to the fridge to grab one of the bottled waters that are typical for the company to supply. It's not long before the name of Jayden Roads spreads throughout the room and it seems like the mood shifts into something more lighthearted. It seems that few ever focus

pass the news of their firing to see what else got released in that letter.

A few of those who'd come to support those who'd been fired are now following Minds idea and beginning to write out their resignation. A few people share articles to those uniformed about who Jayden Roads is and what his usual MO as a company's new CEO is, along with what kind of state the various companies end up as under the man's leadership.

This is going to be the man's eighth time as a company's CEO, the man left his previous post about ten months ago. "He really gets around the business world, huh?" He hears someone comment while a retirement speech is running near him.

As he finishes the bottle of water, he grabs another before leaving with the latest group leaving the Staff Kitchen. Moving out of the way for an incoming wave of employees as he decides to take the stairs instead of the elevator, after all, he could use the exercise.

**/ First Day of Unemployed **

He wakes about ten minutes after when his alarm would have gone off. Letting out a soft sigh, he rolls to the side of his bed before sitting up, his legs over the edge of the bed. Realizing where the water bottle is, he leans back to snatch it from the other end table, pressing the button, he takes in a mouthful. He swishes it about within his mouth as he slowly swallows the water.

Getting up off the bed, he takes the bottle with him to the dresser. Placing it on top, he goes through the dresser drawers for something to wear. Once he's decent enough, he recalls picking up the bottle as he heads out of the room. Heading for the kitchen, where he refills the bottle with water from the fridge, he notices the road before his apartment, particularly at his car.

He's not sure what to do with himself today, yesterday had been his final day and there's also the lack of him needing to set up a photo

session as that's happening next week. Which is how his game console gets noticed by him, which is next to the large flat screen tv. He can't recall the last time he's made use of it.

With toast eaten, he wanders over with a glass of apple juice. Putting it on the coffee table, he turns on the tv and the game console. And so, for the morning of his first day of being unemployed, he plays Rafts of Clouds III. Lunch rolls around and then passes, it's around two pm that he pauses the game to attend to bio needs.

The afternoon is more Rafts of Clouds III and he stops near eight pm, which is when he decides to watch some streaming show. The day is rather uneventful, and Ryan still finds it hard to know what to do with himself, but he's sure that he'll get use to this. For now, he'll wait before altering his photo sessions from a biweekly basis to a weekly one.

After all, he might decide to try and get a new job before the new month is over and done. Deciding not to rely upon his savings, investments, and money tiers from his account. *Might also need to see if Mystery Reflex is able to modify their schedule to accommodate a weekly schedule.* Ryan reflects as he turns off his tv and gets ready to have a shower.

**/ Four Months Later **

With everything ready to go, he enters the rental pool. His body alters and he swims about, getting use to the changes as he waits for the signal to go off. The crimson light flows into a green one and thus, he tenses his body before exploding from the pool onto one of the few set pieces of the room.

Shaking his head, allowing his frill to open, the side first and then the top one. It's an odd sensation of moving things upon his head and sides, that lead all the way down to his shoulder and lower back. Flicking a more serpentine tail then fish first to the right and then to the left as he looks around.

Hoping that his acting is decent, after all, this is the first time he's done a live stream, never mind recording a video. Pulling himself more into the air while having his tail encircle under him, Ryan does his best to come across as relaxing as he begins to take deep breaths.

When another light flows into a green one, signalling it's been five minutes since he exited out of the pool, he takes one deep breath before opening his mouth. And a lowish note comes out and he holds that note for a few beats before he begins to have his voice slowly rise in note, getting use to the various notes. It had been tricky, training himself to recognized the various musical notes for this. It had taken three months of planning for this and he didn't really have a song in mind, deciding to just... wing it.

And as he finishes going over the musical scales, he takes a moment to take a refreshing breath before going beginning to sing out his emotions, feeling out which notes express his emotions at this moment, which are nervousness along with caution and as this continues to go on, he feels more comfortable and the notes, he hopes, reflects that.

As the signal that it's been nearly fifteen minutes of this segment, his notes begin to lower until he becomes silent. He makes it obvious that he's looking off at some far-off point that's where's the next signal light is. Uncoiling his tail as his body begins to lower down upon the fake rock, his frill slowly coming close to his body.

As the light changes into a green one, Ryan lets out a loud, angry screech before seemingly bolting into the pool.

As he swims around, his eyes keep looking at the signal light, waiting for it to turn red. When it does, he relaxes and moves to the surface. He checks each of the signal lights and finds they are red. Letting out a sigh, he lets himself fall back into the pool and spends a bit of time just enjoying floating about the pool's surface.

Feeling relieved that this live stream is over but also dreading the kind of comments in the chat. The thought of how badly he'd messed up concerning his singing along with his acting. Sure, he's posed for photos but he's always had a series of them to pick through for those he decided is best.

This live steam is raw and for all that he's done his best to prepare himself by creating a script of a sort. The signal lights were easier for him to see and had been set to various timers that were connected to the live stream. He's not sure he'll do another, after all, this whole thing turned out to be rather nerve wrecking.

And so, he gets out of the pool. Sliding over the tarp that's covering the floor, it's hardly the first time he's been legless, this being his eighth in fact. As he arrives at the pail of warm water, it had been rather hot when he poured the water into it, he curls up to ensure that majority of his body will get hit with the water.

For all that's he's prepared for the sudden change, he still almost ends up falling upon his butt. Getting something on, mostly just to cover his lower body, he begins to clean up the water that's pooling around where he's standing. Flickering on the switch to begin emptying the rental pool, he begins wiping down the rock prop that he'd been resting on for the stream.

As he collects the various lights, the three microphone he'd placed about the room, the motion sensor that's above the light he had placed in the pool, and the camera that had recorded it all. As he does so, he muses over the various animals he had used to create his version of a Siren. Most of the items were ones he'd rented and thus, he's careful about putting them back in the bamboo plastic tubs along with the thick packing cloths.

Due to the location of Jusenkyo, there's no large aquatic mammals like dolphin or whale, thus, the vocal cords he'd used were birds. There's no particular song bird he'd used. The three-point frill came from cobra. Given he was going to use cobra for the frill, didn't see the need to waste more of it so used it for the tail along with scales

about the body plus thin pointy teeth. Colouring of the body and scales, he'd used the trusty octopus.

As he finishes up what he could, leaving the tarp and the rental pool alone as the owners will collect both. The fake rock was put in the closet, after he taken the stand apart. Checking through the various tubs, rechecking that everything is in the correct tubs, he then puts the lids on and using the combo locks to secure them for their owner.

And so, Ryan walks over to the laptop. Opening the lid, it wakes from the sleep mode and he sends the messages to the owner of the pool and the other equipment he'd used. With them sent, he ignores the Mail app to go to the site that he'd used to live stream.

He watches the recording, which is about twenty minutes long. Embarrassment is the primary feeling as Ryan watches it. Listening to his singing, he is a bit surprised at the pitching but assumes it might be due to using three microphones as they had been located at different distances. The point where the him on the video lets out a loud screech, he winces at the volume, he hadn't expected it to be so high pitched.

And with it coming to an end, Ryan looks at the various comments posted before going through chat history. There are comments over his choice of colouring along with design when it comes to his designing of the Siren form. Such things aren't anything new for him and likely this won't be the last comments he'll get about his design choices, although most are likely bitter about the lack of information concerning his method of creating such forms.

Even after so many years of him uploading photos and now a live stream, it seems that whoever was the one to upload that manual onto the internet hasn't seen fit to release it digitally. It baffles him at times as to why they would do so in the first place if they didn't wish to benefit from doing so by getting renown or monetary profit. He had entertained the idea of releasing the original along with his translation but didn't know if that would draw a series of lawsuits to his door or not.

It's an old matter that he refuses to dwell upon. He has backup copies of the original upon memory drives along with printed out in a binder. That includes his first translation along with his latest personal notes. He isn't sure if the owner of the manual and the uploader were one in the same, never mind if they might have the aptitude for magic.

As he rewinds the video, Ryan's mind is on something else. Wondering if he shouldn't have done another skit or perhaps just done a Q live stream instead. Either way, it won't reverse what he'd done today and he won't be going ahead with any other streams, at least, not without doing a few practice filming, like, five.

**/ Eight Months Later **

The ring tune is from his second cell, which is a pay as you go one. The number is unknown, which isn't that surprising, given that the only number registered is for Mystery Reflex. *Could it be another wrong number?*

As he touches the correct icon that's on the face of the cell before selecting Speaker. "Hello?" Ryan fully puts down his controller. "This is Crafting Chimaeras."

"Hello, this is Mr. Liberte and I represent Zeed's Vocals." The man says and it takes him a full minute to recognize the name Zeed's Vocals, the lead singer's name is Hermonie Starks. The reason he is familiar with the name has to do with what happened three months back, that some overzealous fan/stalker had got upset over some overreaching offer that got rejected and thus the person went about placing a Curse upon the singer. The details of the Curse weren't released to the public and the news did fall to the waist side after two months.

"This is the man behind Crafting Chimeras I presume?" Mr. Liberte inquires after a period of silence as he mentally argues with himself over whether this is a prank or not. After all, he doesn't see why

anyone in the music industry would want to get in contact with someone like him.

"Yes?" He then makes a throaty cough before speaking once more, "Yes, this is the account holder of Crafting Chimaeras." He can't find it in him to fully trust this whole situation.

"According to your account profile, you claim to be the one doing your own mixing for Instant Powders." Mr. Liberte states. "So, I would assume you are more than just the account holder."

"Ah, that is true." He admits, it's been a very long time since he had to deal with his profile information, given he pretty much kept it short and simple the first time around. "You are aware of how hard it is to believe that someone related to Zeed's Vocals would be interested in contacting someone who's does what I've been doing with the account."

"I can see how you might find this rather hard to believe." Mr. Liberte admits and then after a few seconds, the man inquires, "In order to get a hold of this number, we did seek out and speak with the person behind Mystery Reflex."

That explains where they got this number. Ryan admits to himself. "I see." From the few times they spoke with one another, Mystery Reflex had sounded to be a woman but he couldn't be sure, given the other's job, thus it's not that hard to imagine to them using misdirection to get misgendered to protect their identity.

"I still find this to be... hard to swallow as it were, that you would seek to speak with me, given that there's plenty of... more impressive talents in the world." He states, still not sure what makes him someone they'd want to reach out to. *Heck, I'd understand them wanting Mystery Reflex's input on magic then myself.*

"We have spoken with various experts from the various branches of the occult study." Mr. Liberte agrees. "All the results of the studies and attempts didn't work out."

The dead way that was spoken, causes him to wonder over the results had been. "It seems as though I'm missing a key bit of information." He tells the man on the other side of the phone call.

"We take it that you are not willing to share your method of mixing Instant Powders? For any price?" Mr. Liberte asks.

"To be honestly, I don't own the hard copy of the method nor do I know how to get a hold of the one with it." He admits. "It was by chance that I download it before it was deleted for whatever reason the uploader had to remove it."

"And you don't recall the handle of the uploader... Nor the country of origin, yes, I can see why you would be cautious." Mr. Liberte sounds thoughtful and he admits that's true, given his previous studies along with what his old job had been, magical legality is something he's wary of and isn't sure he wants to spend the money to figure out where he stands, legally, when it comes to possessing the magical text that he is sure falls under Alchemy given the subject that the text addresses.

"It might be best for you to get into contact with a lawyer on your end." The implication is that they seem to be incline to do the same. Which Ryan couldn't help but sigh at the fact that this issue is likely going to be troublesome.

"Is this number temporary?" He asks after thinking about it for a few minutes. "This number will be valid for the next four months."

"I see. Ok, so I'll make an appointment and after having the meeting, I'll phone this number concerning my options to render aid viva said method." Soon enough, their farewells to one another are given and then he pulls the cell away, the other party is the one who put it an end to the call.

"Great... Just... Great." He murmurs as he swipes the app away. Putting the cell down, he rubs his face for a bit.

**/ Three Weeks Later **

He'd been nervous, as he had decided to assume his profile appear for this whole thing. Which involves him deciding to travel to the airport viva bus but few people really seem incline to treat him different. Then a local wearing an illusion gets on the bus and he's reminded that, yea, it's not that unusual to see someone looking so fanciful as his current appearance. With that reminder, Ryan had relaxed and feels like a weight had been lifted from himself.

The trip is uneventful, then again, given the plane is a private one, it was more than likely was always going to be. There hadn't been much for his lawyer and himself to discuss, a mere review seemed to be in order. Once done, they were left to their own devices for the rest of the trip.

Arriving at Glacier Park International Airport, it's some miles from their actual destination, which is Whitefish. Even now, Whitefish remains to be a small city within Montana, it's still a tourist hub. As they enter the airport building proper, they are greeted with Mr. Liberte along with a pair of private security personal. Ms. Welder is the one to do most of the talking when the polite greetings are done, leaving the lawyers to converse, Ryan takes in the airport's hustle and bustle.

With what chit chat comes to an end, they head to retrieve their luggage. Following Mr. Liberte to a trio of cars, his lawyer and himself are directed to the middle car while Mr. Liberte heads for the final car with the pair of security personal split between the two. Once within the car and put the seat belts on, he wonders if the security detail is a little overboard, after all, they have the caster in custody, right?

"You know that you might encounter warm water during this trip?" Ms. Welder inquires and he inclines his head. "You don't seem to have a flask on your person." She gently points out and he blinks before realizing what she's implying.

"My method means that there's a special condition for my reversal." He explains. "It's... something that could be exploited."

The expression of Ms. Welder seems to get the dawning realization at what he's implying. There's nothing more said between them and he's glad he left the amulet back home. After all, he doubts it would work while he's in this form, plus, he already knew, the amulet isn't needed to use the custom Instant Water, it just keeps the form from reversing before the wearer wishes for the transformation to be reversed.

**/ The Next Morning **

He's sitting across from Ms. Starks while their respective lawyers discuss the contract that would also have an NDA if this fails. Which makes sense, given his position as a popular media figure in certain circles and Hermione Starks' clear presence in the music industry. The details of the curse is the reason for the NDA portion of this contract, which likely could be used against her by her more extreme fans.

They've arrived at eight thirty am and got into meeting with the musician at nine am. The high collar covers her neck while there's what appears to be fur sticking out from the long sleeve, covering a small portion of her hand. The pair of glasses upon her face are likely enchanted to hide something to do with her eyes.

He notices that they've been at it for nearly forty minutes and Ryan feels like a lump of rock throughout this whole conversation. It causes him to wonder why they didn't already have a general contract for this situation, given it's been almost nine months since the curse was put on Ms. Starks.

Mr. Liberte glances at his client during a longer period of silence. "Perhaps a break is in order." He suggests and Ms. Welder agrees after glancing at him. "Acceptable."

As the pair of lawyers get up, he hurries to do the same while Ms. Starks does so slowly and with dignity. The two pairs of them do leave the room and then take off in different directions once they come arrive at a fork in the hall, with them heading for the front while the musician and her agent head off, likely to the restaurant. His lawyer, Ms. Welder, leads them outside viva the front doors.

"Is it going well?" He asks, feeling a bit awkward over the silence after nearly a minute of them stopping near a bench. His lawyer gives him a glance before sighing.

Looking away, she seems to be thinking over something. "Well, it seems that they don't expect anything to come from your... technique." Ms. Welder states slowly.

"Do you think it could solve this problem?" Ryan asks after a few seconds of considering what she said. He's no expert after all, he pretty much stopped looking into the subject or products besides those involving Instant Powders, which hasn't really seen much development in decades.

"Well... from what I've gathered through my contacts... Nobody has found an Alchemy technique that could affect Instant Powders." Ryan nods, after all, this technique involves the appearance of a Homunculus, which does fall under Alchemy as creating one, while illegal in most parts of the world, wouldn't be something anyone would think could do more than alter the appearance of Homunculus.

"It must be a rare technique." Ms. Welder muses. "Which branch of Alchemy does it use? I don't think I've asked that in our previous conversations."

"Branch? Huh, I... To be honest, I can't say as it's all very confusing as I can't seem to get what they mean by branches..." He admits. "I mean, Decomposing is a branch or is it a process? Never mind how it's been set up in various shows, I mean, there was how many Japanese anime and manga with that as a premise back in the Twenty-First Century? Even in the late Twentieth Century..."

"It's rather confusing and branch is more of a modern term for what subject an Alchemist is focus on." Ms. Welder remarks. "Metal transmutation is a classic 'branch' of Alchemy along with creating life, which is what Homunculus fall under."

"I do seem to recall seeing a picture of a tiny green lamb in a school text once." Ryan muses. "As for the technique, it might fall under the subject of transmutation, given how it alters the body from one form to another, even if the medium is Instant Powders."

"And yet, that's not the purpose of Alchemy's transmutation." Ms. Welder remarks and he nods before going on to say, "Yea, but at the same time, what horror pictures I've seen of Homunculus."

There's not much to discuss concerning the subject of Homunculi and the subject changes into repeating previously covered points. Reminders of their strategy when it comes to negotiations and their own counter conditions. By the time the break hour comes to an end, they were each upon their respective phones.

**/ Three Days Later **

As he waits for the aid to open the package up, Ryan is doing his best to keep from fidgeting with his various tools that's waiting upon a silk napkin after having been thoroughly cleaned by hand by himself under the supervision of the head chief. The pan had been a bit harder to clean, given they wanted him to get the pan out of the clay block he'd baked it in when this all started.

They couldn't get it out and so, he just wiped it down after it's been reported to Mr. Liberte, who came to give it a look before agreeing that a simple wipe should work. True, there was a bit of dubious glances at the fused pan block but the man did leave him to the work with the head chief of the restaurant, who's kitchen sinks he's using to do so. The woman, one Mrs Gunn, is the one who carried the tray of drying tools plus the pan block into said room before she sets them upon the silk napkin that was upon the table.

There are no cameras pointed his way, as agreed, so he'll be able to work his 'magic' without worrying anyone would attempt to mimic it. If it works in breaking the Curse, then he will likely find himself getting recorded viva this impromptu stream, which is going to be a Live Stream. *Like I need the pressure and why? Why did we agree to them streaming this Live?*

"Here." Ms. Welder approaches with a pitcher of water that's been finish getting scrutinized by the three magic users to ensure that the pitch and the water haven't been tampered with before being given to him. "Thanks." He says as he pours the water into the pan block.

With that, he sets it to the side while ignoring the feeling of the eyes upon him. Just because he's not getting recorded didn't mean that there weren't going to be people watching him go through with his technique. It's a unique experience, one he doesn't wish to replicate, even though he's yet to perform his agreed upon part of this whole thing.

The man seems to review the list of which Instant Powders to put upon the tray, as if not sure if he seriously needs what's listed. Which is kind of fair, given that octopus isn't a popular Instant Powder and yet, it's something of a base Instant Powder when it comes to skin colour and texture. It's a good bridge when it comes to fusing different skin/fur/feather/hide/scales of species together.

Other than the form being neither man or woman, he's given freedom when it comes to it. The primary requirement of being neither gender isn't alien to Ryan, after all, his custom forms are generally genderless. Which had left him figuring out the rest as there's little to go from there but he also refuses to just copout and go with an Elf or something that's too like a human in appearance. He also wishes to ensure that the voice will sound spectacular, given Ms. Starks is likely going to be asked to sing for those watching.

Soon the Instant Powders and brought over along with small bowls. Each of the bowls are silver, something to do with magical poison reveal. He assumes. The packets are unopen as he checks them,

having check a third time, he singles out the woman one and opens it, pouring the Instant Powder right into the pan block. As he fills his second silver bowl with water, there's a slight hiss and Ryan feels someone at his back, looking over his shoulder.

A glance reveals that it's one of the three magic users and looking down at the pan block, doesn't see anything unusual. "Please don't stand at my back. You can stand to the side but I rather not have you directly behind me." He says as politely as he could while the breaded guy grunts after a few seconds, stepping to his left while the other two seem to have come near the table viva his right, their own eyes upon the image of a woman that's near the pan block.

Taking a slight breath, he fills two more of the silver bowls before going through the packets once more. With the right Instant Powder, he needs for the next step, he opens it a touch before putting it in the least filled silver bowl. Setting the open packet in one of the unfilled silver bowls to keep the contents from coming out, he reaches for the right magical tool from the silk napkin.

The words come out casually as he gently adds the opposite gender water near the crouch area. The internal display regarding the right parts shrinks until they are gone. The muscles also change to erase the usual opening that women have down there. The image flips through the various layers of a body, the skeleton, muscles, blood vessels, organs, and skin.

There's no more water in the silver bowl, so he sets it to the side, doing his best to ignore the exchange of looks from those that are watching him. Pulling one of the clean waters, he begins to go through the packets before settling upon one of the birds. Doing his best to ignore the magic users about the table along with the aid who'd opened the package, he alters the lungs, throat, and larynx using the same magical tool plus the water. Then, he sets down said magical tool for the one meant to enlarge what has been shrunk due to the size of the bird he had used.

Slowly, he works through the packets, pitcher of water, and the silver bowls. Someone does take the used ones to clean before returning them as he works on combining feathers and scales. With them situated in the locations he thinks works, goes for the Instant Octopus and begins to alter the bare skin into what he's decided would be the basic colour. Then he begins on evening the edges about the two areas, making a boarding transitioning area.

Feathers and transforming a few into down to simulate hair, scales being used to come across as gemstones that's been embedded into the skin, which had him using a pair of different magical tools. Pitching the skin in the same location as this one prominent scar that's upon Ms. Starks' back, in doing so it gives an illusion of a scar tissue. Sure, the scar likely won't be noticed, but he thought it suited giving the illusion of character, that this form has been lived in. The ears change not just shape but location, which means he alters the ear channel, which alters the skull and the brain within to accommodate the changes in location.

It takes a few minutes to slowly alter the skull which alters the face. Sure, he goes back to make adjustments but with the head a bit more... non-human in dimension, which mean has him working on the teeth next, Ryan considers making them all fangs or going a bit flatter than he generally prefers. Given he's going to be adding antlers, he could go that route, hoping to have the canines popping out without needing to go for a predator's teeth.

The are tiny antlers buds that he arranges like one would reptilian spines or spikes, with them starting along the forehead and stopping just after the ears, which is among the mess of down and feathers. Pouring more Instant Octopus, he begins to alter the skin covering the antler buds. Then he studies as he wonders if he shouldn't do more but decides that the colour is popping rather well and in the pattern that looks like it's been painted on.

With the remainder of this dose of water, he alters the colour of the down to an off white from its messy mixture of the feather colours. The antler buds and feathers are a good contrast to what he just did.

Next, he considers the lower body, which is still human, well, besides the colouring of the skin. Studying the toe nails, he checks the finger nails and hums, since he still has some Instant Deer, he using it to blacken the two sets of nails.

Then, he begins to add more water into the bowl and then a bit more Instant Deer as he decides to go a digitigrade with four thick toes.

Altering the potions of the bones of the leg plus feet and lastly the pelvis, adding Instant Deer when he thinks fusion of some bones or altering the shape would serve it well. As he finishes with the shape of the toes and legs, he moves onto something else. Infusing the leg hair with Instant Deer help thicken and provide a uniform appearance, which includes colour, but he knows how to fix that. Studying the feathers upon the head as he mixes up more Instant Octopus to begin altering the colouring of the fur that's below what's the 'knee' of the legs to the toes. It's tricky but it being a bit more earthy in tone compared to the feathers wasn't that bad of a contrast.

"Lunch!" And he jerks his head to look at the aid who just entered with a trolly that's got dishes upon them. It appears that there's a few of them waiting to be rolled into the room.

His gaze goes to the clock that's upon the wall and realizes that the morning has flown by. And so, he studies what he has created with Instant Powders and finds it rather decent, given it had been down without any real planning beforehand. *I could have added scales about the thigh plus doing some 'painting' on them but I doubt anyone is going to be focusing upon her legs.*

Looking about the room, those that had been in the room clearly wondering where the time went as they had clearly been watching him work his 'magic' with the pan block, magical tools, and Instant Powders. The three magic users seem to watch to reach out and touch something, likely his magical tools but reframe from doing so. Taking a step back, he notices a few things about his condition and so, excuses himself to hurry off to deal with more urgent one.

Upon returning, there's more people in the room, which include Mr. Liberte and Ms. Starks. Those who were new additions within the room seem to keep glancing at the image that's featured over the pan block. What conversations that are going on circle around what he'd done and their various reactions that seem to range from awe to fake begrudging respect or trying to dismiss the idea that will look as advertised. Collecting a plate, he joins Ms. Welder, who seems to be deep in thought as she doesn't react much to his presence.

It's likely understandable, after all, the three magic users also seem deep in their own thoughts, although their gaze would seem to be pulled towards the pan block. After a few bites, he drinks from his soda can once he opens it. As he finishes, he feels a bit tired but that's to be expected, given how focus he'd been since little after seven am until eleven fortyish. He'd been standing before that table for near five whole hours, that's including him waiting for the packets and bowls to be placed upon the table so he can start.

"You truly make Chimaeras, don't you?" Ms. Welder muses and it takes him a second to realize she's addressing him, that she's aware of his presence next to her. "Well, yea, I ultimately do. Given I'm using more than two Instant Powders and that's what a Chimaera is, a combo of more than two animals or beings."

Ryan knows that very few people ever believed him when he lists the Instant Powders he's used on various form when it uploads the photos. Given how the usual traits are not evident, people tend to take that as him lying. He suspects that the people who just watched him work, they likely changed their minds and, depending on their own NDAs, might post this witnessed event on the various forums and various sites.

As the food gets finished, the conversations change tone as it seems people seem that this will break the Curse. Ryan finds it hard to try stay pessimistic over whether it'll work but, admits that, well, it just might work? After all, having looked up the subject of altering looks of Homunculi as it kept bugging him, he admits that nobody likely

expects such failed techniques could work to design an Instant Form.

As the various dirty plates get collected, Ryan watches as Ms. Starks and Mr. Liberte approach the table with one of the aids that hadn't been within the room during the morning. The bearded magic user approaches the pair, likely to get a few words in, well, he assumes that's why he's approaching the pair. A scanning of the room, he notices that the woman sporting dyed white with red tips is on her phone near the fire exit while the other man, who's got a tribal tattoo of black and red above his left eyebrow is center of a group of people listening to whatever story he is telling, he's assuming given the gestures of the hand and the changes in how the man holds himself.

With ten minutes to one pm is when someone claps their hands to get the rooms attention. Ryan lowers his phone after pausing the game he'd been playing to pay attention to what's being said, which is likely in relations with the Live Stream, which is to happen in a few minutes. It's mostly just reminding them to not walk before the various cameras along with how to activate spell upon the various wooden bracelets that will ensure any noise they make will be lowered by a certain degree, not that he has one nor is it likely he's going to be given one as he's not expected to be moving about a heck of a lot now that his job with the Instant Water is done.

As for him making an appearance on the Live Stream, it's not certain as there's little planned besides the short Q and the very public splashing with the Instant Water, which should cause a transformation. If everything goes well, Ms. Starks will sing one of her older songs before going on to sing a few requests from the chat. The Curse activates whenever she sung or had experienced her usual monthly visitor. The details of the Curse weren't given to him, just simple points, namely, singing causes the Curse to 'grow' and even if she were to quit, it wouldn't stop the advancement of the Curse, something about it being locked upon her gender, which is

where they had insisted that he make use of both genders when creating the Instant Form.

Soon, tables and chairs are being moved either out or to the wall. Chairs being stackable makes that easy while the tables are just pushed to the side, with a few being flipped over before settling upon another table. A few potted plants and such get placed where the padded chairs are to give it a homely feel. The space is getting a few things moved around as the camera people give suggestions along with them typing away at their respective laptops.

The breaded magic user is the one who pours the Instant Water from the pan block to a pail. The other two keep to the man's side and he approaches the table to begin putting his belongs away, after giving them a wipe with the silk napkin. Putting the items into the traveling tub as people are settling upon the chairs. With a quick snap, the lid is clipped into place. The silver bowls plus the open packets are left upon the table as he hauls the tub to the door where Ms. Welder is standing, taking a few steps away, the magical lawyer sets up the ward to ensure that the tub is secure and protected from thief and tampering physically or magically. Or is the magic used was on a greater scale that Ms. Welder will be alerted to the tampering with the tub.

The speakers that were set up, play a soothing background music as the Live Stream goes Online. The previously bulky cloths worn by Hermonie Starks have been shed to a simple two-piece bathing suit with a trendy trench coat with short sleeves gives a good look at what kind of changes the Curse had cause to the singer's body. Uneven portions of the singer's body sport fur of varying lengths with a collar of fur about the location of the larynx. Eyes looks just as uneven with one sporting a more human looking one with the eye colour being the hint of something being wrong while the other is more like that of an animal, only sporting her original eye colour.

It's clear that the Curse was meant to be cruel just by looking at how the changes were happening to Hermonie Starks' body and he suspects that the unseen changes likely had to do with her mind. He

wonders about how the other members of Zeed's Vocals are dealing with this series of events. If any of them feel frustrated at the fact that they couldn't do anything to aid Hermonie Starks with this Curse.

He doesn't fully pay any attention to the Q as he can listen to it later. A few people come into the room while others walk out. Ryan can only guess as to what business those people had within the room, given that this isn't a staff room nor was there much for people within the room besides the Live Stream and anything related to it, there's a slight shine to around the trio of magic users that means that there's a shield over the three, likely to ensure the safety of the pail holding the Instant Water. That there's another pail of water not that far from the Q session only makes sense, given that they would need warm water to reverse the effects of his modified Instant Water.

A touch over twenty minutes and it's then that they call an end to the Q for deploying the Cure to the Curse for all to witness. Which is the signal for the breaded man to approach with the pail, which is handed to a standing Hermonie Starks who is sure to thank him loud enough for the cameras and microphones to catch. She then ensures she's facing the cameras with the pain first at her chest and then, she dumps the Instant Water upon herself and she is transforms into much fleshier version of the illusion that had been hovering over the pan block.

"As you can see, I have been transformed! Now then," Hermonie Starks is clearly doing her best to get use to her new voice as she does talk for a bit, there's a few throaty grunts throughout along with the voice moving through different pitches, likely the musical scale, at least, he assumes some of them were. She even moves carefully upon her altered legs but she seems to getting use to it within a few minutes but doesn't feel comfortable siting back down upon reaching the chair. Which is likely a good idea, given the digitigrade nature of the lower body and how unfamiliar she is with dealing with anatomy.

"Let's begin, shall we? I think it's time to do what you are all hoping for, right? A performance from yours truly, right?" Hermonie Starks states and he assumes that the chat is in total agreement, and thus,

she lets loose a musical note, not unlike what he had released back in his own Live Stream.

It, of course, changes but the reaction of the pure note is clear as day upon those who's part of getting recorded viva the Live Stream. The lyrics are one of the songs that Hermonie Starks had recorded on a solo video. The lead singer of Zeed's Vocals begins to put her whole body into the performance, her movements are quick to become confident, after all, the basic bone structure is still human like. The song, of course, has its unusual highs but Hermonie Starks is a professional and makes the best of those odd pitches.

The next song is currently in the process of being voted upon which they stretch on to a good three minutes, with Hermonie Starks doing a few quotes for the audience to keep them entertained. He notices that she's clearly using the silly voices to get a better idea how quickly she can switch pitches along with what her new vocal range is. He does get a few glances from Hermonie Starks before she goes on to sing the next song, which she is sure to use her new range to give an unusual performance for the song.

Third song has Hermonie Starks a touch more comfortable with her new larynx along with lung capacity. It's clear by the fifth song, she, and the audience, want a musical challenge to really put this Instant Form for a decent test. Which has some rather odd song that's opera like that's now being played, it's from some old nineteen-nineties movie called Fifth Element. It seems that it's enough of a challenge for Hermonie Starks given the almost predatory smile, that includes showing off her teeth, which does indeed cause the canines to pop.

A few seconds and the background of the song begins. It's a clear flat attempt at singing the song but, in his humble opinion, she seems to enjoy her attempt, for all that she likely hadn't gotten the beats correct among what other flaws there most likely are. "Well, I hope that proves that is my first-time hearing and trying to sing that song!" Hermonie Starks addresses the cameral. "It's an interesting one, I think I'll have to give it another go, but not now."

"So... I know a great many of you have plenty of questions regarding this fantastical Instant Form!" Hermonie Starks remarks and he straightens up while perking up from where he's leaning upon a counter. He rather hopes she isn't going to beckon him over, for all that his actual identity is obscured with his current looks, he isn't all that sure he wishes to be seen next to a member of Zeed's Vocals, never mind with the one who's made the news due to some fan/stalker going so far as to Curse her in a cruel manner.

He rather not attract that kind of attention, thank you very much! And yet, he is pulled forward, likely due to a spell. As the spell has him staggering as it lets him go, Ryan notices how the cameras use their limited movement to include him as Hermonie Starks moves forward, the steps confident.

"You all brought him to my attention with that Siren video." Hermonie Starks grips a wrist of his left arm. "So, it's my pleasure to introduce Crafting Chimaeras! He's the one who designed this Instant Form!"

He's pulled towards the set, given that most of those who'd been seating there for the Q session had lingered for the songs. Now though, they had slipped off the screen. He smiles for the cameras but can only guess how clearly out of his depth he is as he allows himself to be move closer to the various chairs, all the while the cameras do follow them.

"Glad you approve my work." Ryan manages to say in a level enough tone. "Hopefully your viewers and fans are enjoying the Stream."

"I'm sure when this is over, you'll be able to see the many positive comments about your work!" Chirps Hermonie Starks. "I must admit, when I saw your Siren video, I hadn't thought you were doing it as raw. The vocal range isn't one that many thought to be possible for anyone could get without a spell or an enchantment."

"A lot of people overlook the number of Drowned Birds among the number of pools, which do include various native song birds of

China." Glad it's just a Q session going on between them. "Of course, there's plenty of much more impressive forms among the Drowned Pools..."

"You rat bastard! You think you can just get out of this scot-free?!" Some guy is rushing forward with a pail that seems a bit familiar. "Well, enjoy for fifteen minutes of FAME, because everyone will know your ugly mug from here on out!" With that, the contents of the pail are sent flying towards the pair.

Hermonie Starks is shielded rather quickly and thus the warm water falls without touching her. As for himself, Ryan gets hit in the near side that's close to where the guy is. Of course, nothing happens as he plucks at the wet spot of his shirt. "Rude, man, rude." He states as he holds the spot of the shirt away from his body.

Looking annoyed at the guy, who's in the process of falling due to a spell, Ryan sighs. "Well, that was..." It's then that he notices the clear gobsmacked looks upon those around him, which includes the woman that's not far from him. "Well, I did say I came prepared for an instance like this, didn't I?" He defends himself after looking about the room.

"I think this is a good point to end this particular Stream." Hermonie Starks states upon finally gaining control over herself. The pair of magic users are now approaching the fallen man, the woman pulling out pair of handcuffs.

Soon enough, the man's arms are pulled backwards as the handcuffs snap around. He assumes that the camera is over and Mr. Liberte seemingly teleporting next to Ms. Starks' side. It's clear that she's not holding up as well as she had been when the cameras were on. With there being nothing, he could do, Ryan steps away, heading for where Ms. Welder is, who seems to have recovered from the incident with the warm water tossing lunatic. "Well prepared indeed." The magical lawyer states with a slight head shake as she looks at him up and down.

"Didn't I tell you? I'm sure I mentioned that it has lock of a sort." Ryan inquires, he's sure it came up at some point on during their conversations. "We were... traveling? Maybe in the car? Or the plane?"

It takes a bit of thinking before the woman to slowly nod. "Ah, I seem to recall something coming up but I thought it was a type of personal shielding... But your words... Huh..." Ms. Welder lets out a sigh.

He is a bit curious about what she thought he meant by special condition; Ryan is sure he used that kind of wording. Although he does now have to consider that the pail that had been holding the warm water might have other spells besides one to kept, he water above a certain temperature upon either the pail or the water itself. Yet, it seems that it's not something he finds himself overly concerned with as a great many important dressed people are making their respective appearances.

As Ms. Welder turns sharply towards the door, someone has already reacted as this man who'd attempted to make off with his tub is falling to the floor due to a spell. "Looks like we caught an accomplice." The man is quickly handcuffed and Ms. Welder goes to ensure his tub isn't going to be taken as evidence, although how she'll make that happen, he's a touch curious to know.

Still, Ryan just finds this whole thing to be draining upon him. He's hopeful that things will be easily sorted out and he can head back to his apartment. Where he's not having to deal with lunatic fans/stalkers and whatever schemes they have concerning the people around their idol/target.

**/ A Year Later **

Sitting in Ms. Welder's office, Ryan looks over the document. It's been a trying year for them both, as his technique has come to the forefront of the global stage. After all, it wasn't just due to what he's created when it comes to using Instant Powders but also the many tests that followed that infamous Live Stream splashing as it seems

that warm water and the pail that held it had some serious enchantments and spells upon them in regards to unlocking Instant Powder locks, particularly given the water had been gathered in an ancient artifact pot that was meant to unlock another ancient artifact's ability to lock a Jusenkyo Curse.

It's the first time he's heard of the pair of artifacts, the Pail of Preservation and the Pot of Liberation. Even now, the full details of what they'd been used for along with how they've been tested weren't disclosed to either Ms. Welder or he himself. And yea, his magical tools had under gone examination under Ms. Welder and his own supervision, with them clearly passing the various examinations before being given back to his possession, with plenty of grumbling and weak protests, once he admitted he could just create another set, which includes recreating his clay block engulfing a ginger bread man cake pan.

That he'd been tested for nearly two weeks before being allowed to head home still miffs him to this day. Which included medical ones alongside magical ones. Thankfully, he'd been able to notify his followers viva the site about his lack of photographing for the unseeable future.

He'd been sparse when it comes to updating his followers even when he returned home and began uploading photos of himself once more. Ryan had also been sure to convey his thanks to Mystery Reflex for their help with finding such a competent and professional magical lawyer such as Ms. Welder. After all, she would have easily dropped him once Mr. Liberte agreed he'd completed his end of the bargain and thus could have left him to find others to take up his case when it came to dealing with the global community and it's inquiring over the technique he has been using along with pressuring him into signing some kind of guilty plea, which he is sure is illegal, not that they got around to completing that particular statement upon Ms. Welder entering the room, stating that she's his legal advisor.

"Hard to believe it's almost over..." Ryan sighs as he goes over the document, shamelessly using his phone to look up legal jargon or

term of phrase. This document is pretty much ensuring he couldn't get into any legal trouble along with pardoning any perceived legal crimes he'd unknowingly done during his use of said technique in the past while also him receiving a license from here on concerning the method, even if it's one that covers whatever field of magic he'd been using.

The other party that's representing said global community in regards to magical law and governance all sport varying degrees of impatience annoyance to plain boredom. They number five along with four save one of them being magic users. Ryan finds it within himself to not feel all that threaten by them, not after everything that's happened in the pass year.

As he finishes up save for the last signature, Ryan hands it over to Ms. Welder for her to put it under the last number of tests to ensure that there's no hidden clauses upon the document. Once it passes, Ms. Welder passes the document over for them to look over before signing or initialing that they witness that he has signed it under their respective supervision with them doing the same when it comes to the final signature. Each of the four put the almost completed document through their own tests before handing it back to Ms. Welder.

She goes over it before handing it over to him for the final signature. Which he does, at which point he passes it to the non-magic user. The woman takes out some wax plus a metal signet ring, putting the crimson wax next to his signature before placing the signet ring. Wax melts under the ring before the woman pulls the rest of the wax away before lifting the signet ring. The document's pages flare a crimson that's the same shade as the wax.

The document gets passed to one of the four magic users once the wax and ring are put away. Each put their signature down before including a bloody thumb print that was brought about viva a silver pin to prick an index finger to cover said thumb with their own blood. The pin prick is healed with an enchanted napkin. The final signature is Ms. Welder, who does the same as the four magic users.

Within seconds, prepared blanked papers plus bottles of ink float in the air as copies are made of said document before the original is placed into a secure glass and silver tube that's enchanted and warded. The non-magic user takes possession of said tube containing the original document while six copies are handed out to the four magic users, Ms. Welder, and himself, the remaining six copies are taken by the official to be filed with certain departments right away and with a single one to be used as a reference along with it being used to create more copies or translated into different languages, with those copies being of either digital or physical copies.

As the copies were being created viva magic, Ryan has his phone out and sends the documents to not just the five before him but also to various authorises, be they magical institutions or government departments. It's the original pdf along with his English translation of that old Germanic that it was written in. Minutes later, the pair of pdfs is done getting uploaded.

"This? You were using THIS?" The man with slight graying hair and bread exclaims as the man had hurriedly skipped through a portion of it. "This is... it's a failure! Just like all that's like its type!"

"You are familiar with it?" Ms. Welder inquires while the others also look at said man. "Failure? It clearly isn't, given how much evidence we have that it is successful!" Remarks one of the other magic users.

"It's one of those that are meant to alter a Homunculus' appearance. It's hard to say if it was before the attempt at bring it to life or afterwards." Graying bread man states.

"I can't fully recall my reason for trying it but I figured the appearance portion was worth trying when it comes to creating an Instant Form." Ryan states with a slight shrug of his shoulders. "The amulet that it suggests creating isn't needed for the Instant Water to work, just if you want to defy the warm water reversal by holding it while transforming with the Instant Water and holding it when you are exposing yourself to warm water when you want to transform back."

"Ah, might we examine the amulet you created?" Asks one of others that have been silent and rather bored. Pulling out a case that he had put it in, Ryan hands it over.

As the lid comes off and it reveals the amulet that he created back when he was in his final year at high school. The crystal within the clay continues to give off its usual glow that it's been doing so since he first splashed himself. It's taken out by the person, who then turns it this way and that, taking in the size of it along with the weight.

There's a hum and Ryan watches as the person preforms a few spells upon the amulet with various etheral threads connecting himself and the amulet. He's not sure what it means but from the expressions upon those magic users, there's something going on with the amulet. He notices Ms. Welder sighing every so slightly, which means that there's something they'll have to talk about as the spell or spells come to an end.

The amulet it put back into the case with the cover getting put on. It's handed back while the other magic users seem to be deep in thought. "It's hard to say if it's due to him having crafted it right or not." Remarks graying bread man.

"Well, that can be something to discuss at a later date." Ms. Welder states. "For now, I think it's best for people to review what's been given and to explore this new avenue of testing in regards to this text along with its sibling failed technique."

"Indeed." The woman who's the only non-magic user among the five. "For now, what kind of license is it that needs to be issued in regards to Mr. Hammett?"

"Alchemy." Admits the man who's familiar with the text. "After all, this text and its siblings have always been regarded as failures, so there's no broken laws that need to be pardoned."

Within minutes, the woman fills out said license and Ryan signs it before them all. Once done, he folds it up and pockets it. "I guess I'll

be hearing from you at a later date concerning the amulet?" He inquires and there's a few grunts of agreement with a dash of nods as they get up from their chairs.

It's not long before the five leave, polite farewells exchanged, it's soon just the pair of them. "So...?" He isn't sure if she'll tease him to get him to ask in a full sentence.

"Well, it explains your... youthful looks and it could mean you are rather hard to subject to being Cursed." Ms. Welder states as she finishes pulling out some bottle that sports a rum label upon it. "And it's rather interesting that you managed to get it to work, then again, I guess nobody ever thought to use it for something other than what it was developed for."

"And yet, anyone can see how you'd come to the conclusion you came to, given your lack of background in magic." Ms. Welder remarks. "I think a lot of magical techniques will be reevaluated and will likely try to apply them out of the box as it were." Then she uncaps the rum and pours herself a shot glass while he skims through his copy of documents.

"Thanks for all your help." Ryan says to Ms. Welder. "I'm not sure I'd have come out of this as well as I have."

"Well, I must admit, you did provide me with an interesting challenge. I don't think I could have gotten so much free publicity if not for Cl... Mystery Reflex sending you, my way." Ms. Welder, whose first name is Deandra, states with a clear satisfied smile.

They do chat for a bit, mostly about the likely time line for when he could expect getting in contact by any of the four magic users or by anyone, they associate with and are interested in the amulet's influence upon Ryan himself.

After a short period of silence after their chit chat, they give their farewells and Ryan leaves the office. Yea, he approaches the

secretary and pays the bill. Once it's paid, he leaves the office and heads back to his apartment viva his one passenger car.

He's not sure how long it'll take for the original pdf and his English translation to find their way onto the internet, but he's sure it won't be today. *Oh yea, I should post an update about the end of this issue. I'm sure people will be glad to know that it's all cleared up and I'll be uploading photos once more.*

Ending it Here!

Chapter Guide:

Crafting_Chimaeras

Ryan Hammett – elder brother of Michael Hammett

Mystery Reflex – Illusionist who can have their illusions be filmed

Zeed's Vocals - Leader Singer: Hermonie Starks